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# TOURISMOS

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*literature on the contribution of clusters to tourism destination and tourism business management and marketing is followed by three case studies of rural tourism-related projects in Greece. These case studies focus on the main management and marketing issues. Various management and marketing issues are investigated; the achievements and problems are stressed, and the factors crucial to the success of these rural tourism business clusters are identified. The paper provides recommendations for local planners and destination managers to enable them to successfully operate such alliances.*

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*Kapil Kumar*

*History and Heritage have traditionally been strong pull factors in tourism. There are countries and destinations with strong tradition in these areas with practically no efforts needed for product designing, promotion or marketing. Destinations like Rome, Vienna or Paris, etc. can be cited in this regard. It is interesting to find that a country like Australia with a history of approximately 200 years (excluding the aborigines' history) has made extensive use of its history and heritage by converting them into tourism products and convict heritage tourism has emerged as a vital interest area for both domestic as well as international tourism. As a visiting fellow of the Australia India Council (2007) I worked on a project – "How Australia has converted its history and heritage into tourism products?" and further as a visiting Professor under the Australia Endeavour Award 2008 I worked on Convict Heritage in Australia. For this I carried out extensive fieldwork in different parts of Australia. This paper analyses the decision-making and planning for converting convict history and sites into convict heritage sites and further developing them as tourism products. It examines the attractions created in this area and the way they are marketed and promoted. After discussing the broad areas the paper discusses the Fremantle prison as a case study whereby it takes into account its conversion into a convict heritage site and its enrichment into a tourism product by introducing prison tours, theme parties and a live experience of prison life to the visitors. How do the visitors feel about this experience is another aspect dealt with in the paper along with the perceptions and attitudes of the host population, former prison officers and members of the Town Council in Fremantle. The paper also makes certain suggestions for further enrichment and rejuvenation of such tourism products in Australia. The paper, by dealing such themes, provides an insight into this emerging area of new tourism products that provide a successful tourism product case study for others to learn from and follow.*

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*Elena Petrovska, Risto Reckoski & Gordana Reckoska*

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*economic benefits for communities living in rural or remote areas. The attributes of ecotourism make it a valuable tool for conservation. Also, ecotourism process embraces a huge range of participants doing different parts of the whole development stages. Of all the participants in the ecotourism activity, the tourism industry is perhaps the most important and the least appreciated by conservationists.*

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*Velissariou Efstathios, Galagala Anastasia & Karathanos Athanassios*

*Wine tourism is globally regarded as a traditional, yet at the same time dynamic form of alternative tourism. In this paper, the development of a Network of Wine Routes in the region of Thessaly, Greece is presented. Thessaly is a region where wine tourism could potentially increase the flow of tourists as well as improve their quality. More specifically, four routes are proposed and the conditions needed for the successful functioning of the network are presented. These include the establishment of visitable wineries, collaboration with tourism enterprises and synergy among all parties involved. The plan was based on international and Greek experience in wine tourism as well as on the results of primary research, studying the members of the “Wine Roads of Northern Greece” network, which are briefly summarised.*

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*Konstantinos Tomazos & Richard Butler*

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## EDITORIAL

This is the special issue of *TOURISMOS*, continuing an annual series of special issues. In the previous eight issues, our multidisciplinary journal aimed at justifying the rationale behind introducing yet another journal in tourism academic studies. Capitalising on this effort, we now focus on furthering our scope and consolidating our position in both conceptual developments and practical applications in tourism with special emphasis on Special Interest Tourism.

Mass tourism, the most predominant form of tourism over the last decades, is gradually being brought in question. In spite of becoming a developmental vehicle, it does not always offer travelling experiences that are highly associated with immaterial qualities, ambiance, aesthetics and atmosphere, pure feelings and not products. Moreover, contemporary tourists are no longer considered to be passive participants or just observers of the offered activities. On the contrary, they play an active role in forming the overall tourism experience, seeking to fulfil several needs. The latter emerge from various kinds of motives which are highly related to the search for a deeper meaning during a travel. In an effort to respond to the modern multi-motivated tourists' demands, as well as to meet their particular needs, Special Interest Tourism has been developed.

In the case of Special Interest Tourism (SIT), traveller's motivations as well as decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest that is focused either on activity/ies and/or on destinations and settings. Moreover, emphasis is given on the fact that, in contrast with tourism in general, which involves mass participation, SIT suggests non-commercialised individual travel. It provides a "meaningful-trip" with several social, cultural, environmental and communicational dimensions, rather than an "escape-trip".

A wide range of SIT categories exists: regional, rural, urban, cultural, heritage, wine and food, educational, religious, sport, adventure and nature-based, environmental, cruise, sex, health, festival, event tourism and so on. These categories in several cases overlap. The global financial crisis, that hit the world economy in 2008, has affected international tourism more than domestic tourism and business tourism more than leisure tourism; hotels more than other types of accommodation and air transport more than other types of





transport. According to OECD, specific forms of Special Interest Tourism (such as cruise tourism or winter tourism in the Alpine region) have been only slightly impacted during the crisis, or have even experienced growth.

Within this context, this Special Issue endeavors to add to the literature on SIT, including articles that explore several research agendas. The selected studies are based on various theoretical models and they focus on planning, development, market and impacts of different forms of SIT, such as rural, cultural, wellness, cruise and tourism in protected areas.

Based on the previous analysis, I trust that you will enjoy reading the contributions made in this special issue of TOURISMOS!

Olga Iakovidou  
Guest Editor

## TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT: PRESSURES OF TOURISM RELATED CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF HOST AREAS- ATTEMPTING A SURVEY IN THE CYCLADES

Ioannis P. Spilanis  
University of the Aegean

Olga P. Karayiannis  
University of the Aegean

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*The present constitutes part of a wider research attempt to examine the impacts of tourism on the host areas using a transformed version of the explanatory tool 'DPSR' (Driving Forces, Pressures, State, Response). The Cycladic islands are selected as a case study, and the basic environmental pressure factor examined is tourism related construction activity. Concluding from the data presented, the tourism development paradigms in the study area (3S-tourism hosted in 'conventional' accommodation and second homes), seem new construction intensive. The working hypotheses and limitations of the present research application, reflect weaknesses of the Greek institutional framework, towards understanding and managing tourism impacts, let alone sustainability goals.*

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**Keywords:** tourism, environment, construction, pressures, islands

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of tourism impacts on the host areas constitutes one of the major scientific research fields of the tourism phenomenon. The usual classification of the influences and changes that tourism generates in the receiving areas, categorizes them as economic, social or environmental, although very often, a change may apply to more than one, if not all categories. Focusing on the natural environment of the host areas, the basic environmental modifications due to the tourism activity on the local level, concern a series of parameters in relation to land and building uses, water resources, energy balance, atmosphere, waste generation, biodiversity, landscape, etc. (Mathieson and Wall, 1982)



The present paper constitutes part of a wider research attempt (Spilanis, 2006), to examine and assess the impacts of tourism in the host areas by applying sustainability criteria, adopting the widely used, by international organizations, explanatory tool ‘DPSR’ (OECD, 1993). Briefly, the aim of the present paper is to record the pressures of construction activity for tourism purpose on the local level, using as a case study the Cycladic islands.

## **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

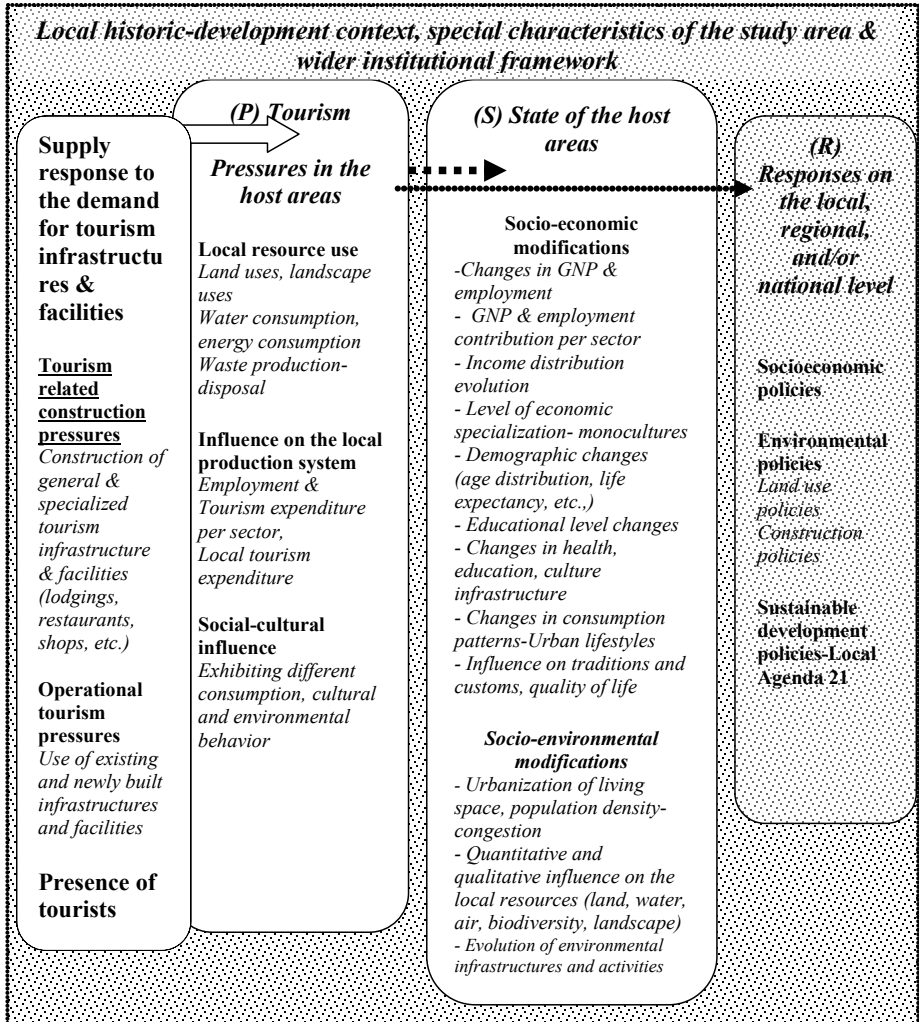
The wider methodological approach proposed, aims to finally produce a sustainability assessment platform on the spatial level. Within this approach, a modified version of the explanatory tool DPSR (driving forces, pressures, state, response), widely used in several forms by international organizations (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, European Environmental Agency) (OECD, 1993; EEA, 1999; Spilanis et al., 2005), is adopted.

### **Reformulating the explanatory tool DPSR according to the tourism phenomenon**

The tool is reformulated (diagram 1 below) in such a way, as to express the correlation between the pressures of tourism activities (acting as a driving force), their impacts on the local level, and to consequently record the evolution of the state of the local socioeconomic and environmental systems, taking at the same time under consideration parameters of the local context (special characteristics of the study area and wider institutional framework) as well as policy modifications. In more detail, under the view adopted, tourism demand in the host areas exerts a series of pressures on the local socioeconomic and environmental system (1st and 2nd frame in the following diagram). These pressures are being generated due to the construction activity for tourism infrastructures and facilities on the local level, as well as due to their operation, which in turn is being enhanced by increased tourist arrivals. The pressures in turn, modify the state of the local systems (3rd frame in the diagram). Whichever the local historic, development and special characteristics in the host areas, as well as wider institutional framework (background frame in the diagram), they should always be taken under consideration as timeless ‘filters’, regulating the extent and level of the above tourism pressures. According to the explanatory tool, the societal response, to tourism impacts (4th frame in the diagram), calls for the modification of

the existing institutional frameworks by adopting appropriate policy measures.

**Figure 1.** The explanatory tool DPSIR reformulated according to the tourism phenomenon



Source : (Spilanis, 2006), partial modification

Conclusively, the approach presented can be used as a wider ‘study’ guide in order to:

- i) understand and record modifications appointed to tourism in the host areas,
- ii) assess the influence of tourism on the sustainable future of the host areas,

always in relation to the forms of tourism locally developed, as well as special characteristics, either historic, developmental, institutional, of the wider area of interest.

### **Tourism related construction activity: a subcategory of pressure factors of the tourism phenomenon on the host areas**

The choice of examining tourism related construction activity in the host areas, complies with a reasoning that takes under consideration the *growth dynamics* of the tourism phenomenon (tourism facilities growth, growth in the number of tourists), which in turn usually affect the *operational dimensions* of tourism (rise in resources consumption). In order to record and analyze the pressures of tourism activity, it is possible to categorize them (diagram 1, frame 1), as *construction (permanent) character pressures*, deriving from the creation of new infrastructure and tourism facilities, as well as *operational (seasonal) character pressures*, deriving from: i) the operation of the existing stock of facilities during the tourism season, and ii) the presence and activities of tourists. Additional qualitative features of the two pressure subcategories, for example spatial placing and construction style parameters of tourism facilities, the cultural origin, the consumption and environmental behaviours exhibited by tourists, etc., may assign further significance to the pressure factors under consideration.

Aiming in the present to survey the tourism related construction activity, a question that obviously arises is which part of the construction activity in an area can be characterized as ‘touristic’. Consequently, matters of *defining the limits of the tourism phenomenon* arise. In relation to this matter, the participation of the exclusively tourism purpose-built facilities, like hotels, rooms to let, restaurants and shops that operate during the tourism season, is obvious. Difficulties occur when in need to categorize construction activity for : i) *facilities of mixed uses* like the ones serving the seasonal population as well as the permanent population

of a host area, *or general infrastructure*, e.g. roads, ports, airports, etc. which also causes extensive changes of the natural space, and ii) *facilities used informally*, like new houses which although stated as primary ones, are being rented occasionally to tourists. Finally, an ambivalent, escaping category of construction activity relating to tourism, is one that derives from *changes of use* of facilities, including facilities initially constructed for non-touristic purposes, which with time, are being transformed as to serve touristic needs or vice-versa.

Following the setting of limits and the categorizations of the 'tourism' construction activity, as well as its qualitative parameters of interest, comes the matter of *recording it with appropriate and accurate statistical data*. This, once again relates to national, regional and/or local institutional particularities and especially ones that concern the statistical systems adopted and applied in the jurisdictions of interest.

Conclusively, within the present paper, an attempt is made to record *the pressure of tourism related construction activity*. Stages that should follow the present research segment, are the estimation of the *changes in land uses*, as well as the extra (considering that the present ones are known) *seasonal demands that the operation of the newly built tourism facilities will pose on the local environmental system* (water, energy consumption, waste treatment, etc.). Finally, of great importance are the factors of *built environment changes (for constructions inside existing settlements)* and *landscape changes (for constructions outside existing settlements)*, as they constitute a resource of crucial importance for the host areas. These changes should also be examined in a following research stage, one which would include *qualitative parameters of tourism related construction activity*. All the above research quests, constitute necessary steps in order to acquire appropriate data for sustainability assessment of the host areas.

## RESEARCH APPLICATION IN THE STUDY AREA

### Concise profile of the study area

The island complex of the Cyclades comprises one of the 52 Prefectures of Greece, and together with the Prefecture of the Dodecanese, constitutes the Southern Aegean, one of the 13 administrative regions of Greece, one of 4 that are completely insular. The great distance from the European core areas, the absence of borders with other European States and the geographical fragmentation of the area, make the Southern Aegean one extremely isolated and particular

European Prefecture (Prefectures of Aegean Islands and Crete: 2006). In a total of 9.837 insular areas (islands, islets, rocks) of the country, the Cyclades come first with respect to the number, with 2.242 (Mergos et al. 2004), while 24 of the Cycladic islands are inhabited.

Human presence in the Cyclades has been uninterrupted since antiquity, as is proven by the rich archeological findings but also from the extensive agricultural landscape, characteristic of the area (Mendoni et al.:1998) Agriculture, rearing livestock and shipping, have been basic productive activities since antiquity. At the time of their incorporation in the newly established Greek state in 1830 the islands of the Cyclades were densely populated and showed considerable shipping and trading activity (Mergos et al.:2004; Spilanis et al.: 2004). After the Second World War the population shrank, due to migration to big urban centers, however during the last decades it has recovered significantly, due to the employment opportunities offered by the tourism phenomenon, which gradually expanded (Spilanis:2000, Prefectures of Aegean Islands and Crete: 2006; Mergos et.al.: 2004).

Regarding the natural and man made environment of the greater Southern Aegean area, its significance and uniqueness rely on the natural landscape, its diversity, its scale and shape, its flora and fauna as well as the aesthetic, historic and land planning values of the settlements (Prefectures of Aegean Islands and Crete: 2006)

The current population of the Cyclades is according to the census of 2001, 112.615 people (almost 1/10 of the country's in total), recovering since 1980's and approaching the levels of 1950's, when its greatest decline occurred (Mergos et al.: 2004; Spilanis :2000). The majority of the work force is employed in the tertiary sector (about 60%), constantly growing in the recent decades, followed by the secondary sector (about 29%), while the primary sector comes last (about 11%) and is shrinking faster than the National average (NSSG: 2001). In 2005 the Gross National Product per capita in the study area, was 5% higher than the national average, slightly curving since 2003 (NSSG:2005). Nevertheless significant divergence of the above indicators is observed between different islands comprising the prefecture.

The Cyclades island complex, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Greece, both for Greeks and foreigners, one of the "dynamic" Prefectures with respect to its GNP (Gross National Product) and its rate of change compared to the National average in the period 1980-1990 (Mergos et al, 2004: p119), and one "specialized" in tourism (Spilanis 2000, p166). Regarding the tourism product offered, beach tourism predominates (Salfo et al., 2003). In relation to the rest of the

region, as well as the country in total, a series of parameters like the considerable participation of internal tourism (Greeks) in the area, the small size of lodgings, the considerable percentage of rooms to let and the reduced dependency on tour operators (Papanikos, 2000), indicate a *non organized - "family-business" model of development*. The phenomenon of "second homes", seems to be playing a major role in the area (Karagianni, 2005), an often unnoticed and neglected one by tourism analyses, by increasing, the lodgings, as well as the influx of regular residents-tourists in the area. The most important problems of the tourism sector in the greater area of Southern Aegean, are related to the low quality of the tourism product offered as well as that of the public infrastructure and services, and the inability to diverge from the typical 3S tourism model. (Prefectures of Aegean Islands and Crete: 2006). These problems translate to low tourism expenditure, short duration of visits, as well as intense seasonality (Prefectures of Aegean Islands and Crete: 2006)

Regarding the Greek institutional context of the construction activity in general, the absence of a legal framework regulating land or building uses, along with the institution of 'off plan building', frequently in ecologically sensitive areas, have played a catalytic role in the formulation of the touristic reality in Greece, often contributed to the devaluation of natural and/or cultural resources (Prefectures Aegean Islands and Crete, 2006; Panagiotatou, 1998; CPER et al., 1998; Sifounakis, 2005), and consequently undermined tourism development itself in several destinations. The most important dangers of landscape degradation in the islands of the greater Southern Aegean region, include *de facto* urbanization, created by the uncontrolled touristic development (which led to the expansion of settlements, construction of tourism related infrastructure and facilities, particularly on the coastline), extensive quarrying activities, construction of public infrastructure, as well as uncontrolled waste disposal (Prefectures of Aegean Islands and Crete: 2006)

### **The institutional framework of monitoring tourism related construction activity in the Cyclades**

The application of the methodological tool adopted, dictates the monitoring of *characteristic building parameters* within the scope of impacts, for the Prefecture as an entity, as well as for each island individually, given the different characteristics and evolution of each island. However, the existing institutional framework providing data related to the total construction activity in Greece, does not allow



thorough quantitative and qualitative examination, let alone for the subcategory of tourism construction activity and its qualitative parameters. More specifically, the primary information sources regarding the construction activity in Greece, are: i) *the two censuses, the buildings census*, which provides data in *numbers of buildings*, and *the population and housing census*, which provides data in *numbers of houses*, both carried out every decade and, ii) *the legal construction activity*, monitoring monthly the authorized construction activity (but not necessarily carried out activity), in *numbers of permits, houses and m2*, (derived from the local city planning offices of the country). The above monitoring system seems problematic on three levels:

a) It does not monitor *crucial parameters with respect to the pressures and impacts of construction*, taking into account the particularities of the Greek institutional framework (not determined land uses, inadequate protection of natural and cultural resources, ‘off plan’ construction), e.g. whether a construction is authorized within or outside city plans, its proximity to areas with high ecological values (Natura areas, or the coast) etc.

b) *The data* from most of the sources (buildings census, legal construction activity) mentioned above *are*, to a great extent, *not complementary*, given the different units of measuring used (number of buildings from the buildings census-number of permits and m2 from the construction activity). The above situation is worsened when monitoring construction activity on the islands, since the available data are not provided for every island separately, but at the municipal level, requiring further processing for the assessment of construction per island.

c) Data from both sources *only partially cover tourism use and furthermore in an inconsistent way*: i) the building census although provides hotel buildings as a separate category of buildings, the unit of measurement-number of buildings- does not allow pressure per island to be accurately revealed, something that depends on the actual size (m2, land cover) of each building and ii) data from the legal construction activity, although provides data for numbers of building permits for hotel buildings, it only provides number of m3 per building permit and only per Prefecture and not at municipality levels, so consequently not per island (for privacy reasons, as was stated by the National Statistical Agency of Greece, upon the request, at November 2008).

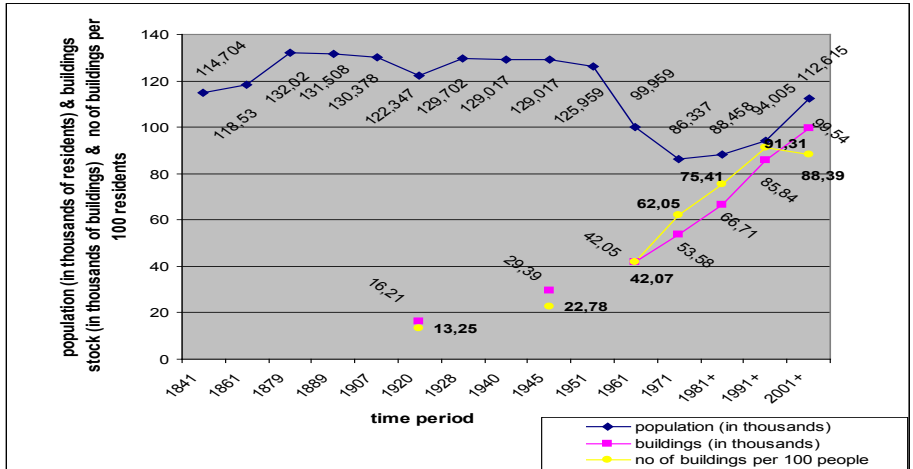
The most important categories of tourism related construction activity in the Cyclades according to the profile of the area, seem to include *hotel and auxiliary lodgings* and particularly the category of *houses*, either privately used summer houses, or for rent or sale. However,

due to the difficulties, mentioned in the previous section, in characterizing construction activity as 'touristic' (mixed uses and informal-illegal touristic use), and lack of appropriate statistical data, as explicitly discussed, calculations can only be done *by approximation*. Consequently, within the following presentation, the categories of construction activity for tourism facilities, lodging, dining, (restaurants, bars, coffee-shops, etc.) and recreation, as well as of tourism infrastructure (e.g. conference centers) or supportive to tourism (commercial and services) will not be examined as a subtotal of the wider construction activity, since it will be assumed that the latter, in the area of interest, to a great extent relates to tourism. Only the category of houses can and will be examined separately, assuming again that within the legal activity data, the houses authorised are to a great extent second-summer homes and houses for rent or sale that either fall in the second home phenomenon, or in the 'conventional' tourism sector, either formally or informally (informal-illegal tourism leases). Finally, the construction activity of general infrastructure (e.g. ports) will not be examined.

### **Tourism related construction activity in the Cyclades: data presentation**

Presenting the tourism related construction activity in the Cycladic islands, for the Prefecture in total but also among the islands, can be attempted on four crossing over levels : 1) in historic terms-examining the evolution of building, in relation to the periods of construction of buildings from 1919 until 2001 (census 2001), 2) in terms of current tendencies-examining the data of legal construction activity for the period 1997-2007, 3) in absolute terms (in m<sup>2</sup> of buildings and numbers of houses authorized), and 4) in relative terms (related to the size-area and population of each island). Beginning by examining the evolution of the total construction activity in the Cyclades, in comparison to the equivalent population fluctuation, and the indicator 'number of buildings per 100 residents', in graph 1 below, the basic assumption adopted throughout the presentation that follows, is formulated : a major part of the construction growth (more than doubling of the buildings stock of the Prefecture) during the decades 1960-2001, taking under consideration a less dynamic population growth for the same period (actually a recovery almost at the 1950s level) must be attributed to the tourism phenomenon. The value of the indicator 'number of buildings per 100 residents', is 88,39 for 2001, more than double its 1961 value of 42,05.

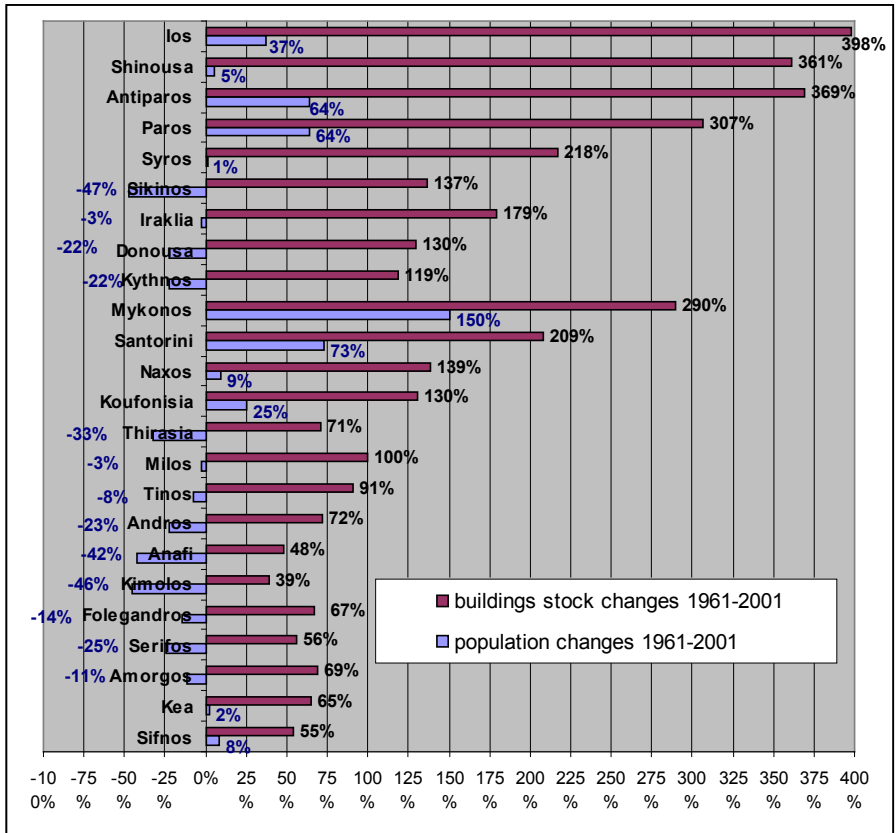
**Graph 1.** Comparative evolution of population and buildings stock in the Cyclades (1841-2001)



Source: Processing of data by the authors from buildings census 2001 and population census (1841-2001) from (Spilanis et al., 2004)

Consequently, examining the equivalent indicators of population and buildings stock between the decades 1961-2001, in graph 2 below, the islands with the greatest difference between the two trends are being revealed. It becomes obvious that construction, in terms of numbers of buildings, shows significant increase, both in the “traditionally” touristic islands with substantial tourist arrivals, like Ios, Mykonos, Paros and Santorini, as well as in smaller and more recently touristically developed islands like Antiparos, Shinousa, Iraklia and others. The considerable population recovery of some of the traditionally touristic islands, explains their lower ranking in the presented histogram.

**Graph 2.** Population & building stock percentage changes 1961-2001 in the Cyclades— islands presented in declining order regarding the biggest deviation between population change and building stock change



Source: Processing of data by the authors from buildings census 2001 and population census (1841-2001) from (Spilanis et al., 2004)

With respect to the building activity following the year 2001, assuming that a construction takes on average 2-3 years after its authorization to complete, the authorised construction activity data from 1997 (3-4 years before the census) until 2007 (most recent available data) are selected and presented. More specifically, the total m2 and the number of houses, based on new construction permits and additions to existing buildings, are presented. It is noted that in both cases, all potential uses

are included (professional, home or other uses). In the tables that follow, the islands of the Cyclades are listed in declining order with respect to the pressures they experience from building, according to the criterion examined, and are roughly categorized in three groups (see bold lines on each table): islands of high, intermediate or low pressures. In table 1 that follows, the numbers of m2 and houses, based on new permits and additions for the period 1997-2007 per island are presented.

**Table 1.** Indices of building activity per island in the Cyclades during the period 1997-2007 – islands presented in declining order regarding the estimated pressures in absolute and relative terms

island	building permits total m2	no of new houses to be built according to building permits	island	total buildings permit m2 per islands km2	island	total buildings permit m2 per resident (2001)
PAROS	888727	5449	SYROS	6739	SHINOUSA	114
NAXOS	630394	4545	MYKONOS	6426	SIKINOS	98
SYROS	563621	4190	KOYFONISIA	5796	KOYFONISIA	90
SANTORINI	549312	2433	PAROS	4569	KEA	87
MYKONOS	409377	2872	SANTORINI	4552	PAROS	69
TINOS	344969	2595	SHINOUSA	3026	ANTIPAROS	69
ANDROS	303808	2410	TINOS	2108	FOLEGANDROS	62
KEA	209064	1897	ANTIPAROS	2053	MYKONOS	59
MILOS	142101	1375	NAXOS	1616	ANAFI	53
ANTIPAROS	100480	818	KEA	1584	TINOS	48
KYTHNOS	71491	749	SIFNOS	1373	KYTHNOS	43
SIFNOS	69868	786	FOLEGANDROS	1284	SIFNOS	41
AMORGOS	56400	491	MILOS	944	SERIFOS	40
IOS	56074	403	ANDROS	800	NAXOS	35
FOLEGANDROS	48879	378	SERIFOS	766	DONOUSIA	33
SERIFOS	41174	478	KYTHNOS	704	AMORGOS	30
KOYFONISIA	33039	282	THIRASIA	600	ANDROS	30
SHINOUSA	23540	236	SIKINOS	570	MILOS	30
SIKINOS	23377	233	AMORGOS	467	SYROS	28
ANAFI	14377	155	IOS	453	IOS	27
KIMOLOS	10881	143	DONOUSIA	397	SANTORINI	26
IRAKLIA	5583	51	ANAFI	375	IRAKLIA	24
DONOUSIA	5355	53	KIMOLOS	305	THIRASIA	21
THIRASIA	3608	50	IRAKLIA	205	KIMOLOS	14
<b>CYCLADES</b>	<b>4605499</b>	<b>33072</b>				

Source: Karayiannis, 2007

It becomes obvious that in absolute terms, the greatest volume of the construction activity is concentrated in the larger and “traditionally” touristic islands, as well as the islands that due to their proximity to Athens, participate more, in absolute terms, in the “second home” phenomenon (Salso et al., 2003), like Tinos, Andros and Kea. Evaluating the relative pressures that the planned construction activity exerts on each island (total m<sup>2</sup> per km<sup>2</sup> of land area, and per resident 2001), the initial picture is partially modified. According to the size of each island, islands like Mykonos, Paros and Santorini remain in the high pressure group, topped by Syros (which must be however dealt with as a special case, being the capital of the Prefecture), while smaller islands like Koufonisia, Shinousa and Antiparos move higher up, as well as Tinos. Finally taking into account the population of the islands, smaller islands are established in the high pressure group, probably because of the simultaneous construction increase and population decline, as well as their limited space.

Attempting to partly combine the census data and the authorized construction activity, so as to formulate estimates on the current pressures per island, as well as the prefecture total, it is possible to compare the stock of houses per island in 2001, with the volume of houses authorized between 1997 and 2007. In table 2 that follows, these data are presented and the islands are placed in declining order (2 rankings) regarding the number of new houses as well as a percentage of their stock in 2001. By examining the data, an impressive increase in the total of the prefecture, exceeding thirty percent, becomes obvious. Once again the greatest activity in absolute terms seems to be taking place in the larger and more touristic islands (Paros, Naxos, Syros, Mykonos and Santorini), as well as the islands with considerable “second home” activity. (Tinos, Andros Kea). The greatest construction increase as a percentage of the existing stock in 2001, seems to be taking place in the smallest islands, for reasons already discussed.

**Table 2.** Estimations of housing stock addition per island in the Cyclades during the period 1997-2007– islands presented in declining order regarding the estimated pressures in absolute and relative terms

	Total of inhabitable houses (2001)	no of new houses to be built according to building permits 1997- 2007	% predicted rise of houses per island		% predicted rise of houses per island
PAROS	10582	5449	51%	SHINOUSA	136%
NAXOS	14197	4545	32%	KOYFONISIA	130%
SYROS	12581	4190	33%	ANTIPAROS	86%
MYKONOS	7275	2872	39%	KEA	66%
TINOS	8309	2595	31%	FOLEGANDROS	55%
SANTORINI*	10933	2483	23%	SIKINOS	54%
ANDROS	7423	2410	32%	PAROS	51%
KEA	2869	1897	66%	ANAFI	41%
MILOS	4377	1375	31%	MYKONOS	39%
ANRIPAROS	954	818	86%	IRAKLIA	36%
SIFNOS	2370	786	33%	CYCLADES	36%
KYTHNOS	2370	749	32%	SYROS	33%
AMORGOS	1526	491	32%	SIFNOS	33%
SERIFOS	2329	478	21%	ANDROS	32%
IOS	1567	403	26%	AMORGOS	32%
FOLEGANDROS	693	378	55%	NAXOS	32%
KOYFONISIA	217	282	130%	KYTHNOS	32%
SHINOUSA	173	236	136%	MILOS	31%
SIKINOS	429	233	54%	TINOS	31%
ANAFI	382	155	41%	DONOUSIA	26%
KIMOLOS	1223	143	12%	IOS	26%
DONOUSIA	201	53	26%	SANTORINI*	23%
IRAKLIA	142	51	36%	SERIFOS	21%
<b>CYCLADES</b>	<b>93122</b>	<b>33072</b>	<b>36%</b>	KIMOLOS	12%

\* Thirasia has been include here as well

Source: Karayiannis, 2007

## CONCLUSIONS & LIMITATIONS

The present constitutes an attempt to monitor and evaluate pressures coming from the phenomenon of intense construction activity, tourism being its driving force, in the area of the Cyclades. This attempt was, inevitably, fragmental, dictated by the lack of suitable statistical data, as was demonstrated by the different measurement units that were examined and presented (buildings, m<sup>2</sup>, houses), as well as the different time scales that the data were (and still are) collected and were hence available for processing.

With respect to the dynamics of the construction activity, especially during the last decade, the largest part seems to occur on the traditionally “touristic” islands, while in relative terms, the pressures revealed seem greater on islands of smaller size and latter tourism development. The

tourism development paradigms in the study area (sea and sun tourism hosted in 'conventional' accommodation and second homes), based on the data presented and previous studies (Karayiannis:2007), seem to belong to a context of intensive construction of 'new' buildings and marginal re-use and renovation of existing buildings. In short, tourism activity in the Cyclades is *new construction intensive*, exerting pressures on the environment (especially by land use changes), affecting not only the townscape but also the landscape, as well as ecologically fragile areas.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS-DISCUSSION

Several surveys and scientific reports, acknowledge the particularities of the Greek institutional framework regarding the construction activity, and especially the institution of "off plan building", as crucially problematic issues of national housing and tourism development in Greece (CPER et al., 1998; Panagiotatou et al., 1998, and others). But then again, it seems that the national construction sector, as such, is still widely being considered and promoted as a major development agent, as was the case after the Second World War (Hemonti-Teroviti, 2001, Getimis, 2000), whereas at the same time, local objections against stronger regulations concerning construction activity in rural areas, are very strong. Acknowledgement of the above on behalf of the national planning authorities should at least enforce statistical monitoring of "off plan" construction activity.

Conclusively the working hypotheses and limitations of the present research DPSR application, regarding which parts of the building activity can be characterized as 'touristic', the lack of appropriate statistical data at the national, regional and local level, as well as the results of tourism related construction activity presented, reveal weaknesses of the Greek institutional framework towards understanding and managing tourism impacts, let alone goals of sustainable development.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Excluding the number of houses for which data can be taken both from the housing census (historical data), as well as the legal construction activity (authorized but not necessarily occurring activity).Here write endnotes (if any).
2. According to Pearce: "...in the aggregate, second homes may constitute a very sizeable proportion of total capacity in particular resorts." (Pearce, 1992: p.25). Equivalent remarks regarding the second home phenomenon are stated in a technical review conducted by the United Nations Economic Committee for Europe: "...the growth in the number of second homes during

the 1990s constitutes another major problem: the land area required by such a home, per person, is 40 times that for a flat and 160 times that for an 80-bed hotel (20 times when garden areas are excluded)” (UNECE, 2006).

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## CONTRIBUTION OF NETWORKING AND CLUSTERING IN RURAL TOURISM BUSINESS

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*The tourism industry is characterised by a highly competitive global market. Research suggests networks and clusters are efficient tools providing a framework for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises with opportunities to operate in this competitive environment. The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential contribution of clusters and networks in the field of rural tourism business. A review of the literature on the contribution of clusters to tourism destination and tourism business management and marketing is followed by three case studies of rural tourism-related projects in Greece. These case studies focus on the main management and marketing issues. Various management and marketing issues are investigated; the achievements and problems are stressed, and the factors crucial to the success of these rural tourism business clusters are identified. The paper provides recommendations for local planners and destination managers to enable them to successfully operate such alliances.*

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**Keywords:** *Clusters & networks; Rural tourism business; Greece; Case study.*

### INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is continuously faced with a highly competitive environment; and the global market does not longer involve single businesses, but it rather consists of geographical or thematic destinations composed by a network or cluster of tourism related operations (Lazzeretti & Petrillo, 2006). Research suggests that clusters/networks can be used as framework providing small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs) - which do not possess either the resources or



organizational capabilities to survive on their own - with opportunities to operate in a competitive tourism environment. The challenges facing tourism businesses in rural areas have long been recognised (among others Wilson et al. 2001, Sharpley 2005). For many years the proactive partnerships between public and private sectors were a favoured method of addressing the problems faced by SMTEs in a highly competitive market (Middleton 2002). More recently, however, attention has been increasingly focused on the contribution of clusters/networks as a means of generating positive economies for tourism businesses and regional competitiveness (Porter 1998, Poon 2002). These alliances are becoming increasingly important as destinations are becoming more competitive in the tourism market for a market share. The linkages within the private sector are important because of the nature of overall tourism products which are an amalgam of multiple components supplied by a range of businesses. The more mature the market the greater the incentive for the individual actors at destinations to seek the benefits of partnership synergy.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential contribution of networking and clustering in the context of rural tourism business, and to identify factors associated with their success. The paper commences with a review of the literature and is followed by a discussion of three rural tourism-related projects in Greece. The paper concludes by providing policy implications and recommendations for local planners and destination managers to enable them to successfully operate such alliances.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tourism is a highly diverse and fragmented industry; this statement also stands for rural tourism which is generally regarded as including a wide variety of tourist services and activities, all being developed in an area characterised as being rural. It might be suggested that rural tourism is a concept which includes all tourist activity in rural areas (Soteriades & Varvaressos, 2002). It should be noted that the definition of rural tourism must be from a visitor's experiential perspective. The 'experience' of rural destination is definitely more important than specific attractions and products. The countryside has become the destination for a growing market and the challenge for rural tourism businesses is to produce the right product at the high level of quality sought by this clientele, and to market it professionally. Thus, rural tourism is, simultaneously a form of

consumer behaviour and strategy by which destinations develop and market rural-related attractions and imagery.

A cluster is simply a collection of businesses or industries within a particular region that are interconnected by their products, their markets and other businesses or organisations, such as suppliers, with which they interact. Porter defines clusters as 'geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (for example, universities and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also co-operate' (Porter, 1998:197). Clustering is a process that enables the participants to exploit their synergies and the complementarities between their outputs, involving several benefits. A cluster is a progressive form of business network, which has strong business objectives focusing on improving sales and profits. It makes the exchange of information and technology possible, encouraging different ways of co-ordination and collaboration within them (European Commission, 2003). In essence, clusters are characterised by a variety of participants that transcend organisational boundaries and structures, and involve commitment by cluster members to a set of common goals and the sharing of worldviews. Clusters/networks are vital for regional development increasing the performance, innovative capacity and local businesses' critical mass.

Clusters/networks are said to involve several benefits including economies of scale; a focus on cooperation and innovation; increased synergies and productivity; knowledge transfer; joint marketing; increased competitiveness and sustainable competitive advantage. All these create opportunities for synergy and mutual reinforcement to achieve the main aim of a destination that is a rewarding holiday experience for its visitors (Michael, 2003; Saxena, 2005). SMTEs face the challenges of renewing business models to maintain competitiveness in the global economy, and networking and product innovations are typical responses to these challenges (Kokkonen & Tuohino, 2007).

Research indicates that network building is a major new source of competitive advantage and an essential management requirement. Recent studies (e.g. Hall, 2005; Michael, 2003; Novelli et al., 2006; Saxena, 2005; Tinsley & Lynch, 2007) address in more depth the implications of clustering in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Michael (2003) highlights the importance of the 'structure' and the 'scale' of clusters, especially when applied to the tourism context. He also focuses on the 'creation of economic and social opportunities in small communities through the development of clusters of complementary firms that can collectively deliver a bundle of attributes to make up a specialised

regional product' (Michael, 2003:3). Hence, networks/clusters are considered as being efficient management and marketing tools for rural destinations. These tools however, must be used in appropriate manner in order to contribute at achieving sustainable tourism development and related business objectives (Kokkonen & Tuohino, 2007; Tinsley & Lynch, 2007).

It has been stressed that, given the inevitable structural diversity of the tourism industry and its domination by small businesses, there is no logical alternative to the development of local partnership involving local tourism businesses and other local stakeholders. Considering that through a cluster, a group of SMEs can compete globally by co-operating locally; networks/clusters in tourism have experienced a dramatic growth, bringing significant benefits such as share of valuable marketing information, innovation, resource development and knowledge transfer between stakeholders (Saxena, 2005). The purpose of tourism clusters and networks is to highlight the availability of certain activities in one destination or region and to get SMEs that would normally work in isolation to co-operate and build a successful tourism product in the locality. It is exactly because of this fragmentation that all actors taking part in the value-chain should deal with issues such as integration, collaboration, networking of their activities (Poon 2002). Nowadays tourists desire a series of services that allows multiple options and a package offering opportunities of 'experiences'. The destination's value-chain is thus reflected in all its elements. This approach requires cooperation and networking between the key components. Lemmetyinen & Go (2009) suggested that the development of tourism business networks might be considered as a system in which every participant contribute with its own capabilities. The authors stressed the importance of a network approach for managing and engaging in active net participation, and they suggested that local tourism businesses must develop new key capabilities in order to face competition. Hence, the coordination of cooperative activities in tourism business clusters is identified as a prerequisite for enhancing the value-creation process and building the brand-identity process across the cluster. Another study (Kokkonen & Tuohino, 2007) analysed SMTEs innovation processes and networking dynamics. It was confirmed that innovation in SMTE networks was a synthetic process consisting of product, process and resource innovation.

The valuable contribution of tourism clusters/networks has been investigated and stressed in several contexts. Firstly, in regional and virtual networking; the tourism industry exists as a network of

interconnected subsectors, and consequently, networking is very beneficial in destination marketing (Soteriades & Avgeli, 2007). The contribution of ICTs has been highlighted by various authors (e.g. Hitz et al. 2006). The available technologies stimulate networking and electronic business networks have the potential to unite local stakeholders within a local network to address various problems. Destinations emerge as major beneficiaries of the ICTs, as they can take advantage of new strategic tools for management and marketing through co-ordination of local products and increased power in the distribution channel. These benefits can be achieved by means of a closer partnership throughout the tourism industry. The Internet allows the creation of virtual enterprises in which ICTs provide the linkages, especially networks for micro-businesses. It is suggested that SMTEs benefit from increased information flow through regional networking, to enhance market visibility, global positioning, and strategic leverage (Hitz et al., 2006). The development of the tourism portal [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com) is a good example of the multilateral alliances and cooperative effort required in order to market New Zealand as a tourism destination (Bhat, 2004). Networks in regional communities are fundamental not only to leverage opportunities for promoting and marketing of local industry, but also in creating the prerequisites for regional product innovation.

Secondly, literature on event management has acknowledged the importance of building relationships with other actors within the context of event tourism (e.g. Getz et al., 2007) and convention tourism (Bernini, 2009). The case study of Lismore in Australia (Mackellar, 2006) demonstrates that festival activities such as recipe competitions allowed local growers and interstate visitors to discover new interconnections between gastronomy and other economic industries. It has been suggested that (i) in a network having long-term, and trustworthy relationships the operational uncertainty decreases and, consequently, the internal efficiency increase; (ii) a network operating without collaboration, it results in internal inefficiency. Stokes (2006) investigated the inter-organisational networks that influence events tourism strategy making by public-sector event development agencies in Australia. He suggested that strategies of a reactive-proactive nature mostly guide events tourism development by Australia's corporative event development agencies.

These agencies maintain soft, loosely formed networks that consist of relatively stable clusters. Wine tourism is another context that has been cited as an example of successful development of clusters (e.g. Hall, 2005). According to Getz & Brown (2006) collaboration is needed to facilitate the wine tourism experience, involving destination



marketing/management organizations, the wine and tourism industries, cultural and other recreational suppliers. Finally, a cluster in spa & health tourism has been investigated by Novelli et al. (2006). The UK 'Healthy Lifestyle Tourism Cluster' experience was employed to analyse the process and the implication of cluster development in tourism. Their study suggested that consideration should be given to the process rather than to the outcomes. However, the development of clusters should not be seen as a simple and spontaneous process, but as a very complex process linked to strong stakeholder collaboration.

During 90s and this decade networking/clustering projects have been performed all over Europe (European Commission, 2003). Within this context, a number of projects have been conducted in the field of rural tourism in Greece. These projects are mainly aiming at enhancing competitiveness and supporting efficiency of rural tourism business. Following a brief discussion of the study's methodology, three of these projects are analysed in this paper in order to investigate clusters/networks' contribution and highlight the factors influencing the successful operations of such projects.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research employed a collective/multiple case study methodology. A case study is an empirical inquiry that 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context' (Yin, 1984:23). It may concern a person, a community, an organisation or any other unit of social life. Relevant data are gathered through the use of multiple sources including observations, interviews and narrative reports. In the field of tourism, a case study has become increasingly an accepted research method for gaining a holistic understanding of the factors contributing to the success of a single tourism business cluster or collective/multiple business networks.

The objective of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the clusters' contribution and success factors. It is based primarily on documentary evidence derived from a number of sources, including soft and hard copies of informational reports, private papers, visual documents, and promotional material of rural business clusters. Such documents are a rich source of data and commonly used in case study research. Documentary data to borrow a phrase from Hammersley & Atkinson (1995:173) provide 'a rich vein for analysis'. Moreover data was collected through semi-structured interviews with three coordinators of business clusters.

The research examined three projects, the rationale being that this should produce insights into what is 'good practice' in tourism enterprises clusters. Current knowledge in this area is either incomplete or shallow (Soteriades & Varvaressos, 2002). Hopefully, however, the three cases studies discussed in this paper will contribute to our understanding of tourism business clusters and may even provide a platform for further research.

Past studies show that many rural communities have to compete with the increasing number of regions that try to enter the tourism market, making the identification of a unique portfolio of indoor and outdoor activities the only way forward. It is suggested that the best way to stay competitive is through the reinforcement of existing networks and the formation of clusters in which knowledge, expertise and ideas are exchanged in order to build a visible and sustainable rural tourism portfolio (Hall, 2005; Wilson et al. 2001). Within this framework, it is very interesting to explore alliances that have been developed in order to draw a number of suggestions for destination planners and managers. For the purposes of this study three related projects are examined: (i) the 'Guest Inn' network; (ii) the 'Land of Psiloritis' cluster; and (iii) the 'Wine Roads of Northern Greece', cluster. The three projects are examined in terms of the following characteristics: (i) actors; (ii) objectives and activities; (iii) structure; and (iv) achievements and problems. These are discussed in the following sections.

## **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **'Guest Inn', a rural accommodation network**

'Guest Inn' is a Greek network of rural accommodation that is a member of the European Federation of Farm and Village Tourism ([www.eurogites.org](http://www.eurogites.org)). It operates since 2003 under a formal structure as a general partnership. Its mission is to promote and distribute small accommodation units via the Internet, as well as to suggest and provide the traveller with accommodation which complies with specific common quality standards, such as friendly welcome and particular location. The network firstly concerns tourists interested in getting to know and spend his/her vacation in unknown beautiful places all over Greece. Secondly, it concerns outstanding rural accommodation units, usually located in regions still unspoiled. The accommodation-members are located in an authentic environment, quiet and well preserved, with respect to the local architecture. The network's aim is to establish of a brand name, acting as

an umbrella for marketing purposes, as well as to conform for referred operational models of rural accommodation. The most cost and time effective way of creating some form of visible identity has been to start with a logo (see Fig. 1) and a website ([www.guestinn.com](http://www.guestinn.com)). This logo formed the basis of branding.

**Figure 1.** The Guest Inn's logo



Accommodation operators, who become network members, are chosen irrespective of their category and price range, but on the condition that they meet specific quality criteria (see Table 1). A classification according to ‘sunflowers’ (1, 2 or 3) aims to determine the accommodation’s standard and to enhance tourists find out the unit matching his/her desires. Hence, the network’s aim is to render its brand name a guarantee for quality services.

**Table 1.** ‘Guest Inn’ – Quality criteria

Area	Criteria
Hospitality	Personal care and warm welcome by accommodation operator.
Stay	Pleasing decoration, impeccable cleanliness, comfort, good amenities in conjunction with a traditional home made breakfast.
Architecture	Small units, housed in new or renovated buildings, harmonious with the local architecture of each destination.
Environment	Landscapes of major natural beauty offering to the visitor peace, serenity and rest, as well as the opportunity to come into contact with the Greek countryside and its people; and get to know local products.

Source: [www.guestinn.com/en/quality](http://www.guestinn.com/en/quality)

The suggested locations are far from the beaten track and mass tourism. They provide the opportunity to discover traditional Greek hospitality and the beauty and serenity of the Greek landscape.

The website [www.guestinn.com](http://www.guestinn.com) offers information on the network, describing the project and listing members, and providing other general information. There is an affiliation with Minoan Lines, which

offers a discount for all clients having booked accommodation online. The network also offers association opportunities to related business.

REGION	UNITS	TYPES					
		Traditional cottages	Farm houses	Traditional studios	Traditional hotels	Rented guest rooms	Traditional guest houses
Macedonia	7				1		6
Thrace	3	1			2		
Epirus	7	1			1		5
Thessaly	4			1			3
Continental Greece (Fokida & Fthiotida)	2					1	1
Peloponnesus	10	1		2	1	1	5
Ionian Islands	5	2	2				1
North-Eastern Aegean	5	1	2	1			1
Cyclades	8		1	4	2		1
Crete	9	4	4				1
TOTAL	60	10	9	8	7	2	24
Distribution %	100%	16,7%	15%	13,3%	11,7%	3,3%	40%

**Table 2.** Guest Inn's members – Distribution by region and type of accommodation

Source: [www.guestinn.com/en/allpans.php](http://www.guestinn.com/en/allpans.php)

### **'Land of Psiloritis', a geographical cluster in Crete**

The cluster 'Land of Psiloritis' has been created by businesses, bodies and agencies sharing a common aim, namely to preserve, develop and promote the area's special identity, using concerted actions which are focusing on the development and promotion of rural tourism products in the central mountainous area of Crete (see Map 1 in Appendix). The cluster has been established since 2005 with a formal structure as a limited company (AKOMM, 2008). Its stakeholders are from different branches / industries: accommodation, catering, farmers, food producers, trade, cultural agencies ([www.idinet.gr](http://www.idinet.gr)). The local action programme of the European Initiative Leader Plus contributed a financial back-up, covering particular operational expenses. The cluster's partners are forty four (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Partners of cluster ‘Land of Psiloritis’

Industry / Activity	Partners	
	Number	Distribution (%)
Restaurants/ Catering	11	25%
Accommodation	12	27.3%
Alternative tourism – Travel agency	1	2.3%
Food and beverage producers/ manufacturers	14	31.7%
Popular art, traditional, handicrafts etc.	5	11.4%
Development and culture agencies	1	2.3%
Total	44	100%

The main aim of the cluster is the establishment of a brand name for quality products and services. This task is performed with the know-how and experience transfer of the trans-regional cooperation. The accumulated experience within local and interregional networking has enhanced the adoption of a platform of share interests and mutual benefits. Hence, the cluster would be very beneficial to sustainable development and management of rural tourism businesses. The cluster’s main objective consists of offering a concrete expression and entrepreneurial form to all productive activities within the area of Psiloritis, by performing actions such as provide technical advices and consulting services to its partners (i.e. quality certification and marketing activities); promotion of local products; e-marketing and e-commerce; product development; and implementing innovative projects.



**Figure 2.** Psiloritis brand name

One of the cluster's main outcomes is the local brand name 'Psiloritis Crete' (see Figure 2). This is inspired from all the shepherd's houses (mitato) that a visitor can only meet in Psiloritis area

### **'Wine Roads of Northern Greece', a thematic and geographical cluster**

This cluster is an interregional partnership between the Wine Producers Association of the Northern Greece Vineyard and fifteen local development agencies ([www.wineroads.gr](http://www.wineroads.gr)). The Association was set up in 1993 as a not-for-profit non-stock corporation by the joint efforts of the thirteen members of the Association. Its aim was to support the vine-growing and wine-making tradition and give the opportunity to Greek and international visitors to discover the vineyards and wines of Northern Greece. In 2002, wineries from Epirus and Thrace joined the Association, and this new alliance was renamed as the 'Wine Producers Association of the Northern Greece Vineyard' with the trade name 'Wine Roads of Northern Greece' (see Map 2 in Appendix). Today, the forty five wineries that have joined forces within the association, have directed part of their corporate activity towards a set of common objectives. These include: (i) building up the image of the wines of Northern Greece Vineyards, and promoting their products; (ii) offering visitors an all-round wine tourism experience of vineyards and beautiful landscape; (iii) supporting Northern Greece's cultural heritage, by focusing primarily on grape growing and wine and on cultural activities; and (iv) participating in the formulation of general rules governing the relations between growers, wine-makers and

wine merchants, with a view to optimising cooperation, improving the quality of both products and services, and consumers' experience.

The alliance is actively involved in activities related to the above objectives. In 2007 the network grew to include selected hotels, restaurants, local produce and outdoor activities businesses. Hence, it has become a cluster, in order to collectively create a framework for the support of the region's cultural and gastronomic tradition. The project has received a financial back-up within the framework of the European Program Leader Plus. Its aim is to develop an integrated tourism rural product, a themed product having as a main concept the vineyard. A synoptic image of cluster's partners is shown into Table 4.

**Table 4.** Wine roads Cluster's Partners

Region Industry/ Activity	Central Macedonia	Western Macedonia	Eastern Macedonia	Epirus	Thessaly	TOTAL	
						Number	%
Wineries	20	11	6	3	5	45	26.9
Catering (Restaurants – Cafés)	25	14	6	3	1	49	29.4
Accommodation	21	11	8	10	1	51	30.5
Local products and handicraft producers	9	6	4	--	--	19	11.4
Recreational activities	1	1	--	1	---	3	1.8
TOTAL	76	43	24	17	7	167	100
Distribution %	45.5%	25.7%	14.4%	10.2%	4.2%	100	

In fact, wine routes are really a series of recommended itineraries selected for the traveller interested in visiting this region. Signage along the roads directs travellers to vineyards, wineries, stores stocked with regional culinary specialities, as well as churches, monasteries, and other points of interest. Recommended routes to visitors include, Olympian Gods, Epirus, Naoussa, Pella – Goumenissa, Lakes, Thessaloniki, Dionysus, and Halkidiki. Trips last three-four days and are flexible in that visitors can design their own holiday itinerary to experience the traditional culture. A trip along the 'Wine Roads' promises the visitor a great gastronomic experience.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Given that rural tourists are seeking a diversified and rewarding holiday experience, destinations effort should be put into identifying the opportunities for synergy and mutual reinforcement. The success of a destination in terms of tourists' satisfaction is a function of several interdependent components. Therefore, clusters/networks' activities are implemented into two main areas: (i) Management: networking contributes to strengthen backward economic linkages to reduce leakage; enhance collaboration; develop local understanding and knowledge of tourism; knowledge management; share information and expertise; innovate; and monitor the results achieved and adapt the management techniques accordingly; (ii) Marketing: provides techniques for conveying information, adapting products and moulding and monitoring customer behaviour (Fyall and Garrod, 2005). All variables marketing mix and communication tools, e.g. product development (value-chain and innovation); market research; market segmentation; branding; promotion; information services; relationship marketing would be positively influenced by the synergy created through coordinating them within one management team.

What are the main activities and achievements of the projects examined? Firstly, with regards to 'Guest Inn' network, its main achievement seems to be the establishment of a voluntary chain<sup>2</sup> with a brand name. A common branding is beneficial to better market positioning, joint marketing and promotional activities, efficient distribution (through a central distribution system), and operational standards. Various recreational activities are provided to guests through the network, such as rafting, trekking, wine roads, sea sports, horse riding, climbing, diving, bird watching, mountain bike, and skiing. Additionally, the network constitutes a means of establishing a quality scheme, thus enhancing rural tourism operators and contributing to the improvement of the quality services. Secondly, as for 'Land of Psiloritis' cluster, it should be stressed that the main outcome is the establishment of a brand name. This brand name is a component of a quality chart. Significant economic aspects of the brand name actions are: (i) to refer to products and services produced within the area; (ii) to enhance local enterprises and agencies to

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<sup>2</sup> A voluntary chain is a form of consortium of rural accommodation units. The establishments-members of this chain remain at the ownership of the operators, although they join their forces to achieve more efficient management and marketing.



collaborate in order to achieve sustainable management; and (iii) establish inter-linkages between local produce and gastronomy. The cluster's website has a banal approach; it is used as a notice board of posted events and has become a commercial tool for reaching potential visitors in search of services available in the area.

Finally, regarding the 'Wine Roads' cluster, its aim is to develop themed rural products in order to attract visitors in Northern Greece. Hence, it consists of interlinking, on one hand, professionals of accommodation, catering and local producers, and on the other, wineries and vineyards as tourist attractions. It should be noted that the selection of all partners for joining the cluster is based on specific qualitative criteria indicating a special seal of approval. Consequently, it is an initiative seeking to capitalise existing investments for projects already deployed; in other words, to trace new itineraries and to enlarge wine routes developed within the framework of European Initiative Leader II. These themed products interlink wineries and vineyard domains to tourism attractions, as well as to tourism-related business creating an added-value for professionals and rendering the region more attractive to potential visitors. Furthermore, through hosting and entertaining promotional events, the cluster plays a leading role in supporting the local wine, a key element in the Northern Greek vineyard. Cluster's activities include marking and signposting wine trails for tourists to follow, providing them with information on places of interest such as folklore museums, and archaeological and historical places. Other activities such as publishing books on local gastronomy, organising gastronomic and cultural events, festivals and other meetings aim at generating tourist visitation.

The formation of clusters/networks is routed in the desire of rural communities to create a more viable set of tourism opportunities. Benefits resulted from clustering /networking includes: sharing of ideas, knowledge transfer through expertise and resources exchange; skills enhancement (i.e. customer services practice); establishing a quality assurance scheme; establishing inter-linkages between local produce and gastronomy; and efficient marketing. From a business perspective, the above examined three alliances have produced significant benefits for those SMEs used to working in isolation, which now co-operate with other local businesses. Their alliances have been generating improved quality of services and enhanced the visibility of SMEs. Furthermore, they have created synergies: commercial collaboration is one of the most obvious outputs, as well as voluntary arrangement of business referrals and joint marketing under their banner. Through the partnership, rural

operations are encouraged to operate in a progressive form of business network (cluster) in order to work for their own interests (improved sales and profits) and for the visitors' benefits (improved product/experience). From the foregoing analysis it can be seen that the three Greek projects have the three basic features as identified by Roberts & Hall (2001): all three (i) have partners sharing common objectives and mutual benefits; (ii) create synergy between the partners concerning activities carried out in local and regional level; and (iii) enhance the previous actions. Within this clustering framework, the activities undertaken are into management and marketing fields, and some themed products – wine routes and gastronomic trails - have been developed. These products include coupling between culture (monuments), agricultural activities, local products (wine) and gastronomy, leisure activities in order to achieve synergy. These activities are common to the networked areas. Another achievement of the examined projects is the introduction of innovative procedures concerning the promotion of rural tourism business, the improvement of supply, knowledge transfer; experience exchange and joint marketing actions.

However, our study suggests the problems are there. The fragmented nature and predominance of very small tourism enterprises and the weak relational ties between actors makes it difficult for an industry network to be self-supporting. The clusters offer some solutions to some of the immediate needs of the participating businesses, but the difficulty is keeping the members motivated for the long-term objectives, e.g. growth. It often seems that the short-term results are valued more than the long-term prospects. Experience has also shown that one of the major issues is encouraging local businesses to look at the long-term economic development implications rather than focusing on the short-term benefits. Another problem is the retention of skills and the quality of the local supply chain. The local industry is characterised by relative weak and unstable relations. Since the cluster's main aim is to generate businesses and market diversification, the value-chain needs to be established and enriched. Enormous efforts have been made by coordinators to keep members interested by contributing to the cluster activities, which in a way stressed the importance of a joint effort. Lack of leadership and lack of shared commitment and enthusiasm was also evident. One of the key findings of our study is that there is a need for strong leadership in order to strengthen further relational ties between members. Clusters/networks lack research information to set and monitor realistic targets, mostly they do not coordinate visitor management programmes, and they do not involve local businesses in the process of setting and achieving agreed

targets. Last but not least, the examined projects do not take full advantage of the tools provided by ICTs, mainly the Web 2.0. Clusters have to address the above problems and face the challenges; otherwise they will have dysfunctions resulting in ineffectiveness (Novelli et al, 2006).

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study of the three projects has shown that these alliances can help in the innovation process of rural tourism businesses, and can contribute to regional development, through the simple results produced by network activities. The study's policy implications and recommendations are twofold, as follows. Firstly, two crucial issues and a major challenge suggested by related research have been confirmed: (i) it is imperative to adopt a strategic approach to networking/clustering in order to consistently ensure higher standards of product delivery at destinations and to appeal to ever more demanding customers. This approach effectively conserves and enhances the special intrinsic qualities and character of 'place' at a destination, both for its own sake and as a core element of its attractiveness to visitors; (ii) there is also a requirement for efficient management of local clusters (i.e., leadership and clear rules of conduct). Within this framework, a much-improved research effort and research-based market segmentation are needed to provide management information for decision-making in order to achieve desirable marketing outcomes in a rural tourism context; (iii) the challenge is to create a customer focus bounded by knowledge management and driven by innovation and personal service.

Secondly, the study highlights those factors which are considered crucial for success and which influence the effectiveness of clusters in rural tourism businesses. These are: (i) participation of both public and private sectors is essential. It is estimated that the optimum route to effective management and marketing lies somewhere between the resource responsibility and orientation of the public sector and the asset responsibility and market orientation of the private sector; (ii) a clear cluster structure (relationships and roles of members) is required and a common platform of interests should be developed. There is also a need to consider informal relationships among local stakeholders; (iii) the characteristics of partners, in terms of their expertise and professionalism and networking ability have important ramifications for the cluster's cohesiveness and the development of shared views and understandings of problems; (iv) additionally, shared commitment, collective action, and

continuity must be strong features of the alliance; (v) the cluster's geographical/spatial qualities have significant implications for collaboration, harmony and agenda setting in the alliance. It is suggested that a theme (e.g. wine or other distinct local produce, experience quality) may be the driving force to attain improved outcomes.

Furthermore, there is a need for a customer focus driven by innovation and personal service. This will be a major challenge for rural tourism business. It is suggested that networking and clustering are efficient tools providing with opportunities for energy and innovation, and networking activities should be a prerequisite for rural tourism policies. Where these tools are appropriately implemented, taking into account all the above-mentioned factors, they would have a significant contribution into rural tourism industry competitiveness. These business alliances could operate more efficiently at local destination level, having a comprehensive approach; in other words consider the local economic development components / factors (Hall, 2005), e.g. maximum of local stakeholders must be connected up (i.e. local marketing networks and management clusters); attract external resources (i.e. finance, skills and technology); and reach the customers outside the region (i.e. use of ICTs). Obviously rural tourism industry should be obliged to adopt and implement tools and practices such as clustering and networking to attain maturity; the aim being for related businesses to be adapted in new over-particular global marketplace.

However, it should be stressed that our study encompasses some limitations. It is an exploratory research, the method used is a case study and further testing with other cases would confirm and highlight contribution and success factors. The present study tended to describe rural tourism cluster's structure and activities. Findings cannot be generalized to any specific project or geographical area. Further investigation is needed to make it more robust. More extensive empirical work is needed to investigate the dimensions, properties and aspects of business networks. Hence, there is a need to understand the dynamics of clusters/networks and to develop appropriate strategies for their management.

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## APPENDIX

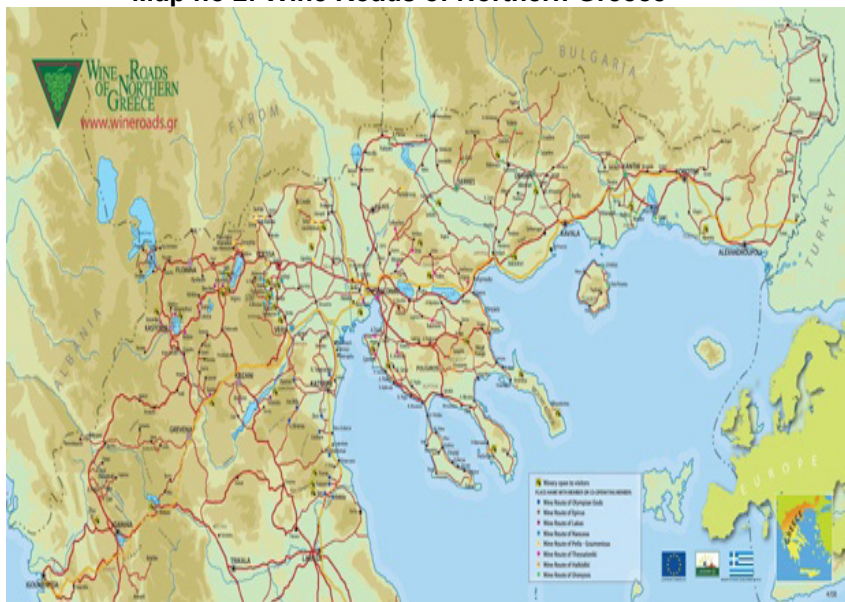
**Map no 1. Greece and Crete**





Sources: <http://maps.google.com/maps> and <http://www.thehotel.gr/map-of-crete/>

## Map no 2: Wine Roads of Northern Greece



Source: [www.wineroads.gr/eng/index.php#](http://www.wineroads.gr/eng/index.php#)



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## MUSEUMS, MARKETING AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE TOBACCO MUSEUM OF KAVALA

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*In the contemporary era there exists an interest in the ability and know-how of experts to use culture and tourism as tools for management and marketing. Museums and historical attractions invent various strategies in order to create sources of income, encouraging economic activity and inducing particular benefits for cities. The main objective of this paper is the pinpointing of the role and importance of the Tobacco Museum of Kavala and the way that this can contribute to the enforcement of the image and development of the city in the context of a Strategic Pilot (Place) Marketing Plan, having the Museum as its core.*

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**Keywords:** *Tourism development, Cultural development, Tobacco Museum of Kavala, Strategic Pilot Marketing Plan, Field Research*

### INTRODUCTION: CULTURE, TOURISM AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The designation of culture as a factor of great importance for urban development has become a very interesting scientific and research field, mostly in the last three decades, in the USA and Europe (Kong, 2000; Barnett, 2001). The development and implementation of specific cultural and tourist policies and activities has been related to the necessity of



European cities to deal with various socio-economic changes that affect their internal and external environment at a micro- and macroeconomic level (Deffner and Metaxas, 2003). The implementation of cultural policies as tools for the development of cities could be expanded in various economic sectors, such as tourism, sports, leisure, arts and the mass media (Bianchini, 1993), creating a strong cultural industry which would include a variety of activities, such as fashion and design, architecture, cultural heritage, local history, entertainment, and generally the identity and image of the city in the external environment (Kong, 2000). In most cases, 'culture' has been widely used in various initiatives concerning the reconstruction/revitalisation of cities and especially their development through the use of specific strategies and methods (Alden and da Rosa Pires, 1996; Carriere and Demaziere, 2002; Grodach, 2002; McCann, 2002; Van Aalst and Boogaarts, 2002).

The cultural development specialists of cities should focus on how to 'use culture as a tool' through management processes by identifying the weaknesses and the strengths of the cities' cultural environment, focusing on the analysis of each field of implementation action –aiming at creating each time and for each field the appropriate conditions for development— and at the same time assessing the anticipated benefits from these actions to the cultural and tourism development of the cities.

## **THE ROLE AND MARKETING OF MUSEUMS**

Ginsburgh and Mairesse (1997), in their effort to define the term 'museum', have discovered that the common element between the existing definitions is related to the kind of activities that a museum can develop and which ultimately create the differences between the museums and other organisations. These activities are preservation/protection, research and communication. Van Aalst and Boogaarts (2002) believe that the reassessment of the role of the museums is developing in parallel with the changes in museum management. From this perspective, museums — as organizations — act more like exhibition places, while their basic activities (mentioned above) are given a lower priority. Therefore, the inner character of museums as organisations and 'special environments' presents a much more complicated structure — including the 'commercial activity' aspect (Van Aalst and Boogaarts, 2002) — and in order to identify their role in the cultural and economic development of the cities, a much more specialised analysis is needed.

The *role* of museums is very important because they support cities in promoting themselves as cultural centres in the internal (citizens and

businesses) and the external (visitors and investors) target markets, fulfilling their demands and expectations. Based on this, it could be said that museums could act as 'tools for the cities' regarding their development process. However, the extent of their effectiveness depends on the ability to plan and implement the appropriate strategies and development plans by the decision makers operating within the environment of the cities.

In the case of museums, the contribution of *marketing* is based on adopting the assumption that museums are 'goods' in relation to certain target markets, satisfying their needs, demands and expectations and also contributing to the economic and cultural development of cities. Introducing marketing to the museums is related to the attempt to address the following four factors: a) the extended international development of museums, b) the search for economic resources, c) the competitive environment between the museums, and d) the need of the museums to know better their visitors. Each of these factors is related to the development of specific strategies and actions in the context of an overall marketing plan working towards a museum fulfilling – within a certain time period – its objectives at a micro- and macroeconomic level. Based on this rationale, the necessity for determining and satisfying the goals of museums – as organisations – generates the development and implementation of specific strategies and actions such as: searching for potential target markets, categorising them according to their characteristics, defining the museum's image and developing a marketing mixed plan (product, price, place, promotion) [Deffner and Metaxas, 2008].

In recent decades, the idea of museums as imposing buildings with extended and tiresome exhibitions has begun to fade. Nowadays, small-scale museums that offer flexible and alternative exhibitions are being particularly developed. Moreover, they have a classic educational character and offer entertaining activities. An important additional factor in the contemporary perspective of museums is the change from more institutional exhibitions to those that create social, creative and participatory experiences which are more approachable for the wider audience (young people), organised tours that include interaction between the visitors and the exhibits, brochures and leaflets, information, maps, guides and copies of their exhibits, coffee shops and restaurants inside the museum and a specially trained personnel, 'packages' offering better prices for families and tourists, the location and architecture of the building, and carefully designed websites on the internet.

Most marketing plans that promote museums include a case study in order to identify and analyse the characteristics of the audience. At the first stage of the plan, research, in the form of questionnaires addressed to the citizens and visitors of the museum, leads to an analysis of the market that the museum is targeted at. It is important for the success of this kind of research, to distinguish between visitors and visits so as not to reach false conclusions. The most important conclusion drawn by research into museum marketing is that marketing should not be excluded by the rest of the museum's activities but it should be included in its overall management. The most successful examples of museum marketing come from museums that have adopted this approach (McLean, 1994).

## **TOBACCO MUSEUMS – THE CITY OF KAVALA**

### **Tobacco museums**

Tobacco museums, due to their nature and particularity, are considered to be a special case amongst museums. Their goal is to preserve the history of tobacco cultivation in an area and encourage the audience's consciousness regarding the importance of the economic, political and social impacts of the tobacco industry on the history of a place. On a global scale their number is limited, although tobacco cultivation, especially in the USA and in areas such as North and South Carolina, Florida and Ohio, had represented an important part of the economy. In Europe, a few tobacco museums can be found in France (Bergerac Tobacco Museum), Slovenia (Slovenia Tobacco Museum), Finland (The Tobacco Museum in Jacobstad) and Sweden (Tobacco and Match Museum in Stockholm). There are also a few more, smaller and less-organised – but particularly interesting— tobacco museums all over the world that are poorly promoted and supported on the internet.

### **Kavala: 'The Tobacco City of the North'**

The city of Kavala, due to its proximity to areas where the rare burley 'basmas' had been cultivated, and to the seaport, where large commercial ships were hosted, was where the commercial exploitation of the Balkan tobacco in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was concentrated. After 1950, with the importation of the burley 'Virginia', the economic status of Kavala in relation to the tobacco trade, faced a period of economic depression which was connected to the entry of multinational funds. The city then began to grow as a large regional capital, creating an important

scientific community and developing remarkable cultural activities (Tobacco Museum of Kavala).

Today's vision of Kavala as 'The Tobacco City of the North' is directly connected to its rich historical and cultural heritage as well as its geographical position. The most important questions are related to the actual dynamics of these visions. These dynamics refer to increasing the city's competitiveness, enhancing local development and effectively managing its inner potential. The Tobacco Museum is directly connected to the history, heritage and development of the city. In this context, three scenarios have been examined which are related to visiting/staying in Kavala and also visiting the Tobacco Museum. Those three *scenarios* are: 'Going' (1), 'Passing' (2) or 'Staying' (3), according to the question of whether Kavala is a city that people choose to 'pass through' or 'stay in for a few days'. The result was that a visit to the museum is more likely to happen when people choose to stay in Kavala for a few days. Moreover, the possibility of visiting Kavala only for the Tobacco Museum reduces as the distance between a visitor's home location and the city of Kavala increases.

A third relationship that has been examined is the one of a '*visitor of special interest*' with the possibility of visiting the museum. The term 'visitor of special interest' refers to the visitor that has a particular and special interest in visiting the Tobacco Museum. This special interest originates from the museum's unique character. Therefore, visitors who could be researchers or interested in the museum's history or be personally involved with tobacco constitute the 'target markets of special interest' which are very keen on visiting and knowing the museum. In this case, the greater and more specific the interest, the higher the possibility of visiting the museum in the context of a few days' visit to the city or a special visit to the museum. Furthermore, the greater the interest of a potential visitor, the lower the possibility of not visiting the museum because of the distance from the original location becomes. That leads to one more interesting relationship that can be examined, the one of attracting visitors from long distances, who have an important reason to visit the museum and use Kavala for accommodation. In other words, visitors to Kavala and the museum that come from a long distance are the ones that stay in the city for a short period of time.

## THE TOBACCO MUSEUM OF KAVALA

### Defining the vision of the Tobacco Museum of Kavala

The vision of the Tobacco Museum is co-identified with the vision of Kavala. Their connection is based on the local history, tradition and values. What really has to be considered is the necessity of adopting, planning and implementing specific development strategies such as a Strategic City Marketing Plan of Kavala, which will promote the valuable cultural, historical and social elements of the city and of the Tobacco Museum. It is essential for the museum that its vision is based on its unique character combined with specific development goals and actions. Moreover, the museum's geographical location is important regarding the extent of its dynamics and competitiveness, in relation to respective, or the same thematic, museums or destinations, to be potentially defined. The vision for the Tobacco Museum should include the dimensions of uniqueness, historicity-tradition and modernisation. It could be stated that:

The Tobacco Museum is a unique and historical museum organisation with a contemporary profile and identity in the European cultural area.
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## **SWOT Analysis of the Tobacco Museum**

The analysis of the environment of Kavala's Tobacco Museum could help in defining the museum's distinctive strengths in its present status and in predicting basic development weaknesses in its internal environment. Furthermore, this analysis creates the ability to stress potential development opportunities and identify the threats from the external environment of the organisation that are related to issues of its development, long-lasting viability and effective operation. Table 1 shows the analysis of the museum's internal and external environment that defines its present status (2007-08), and the difficulties of its development.

**Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Kavala's Tobacco Museum**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relative proximity to Thessaloniki</li> <li>• Uniqueness of the museum concerning the exhibition of the commercial processing of Eastern tobacco</li> <li>• Prominence of the social history of Kavala and the wider area of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace</li> <li>• Uniqueness and variety of the exhibits</li> <li>• Modern and experiential presentation of methods and techniques</li> <li>• Research activity</li> <li>• Dynamic website</li> <li>• Experienced personnel</li> <li>• Development of a library (books, journals, documents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small number of visitors</li> <li>• Uncertainties concerning the museum's building</li> <li>• Lack of significant actions to promote the museum</li> <li>• Lack of signposts in the city</li> <li>• Inefficient cooperation between local factors</li> <li>• Lack of autonomous/private resources</li> <li>• Ineffective supporting structure (e.g. lack of flexible hours)</li> <li>• Lack of a common vision from the local society for the museum's development</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrichment of the museum with exhibits from organisations inside and outside the country</li> <li>• Cooperation with tobacco museums from other countries in order to create networks</li> <li>• Enhancement of the research activity</li> <li>• Participation in Greek and international exhibitions</li> <li>• Creation of a museum shop</li> <li>• Digitisation of the database</li> <li>• Participation in European projects</li> <li>• Ability to attract subsidies from various associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long distance from Athens</li> <li>• Smoking as a politically incorrect activity</li> <li>• Lack of strategic planning in tourism development</li> <li>• Not being incorporated in tourist packages of the wider area</li> <li>• Low government subsidies</li> </ul>

*Source: Strategic Pilot Marketing Plan of Kavala's Tobacco Museum, 2008*

## Field research on the Tobacco Museum<sup>i</sup>

The case of Kavala's Tobacco Museum constitutes a special and unique case. This analysis uses data from primary field research in the city's environment, focusing on two of the most significant groups, each one with its own dynamics and character<sup>ii</sup>. The *target groups* of the



research were: a) citizens of Kavala (n=149), b) businesses (n=50), and c) visitors (n=78) to the Tobacco Museum. The first two surveys were in the form of questionnaires and personal interviews and lasted from December, 2007 until February, 2008. The method chosen was the one of *scheduled*, not random, *interviews* in order to: a) gather as many questionnaires as possible, b) be able to clarify unclear questions, c) be able to adjust the questions according the interviewee's profile, d) avoid 'quick' and 'not thinking' answers, and e) have the appropriate available time to complete the questionnaires. Each interview lasted from 15 to 25 minutes, depending on the time that each interviewee could spend, and they all took place in the city of Kavala. The third survey lasted from early December, 2007 until the beginning of May, 2008, so as to include the Christmas and Easter vacations. The sample consisted of 78 people who had visited the Tobacco Museum; 52.6% (41 people) of them were men and 47.4% (37 people) women. Their average age was 44 years old.

With reference to the *citizens*, they estimate that the most important reasons for visiting the museum are the variety and significance of the exhibits, the perception of the museum as a part of the city's cultural heritage and the cultural/historical character of the Museum. These three main factors clearly connect the citizens with the history and cultural heritage of Kavala. The Museum is a part of the overall cultural heritage of the city and its existence is considered significant for many citizens. An additional task that was requested from the citizens was to define the image of the museum as this appears in its external environment. A percentage greater than 40% stressed its distinctive character and uniqueness, two elements that are unknown to the wider audience. This evaluation reveals *two important parameters*: a) the citizens are aware of the museum's dynamics but also acknowledge its basic weakness, which is the lack of its recognition, and b) there is a weakness in making the museum's identity and image known to its external environment. Another issue that the citizens were requested to evaluate was the significance of a potential promotion action regarding the museum's image in the context of a Strategic Pilot (Place) Marketing Plan. The citizens of Kavala acknowledge the need for a specific strategy which could act as a development tool not only for the museum, as a cultural product and organisation, but also for the overall cultural promotion of the city's image.

With reference to *businesses* (cultural and tourist), the question was to evaluate: a) the cultural elements, and b) the Tobacco Museum in the development of Kavala. The purpose of this question was to separate the Tobacco Museum and its contribution to the development of Kavala from

the cultural heritage of the city. That way, it is possible to accentuate the Museum's dynamics which are either subsumed by the overall cultural profile of the area or hold a decisive role. From the research, it becomes clear that businesses of the sample, tourist and cultural<sup>iii</sup>, perceive culture as a very substantial variable in the development of the city and emphasise the factors that comprise the cultural, tourist, social and economic development of the city. On the other hand, the Museum's role is not hypotonic since its evaluation is above average and the Museum's contribution, especially to the overall cultural and tourism development of the city, is evident. The most substantial result is that the city's businesses recognise the importance of culture as a driving development force with the Tobacco Museum as a main factor. This supposition creates a wider framework on its own for adopting, planning, evaluating and implementing policies targeted on the Tobacco Museum, the development and role enhancement of which constitute a major necessity in the cultural entity.

Another issue that businesses were requested to evaluate was their own role in enhancing the effort to promote the cultural image of the city and the Tobacco Museum within the external environment. The results are unsettling. Cultural and tourist businesses of the city do not seem to substantially contribute to the effort to promote and support the cultural image of the city and thus the Tobacco Museum. The reason is mostly the lack of cooperation with the local authority actors and the people responsible for the operation of the museum. The role of businesses should be enhanced, with the specific keynotes of contributing to the development of the city and the museum. The overall planning should not be characterised as random but organised, with distinct priorities. Therefore, the involved groups of the city ought to proceed rapidly in reformulating its development goals and clarifying the vision for Kavala in order to be clearly orientated towards specific policies, actions and activities. Finally, the city's businesses were requested to evaluate the role and contribution of the local administration factors in relation to the city's cultural promotion and the Tobacco Museum's image. Businesses believe that local factors make a big effort concerning the city's participation in EC projects and that a specific schedule for promoting the image of both the city and the Tobacco Museum is being followed. Regarding specific actions to promote the museum's image and also their active participation in introducing a specialised actor, businesses estimate that the role of local administration factors is bigger than that relating to issues surrounding the overall development of the city.

The evaluation by businesses ends with their opinion on the needs-policies demanded for the harmonic and normal operation of the Tobacco Museum. The direct conclusion, and in accordance with the responses from the citizens on the same question, is that there must be a clear and common orientation mostly towards the external factors of the tobacco museum's environment in order for them to contribute to an overall strategically planned effort to enhance the dynamic of this special cultural product. As in the case of citizens, businesses also support a specific combination of factors on a macro- and microeconomic level.

According to the *Tobacco Museum's visitors*, the city of Kavala has a very attractive character with a particular cultural dynamic, while the existing information on the city and its characteristics offers the ability to get to know it well enough and also stimulate the interest of potential visitors. Moreover, the fact that visitors perceive the city as an attractive destination enhances the opinion that the Museum could also benefit from the city's acknowledgement as a tourist destination. It is also evident that further promotion of the Museum and its inclusion in the schedule of the city's visitors provides Kavala with one more competitive advantage, the Museum's uniqueness. A crucial question for the visitors to the Tobacco Museum was the evaluation of the criteria for visiting it. From the research it can be concluded that all the factors that are related to the museum and its environment and reflect its dynamics (particularity, significance of exhibits and cultural character) constitute the most important reasons to visit it. Specifically, this structure of the museum's features stimulates the visitors' curiosity. A second element directly connected to the museum's environment is its actual image as perceived by its visitors. The most impressive characteristic during their visit to the Museum was the hospitality of the Museum's staff, which concentrates the highest average of the evaluation, a factor that was stressed by almost the total number of visitors. Linked to the previous factor is the level and quality of the tour, which was also identified by the total number of interviewees. Other important factors were also the amount and variety of the exhibits, the specialised personnel, the excellent preservation of machines and historical sources and the detailed records of the exhibits' history. The last factor also reveals the importance and uniqueness of the museum's archive.

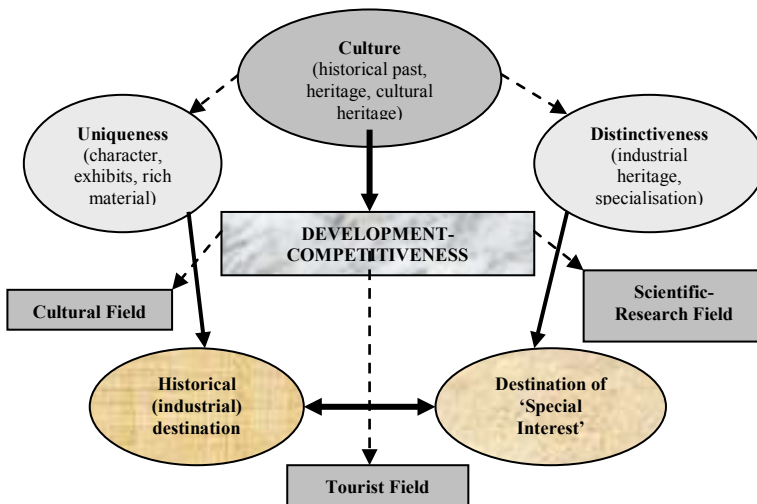
### **The Tobacco Museum as a 'final product'**

The definition of the 'final product' takes into account all the primary field research with particular focus on the findings of the research on

visitors. The image of the museum based on its particularities, its tradition and the evaluation of the primary research by all the groups-factors activated in the museum's and the city's environment will be defined as a 'final product'. Then the museum's image 'as a good' will be connected to the market-targets of the museum, with the distribution channels of its image, with the means of promoting its image and the modulation of the appropriate strategies and alternative scenarios. Culture is specified as the main keynote of development/competitiveness of the museum, based on two very important *parameters*: the museum's uniqueness (character, exhibits, rich and well preserved material, etc.) at a national, European and international level that allows – under circumstances of strategic planning – its effective use. The second parameter, which stems from the first one, is the museum's distinctiveness (industrial heritage, specialisation of exhibits) which allows the orientation towards the promotion of the museum's image in specialised target markets with specific interest. Figure 1 shows the museum's image as a 'final product'.

Each one of the two dimensions in Figure 1 is connected to the respective characterisation of the museum as an 'historical (mostly industrial) destination' and as a 'destination of special interest'. Those two characterisations are complementary to each other due to the museum's character. The overall development of the museum, based on culture as a main keynote, focuses on the cultural, tourist and scientific-research field, where the potential target markets of the museum's image lay.

**Figure 1.** The Tobacco Museum as a 'Final Product'



*Source: Strategic Pilot Marketing Plan of Kavala's Tobacco Museum, 2008*

## Definition of potential target markets of the Tobacco Museum

The proposed target markets refer to the *three levels of analysis*, tourist, cultural and of special interest (scientific, research) and more importantly they are proposed according to the museum's overall image. This means that they could be differentiated or/and modified if and when it is considered appropriate by the *Special Group of Planning and Development* (SGPD)<sup>iv</sup>. Specifically, target markets will be defined based on two major categories. The first one concerns the three levels of analysis, while the second refers to the geographical level, national and European or international.

The three levels of analysis are geographically located not only *at a national but also at a European and international level*. This means that the museum as a 'good' can also be addressed in a wider geographical context, but always within the framework of an appropriately and effectively planned supporting procedure, especially after 'winning' the national market. At this point, something very important should be noted. The reason, why the European/international part of the analysis is used, is the museum's uniqueness-distinctiveness and not its existing dynamics. This needs to be made clear because the comparative advantage of the museum does not result either from the city of Kavala, as a particular

dynamic tourist destination, nor from the Tobacco Museum itself. It results from the fact that at a global level the number of tobacco museums is limited and that allows for to a certain extent — the introduction, distribution and promotion of the Tobacco Museum's image throughout wider geographical markets.

## **Development of distribution channels**

The distribution channels are of great importance because they constitute, as in traditional business marketing, the means of disseminating — distributing the final product into the market — in this case, the image of the Tobacco Museum into its external environment. The main task is to distribute the museum's image in an effective, direct way and as soon as possible with complete information given to the final recipients. According to the analysis so far, this study suggests three basic distribution channels: a) Tourism — Culture in a national and European/international level, b) Channel of Special Interest in a national and European/international level, and c) Channel 'Tobacco Museums' in a European/international level.

In all three channels, the SGPD is responsible for the overall planning and its effectiveness. As mentioned above, the SGPD is also responsible for the overall planning and organisation of the Strategic Pilot Marketing Plan of the Tobacco Museum. It could be said that the SGPD is the principle manager and auditor of the whole project.

## **Methods for promoting the image of the Tobacco Museum**

According to Haider (1992), advertising is the most basic factor for promoting the development strategies of local economies. Kotler et al. (1999:179) share the same opinion, while other experts mention brochures and guides (tourist-cultural) [Getz and Sailor, 1993; Molina and Esteban, 2006] and others the creation of logos (Burton and Easingwood, 2006). All these examples are important tools for the effective promotion and support of the image. The SGPD is also responsible for planning and evaluating all the means of promotion for each of the *three levels of analysis* of the Tobacco Museum (tourism, culture, special interest). The focus lies in the latter, which includes the proposed means that focus exclusively on the enhancement of the dynamic and uniqueness of the Tobacco Museum, which is the objective for the entire promotional effort.

## The proposed Marketing Model of the '8ps'

In the case of the Tobacco Museum, two basic marketing models have been used, mostly in the business world. The first model is widely known as the model of '4ps' (Kotler and Armstrong, 1986/2007) [product, price, place and promotion]. The second model is referred to as the '8ps' model (product, partnership, people, packaging, programme, place, price, promotion) [Morrison, 1989/2001]. After evaluating them, this research concluded that the second model is more suitable for the case of Kavala's Tobacco Museum:

**PRODUCT (GOOD):** The final product is the image of Kavala's Tobacco Museum through its historicalness and uniqueness. The definition of the entire promotional procedure and its effectiveness are based on: a) the clarification of the museum's vision in relation to the development of the city, b) the determination of specific objectives, c) the anticipated benefits from the implementation of the actions, d) the implementation of the SWOT analysis, e) the clear identification of the distinctive characteristics of the Tobacco Museum and Kavala as a whole, and f) the definition of the target markets to which the museum and Kavala are addressed. The implementation of specific research into markets and their segmentation mostly at a national level is considered a very important procedure.

**PARTNERSHIPS:** After determining all the above, the SGPD's second important step is to create effective synergies between the groups involved in the process. The development of networks-synergies between the groups should be based on providing full information and provoking discussions aimed at the best possible use of the strengths of the Tobacco Museum and Kavala. The *levels of cooperation* in the case of the Tobacco Museum and Kavala are three: 1<sup>st</sup> level: Internal synergies (Local), 2<sup>nd</sup> level: External synergies (Regional, National) and 3<sup>rd</sup> level: External synergies (European/International).

**PEOPLE:** In the process of marketing for the Tobacco Museum, special attention should be paid not only to the existing but also to the potential human resources. This attention is defined by three basic factors, management of human resources, information and control, evaluation of resources and international environment.

**PACKAGING:** This procedure refers entirely to planning and choosing specific 'packages' which include all the elements (local goods) which the Tobacco Museum and Kavala should support and promote in the competitive national, European or/and international market. The most important thing in this process is the process itself, because it encloses the

thematic core of the provided package (tourism, culture, tobacco museum, events, etc.) while it defines the characteristics/components of the package, the potential target markets to which it refers, the combined actions that could be developed and the basic keynotes of planning.

**PROGRAMMING:** The basis of programming is the 'Available Time' of a vacation, a visit, a special event, an action of any kind and its dimension is Organisational. In reality, it is mostly referred to as 'Effective Time Management' since tourist packages should be designed and programmed in a specific way so as to provide temporal and organisational possibility for the potential target markets, in the specific-limited available time of their vacation, to choose further tourist services.

**PRICING:** Pricing concerns all the services provided by the city of Kavala and the Tobacco Museum. This is a general definition of the pricing procedure. There is clearly a more specific definition which refers to pricing special packages, tourist, cultural and packages of the Tobacco Museum towards potential target markets. The SGPD should define the final cost estimation for each provided package/service, taking into account a very significant combination or relation— the one of the price and the quality of the offered good. This issue is very important because it is directly connected to the strategies predefined for each target market in order to effectively accomplish their attraction. Lastly, this study supports that there is a third dimension of pricing which refers to the overall promotion of the image of the Tobacco Museum as a distinctive and unique cultural good. In this case, this study suggests the creation of a mini budget for 1-2 years for actions concerning the support of the image of the Tobacco Museum through means of promotion.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The development course of the Tobacco Museum depends, at least for now, on the *city of Kavala* and its development. Historical elements and a rich cultural and industrial heritage strengthen this result. In other words, the Tobacco Museum constitutes the identification of the relation between the city and the history of tobacco, which is diffused in the museum's environment. In this phase, the dynamic of the Tobacco Museum is limited not only within a geographical range, but also within a range of target markets. For example, there are other museums in Greece whose dynamic is remarkable and their competitiveness does not depend on the development of the city they are located in. The Tobacco Museum does not belong in this category.



The Tobacco Museum bases its dynamic on the *uniqueness and distinctiveness* of its character. The research on the visitors to the museum supports this opinion because the rich collection of the museum's exhibits is one of the most important reasons for visiting it. Furthermore, the fact that the Tobacco Museum is one of a few that exist at an international level should not mean that its dynamic stems from this particular distinctiveness. Its dynamic should be first strengthened at a regional and national level, and afterwards be recognised at a European and international level.

The distinctiveness of the Tobacco Museum is simultaneously an advantage and a disadvantage, because it is limited to target markets of special interest (scientists, researchers, etc.). This is crucial, because the overall effort of promoting and strengthening the image of the Tobacco Museum at a European and international level should be first based on attracting specific target markets at a national level through specific actions, which should also become sources of information and distribution of the good on a wider scale.

This research concludes with *three main levels of analysis*: tourism, culture and the level of special interest. In contrast to tourism, where the tourism development of Kavala starts with the city itself, the levels of culture and special interest – because they refer to the wider tourism development of the city– start from the development of the Tobacco Museum. This proposal is considered to be innovative because it aims at enhancing the Museum's dynamic, strengthening the local cultural feeling and defining the important and substantial role that it could, and should, play in the overall economic and cultural development and competitiveness of the city.

The proposed *marketing model* (8ps) is considered representative for the case of the Tobacco Museum and of Kavala. The goal is to specify all the appropriate actions for each development phase and to define the groups that would participate in the whole development process. This model, as well as the 'Critical Path' model, is a tool/guide for planning and developing the activities, not only for the Tobacco Museum but also for the city of Kavala.

Lastly, the composition of the *Special Group of Planning and Development* is proposed. Its formation is necessary because there could not be any action of development without the planning, the evaluation, the programming, the selection, the control and the management of all the available resources. This group would be required to take this responsibility, and, within the scope of the vision for the Tobacco Museum using as keynotes the know-how, the specialisation and the full

information, it will achieve an effective outcome for the development of the Tobacco Museum and of the city.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Strategic Place Marketing Plan constitutes an innovative action for the Greek reality. The innovative character of this action stems from the perception of the Tobacco Museum of Kavala as a 'good' to be analysed and defined through its distinctive characteristics, enriched with various others components which may possibly result from the analysis of the international experience. Furthermore, the definition of the 'line of production' of the specific museum that is related to the roles, the responsibilities, and the obligations taken by the responsible factors involved in the proposed action (public, local or regional factors, business world, organizations, citizens, etc.) is very important. Moreover, to whom the museum is addressed should be defined, as well as who is concerned, the pricing policy, the distribution and transfer of the 'image' and the strategic actions for the promotion/projection and support of the image of the museum. The aim for the Tobacco Museum is to be attractive and competitive in the existing and potential target markets and also to effectively contribute to the overall development and competitiveness of the city of Kavala.

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## ENDNOTES

1. The research programme 'Strategic Pilot Marketing Plan of Kavala's Tobacco Museum' took place from October, 2007 until May, 2008 and was undertaken by the Laboratory of Tourism Planning, Research and Policy of the Department of Planning and Regional Development (DPRD) of the University of Thessaly. The head of the research was the Director of the Laboratory, Alex Deffner, and the research group consisted of Theodore Metaxas, Kleanthis Syrakoulis and Theodora Papatheochari
2. The importance of market research has been stressed by many specialists and most of the times it concerns the tourism and cultural international market examining the trends and the characteristics of target markets, while in the urban environment it focuses on defining the strengths and weaknesses of each destination contributing to planning and choosing strategies and

- alternative scenarios (Jansen-Verbeke and Van Rekom, 1996; Van Limburg, 1998; Garrod et al. 2002)
3. It is important that the cultural contribution is very positively evaluated by businesses that – due to their nature – are aware of cultural identity, thus their opinion is of particular weight in this research.
  4. According to the ‘Strategic Pilot Marketing Plan of Kavala’s Tobacco Museum’ (2008), the structure of this group should include local administration, factors working exclusively on the museum, specialised staff in marketing and public relations, businesses and citizens’ representatives. Their number should not exceed 10.

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## STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS ON MANAGEMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS—CREATING A THEORETICAL MODEL AND EMPIRICAL TESTING AMONG PROTECTED AREAS, MANAGERS AND MAYORS

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*Authorities who manage protected areas (places with unique natural assets) are responsible for nature conservation, sustainable development and the local population's quality of life. Accordingly, they should present innovative ideas for relaxation and recreation with an eye toward protecting nature. This has not yet been accomplished in Slovenia. The qualitative research in this paper is performed to develop a model for authorities who manage protected areas, particularly with regard to the management of stakeholder impacts. Results from two of the four groups of experts interviewed are presented in this paper.*

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**Keywords:** *protected area, management authority, stakeholders, marketing*

### INTRODUCTION

Slovenia is a small country surrounded by Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. Approximately two million people live in Slovenia's 20.273 km<sup>2</sup> area; 12% of which is protected and about 80% is managed.

Our research includes all nine protected areas (PAs) under management authority—one national park, three regional parks, four landscape parks, and one natural reserve, which represents about 80% of all PAs in Slovenia; as well as three PAs in the process of establishment without management authority—two landscapes and one regional park. Slovenian PA territory covers about 12% of Slovenia's land mass.<sup>i</sup> About two-thirds of the PAs were established by the state, while the remainder



by municipalities. PAs are generally located in rural environments that contain about 2% of all Slovenian inhabitants within their borders.

Principal problems facing Slovenia's PAs include insufficient management of stakeholder impacts, communication and collaboration gaps and a gap between the marketing mix and consumer orientation.

The purposes of our study are to investigate the management of customers' (visitors and locals) impact on PAs along with organizational directives for sustainable development and to investigate Slovenia's PAs as products within a marketing framework given existing consumer behavior. Finally, we create a model for all Slovenian PAs and verify its acceptability to all stakeholders.

First, we examine visitor management models of PAs worldwide to find that Europe tends to retain people in its PAs who create and protect traditional, cultural landscapes. Because of the historical, natural and cultural differences among countries, American models cannot be simply translated to European needs, so we devise our own model, which should consider the protection of nature as well as the country's unique individuals and their traditional lifestyles.

After interviewing four groups of experts—the results of two of these groups are presented in this article—we recognize that Slovenia does not have an effective management model for its PAs. Based on these findings, we develop a new theoretical model for PAs in Slovenia and, as the next step in our research, test the model with PA consumers.

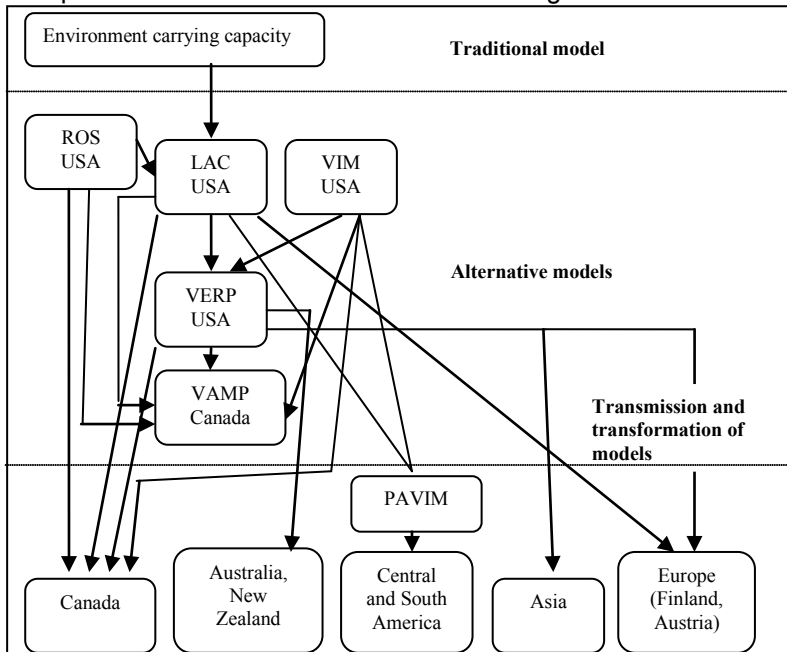
## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The protection of areas with unique natural ecosystems and cultural heritages has a long history in both the U.S. and Canada.<sup>ii</sup> In fact, over the last 20 years, awareness concerning the human impact on nature and natural systems has been growing. Though crowds of people are now visiting PAs (Taylor 2007) to experience the beauty of nature, many visitors are not yet aware of the importance of preserving PAs for future generations.

In the 1970s, authors from the U.S. and Canada began writing about capacity planning and the carrying capacity of PAs (Stankey et al. 1985). Consequently, in the following years, a great many decision-making systems evolved (Figure 1) (Page and Connell 2006; Eagles and McCool 2004; Howie 2003; Farrell and Marion 2002; Stankey et al. 1985). These include: the Limits of Acceptable Change planning system (LAC); Visitor Impact Management Planning (VIM); the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection process (VERP); Visitor Activity Management

Planning (VAMP); and the concept of a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). Many PA managers adopted at least one of these systems (McKay 2006) (South America - Protected Area Visitor Impact Management, PAVIM), with the exception of European managers, who did not follow their lead.

**Figure 1.** North American Decision-Making Model Development: Visitor Impacts on Protected Areas and Remodeling in Other Environments

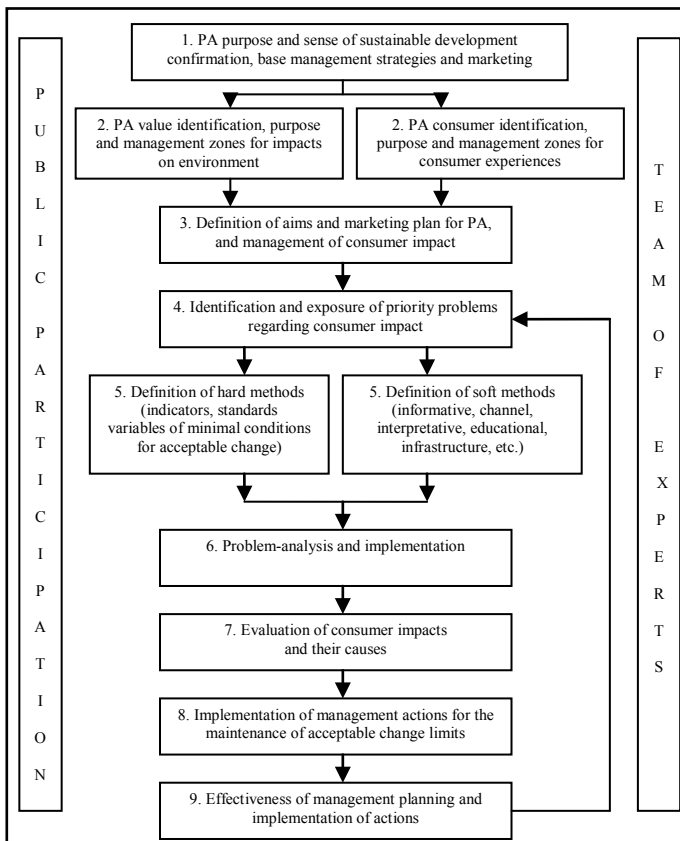


Many studies (Erkkonen and Itkonen 2006; Eagles and McCool 2004; Manning 2001; Farrell and Marion 2002; National Parks Service 1997-2007) focus on manager concerns about restricting human access in order to limit negative impacts on nature. However, few studies are done, on the needs and expectations of consumers, whether local residents or visitors. The Tourism Optimization Management Model from Australia (Newsome et al. 2002; Jack and Duka 2007) and the Integrated Planning and Management of Tourism Based on Natural Assets model from New Zealand (Baily et al. 2003; Baily 2007) are two rare examples of visitor-management models that exist outside the U.S. and Canada.



In addition, while many PA management systems consider the recommendations of various organizations for natural protection and sustainable development, only a few treat PAs as products (Beunders 2006) or apply the concepts of product management—e.g., marketing mix and consumer behavior (Shepard 2006, With et al. 2006, Manning 2001) decision processes—to consumer decisions to experience a PA.

**Figure 2.** Protected Area Stakeholder Impact Management Model



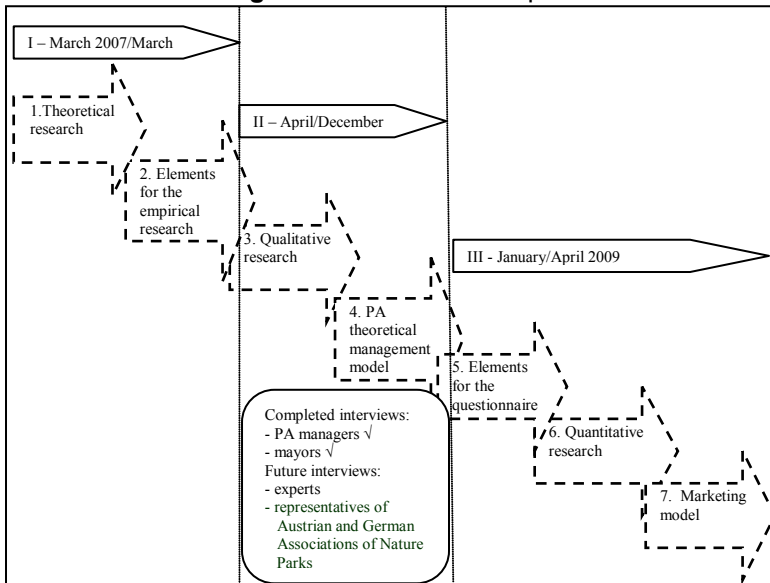
According to our extensive literature review, when the first stakeholder impact management model is created (Figure 2), it is clear that PA managers in Europe do not eliminate people from their PAs in effort to preserve the environment, which is why severe management

actions or prohibitions are not a solution for European PAs. This assumption is the starting point for all other activities in our empirical research.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is divided into three phases and seven steps (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. 7 Research Steps**



The first phase contains: (a) a literature review and research on Slovene PAs and (b) designation of research elements (formation of four interview questionnaires and the first theoretical model). The second phase contains qualitative research, which includes interviews with members of the expert group, which comprises four expert-member sub-groups: PA management representatives (22); local community representatives (mayors) (8); other organization representatives (41); representatives from German and Austrian Associations of Nature Parks (2). The second phase also includes development of the PA management model. The third phase contains: (a) formation of elements for the survey questionnaire; (b) quantitative research consisting of the questionnaire for investigation of PA consumer needs and expectations (an online questionnaire of consumers who visited PAs in the Summer 2008); and

(c) findings for PA management authorities and recommendations for social marketing.

This paper concentrates on the second phase, qualitative research, particularly on the research of the first and second expert sub-groups: 22 PA managers and 15 mayors.

### **Data collection methodology from PA management representatives**

Our first contact with PA management authorities was made by phone and via e-mail in April 2008, when the first primary research of PAs was completed. All PAs were visited in May 2008 to: (a) make personal contact with their management representatives; (b) collect and confirm data about the PAs; and (c) deliver a form for collection of e-mail addresses from visitors to PAs for a future consumer survey. A second visit was made in August and September 2008, when the interviews with the 22 participants from the experts group were completed.

The questions for all personal interviews were prepared in advance and grouped into nine topics: (1) Data and characteristics of PAs; (2) Natural assets, cultural landscape and people in PAs; (3) Management authority and their duties, management plan (MP); (4) Recognizing and setting limits in PAs; (5) Marketing of PAs; (6) PA management communications with stakeholders; (7) PA management cooperation with stakeholders; (8) Management monitoring in the PA and (9) Management effectiveness evaluation. All 22 people interviewed respond satisfactorily to all questions.

### **Data collection methodology from mayors**

Fifteen municipalities were selected based on the number of citizens in the municipality who reside in a PA. The mayors received a questionnaire with nine questions via email: (1) Can you define your view on the PA in your municipality? (2) What is the PA's added value for local people and land owners, as well as for tourism and other offers? (3) How well or poorly do local people accept the PA's management authority? (4) Define the communication between the PA's management authority and the local people and municipality. (5) How do you retain young people and intellectuals in the local environment? (6) Do local people have an opportunity to participate in PA causes that affect their lives and their quality of life? (7) Which activities in your municipality has the PA taken over? (8) Which activities has the municipality taken

over for the PA? (9) Can you define the relationship between the municipality and your PA?

After three requests, we received responses from eight municipalities. Two of the respondents are founders of a PA and the others are within PAs founded by the state. Three of the responders were from municipalities who's PAs are in the process of establishment and do not yet have management authority (For these PAs, representatives of the founders were interviewed. Management duties for other PAs are directed by public institutions). Almost all municipalities are located in the countryside. Responses are heterogeneous and reflect the vast professional knowledge of nature protection, communication skills, political willingness and typical human qualities of the mayors.

## **RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ANSWERS**

### **Results from PA management representatives**

**1. Personal data and characteristics of Pas.** PAs are established to protect a region's natural assets, biological diversity and landscape variety; to ensure economic and social development and research work; to prevent construction and inappropriate influences in the natural environment; and to assist in cross-border cooperation. PAs in IUCN's Category V with a management tradition have from eight to 20 employees and cover from four to 462 km<sup>2</sup> with 0 to 23,000 human inhabitants. They suffer financial and professional shortages, do not know each others' work very well and are not connected.

**2. Natural assets, cultural landscape and people in Pas.** Slovenia is a mosaic of natural assets that are protected as individual natural assets and narrow (natural monuments, reserves) or wide (national, regional or landscape parks). PA landscapes range from salina landscape and wetlands on the sea to karst landscapes, dried-up lakes and caves in the Dinaric region; from high mountains and valleys with rivers, lakes and forests in the Alps, to vineyard hills, fruit gardens, grasslands and mosaics of fields in the Pannonian lowland in the east of Slovenia.

Up until a few years after the Second World War, the majority of people in Slovenia lived in the countryside and were farmers who largely satisfied their own consumption needs. However, the current situation of the local people in PAs is the opposite: individuals tend to be older, with low levels of education. Given present day conditions, which are characterized by many immigrants, high unemployment and low population density, bad traffic and poor access to public services, many of

those who stay have jobs outside the area. Old habits and traditional crafts have largely been forgotten, and people are tired from working in town and do not socialize much, so active associations with the area's PAs are rare. Today's farms are small and often do not produce enough sustenance for a quality life. Additionally, local people often do not recognize opportunities and entrepreneurial initiative are rare. Tourists who come typically stay for only one day, although in some areas, foreigners and urban citizens buy old farms and renovate them into holiday cottages. Like all new inhabitants, these individuals bring with them new habits, needs and expectations.

### **3. Management authority and their duties, management plan.**

PAs are organized as public institutions or concessionaires (firms or associations). Public institutions are state-financed for employees and primary activities, while concessionaires must develop their own financial resources. Both kinds of organizations undertake various projects and apply for EU sources to finance their activities for nature protection and other purposes. All PAs have financial and professional employment problems.

Only two of the PA managers we interviewed have a confirmed management plan, although many others are in the process of writing one. Since these PA managers do not have systematic, defined activities, they have problems with implementation. Additionally, PAs are financed according to the Law for Protection of Nature, so management is not expected to perform activities for which they are not qualified or paid (e.g., marketing).

**4. Recognizing and setting limits in Pas.** Slovenian PAs are established under the Law for Protection of Nature and the Establishment Act, where protection zones, protection regimes and rules of behavior are defined. PA managers must adhere to stated limitations, yet other limitation needs are not defined to prohibit or redirect visitors to less sensitive (less endangered) areas.

**5. PA marketing.** There are no marketing sections or departments in the management of PAs, and they rarely cooperate with travel agencies or other tourist organizations. Tourist strategies in the PAs are not well developed nor do PA managers position their PAs or segment target consumers, and they know very little about marketing mix. No products for target customers are evident and PA brands are not trademarked because they are not marketed. The best-known target group for Pas is school groups because many invite them for workshops. Activities and infrastructure for disabled people are rare and the park infrastructure is not systematically or holistically planned. Communication tools (Web

sites, brochures and flyers) and activities at Slovene PS are below average. Managers do not look for connections with tour operators to sell services or create local traffic.

**6. PA management communications with stakeholders.**

Communication with stakeholders within and around PAs exists, in most cases, only formally and contains little in the way of public participation. On one hand, stakeholders do not show initiative while, on the other, the managers rarely have well-developed communication skills. PA managers are obliged to present the Foundation Act of a PA in public presentations and proceedings, which is, in many cases, the only communication these individuals have with local people.

Good examples are found in the region's newer and smaller PAs, where local people participate in the everyday life of the PA and are in continuing contact with the management authority. This occurs because, in the process of establishment, these PAs use numerous innovative tools to communicate with people.

**7. PA management's cooperation with stakeholders.** The cooperation of PA management with stakeholders is not well established, although there are some notable exceptions where craftsmen and other local producers take part in the activities of the PA. Unfortunately, PAs do not have an overall strategy for tourism development or a long-term vision for including local offers in PA activities.

**8. Monitoring in PAs.** Nature monitoring is well covered in Slovene PAs. Unfortunately, PAs do not carry out other sorts of monitoring and do not know their consumers or the expectations and needs of local people and visitors, or local socio-cultural trends. Likewise, they do not develop strategies for a complete approach to monitoring.

**9. Evaluation of PA management effectiveness.** PAs have not yet developed strategies for evaluating management effectiveness.

## **Results from mayors**

**1. Can you define your view of the PA in your municipality?** The mayors in those municipalities where PAs have a long tradition and professional skills as well as those wherein the process of establishment is ongoing are positive about the protection of nature. They see living in the PA as a privilege because it is a guarantee of better environmental conditions, social life and quality of life. PAs protect resident and landowner interests, prevent environment degradation and undertake a systematic approach for sustainable economic development. The mayors also believe that protection regimes are too strict and inhibit development

(infrastructure) in the municipalities. Some say that the state protects only nature and forgets the people who live in PAs. The mayors expect more help from the state.

**2. What is the added value of the PA for local people and landowners and for tourism and other offers?** A small number of residents and service providers think that the protection of nature (PAs) contributes to added value in the region. Most think that they are deprived and limited in construction, mobility and free use of their property. They also do not share the same vision.

**3. How well or poorly do local people accept the management authority of the PA?** Local people accept PAs with mixed feelings. Landowners are inclined to see the protection only as a limitation of their rights, while other locals are passive. Mayors are not satisfied with the present kind of protection; they would prefer to protect nature under less-severe restrictions. Local people in PAs that are in the process of establishment are interested in the future of the area and are sensitive to environmental problems, but they also have great expectations from their PA's management.

**4. Define the communication between the PA management authority, the local people and the municipality.** There is formal communication between the PAs and local residents and municipalities. PA management is active in different fields, for example, with nature and cultural heritage conservation, organization of cultural entertainment activities, children and adult awareness about protection, etc. Communication in municipalities with established the PAs is especially good. In most municipalities, PA management and the local residents maintain permanent communication through frequent meetings, but these communications do not result in development of tourism projects or seek to address the need to retain people in the area.

**5. How do you retain young people and intellectuals in the local environment?** Mayors agree that the structure for local people is not favorable and that the municipalities around PAs do not offer basic living conditions for young people. Municipalities work toward developing conditions for new jobs and infrastructures for local people in urban environments, but are not all successful.

Some municipalities notice a reduction in the numbers of people leaving their PAs—young families remain in the area and intellectuals drive to work in other towns—and they believe this is due to improved living conditions. In some municipalities, foreigners and citizens are buying old farms and rebuilding them into holiday cottages. Local residents are then in the minority and a sense of space, local identity, and

respect for the particularity of the area is lost. Additionally, as people give up farming, the cultural landscape can change.

**6. Do the local people have an opportunity to participate in PA causes that affect their lives and their quality of life?** PAs regulations define the conditions for sustainable economic development that the local people must observe. Local people in small and distant PAs can participate in public presentations and are often in contact with PA management representatives. Local people in larger municipalities participate by signing off on some decrees (e.g., a detailed municipality spatial plan), while those in smaller or more distant PAs participate through their representatives on PA Institution Councils. On the other hand, local residents rarely show the initiative to participate with PAs if they are not directly involved in a particular matter. The municipalities inform and connect local people and support tourism and other associations, but positive effects are rare.

**7. Which activities in your municipality has the PA taken over?** Duties that PA managers have taken over for municipalities differ from one PA to another. There is a lack of marketing and management knowledge among PA managers and a continuing communication gap between users and PA management.

**8. Which activities has your municipality taken over for the PA?** Municipalities, as the founders of PAs, have, with the purpose of protecting the most threatened parts of the municipality, transmitted nature protection duties to PA authorities. Other municipalities help manage PAs with administrative procedures, offer advice for spatial planning, etc. Nonetheless numerous unexplored possibilities for collaboration remain.

**9. Can you define the relationship between the municipality and your PA?** Relationships between municipalities and PAs are generally good. Both are committed to the protection of most natural assets and the protection of a small part of municipality land (the PA) should not have a negative impact on the further economic and social development of the whole municipality. However, municipalities believe that, except for legislated restrictions, the state does not do anything to help improve PAs but rather place a good deal of responsibility on municipalities without financial support.

There is a need for more communication. Some municipalities and management authorities try to take their common responsibility for long-term solutions, development and better quality of life for the local people seriously while helping to ensure a sensible and environmentally friendly future.



## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **Discussion of PA management representative results**

PA managers should communicate and cooperate with other stakeholders in the region and need to be strong partners in sustainable regional development (Alexander 2008; Eagles and McCool 2004; Phillips 2002). They could establish a Union of Slovene PAs, which should work in common interest and aid communication and connection of the PAs and employees working there. The qualified experts network individuals could help by project and research work, preparation of guidelines, workshops, publications, common products, etc. The union could also take care of promotion and presentation for all PAs, which could help the PAs save money and receive help from the experts.

The Slovene government needs to assign more money to the infrastructure investments in the countryside. High quality standards of living could attract young and well-educated people and stimulate them to work in the region or even open their own enterprises there. Thus, local residents could stay at home, work in the region and have the time to communicate with other people. Destination management companies<sup>iii</sup> (DMCs) should be established to design and market tourism products and assist PAs with promotion and communication with visitors and residents. PAs and DMCs should prepare workshops<sup>iv</sup> for residents and stimulate local hand craft and small trade, to encourage the promotion of old customs, dances and other traditional crafts.

The government sector for PAs should stimulate PAs by preparing PA management plans with good guidelines and practical workshops as well as care for their confirmation. Within the plans, managers should define the purpose and sense of the area and create 5-10 year development plans and activities for their implementation. With government confirmation of the plans, appropriate financial sources should come to the PAs. These plans should be incorporated in all other documents in the region (Alexander 2008; Philips 2002). For the promotion of PAs and their surroundings (and visitor programs), a marketing department should be introduced or the DMC should be established to take care of marketing. Thus, the PAs could become funds for the activities that are not covered by the government.

PAs should prepare their own management plans and incorporate nature management, infrastructure management, visitor management, crises management, etc., set indicators, monitor them, prepare management actions to keep acceptable conditions and evaluate

management effectiveness (Alexander 2008). Tourism could be the best solution for PAs, if their innovative experience programs are well prepared, guided, zoned, implemented and evaluated (Eagles and McCool 2004).

It is important to point out that marketing of PAs is a critical issue. PAs and their surroundings have to develop marketing strategies and take actions to segment target consumers, positioning the PAs and implementing an effective marketing mix. They could develop brands for PAs, systematically and holistically plan the infrastructure and activities for particular target groups while remaining aware of special demographic groups such as the disabled (Eagle and McCool 2004). They should prepare innovative and interactive communication tools (e.g., Web sites) and connect themselves with tour operators and other stakeholders to improve communication with potential consumers. A union of PAs could represent all Slovene PAs (with promotional materials, Web sites, etc.) and prepare tourism products for three or more PAs for specific target groups.

PAs' communication with stakeholders is also problematic (Phillips 2002). PA managers should learn to use innovative communication tools (workshops, panels, meetings, etc.) to communicate with local residents, tourism enterprises and local authorities. The PA authorities should motivate stakeholders to participate in PA management plans and activities.

PA management should also cooperate with stakeholders more regularly. PAs and their surroundings must develop holistic tourism strategies or a long-term vision for including local offices and service providers in PA activities (Jack and Duka 2007). PA managers must develop, implement, monitor and evaluate an effective tourism management plan and a plan for communicating with the stakeholder network together with stakeholders.

Local residents should be qualified and concession contracts should be signed. Together, PAs and residents need to design holistic programs for visitors of PAs, develop DMCs to promote, cooperate and implement programs to monitor and evaluate the implementation.

PAs should also develop a holistic monitoring plan (Alexander 2008), which incorporates nature, sustainable development in the area, the needs and expectations of residents and other stakeholders and their socio-cultural trends, visitor expectations, visitor impact management, sustainable tourism infrastructure, etc. Indicators should be set and monitored. When acceptable limits are exceeded, management actions

should be undertaken. Monitoring plans should result in the evaluation of PA management effectiveness.

PA unions or the PAs themselves should develop strategies and management models for evaluating management effectiveness (Phillips 2002). RAPPAM methodology could be used as the starting point.

## **Discussion of mayor answers**

Area mayors should develop a sustainable development vision as well as holistic tourism strategies for their regions while stimulating communication among different stakeholders and public interest groups within the process. It is also important to design a friendly and comfortable environment for work and everyday life. Local authorities should stimulate residents to take part in society activities and reintroduce traditional lifestyle ways. Government authorities for PAs should communicate with the local residents and landowners while enabling them to participate in the development of protection regimes in the PAs. Some measures and co-financed programs should be undertaken to preserve residents' standards of living; in hilly or mountainous areas, the agriculture is not competitive and farmers need other activities in order to be financially independent.

Implementation of a holistic sustainable development strategy, a management plan for PAs, a tourism strategy, a stakeholders network plan and other important documents may demonstrate added value for residents in the form of new employment opportunities, subsidies, marketing of natural and cultural places and products and entrepreneurial opportunities; lively business with real properties; better quality of life and a trademark that attracts visitors; sustainable agriculture and tourism development stimulation that offers local people new development opportunities; protected land against negative impacts of tourism, treatment rules and supervision of visitor behaviors; less vandalism; and additional financial resources for development. However, doing so could also create ongoing conflicts of interest among agriculture, forestry and PAs.

Nonetheless, PA authorities should also develop communication and trust among local residents already in the process of establishing the PA (Mikuš 2006; Lucas 2002). Residents will more readily accept a PA if they are interested and connected with the activities in the area. That is why they work in the PAs (employees of PA authorities, concessionaires, volunteers), and everyday contact with PA management is important to continued commitment from these individuals.

PAs should be included in the development of regional sustainable development strategies as well as tourism strategies and should establish stakeholder networks. Regarding all of these activities, PAs should develop communication and collaboration strategies for residents and other stakeholders. They should plan and develop communication tools for unique target groups and based on different occasions while implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions for better conditions in the area.

Retaining young people and intellectuals in the local environment is an increasingly important issue. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a long-term sustainable development strategy for the PAs, along with a strong regard for natural protection (i.e., sustainable economic activities, necessary employment, entrepreneurial opportunities, contents of each specific place and programs, granting concessions for PA activities). Municipalities must work toward developing conditions for new jobs and infrastructures for local people and the socialization of residents (tourism societies, choirs, folklore dances and lifelong learning programs). State and municipalities should stimulate young farmers and craftsmen to stay and care for the cultural landscape as well.

Regarding the quality of life of local residents, PAs should develop participation strategies and plans while setting indicators, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities for successful participation management. Residents and tourists will participate when they are directly involved and interested in participation. Managers should learn to use communication tools while gaining knowledge of how to motivate residents to work in PAs (guides, interpreters, voluntary nature protection supervisors or rangers).

However, PA managers are required to perform numerous activities, e.g., PA managers facilitate local awareness about the meaning of nature protection at meetings, education and training courses, and schools; conduct qualifying exercises (for guides, voluntary nature protection supervisors, etc.) and professional excursions for local people; collaborate in tourist promotions with associations and schools; organize entertainment activities; manage real properties and sustain pastures, arrange footpaths and educational and interpretative theme paths. For permanent and successful performance of all these activities, PAs must develop a local community activities strategy and while qualifying for these kinds of activities. Likewise, it is also very important to develop an effective marketing strategy and qualify for activities of the marketing mix.

On the other hand, municipalities have also taken over some activities for PAs, e.g., the municipalities have to plan and develop sustainable development strategies and include the activities for and with the PAs in their territories. For a holistic approach, it is important to cooperate and communicate with Pas' management authorities by developing communication, participation and cooperation strategies as well as holistic tourism strategies for the areas.

When discussing the relationship between municipalities and Pas, it is important to note that Slovene sectorial legislation regulations are the largest obstacle. State and local sectors are not used to communicating and cooperating with each other. The same problem occurs in relationships between municipalities and PAs. In both cases, all parties must try harder to establish a solid relationship with residents and stakeholders, which could be more successful if they represent and implement activities together. For these purposes, PAs need to develop cooperation strategies, set indicators and implement them as well as ensure effective monitoring and evaluation.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This research reveals three main problems related to the management of PAs in Slovenia: (1) shortcuts in finances and employees; (2) problems in communication and cooperation with stakeholders; and (3) a dearth of marketing activities. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning finances only activities geared to the protection of nature; financial sources for all other projects must be gathered through EU projects. Additionally, marketing activities and consumer behaviors have not yet been investigated, but the communication and cooperation of PA managers with stakeholders in the area is underdeveloped. Local people mainly consider PAs to be obstacles, while municipalities and PAs do not have long-term development and communication strategies.

There is also a need for a regulated political environment and reorganization of the Sector for PAs at the state and local levels, as well as for collaboration with professional employees and financial sources in order to advise PAs and help them in the sociological field.

Managers of PAs are short on finances and employees and do not evaluate stakeholder impacts on PAs, assuming that no restrictions are necessary because there is not yet any overcrowding. They also fail to evaluate conditions for sustainable development (except for evaluations of nature) and issues related to marketing. PA management urgently needs

reorganization, more resources for communication and cooperation with stakeholders.

The added value of managed PAs are areas tied to sustainable development, better awareness of nature protection, new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, better quality of life for local residents and an innovative local offer for tourists to experience natural relaxation and recreation with the awareness of nature's protection and a sense of belonging.

PAs also must reconcile tourist strategies with the local community goals and develop marketing plans to invigorate awareness of PAs by Slovenians as well as those abroad. To develop complete strategies in areas of sustainable development, cooperation with municipalities and regional development agencies is essential. Protection of the PA must be undertaken by the local population when they feel protection and all life conditions in the area have been considered with state-supported, suitable legislation and implementation. This approach could lead to better cooperation with other stakeholders in the region such that, over time, they will notice not simply the limitations imposed by PAs, but also their added value. For their part, potential visitors will recognize a PA as a valuable tourism product.

PA managers need marketing knowledge or at least, cooperation with DMCs in public/private ownership in order to develop PAs as "products" for target visitor groups. They should establish PA unions, which could develop a communications toolbox for all possible levels (local, regional and national, sectorial, intersectorial and inter-political). PAs should stimulate connections between all stakeholders in the area to develop an effective marketing proposition and to promote the area.

In order to ensure effective PA management, managers should undertake holistic monitoring that includes natural, economic, and socio-cultural observation while encouraging residents and visitors to behave in accordance with all regulations.

Research shows that representatives of PA management authorities and mayors of PA municipalities are not satisfied with existing legislation related to PAs or with PA management operations. Standardized PA management systems and management plans are necessary for effective functioning of Slovene PAs and for increased awareness of PAs among Slovenians as well as neighboring countries. Likewise, PA managers must respect consumer expectations and needs, creating tailor-made products and communication methods with target consumers to ensure satisfaction of all stakeholders.

In the next phase, interviews with the next two subgroups will refine the model with the description of each step and conditions; this effort will be the basis for our quantitative research.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Data from the European Environmental Agency for 2004 shows that PAs comprise 36.4% of Austria's land area, 10.8% of Italy's, 8.0% of Hungary's, and 20% of Germany's. In the 42 European states as a whole, 14.6% of the land area is protected.

<sup>ii</sup> IUCN (1994) developed a definition of PAs and a system of six management categories of PAs (Phillips, 2002). Definition of a protected area: "An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal or other effective means" (IUCN 1994).

<sup>iii</sup> This is written in the Slovene strategy for tourism 2007-2011.

<sup>iv</sup> Traditional food cooking courses; traditional sweets baking courses; traditional herbs course; bread baking in a traditional way; producing traditional cheese (Gronau and Kaufmann 2009, 90), producing the pumpkin-seed oil, producing marmalades, etc.

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## TOURIST' PROFILE AS CONSUMER CULTURAL, AMUSEMENT AND SPORTS OFFERING IN ISTRIA

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*In this paper, the authors examine the preferences of tourists who are already consumers or could be the potential consumers of the tourist offering. The purpose of the paper is to provide answers to questions arising from this issue, taking into account socio-demographic attributes of tourists and association of those attributes and spending during vacation. The aim of research is to identify the profile of tourists who have chosen Istria., Paper presents the hypothesis that to increase tourist spending, it is necessary to develop a tourist profile and design a cultural, entertainment and sports offering that corresponds to this profile.*

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**Keywords:** *tourist profile, tourist preferences, tourism offering, tourist spending, tourism destination*

### INTRODUCTION

Cultural resources are considered key factors of the tourism offering of the twenty-first century (Vrtiprah, 2006), and tourism destinations should seek to valorise these resources according to the profile of tourists that visit them. Gibson, Willming and Holdnak (2003) underline the importance of sports events to a minor degree through which fans become tourists. The socio-demographic characteristics of tourists have an impact on the way they perceive a tourism destination's image (Beerli and Martin, 2004), as this paper will demonstrate.

Tourist preferences and expectations need to be strategically planned and constantly monitored to optimise the cost of investments planned and to increase tourist spending. The services and facilities provided in a tourism destination should be adjusted to the profile of tourists, taking



into consideration their travel motivations, as well as their previous experiences.

This paper examines the preferences of tourist who are the consumers or the potential consumers of the events, cultural, entertainment, animation and sports offering. The basic aim of the paper is to identify the profile of tourists who have a preference for and choose to spend on the cultural, entertainment and sports part of the offering in the case of the Istria tourist destination. To this end, the authors provide answers to the relevant questions: Are socio-demographic features associated with tourist spending on events, entertainment, excursions, animation and sports? Which type of events, entertainment, excursions, animation and sports do tourists travelling to Istria prefer?

Following on the aims and questions stated, the authors have formulated a hypothesis claiming that **to increase tourist spending it is necessary to develop a tourist profile and design a cultural, entertainment and sports offering that corresponds to this profile**. To prove this hypothesis, research was conducted in 2008 in which 1326 tourists were surveyed.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The authors consider the socio-demographic features of the surveyed tourists as being crucial elements in developing a tourist profile. In their paper focusing on the sex of visitors to wine cellars, Fraser, Alonso and Cohen (2008) have described the identification of concrete visitor groups as a potential strategy in attracting guests and providing the best services possible. Ramkissoon and Nunkoo (2008) underline the impact of nationality on tourist behaviour in seeking information. Involving extensive research into the socio-demographic features of tourists on the entire coastal part of Croatia, the 2004 TOMAS survey has provided the authors with a bearing regarding trends and deviations.

Research was aimed at exploring: 1) the profile of tourists visiting Istria, and 2) their propensity to spend on events, entertainment, excursions, animation and sports during vacation.

The primary instrument used in research to collect data was a questionnaire translated into a number of languages corresponding to the national structure of guests. These languages include the Croatian, Slovenian, German, Italian, Russian, Czech and Slovak languages.

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions and was designed in three parts. The first part contained socio-demographic questions referring

to sex, age, nationality, education and net monthly income. The second part focused on how tourists obtained information about, and their propensity to spend on, services and facilities offered, while the third part posed questions regarding tourist satisfaction with and their evaluation of events, entertainment, excursions, animation and sports.

Tourists were surveyed in the period from 27 July to 15 October 2008. This means that, in addition to the peak tourist season (July and August), research also extended to the post-season (September and October). Initially, it was agreed with the directors and managers of accommodation facilities that they would have their employees distribute the questionnaires to tourists. Considering that 4,200 questionnaires were sent out and that the response rate was negligibly low, the survey was then conducted through interviewers at the accommodation facilities. The sample design as per accommodation units was determined by the structure of guests staying at a given facility in this period. Two interviewers would wait for tourists at the entrance of the accommodation facility's restaurant at breakfast time. First, they would explain the purpose and aim of the survey to the tourists and then, upon receiving their consent, the interviewers would distribute the questionnaire and be available for any additional explanation or information required. Each interviewer received instructions regarding respondent quotas, types of accommodation facilities, the nationality of tourists, and so on. The questionnaires collected after two rounds of surveying were entered into a SPSS software program package that was used for the statistical processing of data. The self-administered questionnaire method was used to gather data from guests staying in different facilities. The data obtained were then grouped and analysed. Table 1 illustrates the profile of respondents by socio-demographic attributes.

The survey was conducted in the territory of the Istrian Country and included the towns of Umag, Poreč, Rovinj, Medulin and Pula. During the first round, 61.9 % of respondents were surveyed; during the second, 38.1 %. Out of a total of 1,326 domestic and foreign tourists surveyed, 38.7 % were located in the Pula area; 26 %, in Rovinj; 23 %, in Umag; 9.1 %, in Poreč; and 3.2 %, in Medulin. The locations at which the survey was conducted were selected according to category and occupancy rates. These locations included 2-star, 3-star, and 4-star hotels, motor camps and apartment hotel complexes. The size of random was selected according to guest patterns and number in period that survey was made.

**Table 1.** Profile of tourists visiting Istria

Attribute		Percentage
Sex	Male	43.6
	Female	52.9
Age group	Up to 25	12.7
	26 - 35	19.7
	36 - 45	24.8
	46 - 55	24.6
	Over 56	18.1
Educational qualifications	Elementary	8.7
	Secondary	35.5
	College and university	55.7
Country of origin	Germany	9.8
	Austria	6.3
	Italy	19.7
	Russia	26.6
	The Netherlands	5.0
	Great Britain	9.0
	Croatia	2.0
	Slovenia	5.2
	Poland	0.3
	USA	0.4
	Slovakia	4.0
	Belgium	1.2
	Norway	0.3
	Sweden	1.5
	France	0.3
	Denmark	1.2
Monthly income	Up to EUR 1,000	32.8
	EUR 1,000 - 2,000	37.2
	Over EUR 2,000	30.0

The sample is representative based on spatial coverage (6 larger tourist towns), countries of origin (16 countries) and types of accommodation (hotels, motor camps and apartment hotel complexes). The sample's size is considered to be sufficient for making conclusions, given that the number of respondents in similar studies (according to socio-demographic attributes) amounts to 880 (Awaritefe, 2008) ,609

(Fraser, Alonso and Cohen, 2008), 438 (Sangpikul, 2008) 152 respondents (Chaudhary, 2000)

The stratified random sample of the study consisted of 1,326 respondents of which 43.6 % were male and 56.0%, female; 12,7 %, younger than the age of 25; 19.7 %, in the 26-35 age group; 24.8 %, in the 36-45 age group; 24.6 %, in the 46-55 age group; 17.6 %, older than the age of 55. A total of 8.7 % of respondents have elementary school qualifications; 35.5 %, secondary school qualifications; and 55.7 %, college and university qualifications. The most of tourist were from Russia ( 26.6 %) and most of all tourist have between 1000 and 2000 Euros monthly income.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The intention was to explore whether any differences exist between guest groups. It was expected that this method would make it possible to single out guest categories that deserve special marketing and service strategies. Results were processed by the sex, age groups, educational qualifications and monthly income of tourists. Examples of similar surveys are in Reace and Tan article (2006: 253) and they point out that "selling tourist attraction is dependent of kind of attraction and tourist segmentation"

As the questionnaire used a number of different measurements, this made it necessary to apply statistical tests to identify and test the significant difference between the sample's sub-groups. To determine the significance level of all relationships, the Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) was applied to data that used nominal measurements. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) "tests whether two categorical variables forming a contingency table are associated"(Friedl, 2005:725 in Fraser, Alonso, Cohen, 2008). Tests were made at a significance level of 95%.

### **Association of socio-demographic attributes of tourists and spending during vacation in Istria**

Although the country of origin of tourists is included in socio-demographic indicators, it was not taken into consideration in this study due to the overly broad range of countries that would influence results. Table 2 demonstrates the association of selected socio-demographic attributes of tourists with spending on the tourism offering while holidaymaking in Istria. In questionnaire is given a chose about amount of spending: "up to 40 Euros/ between 40 and 70 Euros/over 70 Euros.

**Table 2.** Association of socio-demographic attributes of tourists and spending

Age-groups	Spending on events	35.191	12	<b>P=0.000</b>
	Spending on entertainment	13.978	15	P=0.527
	Spending on excursions	25.089	10	<b>P= 0.005</b>
	Spending on animation	23.571	15	P=0.73
	Spending on sports	12.663	15	P=0.628
Monthly income	Spending on events	48.414	6	<b>P=0.000</b>
	Spending on entertainment	20.541	6	<b>P=0.002</b>
	Spending on excursions	25.754	4	<b>P= 0.000</b>
	Spending on animation	30.048	6	<b>P=0.000</b>
	Spending on sport	45.888	6	<b>P=0.000</b>
Educational qualifications	Spending on events	46.937	9	<b>P=0.000</b>
	Spending on entertainment	21.474	9	<b>P=0.011</b>
	Spending on excursions	61.934	6	<b>P= 0.000</b>
	Spending on animation	12.280	9	P=0.198
	Spending on sports	13.394	9	P=0.146

The results of the Chi-square test do not indicate a statistically significant association of propensity to spend on the offering in the place of stay with the sex of respondents. This was confirmed by the absence of any statistically significant relation between these variables, with Pearson's  $\chi^2$  (gender and spending on events (12, n=821)=4,286 (p=0,978), (gender and spending on entertainment) (12, n=874)=14,653 (p=0,261), (gender and spending on excursions) (8, n=1068)=4,653 (p=0,830), (gender and spending on animation) (9, n=686)=14,976 (p=0,92), (gender and spending on sport) (12, n=789)=19,924 (p=0,69).

The age group of respondents is significantly related to spending on events and excursions during holidaymaking in Istria. Pearson's  $\chi^2$

between age-groups and spending on entertainment and sports shows any significant relationship.

Monthly income is significant for spending on all services and facilities the offering provides ( $p=0,000$ ,  $p=0,002$ ,  $p=0,000$ ,  $p=0,000$ ,  $p=0,000$ ). Educational qualifications are significantly related to spending on events, entertainment and excursions ( $p=0,000$ ,  $p=0,011$ ,  $p=0,000$ ), but not significantly related to spending on animation and sports.

The results obtained lead to the conclusion that in understanding the profile of tourists visiting the Istria tourist destination it is vital to take into consideration their age groups, monthly income and educational qualifications when planning for increased spending on events, entertainment, excursions, animation and sports.

Clearly, it is necessary to take into account the needs, wants and expectations of tourists with regard to their age, monthly incomes and educational qualifications, and to design an offering, based on these determinants, that will lead to increased spending as a result of proper planning.

Tourism destination managers need to continuously monitor the trends to which tourism is susceptible, in order to develop a tourist profile that will be used for designing a tourism offering and planning tourist spending. The ECT has noted the following trends:

- The raising of educational levels will influence holidaymaking in which art, culture, history and education will be of major importance.
- There is an emerging need for greater creativity in communicating information.
- There is a growing demand for new destinations in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Guests belonging to older age-groups are displaying an interest in cultural programs.

According to Dallen (2006:2), "tourist which is cultural heritage the main motive are: educational, better spender, they are travelling in groups and they are richer". TOMAS studies conducted in Croatia's coastal regions lead to the conclusion that the middle age-group prevails in the tourist population visiting this area. Also noted is an increase in the educational levels of guests. Guests are becoming increasingly more active, and their participation in various activities is growing, leading to an increase in the number of activities in which they can participate.

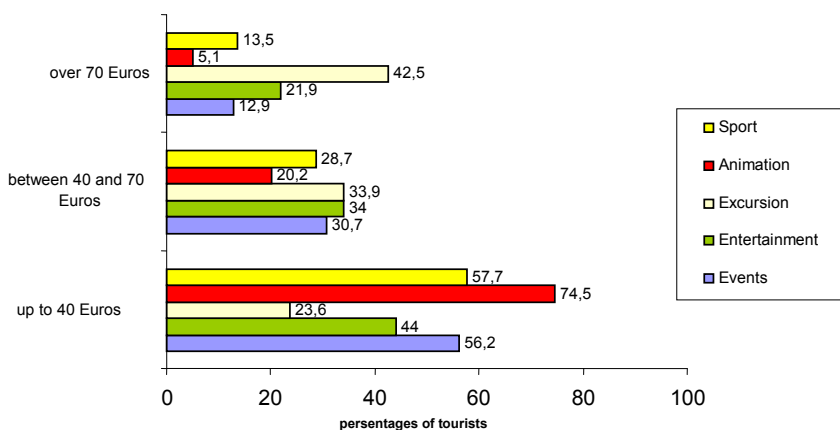
A comparison with the results of the study conducted in coastal Istria in the 2008 tourist season and post-season is indicative of similar trends. Tourists visiting coastal Istria are, in average, between 35 and 45 years of



age, have college and university qualifications, and earn a monthly income of EUR 1,000 – 2,000.

Further chart (No1.) shows how much Euros are tourist willing to pay for cultural, entertainment and sports offering during they vacation in Istria.

**Chart 1.** Tourist spending on cultural, entertainment and sports offering



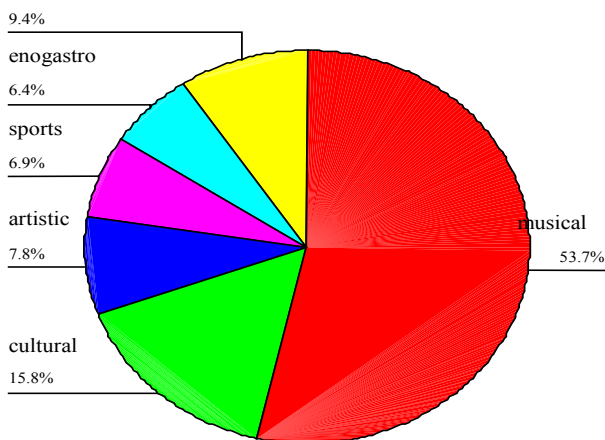
According to Chart 1 the most of tourists (42.5 %) are willing to spend their money (over 70 Euros) on excursions. On the second place is entertainment (21.9 %), then sport (12.9%). On the fourth place are events (13.5 %) and the last one is animation (5.1%). That is confirmed with result that 74.5 % tourists will spent less than 40 Euros on animation.

In all segments female are spending more than 70 Euros (except sport) more than male. The youngest and oldest tourists would pay over 70 Euros for excursions. Educational tourist most of the money will spend: on the first place- excursions, than entertainment, third are events, than sport and the last on the animation. Further, tourists with less than 1000 Euros of monthly income are spending over 70 Euros on excursions as the richer tourists.

## **Tourist preferences' of cultural, entertainment and sports offering in Istria**

Socio-demographic attributes of tourist that were in Istria are in order of global trends. Preferences of tourist also were subject of research, for better understanding their needs and expectations. In further charts (No 2, No.3, No.4, No 5, No.6) are given those results Chart 2.shows the types of events that tourists prefer during holidays in Istria.

**Chart 2.** Events preferred during holidays



The results obtained show that the greatest percentage of tourists (53.7%) prefer musical events, followed by cultural events, in which 15.8% have expressed interest. While 7.8% and 6.9% of tourists are interested in artistic events and sports events, respectively, the smallest percentage (6.4%) are interested in eno-gastronomy events.

**Chart 3.** Tourist preferences regarding type of entertainment during holidays

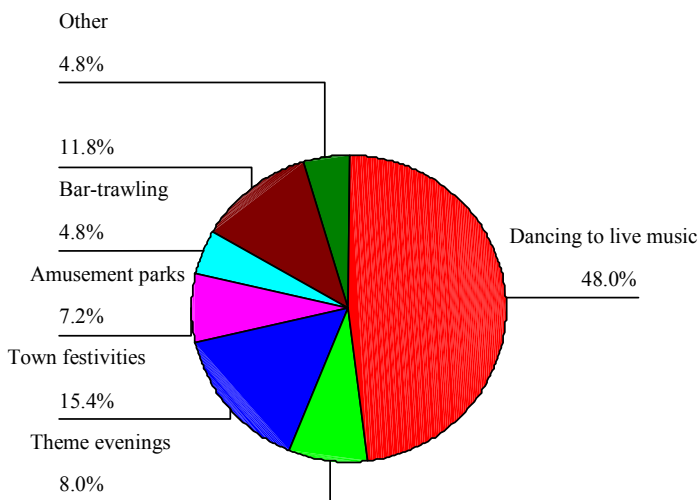


Chart 3 shows that tourists mostly prefer evenings with dancing and live music. This was the result expected result considering the prevalence of the middle age-group. While 15.4% of tourists show a preference for organised town festivities, 11.8% are most interested in “bar-trawling”. About 8% of tourists prefer theme evenings in night clubs, and 7.2% are interested in amusement parks. Other types of entertainment include visits to the aquarium and organised night swimming, which 4.8% of the respondents prefer.

**Chart 4.** Types of excursions preferred during holidays

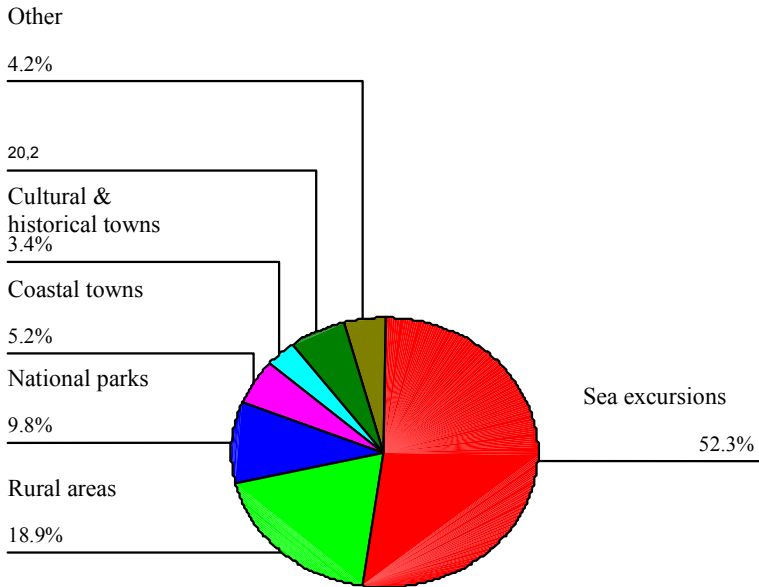


Chart 4 shows that 52.3% of respondents prefer marine excursions by boat, 18.9% wish to visit picturesque places in rural Istria, and 9.8% prefer excursions to national parks. While 6.1% of tourists surveyed are interested in visiting cultural and historical towns, a slightly lower percentage (3.4%) prefer to visit the towns on Istria's coast.

**Chart 5.** Tourist preferences regarding forms of animation

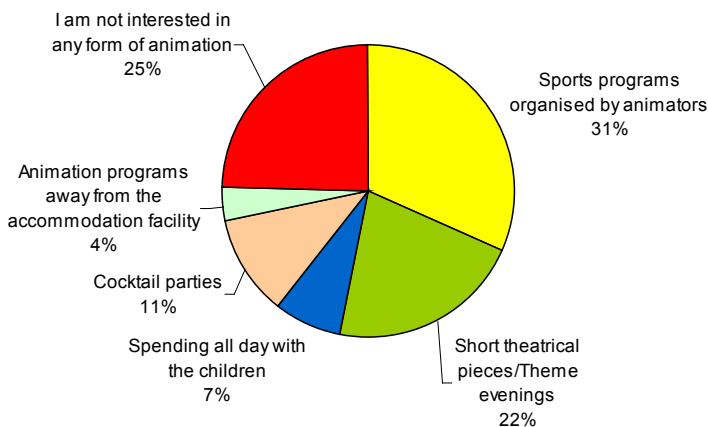


Chart 5. shows that 25 % of tourists are not interested for animation. According to mean age group that is predictable result. 31 % of tourist are interested in sports programs organized by animators, 22 % of them preferred theme evenings. For cocktail parties are interested 11 % of them and 7 % would like to have opportunity to leave their children with animation team. Only 4 % of tourists would like animation programs away from the accommodation facilities.

**Chart 6.** Tourist preferences regarding the sports offering

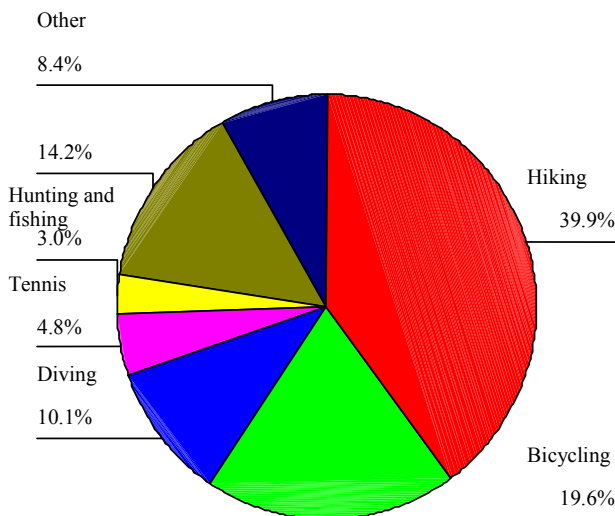


Chart 6 illustrates the types of sports and recreational activities that tourists to Istria are most interested in. Hiking is in first place (39.9%), followed by bicycling (19.6%). Hunting and fishing are interesting to 14.2% of tourists, and diving, to 10.1%. Tennis is the preferred sport of 4.8% of respondents.

## CONSTRAINTS

Constraints were being a part of this study and authors consider it necessary to point them out. Because the questionnaires were distributed among respondents based on self-selection and self-assessment, the authors see these conditions as constraining, from which could have resulted differences in the prevalence of respondents of one sex or age group depending upon the inclination of the interviewer.

Initially, the study was conceived as covering three time periods: the pre-season, the peak season, and the post-season. Ineffective collaboration with the directors of accommodation facilities, because of which the pre-season was bypassed, has resulted in another constraint.

To some extent, the design of the questionnaire and the insufficiently open qualitative approach that was time limited (during breakfast in accommodation facilities) can also be considered as constraints.

Area size could also have influenced results, considering that the survey involved larger towns on the coast.

In keeping with the above, although the results obtained could be generalised, they should not be taken as evidence or considered a fact pertaining to all tourists visiting Croatia, together with their attitudes and preferences.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

When talking about nowadays tourists' profile, results of this study are in accordance with global tourism trends: growth of elderly population, increasing number of families without children that are focused on themselves and have a greater need for active and more experienced holidays (Moutinho, 2005). Very important market segment are middle-aged tourists who often choose distant destinations, stay longer on holidays, combine two or more destinations during one trip and want to participate in various activities as well as spend more on their travels.

According to findings of the study, the typical tourist visiting Istria belongs to the middle age-group, possesses higher educational qualifications, earns a monthly income of up to EUR 2,000, prefers musical events, likes evenings with dancing and live music, and prefers organized boat excursions the most. Of the various forms of animation provided, the average tourist is most interested in sports programs organized by animators, and with regards to sports and recreation, his/her greatest interest is hiking and being in the outdoors.

Imbalance of tourist supply and demand in the Istria tourist destination creates the need for making a richer tourist offer that will increase tourist spending. Creation of each segment offers (excursions, entertainment, animation, sports) should be adjusted to age, monthly income and level of education of tourists.

## POLICIES IMPLICATIONS

Istria has a natural, infrastructure and climate resources for meeting tourist's needs which prefer an active vacation, experience, desire to learn and achievement of physical and mental balance. Management of tourist destinations should adapt its tourism policies to global tourism trends and coordinate all of entities of the tourist offer to change its image of "sun and the sea" destination. Since tourist destination is a product itself, it is very important that this product is innovative and original with high quality and rich content that will satisfy the growing demand for services that are not standardized.

This tourist profile should serve as a sort of guidepost in helping tourism destination managers to create an offer that will satisfy tourist's needs. The authors suggest that the management of the Istria tourism destination should tackle this issue in two ways:

1) by maximizing spending consistent with the preferences of the tourist profile- the aim should be to create an offer according to tourists' preferences (e.g., trips by sea) enriched with additional activities that increase the consumption of tourists (e.g., with sightseeing, fishing, diving, taking a photo with the captain, etc.)

2) by focusing marketing activities on attracting tourists of a different profile- the aim should be to create an offer that will attract the interest of different groups of consumers (e.g., tourists younger age-trendsetters, singles, couples without children, couples with higher incomes).

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## WELLNESS TOURISM: EVALUATING DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES FOR TOURISM PLANNING IN A COMPETITIVE SEGMENT MARKET

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*The purpose of the present study is to identify the various factors that decision makers must take into account when ranking destinations for placing a spa resort/hotel in the thriving health and wellness industry. The study will suggest a decision support system (DSS) based on key factors as climate, tourism development and attractions. The DSS, using a computer based information system, will evaluate the aforementioned factors and will propose a hierarchical structure for rating destinations, useful for private or public planners in the wellness market. The research categorized the prefectures of Ahaia, Arkadia, Ilia, Korinthia, Messinia in the region of Peloponnese.*

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**Keywords:** *spa/health/wellness tourism, climate, Analytical Hierarchy Process*

### INTRODUCTION

The term “wellness” is widely used in European tourism. There is no single definition neither for terms “wellness” and “wellness tourism” nor for the term health tourism. Many researchers have explored concepts and definitions relating to the general theme (Kaspar, 1990; Goodrich and Goodrich, 1987; Lund, 2000). Key among them is the importance of life style, self-responsibility for health, and the exploitation of a person’s potential for a better quality of health. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that tourist activities of this market segment is for “healthy” people whose main motive is pampering and wellness. Pampering



involves offering people an experience that makes them feel good—services such as massages, herbal wraps and exfoliating scrubs. Wellness involves helping healthy people prevent problems so they stay well, both physically and mentally. Sometimes this means offering diagnostic testing to identify potential problems.

Wellness tourism is one of the most ancient forms of tourism if one considers the scrupulous attention paid to wellbeing by Greeks and Romans. This earliest form of health tourism is directly related to contemporary health and wellness and includes visits to mineral and hot springs (Didascalou and Nastos, 2003). Today's health and wellness programs respond to the growing consumer demands for fitness level improvement; for healthy lifestyle education; for nutrition counselling; for healing; for preventative medicine; for solving personal problems like stress or depression; and for spiritual health. Spas are now a key consideration for many holiday makers because they offer a relaxation and health component to the traditional holiday or break.

Today's wellness tourists are self-aware, active seekers of enhanced well-being, health and happiness. Stakeholders of the market must be aware that the needs of wellness tourists vary enormously at different times and stages of their lives (Smith and Kelly, 2006). Many hotels or resorts in our days offer spa-related services among others activities. This amenity in many circumstances is not for the "Guests Only" but also for local residents as it is a significant revenues producer. Such a spa can be called an "amenity spa" as it is added to services offered at the hotel. On the other hand there are spas where the spa experience is the central aspect of the operation. The purpose of this operation is the spa experience itself and it can be called a spa resort (or destination spa). Destination spas are entities unto themselves and create environments that reinforce their specific missions. Their purpose is to set guests on a healthier path for life and serve healthy spa cuisine, provide education on lifestyle improvement, offer fitness activities that built self-esteem while motivating take-home habits and future bodywork and pampering therapies that complement wellness programmes (McNeil and Ragins, 2005). The two kinds of spas have much in common operationally. Both offer: healthful food choices, exercise classes, spa services (e.g. baths, massages), and educational seminars. Where the two operations diverge is in how customers use the facilities. In the destination spa, guests usually come specifically for a program that includes activities from each spa component. In a resort spa, on the other hand, guests come for a full range of activities and choose as much or as little of the spa regimen as they please (Montson and Singer, 1992)

Several demographic, economic, and lifestyle factors are driving such tourism. There may be several reasons for this trend but the following factors play crucial part (García-Altés, 2005):

*Population Ageing:* The postwar baby-boom cohort is approaching the age of highest disposable income and highest propensity to travel. They may be less price conscious and also more sensitive to other aspects of the marketing mix (location, destinations, confidentiality, quality, etc.)

*Lifestyle Changes:* Demographics and lifestyles of these target markets will mean a marked increase in demand for cosmetic surgery, spas, retirement communities, fitness centres, and addiction treatment centres.

*Tourism Alternatives:* Today's consumers are already well traveled and look for something new and different in a holiday experience.

As there will be an increasing demand for spiritual products based on inner experiences a current boom for health and spa products is expected. Health products will also increasingly be added to other tourism and leisure products and accommodation operations will develop more combined products in the areas of health and creative tourism. For many countries the health/wellness tourism market is one of the fastest growing sector i.e. Taiwan, Japan, Australia (Cheng-Fei and Brian, 2008)

## **WELLNESS TOURISM IN GREECE**

Visiting Greece has been set out as a vision for Greek tourism industry but on the other hand this vision is mainly for sea-sun-sand tourism among with the cultural amenities. Differentiating and enriching Greek tourism product is one of the objectives of Greek tourism policy as this can contribute not only to reinforce the image of the country in its markets but also to increase demand during off-peak periods. As health and wellness tourism is regarded as an alternative for the off season and a product diversification for new or mature destinations the development of this form of tourism can improve the competitiveness of the Greek tourism industry.

Apart from the rare landscapes and special natural beauties, Greece has many mineral springs, scattered all over the country, with different chemical characteristics and the presence of rare drastic components with important therapeutic properties. As defined by Greek National Tourist Organization, there are 16 spa centers operating in Mineral Water Sources of national importance and 40 spa centers operating in Mineral Water Sources of local importance. For many years the health tourism product of these centres was focused on "cure" spas but as their traditional clients

were gradually being lost as they aged, many efforts were taken to renovate these properties and to enrich the composition of their product in order to tap the needs of health and wellness tourism market. Today apart from the services offered at these centres many hotels and resorts considering the excellent prospect of wellness tourism market, as individuals emphasize on improving and maintaining personal wellbeing, offer various spa services and activities.

The main objective of this study was to consider 5 prefectures (Ahaia, Arkadia, Ilia, Korinthia, Messinia in the region of Peloponnese for rating them as a suitable destination for placing a spa resort/hotel. Peloponnese has many capabilities (extended coastline, good climatic conditions, vibrant landscape, and many archaeological sites) for tourism development and a series of different forms of tourism can be developed so as to contribute to regional development. The development of new forms of tourism can enhance sustainable development without neglecting that no type of tourism can be sustainable in the absence of appropriate planning, monitoring, evaluation, and management. The good infrastructure plays a significant role in the tourism development of any region, so investments for hotels of highly quality facilities (Deluxe or Class A) is necessary for further growth of tourism especially in the market of wellness tourism where the demand is mainly in the form of the exclusive. The proximity to Athens and the easy accessibility by car can also be considered as positive factors for future tourism development. Halloway (2006) notes that all destinations share certain characteristics but their success in attracting tourists will depend upon the quality of essential benefits that they offer: attractions, facilities, accessibility and climate.

## **MODEL CONSTRUCTION**

As tourism industry changes rapidly one must use new tools and techniques in making effective decisions, but the tourism industry has yet to recognize the value that can provide decision support technologies like DSS, and usually refers to demand-oriented systems such as destination management or consumer-oriented travel-counseling systems (Wöber and Gretzel, 2000). A DSS is usually built to support the solution of a certain problem or to evaluate an opportunity. As such it is called a DSS application. A DSS usually uses models and is built (often by end-users) by an interactive and iterative process (Turban et al., 2003). As conceptualized, DSSs support the intellectual resources of human decision makers through the design of computer models and the

simulation of real-life experiences, DSSs continue to improve the quality of decisions by standardizing the process and logic information managers' choices and making the criteria for determining appropriate outcomes systematic (Piccoli and Wagner, 2003).

In the study the main focus of the authors was on suggesting a Decision Support System that takes into account distinct criteria in a decision making process about preliminary rating destinations to place a spa resort/hotel. A suitable method for selecting competing activities using distinct criteria is the Analytical Hierarchy Process which provides a means of systematizing complex problems (Turban, Aronson and Liang 2005). The criteria can be quantitative or qualitative in nature, and even quantitative criteria are handled by a decision maker's preference structure rather than numerically.

The criteria that authors pay significant role in rating destinations for the construction of a spa resort/hotel are: climate regime, existing tourism development and attractions. As tourism is closely linked to the environment the natural environment and climate conditions are very important in determining the variability and attractiveness of a region as a tourist destination. Two other factors play also an important role: the accessibility and the subsidy one can receive for the construction of the operation (Didaskalou, Nastos & Matzarakis, 2007), but as these factors are in general the same for the region of Peloponnesse, the authors did not take them into account in the model, but for other areas or districts where the differences are significant, these factors must be considered. Also an asset is the presence of a hot/mineral spring.

After the criteria has been established, from the authors through literature review, the DSS tool which will be used for constructing the model is the software Web-HIPRE which is on-line available from Helsinki University of Technology at <http://www.hipre.hut.fi/>. Web-HIPRE is a Java-applet for multiple criteria decision making based on the decision support software HIPRE 3+. In Web-HIPRE the problem is structured hierarchically to form a value tree. In this value tree each criterion is divided to its subcriteria, which are weighted by their importance to the decision maker (on the lowest level criteria the alternatives are weighted). The total weights of the alternatives are calculated from these local weights. The resulting model is called a value tree or a hierarchy of criteria and objectives depending on the tradition referred to. Table 1 and Figure 2 give the construction of the value tree of the study and the weighting methods.. The data for the 5 destinations are given in Table 2.

**Table 1.** The evaluation framework

Goal		Dimension	Weights	Criteria
Destination	1*	Climate	**	Temperature (°C)
				Relative humidity (%)
				Sunshine (hours)
				Wind speed (knotts)
				Precipitation (days)
	2*	Development	2***	5* Hotels
			1***	Index Defert
	3*	Attractions	1****	Nature (% of protected areas in km <sup>2</sup> )
			2****	Archaeological sites (number)
			3****	Museums (number)

\* SWING-technique. In SWING-technique you are firstly asked to give 100 points to the most important attribute change from the worst criterion level to the best level. Then you are asked to give points (<100) to reflect the importance of the attribute change from the worst criterion level to the best level relative to the most important attribute change.

\*\*Pairwise comparisons (AHP). In AHP you are asked to compare pairwise each possible pair of attributes. In each pair you must decide which attribute is more important and how much more important. These comparisons are saved in comparisons matrix and the ultimate weights of attributes are derived by the eigenvector of this matrix. For the comparisons a balanced scale was used, where 1.0 means equally preferred. The comparison matrix of climate subcriteria is given in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** The comparison matrix of climate subcriteria

	A	B	C	D	E
A Wind speed	1.0	1.0	1.86	0.71	0.48
B Precipitatio	1.0	1.0	1.4	0.48	0.42
C Relative Hu	0.54	0.71	1.0	0.11	0.11
D Temperatur	1.4	2.1	9.0	1.0	0.63
E Sunshine	2.1	2.4	9.0	1.6	1.0

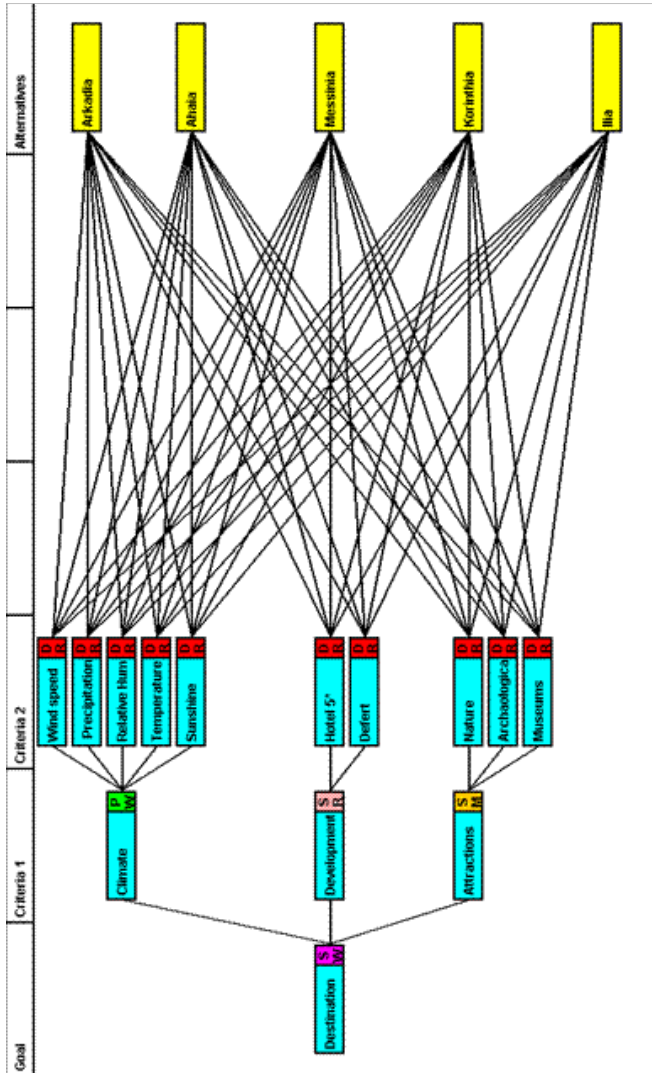
\*\*\*SMARTER-technique. In the SMARTER-technique you are asked to rank the attributes in the order of importance for the attribute changes from their worst level to the best level.

\*\*\*\*SMART-technique. In SMART-technique you are first asked to give 10 points to the least important attribute change from the worst criterion level to its best level. Then you are asked to give points ( $>10$ ) to reflect the importance of the attribute change from the worst criterion level to the best level relative to the least important attribute range.

For assigning weights to each alternative area in research Direct weighting was used. In direct weighting, the weights of subcriteria or alternatives are directly given.



**Figure 2.** The Value Tree



**Table 2.** Data of Model

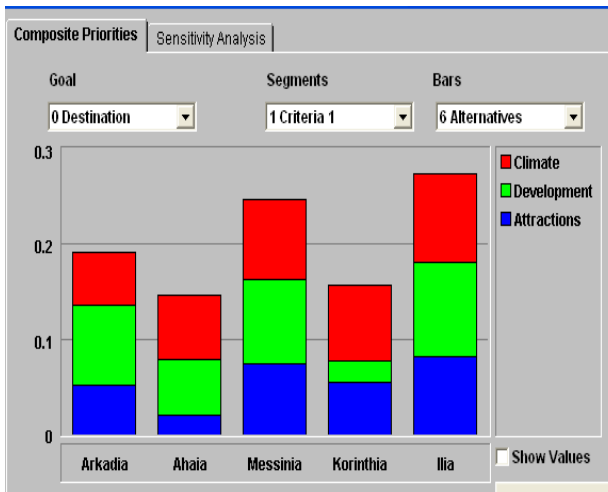
		<b>Ahai a</b>	<b>Arkad ia</b>	<b>Ilia</b>	<b>Korint hia</b>	<b>Messi nia</b>
<b>Climate</b>	Temperatur e	17,9	14,1	17,4	18,2	17,8
	Relative humidity	65,6	63	69	64,4	67,8
	Sunshine	2497, 6	2560,4	2766, 6	2634	2690,5
	Wind speed	4,6	4,9	4,8	5,2	5,3
	Precipitatio n	86	116,9	87,9	73,2	76,7
<b>Developm ent</b>	5* Hotels	0	1	2	3	1
	Index Defert	2,85	2,12	4,08	5,93	4,22
<b>Attractio ns</b>	Nature	22,71 %	19,65 %	16,26 %	17,81%	40,68 %
	Archaeolog ical sites	1	8	11	2	8
	Museums	5	2	4	4	6

The results of the DSS model are presented in Table 3, Figure 3, 4, 5 and 6. Ilia get the maximum score but as it is too close to Messinia, another run of AHP only for Messinia and Ilia, taking into account some other factors, is important for the final rank of the destinations.

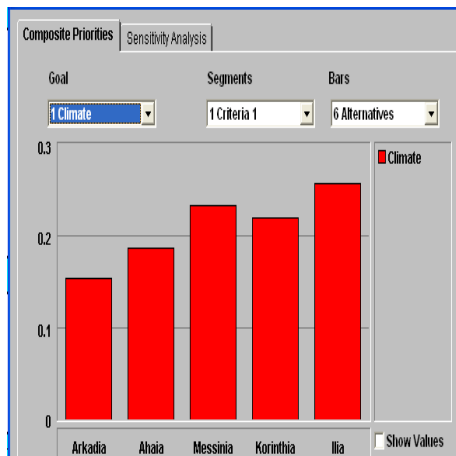
**Table 3.** The scores for the destinations by DSS

	Ahaia	Arkadia	Ilia	Korinthia	Messinia
Climate	0,068	0,056	0,093	0,079	0,084
Development	0,059	0,085	0,099	0,022	0,089
Attractions	0,021	0,052	0,083	0,053	0,075
Overall	0,147	0,193	<b>0,275</b>	0,157	0,248

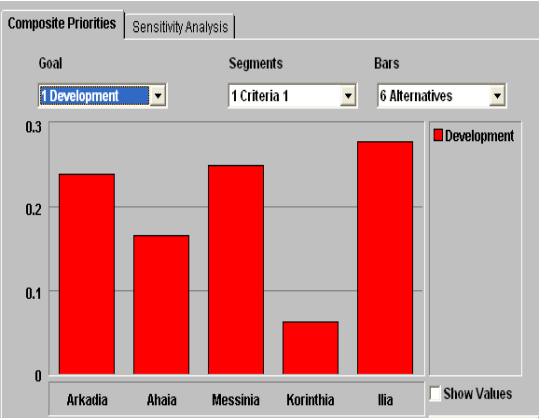
**Figure 3.** Deciding for the destination using all criteria



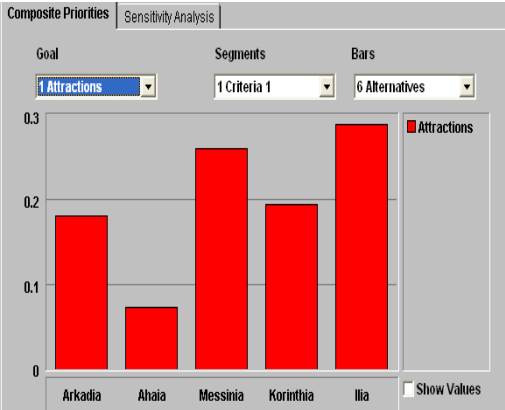
**Figure 4.** Decision with criterion the climate



**Figure 5.** Decision with criterion the development



**Figure 6.** Decision with criterion the attractions



## CONCLUSION

The aim of the authors is not to give an overall framework, as special information is needed. The model is of an exploratory nature and needs further consideration. Its main task is to establish a framework capable of providing a guide to planners from private or public sector. The article reports on a case study considering five destinations at prefecture Peloponnesse of Greece. The article contributes to the literature by focusing on tools that tourism organizations require for supporting their decision in various fields. The increasing complexity of business operations means that companies must design technologically mediated decision making systems to complement human judgment and standardize decision making in an attempt to create competitive advantage.

A key consideration for this explanatory study was to open up new dimensions for decision making in tourism industry as it is important to develop tools as a guide from a supply-side perspective. Due to the fact that more and more people are seeking out information for vacations at a spa it is of great importance to offer spa services and facilities to competitive areas. It is believed that in the process of evaluating the destinations, selecting an appropriate decision method is important. In this study, the authors adopted the AHP method as the basis for their analysis. Hence, the framework can be used as a direction to improve planning in the segment of spa/health/wellness tourism in the future.

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## THE WELLNESS TOURISM MARKET IN GREECE- AN INTERDISCIPLINARY METHODOLOGY APPROACH

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*Wellness tourism market world wide is experiencing rapid development in terms of size but also in terms of quality of the wellness tourism product. It is a form of tourism which can enhance the competitive advantage of a destination. This paper (which was originally presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the University of Aegean- "Planning for the Future - Learning from the Past: Contemporary Developments in Tourism, Travel & Hospitality"-2009) presents an interdisciplinary methodological approach in studying the Greek wellness tourism market, as well as a part of the research's findings in an attempt to define the special characteristics of the demand and supply side of this relatively new market, but also the typologies of the wellness tourists.*

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**Keywords:** *wellness tourism, Greece, triangulation, qualitative research*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry the past two decades is increasingly subsuming the identity of an experience industry (Opaschowski, 2001) and this can be marked due to the fact that increasingly more tourists seek for an optimal experience within the time constraints of their holidays (Trauer, 2006) that will offer both material and immaterial qualities as well as an emotional stimuli. The modern tourist is multi- motivated (Tsartas, 1996) and is trying to satisfy increasing and multiple needs during the travel experience. This approach to the tourism experience is connected with the Special Interest Tourism phenomenon. In that sense, the constant reciprocal exchange between the supply and demand side of the tourism market has led to new leisure and tourism experiences, new tourism





products and destinations which are based upon the satisfaction of a special interest / motive that the tourist might have. In addition, the global tourism market is becoming more and more competitive, constantly demanding the tourism product to become more compound in order to satisfy the increasing and differentiated needs of the potential tourists. Douglas et al. (2001) define Special interest tourism as “the provision of customised leisure and recreational experiences driven by the specific interest of individuals and groups”. Additionally it is derived that special interest tourism can be distinguished by the existence of a special and dominating motive - as far as demand side is concerned - and by the development of special infrastructure at a destination - as far as the supply side is concerned. Finally, special interest tourism is often considered as active tourism during which a person engages in a cultural, artisanal or leisure activity or sport in order to develop his/ her personality (WTO, 1985).

The comparative advantage of a tourism market/ destination can be transformed into a competitive advantage by enriching and differentiating the tourism product in ways of offering something new and of high quality. Alternative forms of tourism, their combination in action and their combination with the mass tourism model –when attainable- can form a challenging option especially for the modern tourist. An alternative form of tourism that has recently emerged as a global phenomenon through the convergence of industries, traditions and therapeutic practices is wellness tourism. These practices are now rediscovered, integrated and branded to create a new global industry (Cohen & Bodecker, 2008: 4). Up to an important degree - maybe by definition – wellness tourism industry is also challenged by issues of sustainable tourism development with environmental, social and economic performance.

## **WELLNESS TOURISM**

Wellness tourism is considered to be the sum of all relationships and phenomena resulting a journey and residence of people whose main motive is to preserve and promote their physical, mental and psychological health and their social prosperity. They stay in a specialised resort which provides the appropriate know-how and individual care. In addition they require a comprehensive service package comprising physical fitness, beauty care, healthy nutrition, relaxation, meditation and mental activity/ education and environmental sensitivity and social contacts (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

The trends towards wellness tourism imply that the approach towards health and wellbeing is rather in a preventing than a curative way and they are largely influenced by media and popular psychology (Smith-Puczko, 2008). Also wellness tourism is increasingly considered to be a part of a more active lifestyle, therefore spa going is treated by spa-goers as a part of a larger health and wellness lifestyle (ISPA, 2008). According to Smith and Puczko (2008) the nature of demand for spa tourism is changing as important social factors are changing- Kaspar (1990) refers to worsening living conditions in polluted metropolitan areas, unhealthy life styles, stress and the fact that the earth population is getting older. The average age of spa goers world wide is around 44 years old, while the number of younger spa users is increasing due to increasing health consciousness. Furthermore, today's travelers are more sophisticated (Mintel, 2007) due to the fact that they are already more experienced, well informed, independent, more quality conscious and a lot harder to please as they seek for the unique experience. The wellness facilities and services by nature can be easily tailored to meet specific needs of an individual. The global trends lately indicate that the wellness –spa industry is moving beyond luxury and pampering into the area of providing healthcare and raising consciousness (Cohen & Bodecker, 2008) regarding issues such as the balance of mind, soul and physical state.

The spa/ wellness tourism industry has increased exponentially in both volume and value, corresponding with the upward trend for health and wellness products in the last 20 years. Despite the spike in demand, the industry remains highly fragmented (Mintel, 2007). Existing and potential spa-goers and travellers are confronted with a confusing array of brands and formats, each claiming its own distinct positioning and philosophy, and catering to various target markets and budgets.

“Generally, spas and wellness resorts in the USA and Asia-Pacific region tend to focus more on lifestyle counselling, massage, indigenous treatments, and the cosmetic aspect of wellness, whereas the overall trend in Europe remains medicinal” (Mintel, 2007). What is interesting is that spa industry is expanding towards two directions in order to cover a greater part of the wellness tourism market. In the first case it is moving towards luxurious facilities and treatments to attract the elite of the tourist market. On the opposite direction, a new breed of discount spas, spa resorts and spa chains are offering treatments at comparatively lower prices in order to attract middle or lower class tourists or younger ones (teenagers etc.) and why not giving them the opportunity to become loyal customers and repeaters to a significant degree.

The latest trends in the international wellness tourism market indicate that the wellness tourism business is seeking and testing new distribution channels (i.e. through intermediaries such as specialised tour operators, specialised webpages/ portals, consortia or voluntary chains etc.) in order to achieve lower cost, better and quicker access to the target market, increased sales, reduction of the business risk. In some cases though, many tourism destinations and companies choose the direct delivery of their products in order to have a more effective overall control over their product (i.e. through personal contact with the tourist, in the wellness tourism venue) (CTO, 2005).

The Greek market follows the trends of the international wellness tourism market with a certain delay. Even though the international wellness tourism market is positioned in the development stage at the Butler's life cycle model, in Greece it is safe to say that it makes its early steps in the introduction stage. Despite the fact that Greece has a long history in therapeutic tourism (balnearies, spas etc.), with traditional spa towns offering an interesting amalgamation of wellness and healing tourism product, it cannot be considered as a wellness tourism destination. The private initiative in certain Greek destinations (i.e. Chalkidiki, Edipsos, Crete, Rodos, Santorini etc.) has proven that when responsible holistic investments are realised, then the market can offer a differentiated, competitive and enriched product. In addition, due to the fact that the state has formed no clear and strict specs for defining a wellness resort, all sorts of hotels and centers can claim that they offer wellness tourism services without following a specific framework of rules and prerequisites. There is no central planning though for this sort of entrepreneurship, so we cannot refer to a well organised or experienced Greek market as a wellness destination but only as wellness resorts. On one hand almost 190 4\* and 5\* hotels are listed in the catalogue of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (2007) offering wellness services. But, as there is no clear definition of wellness tourism, wellness product and resort it is difficult to describe the nature of the wellness product they offer. On the other hand, new or renovated facilities have invested in offering the wellness tourism product with a holistic approach, following the trends of the international market. In fact, hotel and wellness resorts, in Crete for example, have been awarded as the best world's spa (2005, 2006, 2007). This proves that the first dynamic steps into the Greek wellness tourism market have been achieved.

## **THE RESEARCH IN THE GREEK WELLNESS TOURISM MARKET**

In order to identify the present characteristics and future trends and dynamics of the Greek wellness tourism market from both demand and supply side a research is conducted as part of the on-going doctoral thesis referring to the Greek wellness tourism market. The research being conducted in order to support this thesis has as a primal purpose to explore and present the structure of the wellness tourism market in Greece. More over, this research seeks to analyse the findings and link them with tourism, motivation and consumer theories or tourism development theories.

Prior to the fieldwork concerning wellness tourism in Greece, deskwork preceded in order for the global market characteristics, theories, concepts and statistic data to be identified in a primal conceptual framework. Deskwork prior to the fieldwork included activities of organising, sense making, analysing and interpreting the literature review findings (Schwandt, 1997:30-31). After the fieldwork is completed deskwork will also provide with a report of analysing and interpreting the data gathered on the research field.

Literature review provided an important source of methodological and theoretical ideas concerning wellness and wellness tourism and most importantly it provides a dynamic basis of comparison with the findings on the field. One of the main questions that were set for examination (apart form the characteristics of the market's demand and supply side) was whether the wellness tourism should be placed as an "umbrella concept" that included health tourism, therapeutic tourism and medical tourism (Smith, 2008), or we should continue considering it as a part of health tourism (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

The study consists of a cluster of four different researches. The first one (quantitative) addresses to the managers of 186 4\*, 5\* and Luxurious Hotels in Greece that offer wellness services, the second one (qualitative) addresses to 20 key informants that specialize in tourism development in general and in wellness tourism in particular, the third one (quantitative) addresses to wellness tourists in 3 areas in Greece, and the fourth one (also quantitative) concerns the visitors of thermal springs in 3 traditional spa towns in Greece.

The capturing of the data concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the research is realised through the completion of a close- ended questionnaire sent to the wellness hotels managers of hotels around Greece (Rodos, Crete, Athens, Cyclades etc.) via email. The questionnaire includes questions concerning

demographic characteristics of the tourists visiting wellness hotels, the characteristics of the supply side of the Greek wellness market, facilities' characteristics, treatments and activities preferred by the tourists, company strategies issues and the interaction with other special interest tourism activities. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> part of the study (wellness tourists in hotels and visitors of thermal springs) is realised by conducting personal interviews on the field (at hotels in the areas of Edipsos, Rodos, Chalkidiki, Loutraki, Athens, Crete) which have as a backbone a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire includes questions concerning demographic characteristics, motivation and reasons for visiting the facilities, the reasons for seeking wellness in their trip, the preferred wellness therapies of the tourists, the combination of wellness tourism activities with other ones from special forms of tourism, the level of satisfaction from the wellness tourism/ hydrotherapy product in Greece etc.

A pilot test prior to the official research procedure (related to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of the research cluster) was conducted in the traditional spa town of Edipsos, in order to identify any mistakes relative to the questionnaire design and the sample planned to be used, the wording of the questionnaire, the question sequencing, to test analysis procedures and to estimate interview time (Veal, 2006:276). The area was chosen as it can be described as a miniature of the Greek wellness tourism market (combination of traditional and renovated facilities, existence of all groups of wellness tourists etc.). Some questions had to be amended in order to be more understandable and 3 of them had to be removed as the answers had no real use or connection with the Greek wellness tourism market. The pilot test for the key informants' research involved 4 in depth interviews which led to the amendment of 5 questions. In general, the value of this pilot survey was extended to ensure the accuracy of the sampling framework and data capturing techniques (Christou, 1999).

Because of the topic of wellness being complex, multidisciplinary and new for tourism, this phd study is a combination of three types of research. (Veal, 2006). It is descriptive because it investigates the size and the frequencies of the variables (demographic variables, the travel characteristics, the number of the respondents etc.). It is also a causal (explanatory) research because it investigates the causalities, the correlation between the independent and dependent variables (i.e. the total satisfaction from the wellness services- dependent variable- and the consumption of specific wellness services – independent variable). Finally, at a degree it is an exploratory (and rather evaluative) research because it tries to depict information concerning the typology of the

tourists and the way the wellness tourism market and policy is organized in Greece.

Scientists have stated the incompatibility of qualitative and quantitative methods (Kallas et al, 2008:98-108). From the positivists point of view experience theoretically can be detached and objective. Theory can be validated empirically and be empirically objective (detached- neutral). This approach has offered the social sciences the justification for the development of quantitative methodology for empirical research based on the observation of populations. On the other hand the hermeneutical approach (which supported qualitative research) acknowledges that physical sciences and social one cannot share common methods as they deal with different phenomena. Most importantly, the social reality is structured by the subjects through the meanings they give to the human behavior. So, the external world is conceptualised through the common formulism systems that the members of a society accept. In social sciences/ facts (and not only them) there is the need to combine the two methodological approaches in order to avoid duality of scientific descriptions.

The study is using both approaches of research such as the quantitative one and the qualitative research. Quantitative research is supported by the qualitative one for better understanding and documentation of the findings as the market of wellness tourism in Greece needs to be defined in economic, social and tourism development terms. Quantitative research is important for quantifying aspects of social life by assigning numbers which are representative of a range of possible responses (Veal, 2006- Kallas, 2008:156). More over, quantitative methodology describes phenomena through statistic ontology (Kallas, 2008: 99- Brown, 1993) without taking into consideration the special characteristics of phenomena. It only analyses them in terms of comparing the prices the variables take in analysis. It can provide tools for measurement, causality between variables and phenomena, generalisation, and in some cases replication of findings. Exactly at this point it is important to use a methodology that will allow the researcher to describe the social phenomena by forming ontologies and relationships between them. The tools for this can be supplied by qualitative research. The essence of qualitative research is primarily diagnostic as it tries to reveal the factors affecting and forming specific kinds of behavior (i.e. the loyalty of customers in a specific spa brand). In other words it provides a diagnostic approach for the motives and deeper reasons of any type of behavior (human behavior, system's behavior etc.). In this research

qualitative methods are used as a decisive tool for the approach of behaviors, beliefs and opinions.

The triangulation (interdisciplinary) method (mixing qualitative with quantitative methods) is being used as convergent validation was necessary. It is a procedure of establishing the fact that the “criterion of validity is met” and there is integrity as far as the drawn inferences are concerned (Schwandt, 1997:163). Examining a phenomenon or activity from more than one vantage points can limit up to an important degree any personal or methodological biases and enhance a study generalisability (Decrop, 1999). According to Denzin (1978) and Decrop (1999) there are four basic types of triangulation: Combining data sources, methods, investigators and theories. In the present phd research data sources (information from hotel managers, wellness tourists and key informants concerning the characteristics of the tourists’ motivation and typology will be compared as well as the wellness tourism development issues), research methods (qualitative and quantitative methods and tools will be used such as in depth interviews and close ended questionnaires) and maybe theory combination will be adopted (concerning the examination of tourist characteristics from sociological, marketing and economic disciplinary angles).

What triangulation is trying to do is to give a new model of combined methodological approach to research and analysis which will be based upon discovering – describing patterns of data- information (qualitative approach) and justifying (validating) them (quantitative approach) (Kallas et al., 2008:101). The convergence of qualitative and quantitative methods can happen through the use of tools of aggregated management and production of data (i.e. the categorisation in qualitative research and description of phenomena in quantitative research) (Kallas et al, 2008). Finally qualitative and quantitative research is well founded by a series of proofs from text and data groups. In this way empirical research is changing its methodological model from the uni- phase model (organisation of the research into distinctive autonomous research projects) to bi-phase one (more in the form of an integrated research project that includes and shares concepts, terms, data etc.) allowing the combination and interaction of qualitative and quantitative methods (Kallas et al, 2008:103-104).

Finally, one of the ambitions of this PhD thesis is to provide all the necessary information for a complete and integrated S.W.O.T. analysis concerning the characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Greek Wellness tourism market which could support further

planning and rendering of this challenging, promising but still unmapped special interest tourism market.

## **RESULTS FROM KEY INFORMANTS' RESEARCH**

In this paper the justification of the research methodology selected and the results rising from the key informant research will be presented. The objectives of realizing a qualitative research among key informants of the Greek tourism market are as follows:

- To identify the way wellness and wellness tourism is perceived by the key informants
- To identify the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the tourists visiting hotels in Greece that offer wellness services (forming a typology of tourists- tourist clusters)
- To identify the consumer behavior of the wellness tourists
- To identify the niche market that concerns the wellness tourism market in Greece
- To identify the trends of the Greek wellness tourism market
- To identify the characteristics of the supply side of the Greek wellness tourism market concerning the quality of the wellness product, the level of education of the human resources involved in this market as well as the synergies developed with the state and other complementary or competitor companies
- To identify the possible relation/ combinations of wellness tourism with other special interest tourism types that could support the development of a complex of special interest tourism activities in a Greek destination
- To investigate strengths and weaknesses of the Greek wellness tourism market which could be taken into consideration for the future planning and development of wellness tourism in Greece.

The 20 key informants were selected due to their special relationship with the fieldwork and the Greek tourism market. They are professors of Greek national public educational foundations (universities and technological institutions) and they specialize in tourism issues. They are knowledgeable, articulate insiders, possessing a unique perspective on social, economic and development action in the site of special interest tourism where the fieldwork is unfolding (Schwandt, 1997:78). In addition their knowledge, education and experience allow them to be confident and trusted advisors. In the key informants' group sociologists, specialists in tourism development, marketing experts, information technology experts, geographers and law experts are included.



The qualitative research with interviewing key informants was chosen despite the fact that in Greece the wellness tourism market and product are an unmapped area. The reason for this is that Greece has a great tradition in the early forms of wellness tourism such as spa / curative tourism thanks to the numerous historical spa towns and thermes that exist. In any case the market may be different and reforming but some basic knowledge and experience exists and if combined with the general special interest tourism characteristics and issues, the results are expected to be interesting and useful for creating a clearer image of the Greek wellness tourism market.

In the next pages a part of the qualitative research findings is presented giving answers to a part of the research objectives.

**Defining wellness and wellness tourism.** All of the interviewees agreed to the fact that wellness is a state of balance between the body, the mind and the soul. It is also considered by all as an on going process that makes a person feel content and complete, depending always on one's way of life and criteria for evaluating the wellness state. An important number of interviewees (6 out of 20) related wellness with the active role and responsibility a person should have towards life, especially as resistance to the problems of the post industrial societies (stress, detachment from the natural environment, crisis in the human relationships etc.). The way wellness is perceived by the key informants is in the same ground with the definitions given by Dunn (1959) "special state of health comprising an overall sense of well-being which sees man as consisting of body, spirit and mind and being dependent on his environment" or Ardell (1986) "state of health featuring the harmony of body, mind and spirit, with self-responsibility, physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition/diet, relaxation (need for distressing) /meditation, mental activity/ education and environmental sensitivity/social contacts as fundamental elements".

Defining wellness tourism on the other hand was not as unanimous as defining wellness. The majority (more than 10 out of 20) of the interviewees stated that wellness tourism is a broad concept that includes the concepts of health/ medical tourism and curative tourism (i.e. balnearies, thermes). Following this approach, wellness tourism is a special interest tourism form that involves activities, facilities and products that aim to the fulfillment of balance between body, mind and soul. Half of them were specific and mentioned activities of socialising, convalescing or prevention for good health, pampering, healthy nutrition, aesthetic treatments, exercising, educational programmes, alternative treatments and getting in touch with the natural environment, approaching

the definition given by Mueller & Kaufmann (see p.2). Half of the interviewees comment that motivation for wellness tourism primarily is connected with psychological reasons.

On the other hand, 6 out of 20 of the key informants stated that wellness tourism should be located under the broader concept of health tourism, as it was mentioned until recently (i.e. Mueller & Kaufmann, 2000). They recognise a difference in the motives for wellness or health tourism and more particularly, they connect wellness tourism with luxury and spas, while health tourism with a health problem (which needs medical attention or balnearies).

One of the interviewees mentioned that every form of tourism should be considered as wellness tourism, as the motives and need of each person that define wellness are always subjective.

One key informant suggested that wellness tourism should be considered as an autonomous special interest tourism form that is not connected with health tourism.

The fact that everyone stated the importance of providing specialised facilities combined with outdoor activities in the natural environment makes it clear that wellness tourism activities must be pursued in a controlled environment but the integration with the nature can enrich and complete the wellness experience.

**Wellness tourists' Characteristics.** The majority of the interviewees (18 out of 20) agreed that the dominant age group of the wellness tourists refers to the ages between 40-60 years old, followed by the elder groups. Following the international trends, 12 key informants out of 20 estimate that younger ages, especially the ones belonging to the age group of 30-40 years old will soon become an important player of wellness tourism demand.

What is interesting is that one of the interviewees consider that all the age groups carry equal importance in the wellness tourism market, due to the fact that the wellness tourism product is complicated, interdisciplinary and can cover a wide range of interests, following the age group preferences.

The remaining one key informant mentioned that the dominant age group of the wellness tourist is 60 years old and elder people due to their health conditions.

**Wellness tourists' Sex.** An impressive number of the key informants (18 out of 20) stated that at least for the last 5 years there is no worth - mentioning difference between the numbers of men and women visiting wellness resorts. Almost equally, men and women dare to seek for their

wellness experience – even though there are differences in some of the activities they choose.

Despite this international notion of the tourism market, two of the interviewees stated that women are clearly more than men in the wellness resorts, and they recognised that the number of men visiting these facilities is increasing impressively.

**Wellness tourists' Occupation.** 12 people of the Key informants suggested that the dominant group of wellness tourists is occupied in managerial or bureaucratic positions which are related to the modern post industrial society and stressful conditions. Additionally, 3 key informants stated that women dealing with household activities indicate a significant part of the wellness tourist niche market.

One forth of the key informants stated that they had no clear image of the occupational status of the wellness tourists.

**Wellness tourists' Economic Status.** The majority of the key informants (16 out of 20) recognised that the income level of the wellness tourists classified them to the middle and mostly upper class ranking as they stated that the vast majority of the wellness resorts offer their services in prices that address to a narrow part of the tourist market.

The remaining 4 key informants did not have any information on this subject.

**Wellness tourists' Educational level.** More than half of the key informants (12 out of 20) argued that the dominant group of the wellness tourists has a higher level of education and this might come in accordance with their income level. The following group has an average level of education.

**Wellness tourists' Consumer behavior.** The key informants' arguments concerning the wellness tourists' consumer behavior were very interesting. 15 of them refer to this type of tourists as being experienced tourists and familiarised with the wellness product which they might use in their place of origin. They tend to spend important amounts of money in wellness services and treatments additionally to their general tourism experience. This choice is not only a matter of the nature of the wellness tourism product, but it is a matter of the wellness tourists' mentality and idiosyncrasy. They tend to be loyal tourists of specific wellness resorts and treatments but due to the fact that the competition is very hard they are tempted and willing to try new facilities and treatments that could add to their wellness experience or social image/ status. Some of the interviewees stated that in the modern society an important part of the tourists is “money rich and time poor”, which means that the average length of holidays is shortened. As a result, the tourism experience should

be enhanced and intensified in order to offer satisfaction and help the tourist reach the desirable mental, psychological and physical condition- and he/she is willing to pay for it no matter the cost. That is exactly the role of wellness tourism activities for the self realised part of wellness tourists. One key informant argued that wellness tourists are often representative of the package tourists (they visit most famous destinations and consume whatever is included in their package deal). Interestingly, only 4 key informants mentioned that wellness tourists have a special approach towards life and health seeking for a superior experience for their body and mind and they are willing to try alternative treatments that might improve their quality of life. A few of the interviewees (6) also mentioned that a significant part of the wellness tourist market have an elitist approach to the wellness tourism product and experience and they could try anything that could add to their social status either consciously or instinctively.

Moreover, it was mentioned that wellness tourists have high consumer expenditure with high qualitative expectations for their experience.

A fifth of the key informants' group stated that they had limited knowledge of the wellness tourists' consumer behavior and could only mention the fact they tend to spend more money than the average tourist, while one of them stated that they had no knowledge on the consumer behavior of wellness tourists.

**Wellness Tourism Trends.** All of the interviewees recognised the increasing tendency for developing the wellness tourism market in Greece, following the global trends. Despite these tendencies 14 of them recognise the fact that in Greece wellness is still considered to be a luxury and not an established everyday need- in contrast to other countries (esp. in Europe) where wellness services are a part of the everyday life. In the majority of the wellness resorts the wellness tourism product is not the dominant one but a part of a complex tourism package and experience. Also most of them agree that new wellness treatments and activities start to be integrated in the Greek wellness tourism market. 8 key informants mention that wellness resorts start to offer signature treatments, couple treatments and alternative treatments in order to expand the wellness experience and keep the tourist in the wellness center, which gradually is not limited in a small area of the resort but it occupies an open, wide and expensive space. They mention that Greek wellness resorts (usually 5\*) offer a cosmopolitan product, which combines the multicultural dimensions of the treatments with the destinations' character (i.e.

Edipsos, Elounda etc.) by integrating local products such as oil or thermal water in the treatments.

Finally, 6 of the interviewees argued that the wellness experience is gradually moving outside the walls of a spa center and develops through outdoor activities, in the natural environment. The competition within the wellness tourism market and the special tourism market in general is increasing, so the Greek hotels are trying to find ways of enriching their product and competitive advantage.

**Wellness tourism market in Greece- position on the tourism life cycle model.** The majority of the key informants (15 of them) argue that the wellness tourism market in Greece is in the exploration-implementation stage according to Butler's tourism life cycle model. Some areas (like in Crete, Chalkidiki, etc.) where private initiative made competitive investments can claim that they are in the early stages of the development stage. On the other hand, traditional spa towns find themselves in the stagnation stage or even declining stage with few cases like Edipsos, Kaiafas etc. that try to rejuvenate with new investments and by combining special interest tourism activities.

**Wellness tourism marketing in Greece.** The majority of the key informants had a vague image of the wellness tourism marketing strategies adopted in the tourism market. This is not something that cannot be explained as wellness tourism follows the pattern of every other special interest tourism form marketing strategy in Greece: weak presence of central planning with some daring private initiatives. 6 key informants suggested that the marketing and promotional campaign should be targeted primarily in the local market and secondarily in the international one as still it is difficult to compete with other traditional wellness tourism destinations such as Italy, N. Europe in terms of pricing, networking etc. Additionally the resorts in Greece should focus in the quality of the services and most importantly in the differentiation of the product. They also argue that synergies between local entrepreneurs and local authorities could support a stronger marketing strategy that could limit the power of international tour operators in some destinations. Moreover, Greece should not forget the traditional spa towns and try to make them islets of wellness tourism activities or combined special interest tourism activities.

**Connection of Wellness tourism with other special interest tourism forms.** Key informants agree that by developing one kind of tourism activity (such as wellness tourism) a destination cannot support sustainable development mostly because the competition is so intense (in a national and international level) that the tourist needs to have a variety

of stimuli that could enrich his/ her tourism activity. They all suggest the development of wellness tourism in several destinations following the philosophy of development in form of a grid where other special interest tourism activities can be combined and interact, depending on the resources each destination might have (see also Kokkosis & Tsartas, 2001:85). This integrated and sustainable development can support the local society as well and increase the diffusion of benefit throughout the community. 16 Key informants stated that wellness tourism can be combined with the majority of alternative forms of tourism, while the remaining 4 pinpointed specifically some of them, such as cultural, sports, religious, ecotourism, health tourism, conference tourism etc.

## **CONCLUSIONS- IMPLICATIONS**

As far as any conclusions concerning the findings of the key informants part of research are concerned, some first arguments could be safe to be presented. In particular, it has to be noticed that key informants – even though they are experts in tourism development and special interest tourism issues- have limited opinion upon issues concerning the conceptual demarcation and the characteristics of Wellness tourism. This fact, without being odd, it surely proves the need and importance of further in depth interdisciplinary study of wellness tourism's special features and parameters. Moreover, this appears to be the only way to define also the different types of the wellness tourism product which make the supply side of the market so fragmented. After all it is necessary to have a sound definition of the wellness tourism product in order to be able to define its development strategies. Under the scope of further research, it would be useful to collect information that could enable clustering special interest tourism activities with wellness tourism activities in a way that they could create a competitive tourism product under the broader spectrum of sustainable development. In any case, it is important to take into consideration the fact that the complicated nature of the wellness tourism product makes it difficult to firmly define its special identity unless it is related to some special characteristics depending on the type of the destination (i.e. a historic spa town- balnearies), the activities combined (i.e. ecotouristic and wellness tourism activities), the type of facilities supporting wellness tourism (i.e. holistic wellness centers, resorts, city spas etc.) or the products used for the treatments and diet (i.e. mastic oil, olive oil, chocolate etc.).

Special reference should be made to the importance of the remarks and propositions the key informants made as they present a holistic,

responsible, systemic and specific approach to the fact that wellness tourism is directly connected with issues of sustainable development at a local level, while following the scientific dialogue rising the last few years and concerning the role of special interest tourism in sustainable development in the Greek and international market. This thesis tries to pinpoint the necessity of the development of synergies among the stakeholders of a destination which relate to the development of special interest tourism in terms of sustainable tourism development. Following the key informants' suggestions it is necessary to underline the need for developing a complex, differentiated and interesting tourism product which could have as a core the wellness tourism activities but should be enriched with other special interest tourism activities. And in order to achieve that well planned synergies should take place to support the local special character of each destination and make sure that tourism development is integrated within the local economy.

In addition, marketing strategy issues raise at a national and local level that need to be defined and managed in order to support the desirable wellness tourism development model in Greece based upon the demographic characteristics of the tourists, their expenditure patterns, and motivation and of course the limitations of sustainable tourism development.

The need for validity of findings led to the adoption of the triangulation approach of collecting data, analysing information and combining research methodologies. Indisputably, this approach for studying the new and unmapped Greek wellness tourism market is considered to be the most appropriate one in order to achieve more credible and dependable information which will limit the biases of each independent methodology and offer the chance for crosschecks and complementary information at different levels (Hartmann, 1988).

The wellness tourism market in Greece is an unmapped area which presents significant potentials for future growth but also has some structural issues to solve. This ongoing research aims to present the characteristics of the demand and supply side, the possibilities of a niche market and the formulation of typologies of tourists in a way that can ensure the validity of the findings and provide credible information which can support a future wellness tourism development plan at a national level.

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## EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONS, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND FUTURE BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS IN AGROTOURISM

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*Marketers have been working tirelessly to determine the factors that lead to customer satisfaction presuming that customer satisfaction automatically leads to repeated customers. Service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and repeat business are issues well recognized and investigated by researchers. Recent theory however suggests that service quality alone doesn't necessarily encourage customers to repeat their choices, but rather, "complete" customer satisfaction does. Thus, the main research question addressed in this paper is how to complete the relationship between "complete" customer satisfaction and repeat business. The customer's emotions have been proved to be a key determinant to turn a satisfied customer into a repeated one. The research was conducted in 2009, addressed to customers of agrotourism businesses on Lesbos Island and Florina – Greece.*

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**Keywords:** *Customer satisfaction, tourism services, agrotourism, emotions, overall satisfaction, expectations, repeated customers.*

### INTRODUCTION

The technological advances took away from urban citizens the contact with nature thus creating the need for action and activities - either



authentic or as an illusion - in the landscape (Iakovidou, 2000). On the other hand, rural areas suffer from urbanization, isolation, restructuring of the agricultural sector and out-migration of higher educated youth (Hannigan, 1994). The “panacea” proposed for rural areas, has been agrotourism contributing to the economic viability and social regeneration of isolated areas and small islands (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Spilanis, 2000), while offering the customers the opportunity to link with the natural landscape and local population (Iakovidou, 2000).

A further customers’ demand is to have their needs met when selecting a destination. A great amount of research has been carried out on a global level aiming to investigate the causes of customer satisfaction. Meanings such as expectation, disconfirmation, intention, perceived price and repeated customers are among the issues investigated (Normann, 1984). Companies spend huge amounts of money to maintain their customers’ loyalty. It is estimated that customer satisfaction leads to consumer loyalty and encourages the repetition of visits, (Parasuraman, et. al., 1985, 1988) while on the other hand low quality service discourages return customers. Thus, it is generally accepted that when a company provides services of high quality it can anticipate satisfied customers and repeated guests (Tu, 2004).

Recent theory however suggests that service quality alone doesn’t necessarily encourage customers to repeat their choices, but rather, “complete” customer satisfaction does (Jones & Sasser, 1995). The missing keys to achieving “complete” customer satisfaction and consequently repeat business are the emotions and the overall experience and the way customers value these two factors when selecting a destination is the main issue the present paper deals with.

## **AGROTOURISM**

Scholars and developers acknowledge that the economic development and the continuing expansion caused major (mostly negative) environmental, economic and sociocultural changes among farmers and their communities. Once modern agriculture was adopted, a massive rural outmigration took place which intensified in the 1960s and the 1970s (Anthopoulou, 2008). Soon, the negative impacts of modern agriculture and the effects on social and physical environments became a widespread concern. The realization of the environmental effects was the ideological underpinning of the concept of sustainable development (Paniagua, 2002).

Generally conceptualizing the sustainable development, it refers to those social and ecological conditions necessary to support human life at a certain level of well being through future generations. The core idea of sustainable development is that current economic, political and social policies should not damage prospects for maintaining or improving living standards in the future (Boo, 1990).

Given the numerous assessments of the negative consequences of the mass tourism on local systems, scientists supported the idea of a “new tourism” that lies within the natural and cultural “capacity” of the destination area. Thus, “new tourism” has been presented as a “sustainable” alternative to mass tourism. For many, sustainable tourism development holds great potential to revitalize rural areas (Tsartas, 2001).

Throughout Europe, tourism has been widely promoted as the lever to face the social and economic challenges isolated areas confront with, primarily those associated with the decline of traditional agrarian industries (Sharpley, 2002). Rural areas have been projected in the debate on tourism and sustainable development for two main reasons: first, because rurality embodies all those qualities that are missing from the urban and modern society, the urban citizen’s need to reunite with nature and rural culture (Butler et al., 1988, Logothetis, 1988). The second relates to the numerous empirical attempts in many Western countries to enjoy sustainable development as a starting point for rural policies. (Butler et al., 1998, Anthopoulou, 1998).

Gorton et al., (1998) highlighted that most tourism initiatives in rural areas initiate from urban citizens who usually invest the money they get from selling a house to a tourism business in the countryside where the investment cost is usually low. Just 6-18% of these tourism activities start from farmers who usually in crisis periods choose rather to decrease their costs from differentiating their product (Jenkins et al., 1998). However, Sharpley (2002) questioned the panacea character given to agrotourism being a “magic wand that will speed up economic progress” (Hoggart et al., 1995).

The new roles that agriculture is challenged to confront with are the protection of environment, natural life, conservation of cultural heritage and familiarity with local culture (Tsartas, 2001, Anthopoulou, 2008). Increasing interest in tourism activities developed in rural areas led within the last decade to increasing researches whereas public agencies encourage the establishment of small medium enterprises by rural population so as to keep residents in rural areas and increase employment and social welfare. (Fleischer & Felsenstein 2000). However, these small

scale, highly seasonal agrotourism enterprises face many challenges among which the inability of local communities to combine the agricultural values with the guest – service values (Fleisher and Pizam, 1997) as well as the fact that the quality of products and services don't match customers' expectations and demands (Sharpley, 2002). Researchers have proven that tourists to rural areas look for rest and new experiences (Iakovidou 2000; Sigala, 2003; Albacete-Saez et al., 2007) while simply providing accommodation facilities is not sufficient to attract visitors (Sharpley, 2002) but rather active holidays with educational and natural activities (Spilanis, 2000). Agrotourists are motivated by the formula of 3Fs (initials of the Greek words for Nature – Friendship – Hospitality) rather than 3Ss formula (Sea – Sun – Sand) (Iakovidou, 1995).

## **SERVICE QUALITY**

Efforts made by tourism enterprises to maximize individual spend and provide products and experiences that could serve as motives to tourists to stay longer and return on repeat visits (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). When tourists receive excellent quality, their loyalty is empowered and this is a relationship verified by researchers. Loyalty to a rural destination can be directly linked to the services provided to tourists, which allow them to enjoy the participation in natural environment or tasks, custom and local way of living (Boo, 1990, Wight, 1994).

On the other hand, accommodation is extremely important to the experience. Sharpley (2004) concludes that solely the accommodation is not enough to attract tourists but most agrotourism enterprises think that they lack the necessary know how or skills to provide quality services. Furthermore, Kozak (2001) proves the strong connection between tourist's total satisfaction and his intention to visit again the same destination or others in the area.

Some researchers argue that improving the service of the qualities provided cannot achieve the desired customer loyalty. On the contrary, the "complete" customer satisfaction is the one to lead to repeated guests. Loyalty is more qualitative and subjective. Thus, a business can provide satisfaction without achieving loyal guests but cannot accomplish the opposite relationship (Stewart, 1995).

Questions that emerge from literature such as:

*"If they are so satisfied, why are they leaving?"* (Kirkby and Nelson, 2003)

*“Satisfaction without engagement? Worthless. Satisfaction with engagement? Priceless”*

*“If you don’t make an emotional connection with customers, then satisfaction is worthless”* (McEwen, 2003) need to be answered.

Crompton & Love (1995) defined customer satisfaction as a psychological outcome that originates from tourists’ participation to leisure or tourism activities. Zeithaml et al., (1996) highlighted that customer satisfaction is strongly connected to service quality starting with the expectations customers have when they make their choices.

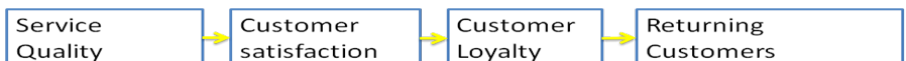
The four elements that constitute satisfaction and loyalty are:

- Brand: the enterprise image, values
- Quality: the perceived quality/professionalism of the enterprise, its service and products
- Interrelationship: the degree to which customer needs are met
- Performance: service delivery, product reliability and response times (Tu, 2004)

Customer satisfaction as a method to pertain customers is declining especially to businesses where services are greatly involved (Tu, 2004).

Possible factors behind falling satisfaction include:

- Customers become more demanding and their expectations increase.
- Enterprises don’t use their brand names even when they have one.
- Customers lack of emotional bonding with the brand.
- Customers feel “hunted” as their personal data are used to be bombed with sales.
- Lower service quality due to automation and reduced cost (Kirkby et al., 2003)
- The widely accepted theory indicates that good service quality leads to customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty and loyalty leads to returning customers:



More recent researches reveal that this figure is no longer accurate enough to describe the actual consumer behavior. (McEwen, 2003)

There is usually a gap between what customer expects and what actually receives. A common mistake is the assumption that if a company

provides the same standards in quality then the perceived quality service will be achieved (Tu, 2004). For example, two restaurant clients receive the same services, the same lunch at the same time and place by the same waiter but they don't have the same levels of satisfaction since their individual expectations and emotions influence the ultimate perceived quality. Even the same customer can have different level of satisfaction by the same service in two different time occasions. (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Christou, 2003a)

The most common mistakes businesses make when studying customer experience are:

- They only consider the rational part of an experience when a large proportion concerns feelings / emotions
- They neglect the fact that the experience includes all five senses (ie. A very nice room that smells really bad)
- They confuse planning a product or a service with planning the experience
- They underestimate the value of the experience when they seek the customer's future behavior (Jones, 1995)
- They don't examine the attitude of local people. Tourism industry depends heavily on the local community and attitude is an important factor that contributes to customer satisfaction and repeated visitations (Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001, Swarbrooke, 1993)

It is evident that further research needs to be carried out regarding customer's behavior, prior, during and after the experience so as to effectively manage total experience (Kirkby et al., 2003). Literature also highlights the importance of customer's emotions in customer satisfaction. Customers can be classified into emotionally satisfied and rationally satisfied. Both types of customers are extremely satisfied with the products or services a company provides but the distinctive element between the two categories is the emotional connection of customers. While emotionally satisfied customers have a strong emotional attachment to the company, rationally satisfied customers, in contrast, lack the above mentioned attachment. Furthermore, emotionally satisfied customers tend to spend more money on the company, become repeated consumers of the same brand while rationally satisfied customers, on the other hand, and behave in a similar manner to a dissatisfied customer. *"Customers want more than transactions - they want relationships"* (Fleming, 2007).

“Without a strong emotional bond, satisfaction is meaningless” (McEwen, 2003). Most people seem to have the sense that affect (moods, feelings, emotion) can influence their decisions and thought process, at least under certain circumstances. However, it is usually assumed that such influence is irregular or unusual; that only strong and infrequent feelings would have such effects and that most often only negative feelings such as anger, sadness or fear would have an impact on thinking processes. Furthermore, most people assume that when affect plays a role in their decision process, such influences are disruptive and tend to make their decisions “irrational” and less appropriate than otherwise (Adaval, 2003; Christou, 2003b).

Emotions are divided into positive and negative ones (Tu, 2004). People tend to consider negative emotions to be the ones that influence the thinking process without realizing that positive emotions have a possible impact on thought processes. Negative emotions derive from three sources: the consumer himself (shame, guilt), others’ behavior (anger, hate) and situational causes (fear, sadness) (Oliver, 1993). Customers who experience negative emotions attributed to other agencies such as staff, have lower levels of satisfaction than those whose negative emotions attribute to the customer himself or to situations (Sigala, 2003; Tu, 2004). Positive emotions, on the other hand, don’t have the same effect as negative ones. If emotions like happiness, interest, enthusiasm etc. remain unchanged throughout the service provision, the customer is more likely to positively evaluate the experience regardless the emotions’ source of origin (Pham, 1996)

Customers tend to evaluate a service positively when they are happy and negatively when they are sad regardless of whether the specific information about the service is favorable or unfavorable (Adaval, 2001)

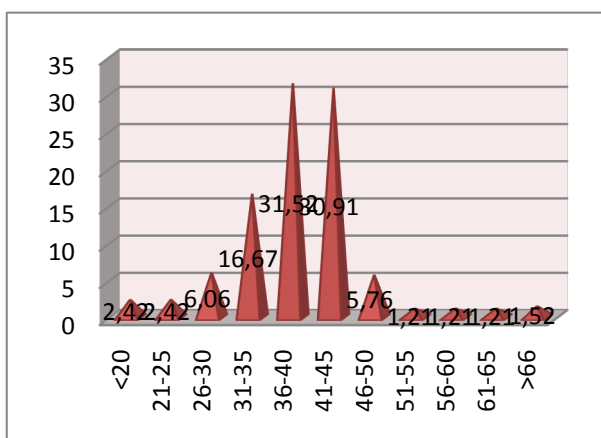
## **METHODOLOGY & FINDINGS**

A survey took place in summer 2009. The tool used was a structured questionnaire addressed to customers of agrotourism businesses on Lesvos Island and Florina, Greece. Lesvos island is well known for the development of agrotourism since the first Women Agrotourism Cooperative was established on the island in 1983 while the island has the biggest percentage of agrotourism accommodation facilities in Greece. Florina on the other hand won the EDEN prize from the European Union. EDEN prize aims to awards the places with high levels of quality tourism

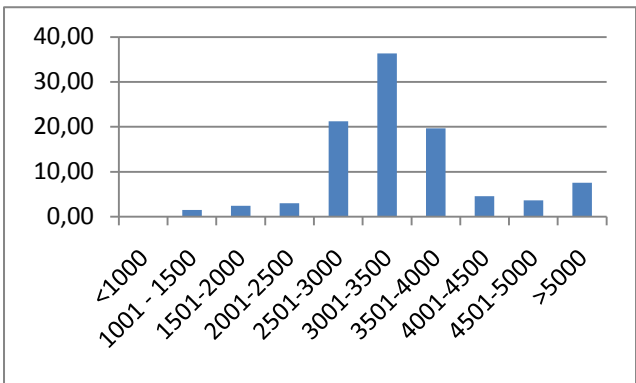


and Florina was among the 10 best destinations for agrotourism in Europe.

Respondents were asked to respond to a questionnaire divided into four parts dealing with demographic data, emotions, expectations and satisfaction. A total number of 330 questionnaires were collected. Out of 330 respondents 158 were men (48%) and 172 were women (52%). The age range was from below 20 years of age up to over 60 years of age. Approximately 63% of the respondents were between 36 to 45 years of age (Figure 1) while the biggest percentage earned monthly (individual or family income) between 2501 and 4000 Euro (Figure 2).

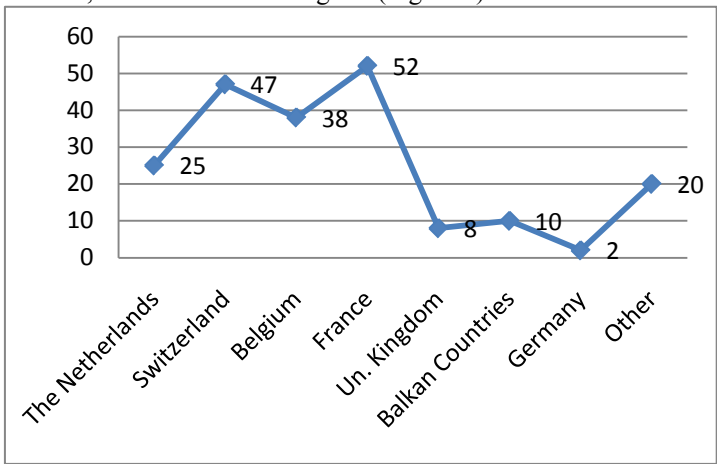


**Figure 1.** Age distribution



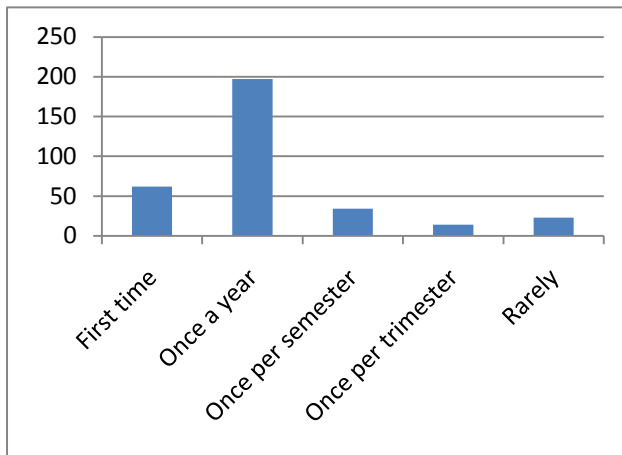
**Figure 2.** Individual or family monthly income

The majority of the tourists were foreigners (61%) mostly coming from France, Switzerland and Belgium (Figure 3).



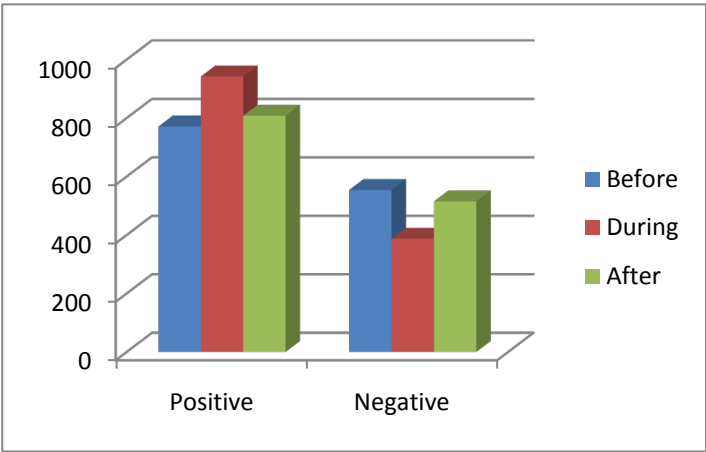
**Figure 3.** Nationality

Most of the tourists (197 out of 330) responded that they visit an agrotourism facility once a year and they do so keeping in mind the principles of agrotourism which they believe in (Figure 4).



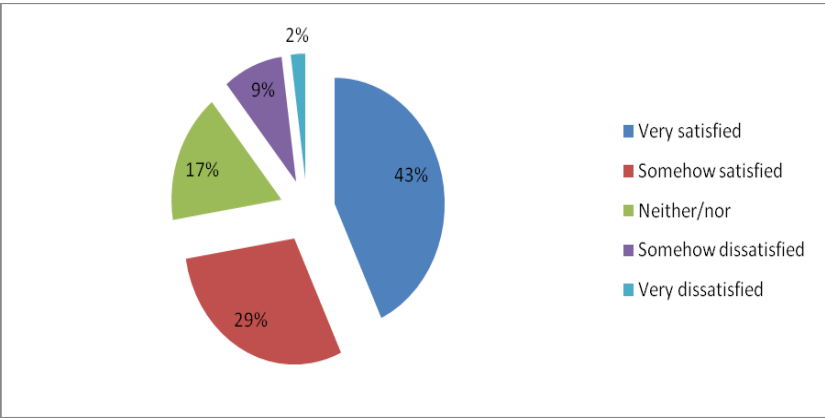
**Figure 4.** Frequency of visits

The emotions were divided into Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA) ones. The PA emotions were Enthusiastic, Happy, Interested, Active, Alert, and Attentive, while the NA emotions were Afraid, Distressed, Lonely, Upset, Sad, Nervous, Cheerful, Irritable from PANAS scales (Watson et al., 1988) and we asked the participants to identify the emotions they felt prior, during and after their visit (Figure 5). As it appears from the figure, tourists experienced many positive emotions prior to their visit, which increased during their stay and decreased after they left the premises. According to tourism psychology, this result was expected since tourists experience a kind of depression once they leave a tourist destination since they feel obliged to return to their routine and everyday life (Lytras, 1993).

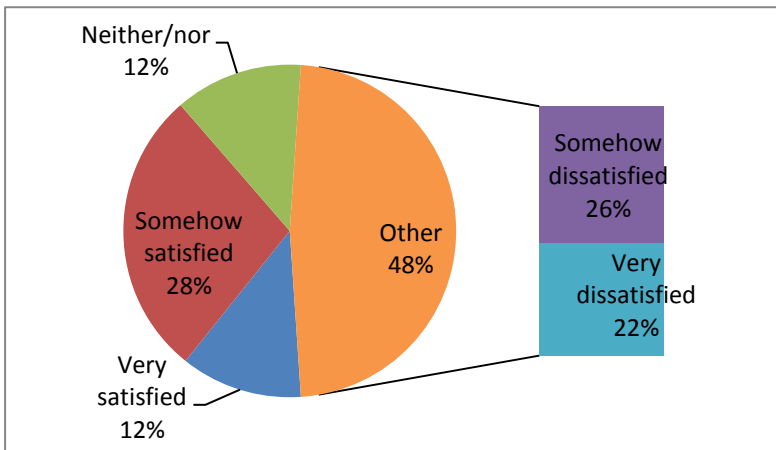


**Figure 5.** Emotions, before, during and after the visit

When asked about the level of their satisfaction from the accommodation, the majority of the respondents were satisfied (fully satisfied and somehow satisfied) (Figure 6), whereas when the activities were concerned the results were completely opposite since 48% were dissatisfied or fully dissatisfied from the provided activities (Figure 7).

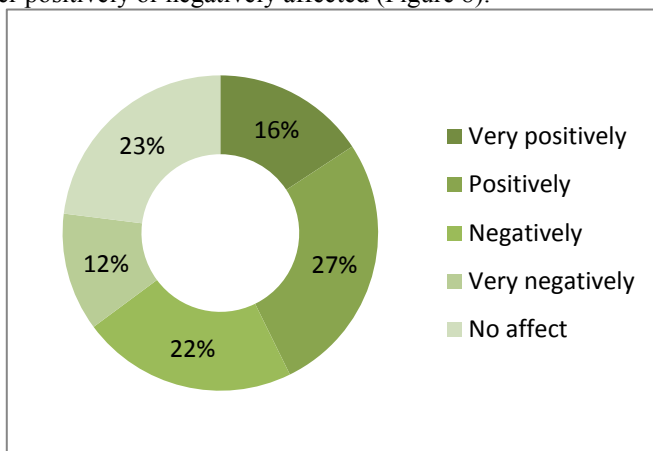


**Figure 6.** Satisfaction from the accommodation



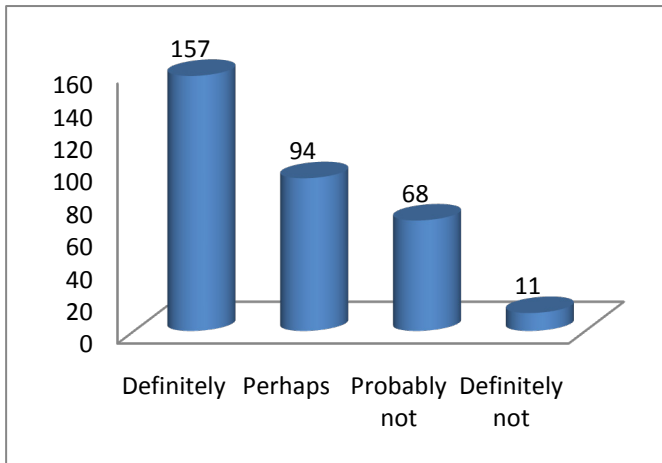
**Figure 7.** Satisfaction from the activities (total experience)

Trying to define whether the total experience influenced somehow their satisfaction from the accommodation, 77% of the respondents were either positively or negatively affected (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Total Experience and Satisfaction

Finally, when asked whether they would repeat the visit to the accommodation, the majority of the tourists responded positively (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Would you repeat the visit?

## CONCLUSIONS

Agrotourism is a field that provides farmers with supplement income. In addition to that, rural areas experience development and stability when agrotourism businesses are established. However, as any other tourism activity, agrotourism needs satisfied customers in order to achieve desired outcomes.

Literature reveals that customer satisfaction is an aspect than does not guarantee returning customers. The issues previously examined to achieve customer satisfaction lack the importance and contribution of emotions when formulating the entire image. Emotionally satisfied customers tend to return to the company and spend more money on the product or service provided. Emotions directly influence the formation of satisfaction and mediate the effects of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction. Emotions affect our experience and judgment. When a customer experiences positive emotions (for any reason), he is more likely to perceive everything better, whereas when a customer experiences negative emotions, he perceives everything to be less favorable or likable

(Russell, 1980). Thus, further research needs to be carried out so as to examine the effect of emotions in combination with expectations in creating “complete” customer satisfaction and subsequently returning customers.

On the other hand, experience is very important. People live for experiences. A good experience helps a customer feel positive. Agrotourists seek relaxation and experiences that might include participation in activities in nature, rural activities etc. A good experience helps determine a customer’s satisfaction and gives a customer the desire to repeat it again.

Emotions and expectations before the experience interrelate and affect the emotions during the encounter as well as the perceived quality both from the participation in activities in nature as well as from the provided accommodation. Finally, they all influence the emotions after the experience which leads to “complete” customer satisfaction which leads to the repetition of visit.

Having confirmed the relationships, there might be a pattern to accomplish returning customers and increase consumers’ loyalty to agrotourism business, thus establishing agrotourism as an unbreakable “ring” in tourism industry.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The research was conducted in two agrotourism businesses, one on an island with long history in the field of agrotourism and a mountainous one awarded for being among the top agrotourism destinations in Europe. The research’s results cannot be generalized until further research is conducted in other areas and other lodgings so as to be able to come to broader conclusions regarding the relationship among emotions, satisfaction, total experience and repetition of visits.

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## TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS, CONSERVATION AND RECREATION: REFLECTIONS ON MANAGING VISITATION IN NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION PARKS

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*This article discusses the findings of research conducted in protected natural areas in the South Island of New Zealand over three consecutive summers between December 2005 and May 2008. The primary purpose of the research was to gather perspectives and data about local community members' and visitors' recreational experiences and aspirations for future management of the conservation parks. Since 2005, 'high country' conservation parks have been designated by the country's protected natural area manager, the Department of Conservation (DOC). The three South Island parks involved in this study - the Ahuriri, Ruataniwha and Hakatere Conservation Parks - were, prior to designation, leased and managed since the nineteenth century by multiple generations of farming families for agricultural purposes, primarily farming merino sheep and beef cattle. Thus the landscape has undergone transition from a farmed environment coexisting with natural features that have high conservation values to one where tourism and recreation activities dominate.*

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**Keywords:**      *conservation, recreation, tourism, New Zealand, management*

### INTRODUCTION

Decision-making processes about the management of protected landscapes can be enhanced through research findings that incorporate community members' and visitors' perceptions and experiences of place. Such research is one means by which resource managers can identify



issues and react to potential impacts in sensitive environments. This paper discusses findings from survey data and interviews with local users of three recently designated conservation parks in New Zealand (Carr, Lovelock and Wright, 2006; Lovelock, Carr and Sides, 2007, 2008; Thompson, Lovelock, Reis and Jellum, 2008). The research findings were of particular significance as a higher percentage of local New Zealanders' perspectives of how such areas should be managed were obtained by the research than is traditionally gathered through previous nationwide natural area or national park surveys see (Booth, 1989; Booth and Peebles, 1995; Higham, 1996; Kearsley, Coughlan, Higham, Higham and Thyne, 1998; Kearsley, Russell, Croy and Mitchell, 2001). With this conservation park research New Zealanders on average comprised 78-80% of research respondents (compared to national park/natural area surveys where New Zealanders are a minority amongst respondents, usually comprising 20-30% of research participants). Thus the baseline data for these studies provided rich, detailed, local perspectives for natural area management particularly when combine with interviews.

The research data informed management about general demographics; visitors' motivations; the significance of the conservation parks to family groups and recreational club members; participation in guided activities and preferences for facilities and recreational opportunities. This paper focuses on the findings that have enabled the Department of Conservation (DOC) to formulate and implement local community-relevant management plans and thus manage the destination with the aim of reducing potential user conflict whilst maximising conservation aspirations and recreational usage of the areas. The paper has broad implications for destination management and recommends destination managers of protected natural areas to: (1) assess requirements for research strategies that can examine the future aspirations of a diversity of visitors and existing local community members, and (2) gather research data that inform management responses to the provision of access and experiences of recreational and commercial tourism users.

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (DOC)**

The Department of Conservation is the resource manager responsible for the majority of tourism and recreation activities in New Zealand's natural areas (DOC, 1993, 2000, 2001). DOC is guided in performing its obligations by government legislation, its primary function being "to preserve and protect natural and historic resources for the public and future generations" (Conservation Act 1987; DOC 1993, 2001). The first

legislation to specifically concern the management of tourism and recreation on conservation lands was the National Parks Act 1952. The National Parks Act 1952 was replaced by the National Parks Act 1980 which ensures individual national park management plans are in place for management of such activities. In 1987 the Conservation Act 1987 assisted the establishment of DOC and Conservation Management Strategies (CMSs) are a statutory requirement of the Act that provide direction for the management of non-national park areas such as the conservation parks. CMS's are informed by public submissions and the data gathered by research such as that obtained for this study. These sources of information are crucial in allowing local and Māori (the indigenous peoples of New Zealand) viewpoints to be considered and conveyed to DOC management. The Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy (CCMS) incorporates guidelines that affect the three conservation parks in this report and the CCMS enables the DOC staff at Raukāpuka (Geraldine) and Twizel area offices to manage these areas for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes (DOC, 2002). The importance of involving community viewpoints in either top-down or bottom-up approaches to planning have long been advocated by tourism academics (Jamal and Getz, 1994; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Joppe, 1996; Simmons, 1994) but seldom is such consultation or opportunities for involvement available. Hall, Jenkins and Kearsley (1997) and Hall and Kearsley (2001) have noted the Department of Conservation being particularly active in the area of seeking public opinion to inform management decisions. In fact the Conservation Act 1987, CMSs and the Resource Management Act require such consultation (DOC, 2001, 2002).

The designation of conservation parks, as an outcome of tenure review ( a review of publicly owned land management practises), has resulted in a change in direction in the dominant economic and social traditional uses of these areas – from farming to intensive conservation of sensitive wetland areas and the establishment or further development of recreational activities on the land. In exchange for loss of farming land the long term farming families of leasehold lands gained either financial compensation or a portion of freehold land area bordering the parks. This has not been without controversy as whilst access for public recreation has increased overall, access by motorised vehicles has been denied by DOC for conservation reasons in more sensitive ecosystems. The advent of conservation parks throughout New Zealand has generally, however, resulted in increased public use of many areas where lands previously leased from the government required leaseholders' permission for access. But access rights are a management issue and the research reported in this

article was partly instigated by DOC management because of access problems, public disquiet and some conflict arising from the sudden change in the management of land at the destination level. Some traditional recreational users and farming families felt previous access rights and traditional activities were being threatened when access to sensitive ecosystems was reduced. For instance, the removal of 4WD access to the upper Ahuriri Conservation Park (ACP) was not popular amongst recreationists who had previously sought permission from the local farming families to access the area prior to the management change (Carr et al., 2006). Generally the conservation parks are increasingly popular destinations as the recreational and environmental assets of the conservation parks have been the subject of various media articles (Barrett, 2005; Booker, 2007; Carter, 2007a, 2007b; Davison, 2008; Keast, 2007; Szabo, 2008). Road access at the three study areas in this article is available via motorbikes, cycles, 4WD and 2WD vehicles on designated roads but sensitive ecosystems (e.g., wetlands) are only accessible on foot. Since 2004, DOC has improved the road conditions for access to each park; existing huts and tracks maintained, new huts, tracks and toilets have been installed and interpretation panels have been designed and installed at strategic sites.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AREAS**

The three conservation parks are now described in more detail concerning the conservation and recreational values. Each of the three conservation parks has significant heritage and cultural values associated with human history in the areas which are all located in the South Island. Recent events in popular culture have affected the areas which were locations during the filming of the 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy. The parks have traditional cultural and ecological values for the local indigenous peoples – the Māori iwi (tribal group) of Ngai Tahu - which consider mahinga kai (natural food sources) and other resources in the parks as taonga (treasures). European heritage is also associated with the parks, in particular the heritage of high country farming, for instance the pioneering activities of Samuel Butler who wrote the book 'Erewhon' (Butler, 1940).

### **The Ahuriri and Ruataniwha Conservation Parks**

The Ruataniwha Conservation Park (RCP) and Ahuriri Conservation Park (ACP) have been managed by the DOC Twizel Area Office since

late 2004 and consequently are described in conjunction with each other. The Ahuriri Conservation Park (ACP) (land area 49,000 hectares) was publically announced in 2004, almost two years earlier than the Ruataniwha Conservation Park (RCP) (land area 36,800 hectares). Both conservation parks are located near the main tourist route (SH1) between Christchurch and Queenstown and thus are ideally situated for ease of visitor access. Visitors are also accessing the areas via horseback, foot or bicycle using various easements and marginal strips alongside streams, rivers and on existing farm tracks. The parks feature tussock valley systems with braided river, wetlands, beech forest, sub alpine and alpine ecosystems located east of the Main Divide of the Southern Alps (Talbot, 2004).

In 2004 the then Conservation Minister, the Honourable MP Chris Carter, announced the purchase of the 23,783 hectare Birchwood Station from the leaseholders Ron and Jennifer Williamson, for \$10 million to enable the establishment of the conservation park (Talbot, 2004). The Williamsons had a historical relationship to the area dating over 60 years. According to Talbot (2004: 26) the purchase would enable “protection of the landscape and ecology of the area, and providing public access – something that has not always been easy in the past, with the road running right through the locked gates in the station’s stockyards”. The RCP was formally established in July 2006 incorporating existing conservation areas with former pastoral lease land following tenure review. As a result of land tenure review processes on stations, the RCP incorporates land that used to be leased by Rhoborough Downs, Pukaki Downs and Ben Ohau stations. These stations had pastoral agricultural histories dating back to the 1850s with some present-day residents in the area having direct links to the original farming families. Recreational activities in these parks today includes camping, trout fishing, mountain biking, climbing, tramping (hiking), hunting (Himalayan thar, chamois and red deer) and horse riding. Whilst some river areas are suited for jet boating, canoeing, rafting and white water kayaking no such activities were observed during the research. Twizel area DOC staff members undertake regular visits to the parks to check on conditions of various facilities. The local farming families still live in and provide a human presence in the valley systems which are not only a heritage feature but also a critical safety feature should an emergency occur.

### **The Hakatere Conservation Park**

The Hakatere Conservation Park (HCP) is managed by the DOC



Raukāpuka Area Office, Geraldine, approximately two hours south of Christchurch and two hours north of the other conservation parks discussed in this paper. It was the most recent park to be established (October 2007) and contains more than 68,000 hectares of land area. The HCP brought together 19 individual areas of conservation land including land purchased by the Nature Heritage Fund and obtained via land tenure review (LINZ, 2003). In April 2008, towards the end of the survey period, it was announced that the HCP would increase by an additional 17,000 hectares (DOC, 2008).

The HCP features wetlands, tussock land, braided rivers, lakes, sub-alpine and alpine ecosystems with significant wildlife habitat. In 2007 the Ashburton Lakes wetlands attracted government funding for the restoration of these unique ecosystems. The predominant vegetation for the HCP is tussock land and to a lesser extent, beech forest and matagouri shrublands (Harrington et al., 1986). The main access route to the HCP is Highway 77 with vehicle access primarily by 2WD and 4WD. Recreation activities within the HCP include tramping, camping, 4WD, mountain biking, windsurfing, horseback riding, motorized and non-motorized boating, climbing, skiing, fishing, and hunting. Several concessionaires offer guided walking, fishing, hunting and mountain-biking experiences of the HCP. Many formal and informal camping and picnic areas, commonly used by local patrons and family groups, are located near popular lakes. Private residences are located in the HCP, unlike the ACP and RCP, with holiday homes (cribs or batches) at Lake Clearwater village and families in high country stations are living there all year round. Approximately fifteen huts in the HCP are managed by DOC or owned by private clubs. As a result of the recognition of indigenous Māori rights to traditional lands and resources the Ngai Tahu Treaty Settlement Act 1998 resulted in the HCP's Hakatere Ashburton Lakes being incorporated into the Treaty Settlement with the 'Deed of Recognition' for O Tu Wharekai (Ashburton Lakes), Canterbury.

## THE VISITOR SURVEYS

The research projects discussed in this article were commissioned by DOC to provide data to inform staff in the management of the three conservation areas. However the success of the first study in the ACP was the incentive for DOC management to commission the two subsequent studies in the HCP and RCP with one objective being the ability to compare data between each area. The resulting findings were merged where possible to provide detailed insights of the management of each

area independently or, as reported in this article are combined as a whole. Quantitative surveys have been a long accepted method of gathering useful data on visitor tourism and recreation use in national parks but no previous surveys have been undertaken in New Zealand's conservation parks owing to their recent establishment (see Booth, 1989, 1991; Booth and Peebles, 1995; Higham, 1996; Kearsley et al., 1998, 2001).

## **Survey design**

The primary aim of the surveys was to gain insights (from open-ended responses) and statistical data about recreational users' and visitors' experiences of the conservation parks. Whilst the conservation parks provided case studies suitable for comparison this article is concerned with key concerns from respondents arising in the combined data from all three areas. Respondents were asked about the recreational activities they pursued and their satisfaction with services and facilities. Demographic and motivational information was also sought to provide baseline data which could assist with ongoing management of the area. The questionnaires for each comprised an information sheet describing the purpose of the visitor survey, a map of the park, and a number of items (questions) allotted to four sections: Your Visit, Motivations, Facilities, and About Yourself. The majority of items were closed questions. However open-ended questions were utilised to elicit respondents' views on recreational opportunities, specific areas of high conservation or recreational value (e.g. mountain huts) and general management issues for the areas. Furthermore, open-ended questions were also included to elicit participants' views on visitor management of the parks, and why they would (or would not) return to the park. Ethical approval for all the visitor surveys was attained from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee.

## **Survey distribution**

Research assistants and DOC staff assisted with direct distribution of survey questionnaires to visitors and via visitors self-selecting to participate. Questionnaires were available in 'pick-up' boxes at gates along roads in the parks and in huts thus exposing as many users to the conservation parks as possible to the research. The availability of surveys via such locations and the convenience sampling method invited all interested people over the age of 15 to complete a questionnaire. This approach was a necessity as it acknowledged the fact that the

conservation parks are sparsely populated apart from, in the case of ACP and RCP, a few farming families. The HCP was the only one of the three to have holiday homes within the park and visitation consequently tended to be concentrated at peak periods during weekends, public holiday and summer holiday periods.

Posters advertised the surveys at these areas. Because of the isolation and infrequent visitation to each area survey staff did not remain on site but regular visits were made to each site to monitor the surveying and interview visitors if encountered. Postage-paid, return addressed envelopes were provided with each survey so respondents could return the completed form to the researchers by mail. The surveys were primarily distributed at the entrances to the parks and at road ends which were logical collection points. Drop-boxes (for depositing completed surveys for collection by researchers at later dates) were also provided at each park. The survey collection drop-boxes were regularly monitored by the researchers and DOC staff for resupplying and collecting completed questionnaires. The surveying periods enabled the participation of respondents who were in the areas during the main summer school holiday periods; Easter; weekend and week days. Over the period December 2005 to April 2006 a total of 370 self-completion questionnaires were distributed in the Ahuriri Conservation Park with 284 returns (76% response rate). Between February and June 2007 a total of 392 self-completion questionnaires were distributed in the Ruataniwha Conservation Park with 240 returns (61% response rate). Finally, surveying was undertaken at the Hakatere Conservation Park between late December 2007 and May 2008. A total of 780 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 509 usable surveys were returned, giving a response rate of 65%. Across all three parks 1542 surveys were distributed and 1033 usable returns were obtained (66.9% combined response rate).

## **Survey analysis**

The data entry and analysis was undertaken at the Centre for Recreation Research, University of Otago, using SPSS Version 15 and Microsoft Excel. Answers to open-ended questions that required a comment or reason were summarised and grouped into like categories. The results are presented in three reports using graphs and tables. All graphs and tables are based on the total number of responses to each question; not-applicable or non-responses are not included unless specified. Some items have been excluded from this article as they were

not directly comparable between the three surveys. However information is obtainable from the authors on request. These excluded findings were area-specific questions, the purpose of which was to inform managers regarding specific facilities or management issues in the individual parks. All completed questionnaires were anonymous and confidentiality of participants observed by not identifying individuals in any published material, as per ethical requirements of the University of Otago.

## **Research limitations**

The self-selection process, where visitors could voluntarily take a form and postal return envelope for completion, could be a source of bias as those people with strong feelings about certain issues could be more likely to fill in a survey (Booth 1991). However, the nature of visitation to the areas meant this survey distribution was the most practical and financially feasible method of surveying the intended participants. Thus the approach aimed for a broad representation of visitors to the parks.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Demographics**

Most respondents regarded themselves as regular users of the New Zealand outdoors, with 72% of visitors reporting over 20 years of such experience, and many (57%) belonging to some form of recreational or outdoor club. The typical visitor may have already visited the HCP before, with regular or occasional users comprising 71.5% of the sample; 28.5% of visitors being first time visitors to the area. The median age of respondents was 45-54 years old at the RCP and ACP whereas the typical visitor to the HCP was in the 35-54 year old age groups and a New Zealander. Likewise, the greatest number of visitors normally resided in New Zealand (93% for ACP and RCP and 82% for HCP). However many of these international visitors resided in New Zealand. Of those respondents who reside in New Zealand, the majority were South Islanders, with 78% originating from the Canterbury and North Otago regions. Gender was slightly in favour of males, with 56.6% of respondents to the ACP/RCP being male. 244 respondents (47.9%) at the HCP were female and 249 (48.9%) were male and 16 respondents did not indicate their gender.

Respondents who were in full time employment (41% HCP and 44% RCP/ACP) were predominant with the remainder of respondents being

retired (15% for all 3 parks combined), self employed (15%) and students (8.3%). Fewer than 5% of respondents indicated they were unemployed. Over half the respondents to all three areas were employed in professional or managerial occupations.

The typical visitor accessed the HCP either by 2WD (43%) or 4WD (40.9%) but once within the park the main mode of moving around is by foot (61.4%). Only 12% of visitors accessed the RCP and ACP by 4WD. However, the HCP has a more extensive road network and can be traversed in several directions unlike the ACP and RCP meaning round trips that exit the park from an area different to the entrance point are possible. Because of the distances that could be travelled on existing HCP roads some visitors (31%) use 2WD and 4WD to access areas within the park. Visitors generally stay in the HCP for two to three days (at least one night) and were likely to stay in huts (25%), tents (24%) or a crib/bach (35.4%) within the HCP. Cribs and batches are not available in the RCP and ACP. At the RCP and ACP 40% of visitors stayed for 1 or more nights with visitors staying in tents (45%) and huts (55%). Very low numbers of visitors use campervans or caravans (20% in the HCP and less than 10% in the RCP/ACP). Day trips were common (31% of HCP and 40% of ACP/RCP visitors).

## **Motivations for visiting the Conservation Parks**

The main motivation for those visiting the ACP and RCP was trampng (61%), then experiencing solitude (58%) and scenery (52%). This was the reverse case for the HCP where experiencing scenery (72%) and solitude (71%) was followed by trampng (59%). Other significant motivations at all three parks were the easy access to nature (66% ACP/RCP and 58% HCP) and to take children into the outdoors (54% HCP and 47% RCP/ACP). Whilst trampng was one of the main activities undertaken in the parks, other reported activities taking place included fishing, picnicking, boating, mountain biking, bird watching, climbing, hunting, 4WDing, motor biking and horse riding.

## **Visitor Satisfaction**

Overall visitor satisfaction was very high for each park (95% HCP and 96% for both the RCP and ACP). A high level of satisfaction was expressed for huts, tracks and recreational opportunities generally. Toilets and road conditions received lower levels of satisfaction. Visitors also

reported lower levels of satisfaction with the information available on the DOC website and in the brochures, which lacked sufficient details about the variety of huts and recreational opportunities. The majority of visitors to the HCP (97%) and 96% to the RCP and ACP said that they would return. The main motivations to return to the areas are the range of recreational opportunities within the parks, the scenery and accessibility.

## **Visitor Information and Interpretation**

Satisfaction with existing information sources was reasonably high, though a number of respondents commented on the difficulty of reading the existing brochures and felt these lacked information on possible activities in the park. There was also confusion regarding land access and it was recommended in the authors' final study reports to DOC that the department consider revising the CP brochures and DOC websites in order to provide more detailed activity/track/hut information (Carr et al. 2006; Lovelock et al. 2007; Thompson et al. 2008). Other report recommendations were to:

- Liaise with other DOC and I-site Information Centres in the Canterbury region in order to provide and distribute quality public information about the CPs.
- Assess the feasibility of having DOC field staff located within the CPs (possibly in a designated seasonal visitor centre) over peak summer months to provide information services alongside other general duties.
- Develop information brochures or booklets on the human history and ecological significance (particularly the wetland habitats and tussock lands) of the areas. These could include 'on-line' educational guides or field trip information about the history and ecological values of the areas.

## **Access issues**

The RCP and HCP provided opportunities for 4WD users that were not available in the ACP owing to sensitive wetland areas. Qualitative open-ended responses to questions in the RCP survey suggested that the impacts of this activity needs to be borne in mind, especially considering the motivations of the majority of users, in terms of the quest to experience solitude. One participant stated:

“I think, probably with... maybe with a lot more of this area coming back into DoC’s stewardship, there is potential I suppose for more signage in some places. But again my view is that, I mean, we don’t want boardwalks and four lane highways everywhere. There needs to be places for people to get that wilderness-type experience. Where there are no tracks, and no signs and they can just wander at will and do their own navigation. So yeah, there needs to be a range of things, but some areas need to be left alone.”

Visitors to the HCP did express concerns that motorbikes and 4WD use could impact negatively on other users (e.g. noise pollution) and the environment (damaging lake shores/wetlands). In the HCP jet boat and jet ski usage was a specific issue owing to the management traditionally allowing motorised vessels on some lakes in the park. Possible recommendations arising from the HCP study participants’ concerns on these issues were:

- Codes of Conduct for motorcyclists and 4WD users in the CPs could be developed in conjunction with representatives from local 4WD or motorcycle clubs. Such clubs could then assist with the distribution of the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct would serve the purpose of raising driver awareness of wetland habitats and suggesting positive behaviours and practices in populated areas, around wetlands and lakes. The Code would also offer advice on preventing accidental fires by vehicles in high risk fire periods.
- Monitoring of the impact of 4WDs on conservation values of the sensitive wetlands was a notable issue. 4WD and motorbike usage resulting in multiple vehicle tracks damaging areas adjacent to wetlands and lakes could require fencing or temporary removal of access to sensitive areas. This again could be conducted in collaboration with respected spokespeople who are regular 4WD or motorcycle users of the area. DOC could investigate the potential and cost-effectiveness of working alongside scientists to photo monitor specific sites or undertake clustered transects on an annual basis.

## **Facilities**

Visitor satisfaction with most huts, tracks and picnic areas was generally high. Most dissatisfaction from visitors centered on toilets and accumulation of rubbish during the high use periods. Maintenance of

signage, huts, picnic areas, car parks and track marking in the areas are ongoing activities by DOC. A reasonable number of respondents felt that there were opportunities to develop more mountain biking, horse riding and walking trails or facilities in the parks, but did not want the area spoiled as reflected in this quotation:

“But if we want to keep the New Zealand mountains as New Zealand mountains, and not like Switzerland or Austria or Disneyland, then people should do it on their own two feet. Because the previous generations of people have shown that it can be done, and with modern equipment and modern tents and modern footwear it’ll be a whole lot easier than the previous generations around it.”

## **CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON FUTURE COMMUNITY AND VISITOR INVOLVEMENT**

This article has presented research findings that inform staff and managers of recently established protected natural areas in their decision making regarding the transition of land use from farming to recreational practices. In particular, a balance of information from local community members and visitors to natural areas was required to inform management decisions where recently designated areas have resulted in relatively rapid changes to the traditional land use. These findings provided insights into current visitors’ experiences. However, it must be noted that visitor patterns in the three conservation parks are likely to change over time. It is foreseen that non-local usage will increase as the reputations of the conservation parks spread and more first time users visit the areas. Ongoing monitoring of changing patterns of visitors’ use, experiences and satisfaction levels, as well as acknowledgement of changing local values, are necessary considerations for land managers as recommended in the various reports (Carr, Lovelock and Wright, 2006; Lovelock, Carr and Sides, 2007, 2008; Thompson, Lovelock, Reis and Jellum, 2008).

It was observed by the researchers that visitors and community members could be involved in the management of the area if DOC worked in conjunction with walking and mountain bike user groups to investigate opportunities for development of further mountain biking and walking trail/tramping tracks in the CPs. The feasibility of volunteer programmes or summer holiday/education programmes could also be considered. The need for continued liaison with local Ngai Tahu *iwi* (Māori tribe) and high country station family members about the traditional value for the parks is another important management consideration. Cooperative approaches to problem solving and regular



liaison between DOC, the local holiday communities and other stakeholder organisations was considered a prime management responsibility by many participants. Better communication between authorities and local knowledge should result in a collaborative effort to solve major management issues, as noted by one participant:

*“Well there’ll always be a certain amount of conflict between farmers and conservation, and/or recreational use. There’ll have to be an integrated approach, and it certainly wouldn’t want to start off with conflict, or it’d be pretty much doomed. Co-operation would be the very best way to start it and let it evolve I suppose as to what’s going to be satisfactory for different user groups.”*

The potential for local communities to have a role in the management of the CPs and other natural areas can be recognised through the consideration of the research findings and implementation of the recommendations. However, DOC and other natural area managers elsewhere can use other methods beyond standard research approaches. For instance, providing opportunities for public comment or inviting public submissions can be achieved through making information accessible via public notice boards/newspapers or public meetings in surrounding local communities. In this case study, future repeat surveys at each park (enabling the comparison of research data over time) could not only monitor but also assess on-going visitor satisfaction and experiences as the areas gain in popularity. Such surveys would thus provide rich longitudinal data for visitor management of the areas.

In-depth visitors studies conducted at protected natural areas such as the Ahuriri, Ruataniwha and Hakatere conservation parks also provide academic case studies useful for teaching and management purposes and if researched in a similar manner could offer insights into successful and unsuccessful management responses when compared independently (Yin, 1994). The research data provided rich information regarding local sense of place and place identities at each site and this will be the subject of future publications and ongoing studies by the authors of local inhabitants’ place attachment and a nationally funded research project on families’ and migrants’ experiences of the New Zealand outdoor environment. The nature of these research projects means that whilst the locations are site specific there are many similarities geographically, in terms of environmental settings, socially (with visitor profiles) and finally with the applications of management tools (e.g. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Carrying Capacity). Implementing such qualitative and quantitative approaches offer rich, complex and grounded insights into the management issues and local communities’ and visitors’

experiences of such protected places.

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## MARINE PROTECTED AREAS & DIVING TOURISM IN THE GREEK SEAS: PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES

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*The adoption of a new legal framework concerning recreational diving activities in Greece has generated an increased demand for the development of diving tourism in the country. The present report draws upon previous experience regarding the promotion of sub-aquatic activities found elsewhere, analyses the potential of establishing diving tourism in the Greek Marine Protected Areas, and describes what an adequate management plan should ideally encompass, in order to ensure the conservation of the marine environment and subsequently the long term viability of this highly profitable form of ecotourism.*

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**Keywords:** *Diving Tourism, MPAs, Management, Biodiversity, Greek Seas*

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, the number of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is globally increasing since a considerable number of studies have pointed out the necessity for the establishment of MPAs and Networks of Marine Reserves worldwide, as ‘tools’ for the conservation and safeguarding of the marine environment and biodiversity (Agardy, 1997; IUCN-WCPA, 2008; WWF, 2008). Alongside with the potential environmental benefits, MPAs are usually expected to profit local communities and contribute to the increase of economic revenues, through the replenishment of fisheries,



and the development of marine tourism (Badalamenti et al., 2000; López Ornat, 2006). Moreover, MPAs provide favourable conditions for educational activities (e.g. environmental education, summer schools, marine laboratories), while they constitute reference sites for scientific research (Kelleher, 1999; PISCO, 2007). For all these reasons, the establishment of an MPA could potentially raise the environmental and socioeconomic profile of a coastal or insular region and promote sustainable development (López Ornat, 2006; Dalias et al., 2007).

Current experience has shown that tourism is among the first sectors that benefit from the establishment of an MPA (López Ornat, 2006). The positive ecological consequences resulting from the protection of biodiversity attract a large number of visitors not only within the protected zones but in the adjacent regions as well (Badalamenti et al., 2000; López Ornat, 2006). Environmental friendly tourism in MPAs is commonly promoted through marine recreational activities, such as snorkelling and SCUBA diving. Economic surveys (e.g. Brown et al., 2001) have indicated that MPAs support the development of sub-aquatic tourism that subsequently favours the installation of new facilities and the creation of new employment opportunities (Dalias et al., 2007). The development of environmentally responsible tourism along with a number of market related revenues (e.g. entrance and diving fees, diving equipment rents, hotels sub-charges, guided tours, short courses) are often used in order to fund the costs for the management, surveillance and monitoring of an MPA (Alban et al., 2006; López Ornat, 2006).

As the tourism industry heavily depends upon the coastal zone (Bellan and Bellan-Santini, 2001; UNEP/MAP/Blue Plan, 2005; UNEP, 2006), marine related tourism constitutes an important source of income for many coastal and insular areas globally (e.g. Red Sea, Caribbean, many Mediterranean MPAs and small island states such as the Maldives). Although diving tourism was initially considered as an advantage of the tropics (Hawkins and Roberts, 1992; Van Treeck and Schuhmacher, 1998), it is now rapidly increasing in the Mediterranean coasts (Milazzo et al., 2002), which are supposed to be a leading tourist destination of the world and consequently one of the most seriously affected regions by tourism.

## **INTENSIVE DIVING TOURISM: IDENTIFYING AND FACING THE PROBLEM**

Marine biodiversity admittedly constitutes the main natural resource upon which the development of diving tourism is based. According to this

point of view, diving tourism directly depends on the increasing demand for ecological quality (UNEP/MAP/Blue Plan, 2005; López Ornat, 2006), and thus, there is a critical need to conserve the marine environment in order to ensure long-term viability of such a development. SCUBA divers are usually environmentally aware, motivated by their admiration for the sea, and willing to pay user fees or taxes in order to protect environmental quality of their diving destinations (Davis and Tisdell, 1996; Arin and Kramer, 2002; Depondt and Green, 2006).

Since MPAs are usually established in areas characterized as biodiversity 'hot-spots', such as the tropical coral reefs (Hawkins and Roberts, 1992) and their Mediterranean equivalent (i.e. the complex hard substrate communities) (Ballesteros, 2006), many MPAs worldwide, including those of the Mediterranean Sea (e.g. Port-Cros National Park in France and Islas Medas Marine Reserve in Spain), constitute popular diving destinations (Dalias et al., 2007).

Although recreational marine activities, such as snorkelling and SCUBA diving are considered to be environmental friendly forms of eco-tourism, several studies have pointed out that once intensive and uncontrolled they can have a negative cumulative impact on the marine ecosystem. This is the case when divers disturb or damage vulnerable species and habitats, either accidentally or deliberately, directly or indirectly, with their hands, knees, fins, hanging equipment, boat anchoring, etc (Prior et al. 1995; Harriott et al., 1997; Tratalos and Austin, 2001). Furthermore, the level of human impact in some highly visited MPAs has surpassed the ecological carrying capacity (López Ornat, 2006), while marine communities undergo through a strong seasonal stress as the number of divers visiting a particular site usually increases during summertime.

Since the marine ecosystems are largely being affected by these recreational activities, the adoption and implementation of adequate conservation measures is considered to be vital both for the protection of the marine and coastal environment and for the subsequent long term success and promotion of marine related tourism.

With regards to diving tourism several measures have been proposed worldwide, in order to eliminate the potential negative impacts of the aforementioned activities. These measures usually include:

- Diving restrictions (e.g. limitations posed to the number of SCUBA divers or dives per day; closing of vulnerable marine areas; rotation of dive sites) (Garrahou et al., 1998; Lloret et al., 2006)



- Special training and briefings in order to increase environmental awareness and ameliorate divers' behaviour (Medio et al., 1997)
- Better management of divers' groups by decreasing their size (Tratalos and Austin, 2001) and/or through underwater interventions, when needed, by the dive guides in order to avoid contact with the substrate (Barker and Roberts, 2004)
- Better allocation of divers among the different dive sites (Davis and Tisdell, 1996), or even increasing the number of sites, with the aim to avoid overcrowding of particular diving 'hot-spots' (Milazzo et al., 2002)
- Concentration of divers in low vulnerability habitats during the initial part of the dive and procedure to more vulnerable habitats only when they have adjusted properly their buoyancy (Di Franco et al., 2009)
- Confining training courses and low level dives to less vulnerable sites (Hawkins and Roberts, 1992; Zakai and Chadwick-Furman, 2002) or in areas of artificially constructed reefs and underwater theme parks that also present interest for diving (Van Treeck and Schuhmacher, 1998)
- Spatial control of divers and snorkelers through the establishment of specified underwater paths (Hawkins and Roberts, 1992)
- Adoption of specific regulations for underwater photography since photographers usually come into direct contact with the substrate in order to take a picture (Rouphael and Inglis, 2001)
- Installation of permanent moorings in popular sites and adoption of regulations for environmental friendly anchoring (Francour et al, 1999)
- Creation of raised boardwalks or submarine paths which allow easy "entry/exit" points for divers, snorkelers or swimmers (Liddle, 1991; Rouphael and Inglis, 2001).

Additionally, before any such measure is adopted, a good knowledge of the target area through detailed mapping is considered necessary in order to identify and quantify the level of vulnerability of the different marine habitats to anthropogenic impacts, record the environmental factors that could potentially boost or hinder marine recreational activities, mark the main sources of pollution and define the ecological state of the natural environment. All this information is essential and should be considered in any future visitors' management plan.

Over and above the direct effects of diving, there are several other environmental and social effects related to the development of rapid,

unplanned tourism, such as pollution, uncontrolled construction of coastal facilities, loss of traditional jobs and authenticity, conflicts between different groups of people, stakeholders, etc. (Badalamenti et al., 2000; Milazzo et al., 2002). All these factors, either environmental or social, should be taken into account, in order to estimate the carrying capacity of any given area, avoid further “impoverishment” of the environment, and to establish effective tourism management that will enhance sustainable development.

## **DIVING TOURISM IN GREECE: CURRENT STATE AND POTENTIALS**

The Greek coastline covers approximately 16500 km along the Aegean, Ionian, and Libyan seas at the NE part of Mediterranean, and is comprised of more than 9,800 islands and rock islets that are scattered around the Greek archipelagoes. As a result of the geographic position between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, alongside with the topography and bathymetry of the seascape, the complexity and length of the coastline, and a great variety of physico-chemical features, the Greek Seas host a rich marine biodiversity, both in terms of number of species and types of habitats. Recent scientific research on the biodiversity of the Aegean Sea revealed that it could be ranked as the second richest area after the NW coasts of the Mediterranean (Chintiroglou et al., 2005).

Moreover, the Greek Seas are characterized by a high level of water clarity, compared to the more eutrophic Western Mediterranean basin, high geomorphologic complexity, mild Mediterranean climate (warm temperatures for an extended period of time) and quite safe swimming conditions. All these characteristics offer a good basis for the development of sub-aquatic tourism in the country.

Until 2005, recreational SCUBA diving in Greece was restricted to only a few marine areas (136) due to a number of legislative limitations that were mainly related to the existence of a large number of marine antiquities. Since 2005 a new law (P.D. 3409/273/2005) regarding recreational diving activities was adopted, aiming to promote diving tourism in the country. The law includes an accreditation system, which is in accordance with the relevant EU directives, concerning all training programs, organizations and providers of diving services. Additionally, the majority of the Greek marine areas are now open to recreational diving, with the exception of those that are defined as ‘submarine archaeological sites’ by the Ministry of Culture and a few other specific cases (e.g. ports). Yet, the law allows the prospect for certain areas with

marine antiquities to be characterized as ‘submarine museums’ that would only be visited under the supervision of an expert guard diver. Furthermore, it provides some general measures regarding the future potential establishment of ‘Diving Marine Parks’ (equivalent to the Marine Parks found elsewhere) and the installation of additional ‘Hyperbaric Medical Centers’ in the country.

Since the adoption of the new law in 2005, recreational diving activities have become more popular in the country. Indeed, unpublished statistics reveal that there has been a boom in the number of recreational SCUBA diving certifications issued in Greece per annum, reaching a total of 14,120 certifications in 2007 (data from the Greek Ministry of Mercantile Marine), while equivalent individual figures for Malta, Cyprus and Turkey for the years 2006 and 2007 were lower (PADI records). Up until now the annual numbers remain quite stable and high. Moreover, the number of dive centers operating in Greece doubled within the first years of the adoption of the new law, while the rise in demand for the establishment of ‘Diving Marine Parks’ in several coastal and insular areas, provide further evidence regarding the increasing interest for diving tourism in the country. However, basic guidelines and measures towards an integrated management plan for the sustainability and long-term viability of diving tourism, compatible with strategies for the conservation of biodiversity and biological resources in the Greek Seas are still missing and remain a crucial necessity.

In Greece there are two large MPAs: 1) the National Marine Park of Alonissos – Northern Sporades (NMPANS) at the North Aegean Sea, established in 1992, and 2) the National Marine Park of Zakynthos (NMPZ), at the Ionian Sea, established in 1999. The first was mainly created for the protection of the last European population of the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), and the latter for the conservation of the most important nesting beaches of the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in the Mediterranean. Both MPAs attract a large number of visitors.

With regard to recreational diving activities, three dive sites within the NMPZ are annually visited by more than 6,500 SCUBA divers through four diving centers (Dalias et al., 2007). On the other hand, in the NMPANS, state conditions and legislative rules concerning SCUBA diving activities remain unclear, since the whole marine area (the largest Mediterranean MPA after ‘Pelagos’ Sanctuary, covering approximately 2,260 km<sup>2</sup>) has been characterized as a ‘submarine archaeological site’ by the Greek Ministry of Culture. It is known that a number of ancient shipwrecks and marine antiquities are situated within the NMPANS.

These should be accurately spotted and mapped, so that the areas that host such antiquities can be officially declared as 'submarine archaeological sites', while the remaining part of this vast marine area could be open for regulated recreational activities. However, no such effort has ever taken place. Thus, although the management body of the NMPANS and the local administrative authorities are highly interested in developing sustainable diving tourism in the area, there are a number of obstacles that restrain any sort of diving activity, mainly related to the aforementioned legislative framework. Yet, there are two diving centers that operate within the boundaries of the NMPANS. They are both based at the island of Alonissos and visit 3-4 specific underwater sites in zone 'B' of the park (Alonissos, Peristera and Dyo Aderfia islands), although only under the supervision of a marine archaeologist of the Greek Ministry of Culture. Recent data show that during the last two years the number of diving tourists who visited the NMPANS has doubled, reaching approximately 600-800 SCUBA divers annually (personal communication with local diving centers).

Apart from the two aforementioned MPAs, there are more than one hundred 'Sites of Community Importance' (SCI) of the Greek NATURA 2000 Network (92/43/EEC), which comprise marine areas and several coastal 'Special Protected Areas' (SPA) of the EC Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) (Thessalou-Legaki and Legakis, 2005). Many of these environmentally important sites already support several tourist activities, including yachting, sailing, spear fishing, SCUBA diving and snorkelling, and are therefore annually visited by an ever increasing number of tourists. Yet, in most cases, no specified management plan is being applied.

A different type of potential MPAs in Greece includes four artificial reefs which have been established over the last decade: Two in the N. Aegean (Gulf of Ierissos, and Fanari at Rodopi prefecture); one in S. Aegean (Kalymnos Island); and one in the Ionian Sea (Preveza prefecture). Furthermore, new plans for the establishment of more artificial reefs in several other parts of Greece are being proposed (e.g. coasts of Pieria). However, no recreational diving activity takes place at these artificial structures, despite the fact that both local administrative authorities and diving centers have expressed relative interest. Finally, a last type of MPA in the S. Aegean involves the Underwater Technological Park of the Hellenic Center of Marine Research (HCMR), at the north coasts of Crete, which is only used for scientific research (personal communication with C. Dounas, HCMR).

## **MPAs and Diving Tourism in the NE Aegean Sea**

The marine ecosystems of the NE Aegean Sea and more specifically those of Lesbos Island have attracted human interest at an early period. Therefore, research on the marine biodiversity of the island can be traced back to the age of Aristotle, when the great Greek philosopher studied and recorded the marine biota of the Aegean Sea (Voultsiadou et al., 2010). During the last two decades several studies have indicated the marine richness and certain physical and biological qualities of this part of the Eastern Mediterranean (e.g. Millet and Lamy, 2002).

Over the last years the University of the Aegean has carried out considerable research with the aim to investigate the perspective of MPA establishment and promotion of diving tourism at the islands of the NE Aegean Sea, in the framework of national and European scientific projects (e.g. Koutsoubas et al., 2006; Gerovasileiou et al., 2008a). Research has mainly concentrated on Lesbos prefecture and is gradually expanding to neighbouring areas (e.g. Chios prefecture). The prefecture of Lesbos encompasses the islands of Lesbos and Limnos which are annually visited by a large number of tourists (e.g. 115,216 visitors who spent 578,223 nights in Lesbos Island during 2006), and the less touristic small island of Agios Efstratios which has been recently characterized as a 'green island' due to efforts for the establishment of environmental friendly sources of energy and ecotourism. Over the last years there has been a marked increase in the interest expressed regarding 'eco-touristic' activities, including recreational diving, in Lesbos prefecture. As a result, local authorities along with the University of the Aegean and private enterprises have made several attempts towards the development of environmentally orientated 'green' entrepreneurships.

In the NE Aegean Sea, there are 9 coastal and marine areas that belong to the NATURA 2000 Network (92/43/EEC), either as SCIs or as SPAs. Additionally, the unique petrified forest of Sigrí in Lesbos Island, which encompasses terrestrial, coastal and marine sites, has been declared as a national 'Natural Monument' (P.D. 443/85). A number of tourist activities already take place in some of these sites, including several types of eco-tourism (e.g. SCUBA diving, bird watching, nature walks, cycling, geo-tourism), while the 'Lesbos Petrified Forest Geopark' of Sigrí recently won the 'Skål International Ecotourism Award' in the category of 'General Countryside' (2008). Furthermore, some of these areas are close enough to other important tourist destinations, while most of them suffer from uncontrolled human developments. However, effective

measures of protection, or any sort of integrated management plans are still non existent.

According to research findings (Koutsoubas et al., 2006), apart from the aforementioned areas which already experience some status of protection, there are many other marine areas in the NE Aegean Sea which fulfill a number of environmental criteria and should be protected. These criteria include a) rich biodiversity (in terms of species richness and variety of natural habitats), b) naturalness (natural unaffected marine areas), c) criticality (endangered and/or protected marine species and habitats), d) representativeness (representative types of Mediterranean marine habitats), and finally e) an important covering of certain biotopes that are protected by the EU environmental legislation (e.g. *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadows, coralligenous beds and submarine caves) (Tunesi and Diviacco, 1993; Kelleher, 1999; Roberts et al., 2003).

At the same time, these marine areas receive a high interest value as ideal sites for the development of recreational diving activities, since they encompass a wide variety of sites which exhibit an interesting geomorphology (e.g. walls, reefs, arches and caves) and support a great diversity of marine life. More specifically, recent findings have revealed the existence of more than 200 megabenthic and pelagic marine species from 14 taxonomic groups (floristic and faunistic) that were recorded in the 3 main dive areas off Lesvos Island by means of SCUBA diving (Gerovasileiou et al., 2008b). Therefore, these coastal and marine areas could form the basis for the future development of 'eco-friendly' marine recreational activities in the area.

In Lesvos Island there is one diving center that operates since 2002 and has carried out more than 850 training courses at an increasing rate over the years. During the last two years three more diving centers have started operating in Lesvos, Limnos and Chios Islands respectively. The increase of diving activity in this region follows the general trends that have been observed for diving tourism in Greece after the adoption of the new diving law. Marine areas where diving activities take place in these islands include a variety of topographic features, as well as easily accessible wrecks which make them suitable for a wide range of diving experiences (e.g. wreck, cave and multilevel dives).

However, certain species like the fan mussel (*Pinna nobilis*), the long-spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus longispinus*), Scleractinian stony corals, gorgonians (*Eunicella* spp.), and Bryozoans, as well as several types of habitats (e.g. seagrass meadows, coralligenous beds, submerged caves), which have been recorded in the aforementioned areas (Gerovasileiou et al., 2008b; 2009), have been characterized as fragile as

they are extremely vulnerable to anthropogenic impacts (Milazzo et al., 2002; Lloret et al., 2006). Areas that encompass such species or habitats are usually perceived as ‘hot-spots’ for SCUBA diving, rendering these species prone to damage as a result of the accumulative effects of intensive and unregulated marine tourism (e.g. increased physical contact by divers, boat anchoring), pollution and other human related pressures (e.g. commercial fisheries, coastal constructions), that could potentially impoverish the structural complexity of the marine habitats in an area and eventually lead to a decrease of habitat cover and loss of biodiversity. Thus, there is a serious threat that once unregulated marine tourism is intensified, conflicting interests (e.g. tourism, fisheries) may lead to a deterioration of the ecological quality and consequently, of the long-term viability of diving tourism in the area.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND POLICIES IMPLICATIONS**

It is essential to adopt a formula for managing the development of diving tourism at the Greek coastal zone in the framework of an integrated precautionary approach. Recent experience has proved that there are two options to choose from: a) the long-term sustainable development and b) the short-term prospect (UNEP/MAP/Blue Plan, 2005; López Ornat, 2006), which unfortunately is the most commonly followed in Greece. Diving tourism should be used as a driving force with the aim to promote environmental conservation along with ecologically responsible coastal development (Dalias et al., 2007). Protection of the natural ecosystems must be a priority, in order to maintain the high aesthetic and ecological value of the marine sites. Previous experience from other Mediterranean MPAs (e.g. measures for eliminating potential human induced impacts) should be used as a tool for planning a new management model, adjusted to the local facts and conditions.

The implementation of a well designed management plan focusing on the development of regulated recreational diving activities within any type of MPA could potentially: a) bring about important economic sources to support the costs of surveillance and monitoring, b) benefit local communities by reinforcing sustainable development, and finally c) increase public awareness with regard to the conservation of the marine environment. However, the primary step for designing any such plan is the conduction of baseline studies to assess local environmental conditions, while its implementation should be based on regular monitoring. Yet, no relevant management plan or integrated monitoring scheme has been applied so far in any of the two Greek MPAs, where

monitoring, carried out by the management bodies of the parks and associated NGOs, involves only the two threatened species *Monachus monachus* and *Caretta caretta*, but rules out the rest of the marine environment.

Moreover, effective planning, management and decision making should take into account the carrying capacity of all marine sites that would directly or indirectly be affected by tourism (López Ornat, 2006), while the needs for infrastructure of the various tourist activities should be treated separately. More specifically, the establishment of regulated diving tourism within an MPA usually demands analytical depiction of dive sites, creation of underwater paths and routes for diving and snorkeling, investigation of the optimal distribution of divers between the different dive sites, establishment of mooring systems for boats and finally the installation of dive centers, 'Hyperbaric Medical Centers', and the associated tourism infrastructure (e.g. marinas). Similar steps are needed in order to develop diving tourism at the existing artificial reefs or those to be established in the near future, in order to safeguard funds for their monitoring. The nomination of artificial reefs as diving sites could potentially redirect SCUBA divers from vulnerable natural marine sites (Van Treeck and Schuhmacher, 1998).

On the other hand, the creation of new marine parks in the Greek Seas should follow the current management approaches and practices along with the environmental trends and needs which have been described by the scientific community, NGOs and the management authorities of the Mediterranean MPAs. Therefore, the approach of 'Diving Marine Parks' that has been suggested by certain authors (e.g. Markatos and Koutsis, 2008) seems yet to be quite dubious and unclear. We strongly believe and propose that the future development of eco-friendly diving tourism in Greece should be combined with the establishment of Networks of Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (networks of permanent or periodically alternating no-take zones). Future candidate target areas should include existing protected areas, which often receive inadequate level of protection (e.g. NATURA sites), as well as new areas that fulfill a number of environmental and socio-economic criteria. These new areas, could be used as buffer zones at a rotational basis, so that the local environment would not be fully 'exploited' at any given site, while at the same time they would protect and finance the permanent MPAs or the core no-take zones of the new parks which host vulnerable ecosystems and where visitation is limited or prohibited (López Ornat, 2006).

The creation of 'Networks of Marine Protected Areas' can provide more effective conservation of different habitats and important nursery



grounds for the early life stages of fish and other marine biota, without interrupting human activities at the intermediate areas (PISCO, 2007). Moreover, networks of small MPAs are proved to be more easily managed (López Ornat, 2006), while the large size of the existing Greek MPAs seems to cause many problems with regard to the surveillance and the acceptance of local communities (e.g. conflicts between fisheries and tourism). However several issues, such as the number, size and distance between the protected zones comprising a network have to be carefully investigated through scientific research (Roberts et al., 2003). Therefore, planning and design of these networks has to be based on both pre-existing information and environmental data taken *in situ*, in order to assess the current state conditions and to ensure a good representativeness and distribution of protected natural heritage (e.g. biodiversity, habitat cover, and fisheries stocks) and environmental processes. This requires the conduction of oceanographic environmental studies at the potential target areas. The need for environmental studies prior to any establishment of MPAs is in accordance to what the global experience has shown (Browman and Stergiou, 2004; PISCO, 2007).

Furthermore, before the establishment of an MPA, within an integrated approach, socio-economic factors from the neighboring coastal areas (e.g. conflicting interests among the different groups of users) also have to be investigated (Badalamenti et al., 2000), while the involvement of the local communities must be a priority, from the first stages of this process, in order to improve the chances of success and the long-term viability of any development plan (Kelleher, 1999).

Both existing and new MPAs of the Greek Seas, should additionally focus on the establishment of educational activities and appropriate facilities (e.g. special training courses for SCUBA divers, visitor centers and information points) and the production of awareness raising material (e.g. educational tools, brochures, guide books and scientific publications) through which, conservation of the marine environment will be promoted. Moreover, it is essential to maintain local customs and traditions that illustrate the relationship between humans and the marine environment (e.g. historical background, monuments, religious sites, human uses of the marine resources, fishing lifestyles).

The decision making process within the MPAs has to be based on a periodic monitoring scheme of ecological and socio-economic alterations which is expected to eliminate potential habitat loss and identify the needs of the local communities. Regional universities, research institutes and NGOs could significantly contribute in the monitoring and consultation process.

Overall, the establishment of any type of MPA and the development of diving tourism alone do not safeguard the success of environmental or socio-economic purposes. A well designed management plan in the framework of a precautionary approach, alongside with an organized management body, responsible for the effective surveillance, sustainable use and scientific monitoring of the marine and socio-economic environment, are absolutely critical to be established.

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## CONVICT HERITAGE TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF FREMANTLE PRISON, AUSTRALIA

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*History and Heritage have traditionally been strong pull factors in tourism. There are countries and destinations with strong tradition in these areas with practically no efforts needed for product designing, promotion or marketing. Destinations like Rome, Vienna or Paris, etc. can be cited in this regard. It is interesting to find that a country like Australia with a history of approximately 200 years (excluding the aborigines' history) has made extensive use of its history and heritage by converting them into tourism products and convict heritage tourism has emerged as a vital interest area for both domestic as well as international tourism. As a visiting fellow of the Australia India Council (2007) I worked on a project – "How Australia has converted its history and heritage into tourism products?" and further as a visiting Professor under the Australia Endeavour Award 2008 I worked on Convict Heritage in Australia. For this I carried out extensive fieldwork in different parts of Australia. This paper analyses the decision-making and planning for converting convict history and sites into convict heritage sites and further developing them as tourism products. It examines the attractions created in this area and the way they are marketed and promoted. After discussing the broad areas the paper discusses the Fremantle prison as a case study whereby it takes into account its conversion into a convict heritage site and its enrichment into a tourism product by introducing prison tours, theme parties and a live experience of prison life to the visitors. How do the visitors feel about this experience is another aspect dealt with in the paper along with the perceptions and attitudes of the host population, former prison officers and members of the Town Council in Fremantle. The paper also makes certain suggestions for further enrichment and rejuvenation of such tourism products in Australia. The paper, by dealing such themes, provides an insight into this emerging area of new tourism products that provide a successful tourism product case study for others to learn from and follow.*

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**Keywords:** Convict Heritage, Ghost Tours, Tourism Resource, Tourism Product, Tourist Gaze





## INTRODUCTION

Conserving, showing and interpreting a ‘cruel and often tyrannical’ past of penal solitude to the visitors as a tourism product is something unique and a departure from the earlier practices of showcasing the histories or monuments that represented the life styles and cultures of the ruling and dominant social groups. The common humans and their histories/heritage were hardly considered as a theme that could act as a pull factor in tourism. Hence, the attitude of tourism planners as well as that of the industry was, why take pains to showcase them. The very word convict has a very specific meaning in Australia and is used not for every prisoner that has been convicted but only for those prisoners that had been convicted in England and transported to Australia as convicts. It remained a taboo in the Australian social context and it was very recently that not only this taboo was broken but quite a few historical studies emerged on the history of the Penal Settlements and their convict population along with the contributions of the convicts in building up the Australian nation. Even the business houses that were established by the convicts now take pride in that ancestry using the convicts’ history to market their products. The best example is that of a popular beer brand where the company claims that the beer had been illegally distilled by James, a convict from the first fleet and he was punished with 74 lashes – a much lesser sentence because the Governor of Victoria tasted the beer and liked it very much. The terminology also changed to refer the convicts as victims of forced migrations, birth stains and so on. This was because fresh researches proved the forced migrations and the injustices committed on the innocent or for exceptionally petty crimes to make free and cheap labour available for colonial expansion through punishment of deportation to the colonies where no local labour could be found (Robson, 1965; Hughes, 1987; Robinson, 1988; Davis, 1998; Frost, Maxwell-Stewart, 2001; Rees, 2001; Davidson, 2007). Not only was the history and life of the convicts rewritten to acknowledge their role in Australia’s development but gradually, the sites and events associated with them like the prisons, the female factories or the buildings constructed by convict labour, the convict hide outs, their working places such as coalmines, their escape routes, etc. became symbols of convict heritage and objects of tourist gaze. This paper seeks to examine the conversion of Fremantle Prison in West Australia into a successful Convict Heritage Tourism product.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted for this case study has been conventional. Three field visits were carried out to the site to have first hand experience of its tourism products. Interviews were conducted with the visitors, staff, local residents, historians and ex-prison officials besides getting questionnaires filled from them. I also explored their website, brochures and other literature like the official tourist survey and feedback. To have a historical understanding of the convict life, one also went through the published research works related to the theme in order to make a comparative analysis that whether the convict heritage showcased for the tourists' gaze and interpreted/transmitted to the tourists by the guides is historically authentic or as is the standard practice in tourism added with spicy stories and fiction.

## **BACKGROUND**

History and Heritage continue to remain the strongest pull factors in tourism in spite of whether the past has been beautiful or horrible. For example, after the Second World War many sites worldwide, where terrible happenings had taken place, started attracting visitors and history preserved both, the loveable as well as the horrible memories for the present and future generations. Many sites where the kings and other public figures were either imprisoned or hanged aroused the curiosity of a visitor yet, to convert the horrible past into a visitor attraction has not been an easy task. The modern world established a symbolic relationship between history, heritage, arts and commerce with the tourist dollar being an answer to meet the cost of heritage conservation along with giving a boost to the local economies. Heritage Tourism has flourished in different forms in various countries but I consider the Convict Heritage Tourism as a significant departure from the various other forms of Heritage Tourism and no doubt Australia has established it as a brand in the tourism generating markets. A variety of factors contributed towards heritage awareness and conservation in Australia. Whereas the generation of the 1950s was busy in earning money and in development, there soon emerged nationalist education with patriotic feelings and reactions (who are we?) in the 1960s and an important saying was "we have got history if they have got". (Interview: David Crinion, Adelaide) A lot of community-based works emerged and throughout 1960s the centenary celebrations of the towns established in the 1860s marked the Australian continent. In

fact, there emerged a movement at the grassroots amongst the new generation where the elite, the artists and the common man were all for finding their history and conserving heritage. It was natural that such a movement would have its impact on the politics of the day and also affect the future. Community Histories, interest in non-Australian Histories that had a legacy on Australia and the History of Aborigines became prominent subjects of research and the monuments and sites related to such history, the objects of heritage conservation (interview: David Crinion). By the 1980s, heritage (both environmental and manmade) had become a major issue of conservation wherein the smaller and weaker players also had a say at the local levels. Researches were conducted to write public histories, and there emerged excellent works (by early 1990s) debating issues related to “presentation of history to a wider public” and the “relationship between the history historians write for themselves and the history they should write for others” (Rickard and Spearriti, 1991, p.1). The “wider public” and the “others” here would include many: popular press; television and radio; historical interpretations at museums, monuments and other heritage sites; tourists and tourism professionals or developers and so on. In fact, public history “also insists that history has a future, not only in the academy but in the real world” (Rickard and Spearriti, p.3; Also see Kapil Kumar, 2005 for uses of History in Tourism). It was virtually a heritage cultural movement that gained strength from strong traditions of community cooperation and had a huge bearing on the thinking of the times. It was in this context that the Fremantle Prison, built by the convicts themselves in the 1850s was converted into a heritage site in the 1990s with a vision to attract tourists.

## **HERITAGE: RESOURCE TO PRODUCT**

Initially, the Fremantle Prison was preserved for heritage purposes as a memory of retaining the convict heritage of a prison and its life, the history of which dates back to the establishment of the Penal Settlement in Australia in the 1850s. The construction of the prison which started with the building of the Warder’s Cottages in 1851 and the entire convict establishment project got officially completed by end December 1859. By 1868, convict transportation from UK to Western Australia had ended; 1876 saw the disbanding of the Colonial Convict Department but the Fremantle Prison continued to host prisoners till 1991 from where started its process of development into a major historic heritage site of Australia. One cannot go into the detailed history but suffice here is to mention that almost 140 years of its history is witness to many events from housing the

most hardened criminals, women convicts, prisoners of war; the ones initially deported from England; escapes and the daily convict life. Interestingly, the archival data and records are rich and well preserved and the website of the Fremantle Prison on the Internet is extremely informative in this regard. I am not going into the details of such records here but some of these records are integrated in the tourism product for purposes of information, knowledge, anecdotes or entertainment of the tourists. In 1983 itself the Western Australian State Cabinet had decided to close the prison. It had also acknowledged that "the site offered tremendous possibilities for imaginative uses whilst maintaining integrity of the historic development". The final decommissioning of the prison in 1991 not only saw a variety of heritage management strategies put into practice but also permitted the maintenance of its historic significance and allow "it to continue as a useful community enterprise". There always had been a debate over heritage usage and conservation in Fremantle and it remerged over the future usage of the prison. One view expressed was to dismantle it (It's an eyesore! Pull it down!) and the entire area to be used either to establish a new housing colony or to have markets with huge malls. Obviously, this was a viewpoint governed by commercial and marketing perspective. It is an eyesore! Represents a horrible past, pull it down, just place a memory stone there and a garden (interview: James Cooper) was another view. Another set of historians, though in favour of conserving the Convict Heritage have been opposed to its showcasing to tourists as they consider that intimate stories of human sufferings should not be reduced to sensational experience for entertainment. (Interview: David Dunston) The other viewpoint was to retain it as a heritage site that can be used for community services and ultimately it was the heritage conservation viewpoint that prevailed (Interview: Ron Davidson, Fremantle). In fact, Roy Jones has elaborately analysed Fremantle's conversion into a heritage township (1992):

"Fremantle was seen by many, and not least by state planners, as rundown and obsolete by comparison and both the first metropolitan plan (Stephenson and Hepburn 1955) and an early City Council plan envisaged radical demolition and reconstruction. By the early 1970s, however, lessons from the destruction of built heritage in Perth had been learned and Fremantle's historic townscape had gained in local scarcity value; the first gentrifiers had begun to move into the town: and, particularly as Perth Airport began to replace Victoria Quay as Australia's "Western Gateway" (Ewers 1971), the economic pressures for (re)development in Fremantle were less strong than was the case elsewhere in the metropolitan area."

Jones further mentioned that “the community of Fremantle have had to struggle to maintain a delicate balance between preservation and change” and accordingly “these changes have been largely dependent on the preservation of Fremantle’s pre-existing assets” (Jones, 2007). Prior to the Fremantle Prison certain other areas had seen heritage friendly development and these included the Western Australian Maritime Museum and certain other areas of the Victoria Quay under the port authority. However, struggle between community consultation and heritage preservation on the one side and business demand on the other side is an ongoing process which has very often witnessed protests and public meetings in favour of the former. One can say here that the decision to close the prison and the heritage preservation movement in Fremantle were timed in the same space. The result was the Fremantle City Council with the backing of its citizens emerged as a winner in preserving the settlers’ heritage at the entry point of Western Australia. No doubt the major credit for this goes to the heritage lobby group, i.e., Fremantle Society (Interview Ron Davidson). Initially, the entire development was focussed on heritage conservation and by 2003 the Department of House and Works, Government of West Australia came out with a Master Plan for the Fremantle Prison Heritage Precinct. The Master Plan declared it “a heritage icon with exceptional cultural heritage significance at state, national and international levels”. It also described it as the “most intact of all Australian convict sites – the most evocative and widespread set of convict transportation sites in the world”. In order to retain its cultural significance, the conservation actions according to the plan were to include interpretation, adaptation for existing and proposed uses, maintenance and repairs. The plan also acknowledged visitation as a “key element of interpretative conservation and income from visitation as a principle revenue source”. By 2003, the visitor number had touched the figure of 1, 12,000 per annum and the plan further sought for improved visitor experiences. Though developed as a premier heritage precinct and a heritage icon the vision of the master plan intended to “provide a lasting legacy for the people of Australia and greatly enrich the cultural life of the state and nation by conserving and interpreting the most intact convict era site in Australia”. At the same time the vision also aimed at making it “one of the Western Australia’s premier destination for tourism, cultural and educational activities” and to emerge “as a model for the care and management of exceptionally significant heritage properties in Australia”. The plans also envisaged partnerships with tourism and small business, community development, education and training, culture and arts, heritage, justice and health (Master Plan, 2003). The stage was set to

develop the site with a product mix of heritage, tourism and community services.

## **THE TOURISM PRODUCT**

The Master Plan emphasised a vital role for the prison precinct in the development and expansion of tourism to Western Australia. By this time, it had attracted 6.9% of Western Australia's 4,46,000 international visitors between July 2001 to March 2002 and 3.7% of Western Australia's 9,40,000 visitors between April 2001 to March 2002. Initially, its paid tourism services included a guided tour programme with night and day schedules along with a self-guided tour of the ground. However, the plan acknowledged a high potential with increase in visitors' numbers by adding more touristic activities. Jack Carlsen et al (2007) in their project on Critical Success Factor for Cultural Heritage Tourism Operations have mentioned that an understanding of "the requirements for ensuring that conservation goals are met while tourism enterprise potential is maximised" is crucial to the "successful management of cultural heritage". And here was a heritage resource with an excellent plan to be converted into a major tourist attraction. I am not going here into the details of how the project team developed on the Master Plan and how the recommendations were put into operations but it is worth mentioning that a host of professionals, Prison Precinct Officers, members of the Fremantle Prison Trust, historians and community representatives had contributed in a big way not only in the consultation process to prepare the Master Plan but also in designing, developing and managing the product.

Today, the Fremantle Prison Precinct is a fully developed tourism product having passed through the stages of initial heritage conservation, planning and development. Besides, international and domestic tourists, its visitors include domestic tourists with convict ancestry, ex-prisoners, former prison officials and also the next generations of both these types of visitors and local residents. Though often the convict family identities are not disclosed, many a times such recognition is possible through the observing curiosity and actions of such visitors which the experienced guides and the ex-prison officials who work there are able to discern (Interview: Ms. Jane, Fremantle Prison). For ex-prison officers and ex-prisoners the visit is like refreshing the memories howsoever bad or worst they could have been along with maybe a good moment or two. For the convict families or their next generations it is like going into the ancestral

past with curiosity and amazement. Besides the buildings and the entire project that has been conserved, the tourist attractions include:

## **PRISON TOURS**

Four types of tours are conducted of the convict establishment wherein “experienced guides bring the rich folklore and stories of the prison to life” (Prison Brochures) and interpret the convict history to the tourists:

The Day Tours are run every half an hour by an experienced guide. You get to know all about the prison life right from the arrival of a convict, his or her registration, medical checkups, life in the cells, kitchen and exercise yards, the painting and graffiti of the walls, the execution chamber, etc. all along with a lucid commentary from the guide which is based on convict history that survived either in the form of records or through the oral tradition. The escape attempts by the convicts, the modes of protests adopted by convicts, the iron hand measures of the guards, part narrations of the crimes committed by convicts, life of women convicts and their crimes, all add to the tourist experience by bringing back to life the 140 years of history.

## **TUNNEL TOURS**

An extremely exciting and unique experience for the visitor is the tunnel tour started in June 2005. An adventure of a very different type, in this tour the visitors explore a one-kilometre system of tunnels built under the prison almost a century back. These tunnels are almost twenty metres beneath the prison and in the late 1800s water from these tunnels “sustained thousands of peoples in the Fremantle area”. The tour is a mix of trekking by foot and exploring the submerged passageways in replica punts used as boats and the visitor has to wear the headlamps and special boots along with overalls. By April 2006, the tunnel tours had received their 10,000th visitor. As per the official survey 74% of the visitors who do the tunnel tours would like to return for tunnels.

## **TORCH LIGHT TOURS**

Run twice a week from 7.30 p.m. at night a tour by torchlight explores the nightlife of the Fremantle prison. Not meant for the faint hearted, the tourists are entertained “with spooky stories of the supernatural”. The brochure poses a question “Do you believe in ghosts?”

or “Are you ready to take your fears?” and also warns you about the few surprises that would be there on the way. In fact Ghost Tours are very popular with the youth and backpackers at all convict sites in Australia and there are quite a few publications on Ghosts.

## **GREAT ESCAPE TOURS**

The prison has an interesting history of daring and dangerous attempted escapes by convicts and prisoners and the guides make you experience these, entertaining the visitors with folklore and stories of successful and unsuccessful attempts.

All these tours are creation of meticulous planning based on historical research and provide a thrilling experience to the visitors taking them back in time when the prison was alive. Enriched by the guide’s narration, my imagination made me feel each and every situation as if I was locked in the cell or exercising in the yard and what not when I took the tours. There is much for the tourists to explore and observe including listening to the histories of women convicts – an attraction for those interested in gender studies.

## **VISITORS’ CENTRE**

Besides the tours, an interesting attraction is the Visitors’ Centre that also houses the convict database. Tourists can search here for convicts in their own family tree and we must remember that the Prison had housed convicts from England as well as Ireland besides the locals. Everything is computerised and a lot of research and effort has gone in building this database. You can search by surname or by the name of ship to find about the 10,000 convicts who had been transported to Swan River Colony between 1850 and 1868. Not only this you can know all about the 43 men and the woman who were hanged there, along with the convicts’ statistics that depicts the nature of crime, occupation, religion and marital status, age of the convict, length of sentence and the regions from which the convicts were deported. Added to these are the stories of various characters and their escape attempts. The Centre has interactive displays and you can virtually tour the prison on a big screen by pressing a few buttons. The most important thing to note here is that this data is based on hard historical research and the prison has its own historians to research and add more value to such data. Hence, what is being offered to the tourists to seek knowledge about or experience is authentic history.



## **OTHER ATTRACTIONS**

To make the precinct more tourist friendly there are other attractions as well:

The Prisoners' Art Gallery houses the artworks produced by the "Western Australian prisoners" during their jail life and holds exhibitions.

An eating joint named as "The Convict Café" provides you with homemade meals.

And lastly, you have the Gift Shop to buy souvenirs that reflect different periods in prison's history and include pens, keys, locks, published literature on convicts, small history of Fremantle Prison, gold coin, etc. etc. managed by very-very visitor friendly youngsters. However, 4% of the visitors in my survey considered it as a good way of making money and another 6% would consider it as a waste of money and not buy any gifts (see Table 1).

The prison also organises theme parties, theme dinners and other functions wherein while enjoying the food delicacies, the guests go back in time with staged re-enactment of convict history for entertainment or education. This not only generates additional revenues but also provides livelihood to the theatre artists or former prison officials.

A host of educational activities, based on prison history, like drawing competition, etc. are also carried out for youngsters and school children.

## **EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS**

Re-enactment of events from the prison history is often used for touristic entertainment. However, exhibitions based on events have been very successful. The most famous ones among these were on the work of "women from Bandyup Prison" and regular programmes of "rolling exhibitions from arts programmes in metropolitan and regional prisons". However, the most successful exhibition has been ESCAPEE – FREMANTLE TO FREEDOM launched in September 2006 in the Prisoners' Art Gallery. The theme of the exhibition was based on a daring and dramatic escape event of six Irish Fenian prisoners from the prison in 1876. Covering "over four countries with contrasting legal systems, this extremely well-researched exhibition depicted the bold escape of Irish Fenian convicts from West Australia to America." In fact, the year 2006 marked the 130 years of this escape and the entire scenario was put to life again not only through the exhibits of photographs, letters, diaries or replicas of the escape boat CATALPA but also by singing of the song 'The Catalpa' that was "performed as a street ballad soon after the

dramatic events of April 7, 1876.”A satire on the jail administration, the words of the “popular song and story” are sung to the tune of “The Boys of Kilmichael” and it goes on as:

“A noble whale ship and commander called the Catalpa they say,  
Came out to Western Australia and stole six bold Fenians away.

Chorus:

Come all you screw warders and jailers, remember the Perth Regatta  
Day,

Take care of the rest of your Fenians or the Yankees will steal ‘em  
away.

Seven long years penal servitude, and for seven long more had to  
stay,

For defendin’ their country old Ireland, for that they were banished  
away.

Now all the boats were a ‘racin’ and ‘makin’ short tacks for the spot,

But the Yankee tacks into Fremantle and takes the best prize of the  
lot.

The Georgette armed with her warriors went out the brave Yank to  
arrest

But she hoisted her star spangled banner, sayin’: ‘You’ll not be  
raidin’ my chest.’

Now they’ve landed all safe in Americay, and there they’ll be able to  
cry:

‘Hoist up the green flag and shamrock. Hurrah for old Ireland we’ll  
die.’”

In fact, this can be converted into a regular performance for the  
entertainment of the tourist.

## **PRODUCT MARKETING**

The marketing strategies had been chalked out in the Project Plan itself and accordingly the site has a marketing manger to carry out the tasks involved. Besides excellent brochures that are available at Tourist information centres and accommodation units all over Australia, it has an excellent web-site which is not only informative and educative but one that really catches your eye and lures you to explore more.

Networking with other such sites, moving exhibitions, press releases and hosting events form pat of the marketing strategies. Yet, the official survey indicates that 39% of the visitors came to know about it from friends and family, 12% through Travel guides at other destinations, 12% by brochures, 7% through Visitor Centre, 5% each through the website

and accommodation units, 3% each through TV, magazines and Newspapers, 2% by exploring the map of Freemantle and 1% each through Radio and the prison staff. My own survey results are not much different with 42% through word of mouth, 12% through electronic media, 10% print media, 14% brochures. 16% from accommodation units and 6% others. Ironically, the tourism industry, except for the backpacker establishments, hardly markets the site. This, perhaps is due to absence of earnings through commissions for the industry. However, the increase in visitor numbers and the visitors' satisfaction rate (See Tables 1 and 2) over the years indicates the success of the marketing plan of the organisation.

**Table 1.** Comparative Figures for Official and Author's Surveys (in Percentages)

	Official Visitors Survey Results					Author's Visitors Survey Results				
	Ex	VG	G	F	P	Ex	VG	G	F	P
Overall Exp. of Visitors	72	24	4	0	0	85	12	3	0	0
Visitor's Exp. with Guides										
a) Knowledge	80	17	3	0	0	88	10	2	0	0
b) Attitude	84	13	3	0	0	92	7	1	0	0
c) Interpretation						94	5	1	0	0
Souvenir/Gift Shop	53	30	13	3	1	62	18	10	4*	6**
					Yes	No	Yes	No		
Will you recommend the site to others?					100	0	94	6		
Will you repeat the visit?					69	31	58	42		

(Source: Fremantle Prison Visitors' Survey Report; Author's survey results through questionnaires)

(Ex = Excellent; VG = Very Good; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor)

\* Good way of making money

\*\* Waste of money

The figures demonstrate that the number of visitors to the Prison has been increasing every year and an increase of 50,000 (roughly about 40%) within three years of the Master Plan launch is an impressive performance of the product as a pull factor.

**Table 2.** Tourists at Fremantle Prison

Year	Visitor Count
2000-01	115,825
2001-02	104,871
2002-03	121,691
2003-04	129,653
2004-05	128,555
2005-06	149,258
2006-07	174,842

Courtesy: Paula Nelson, Marketing Manager, Fremantle Prison

## **AN EVALUATION**

By the year 2004-05, the number of visitors taking guided tours in the prisons had gone upto 1,28,555 and equipped with a number of awards this convict heritage tourist attraction is all set to be a part of World Heritage List and more and more grants are pouring in for its conservation. As a convict heritage site, it is a tourist destination that not only reflects, but also re-enacts the history and life of imprisonment over a long period of time. Constant research for the rejuvenation of the product by adding more tours, events and exhibitions has provided value addition to the product, which is serviced by an always smiling staff in a tourist friendly environment. The development of this convict heritage tourism product has demonstrated that the cultural heritage is not only a “valued point of reference as an identity within a given community” but is also a “potential source” of revenue generation through tourism. Prof. Jack Carlsen shared with me the findings of the project done by his team on critical success factors for cultural heritage tourism operations. Interestingly, the Fremantle Prison was not covered in this extremely well-done project but if I apply their key findings of critical success factors that they “identified from the literature and in discussion with the stakeholders” for the sites which they covered are all actually present in the case of the Fremantle Prison experience: the planning objectives were clearly set, there was sound financial planning, the “appeal, intellectual challenge and raised levels of visitors’ interests” has been there based on authenticity and conservation as the core value of heritage. At the same time certain aspects are still kept away from the tourists like the prison practice of tattooing, information on prison riots and graffiti that depicted revenge, sexuality or cruelty of prison officers. In fact, it was a new trend in tourism that was created with excellent marketing plans. The creation of such a touristic attraction once again proves that product designing in

tourism is not just dependent on market demand but the niche tourism product generates a market demand. (No doubt that war bunkers, firing different kinds of rifles, the voice of sirens and re-enactment of air raids are being showcased to the tourists by the Vietnamese).

For planners and developers of heritage tourism the Fremantle prison represents a successful case study and can be an excellent learning experience for those venturing into such planning and development. Not only authentic history is showcased to the visitors but the guides' narrations are also authentic based on actual occurrences that are found in the prison records. In spite of this there is still scope for further value addition to the exhibits. For example, some replicas can be created for convicts performing various tasks at different sites; photographic presentations of convicts around whom escape stories are narrated by the guides can be displayed (as done in the old Melbourne Jail). As a part of heritage re-enactment, convict heritage theatre shows can be introduced based on prison life themes on a regular basis. A small booklet on prison graffiti and drawings by prisoners can be another souvenir. The singing of 'The Catalpa' can be a regular feature. All this will not only enhance the tourist experience but also provide jobs to young artists. The Convict Heritage Tourism has emerged as a Special Interest Area and is there to stay for long. It should not be taken as a Dark Tourism product just because it depicts the history of forced migration or convict life. Rather, it has to be appreciated that the life of the commoner has been showcased as a tourism product. This is a welcome shift from showcasing the royalty or dominant social groups' lifestyles.

I would like to end this presentation by giving an interesting experience of the answers given to me by the visitors during my field study at the prison. My question was "After going through the prison tours what do you feel like?" and "the options were a prison officer, a convict or a human rights activist." Interestingly the answers were a mixed lot. The teenagers wanted to be prison officers whereas the adults, human rights activists. And surely no one wanted to be a convict. At the same time I would like to suggest that children below the age of 14 years should be kept away from such sites as the mind is not mature enough to grasp the realities of convict heritage in the real sense.

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## INTERVIEWS

David Crinion, General Manager, Tourism Policy and Planning, Government of South Australia, Adelaide

David Dunston, Monash University

Dr. James Cooper, Fremantle, WA

Ms. Jane, Tourist Guide at Fremantle Prison

Prof. Jack Carlsen, Chair in Tourism and Hospitality, Curtin Sustainable Tourism Centre, Curtin University of Technology, Perth

Ron Davidson, President, Fremantle Heritage Society

## FIELD VISITS

Fremantle Prison, February-March 2007 and June 2008

## QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS

Fremantle Prison Visitors' Survey 2008  
Author's Questionnaires for Visitors 2008

## ENDNOTES

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## WHICH HOMEPORT IN EUROPE: THE CRUISE INDUSTRY'S SELECTION CRITERIA

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*This paper presents the results of an empirical research that aims to (a) identify the criteria on which the cruise companies select a homeport, and (b) conclude on the hierarchy that each of these criteria is prioritised. A broad literature review, along with brainstorming sessions, concluded on a wide list of potential criteria. Based on these findings, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to experts that include cruise companies, agents and cruise ports. The analysis of the collected data determines the criteria on which the cruise industry chooses a homeport and the gravity that each criterion has on their decision. Based on the empirical findings, the paper draws up potential strategies for a cruise terminal in order to become a leading cruise port. As competition between cruise ports intensifies, and the cruise industry is increasingly marked by concentration, the provided responses are of vital importance for the future development of cruise ports and, more general, maritime tourism.*

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**Keywords:** *Cruise industry, selection criteria, home-ports, ports of call, ports competition.*

### INTRODUCTION: WHICH PORT TO VISIT?

The question 'which ports to visit?' is vital in several aspects for a cruise company and the final choice has serious economic, social and environmental impacts on ports and local communities (European Community, 2009). The purpose of the scheduled and offered itineraries is not the transport service itself, but the provision of pleasure to the cruise passengers (Kendall, 1986). In their efforts to achieve the highest





level of customers' (in other words: passengers), satisfaction cruise companies introduce itineraries including attractive destinations. Yet, passengers' satisfaction is only one of the major reasons for a cruise company to select and change itineraries, or change the specific ports visited by its fleet. Issues, for example, like the realisation that the passengers do not have positive experiences by a port play a role (see: Henthorne, 2000). The cruise ships must have access to appropriate port infrastructures, superstructures, supplies and services in order to facilitate the ship and the passengers.

According to their use by cruise companies, cruise ports are commonly classified in three categories. The first one is that of *homeports*. These ports are the starting, or ending, point for a cruise, or even both these points. The second category is the *ports of call*, which are the ports visited by a cruise ship during the cruise. The third category are *hybrid* ports, which are a blend of the previous two categories; these ports are the starting and ending point for some cruise itineraries but they also act as intermediate point for other cruise itineraries.

A cruise port is, in principle, interested in being a homeport for one or more cruise companies. This is due to the high economic impact of this development for the port and the port related city which is resulted from three sources of income generator: (a) the cruise companies themselves (cf. BREA, 2005); (b) the cruise passengers (Vina and Ford, 1998); and (c) the vessels crews (Peisley, 2003). It has been recently estimated that when at the homeport a cruise passenger spends six to seven times more money than what he spends at a port-of-call, whereas every one million Euros in expenditures by the cruise industry creates 2,3 € million in business output and 22 jobs (GP Wild and BREA, 2007).

Despite the importance of becoming a homeport, several issues regarding the relations between ports and the cruise sector have not been thoroughly examined in the relevant literature. Most cruise studies remain focused mainly on the market structures of the sector and preoccupied with the economic impact of cruise operations and tourism for the port, the port city, or even the region. To give some examples, Wood (2000) examined the characteristics of cruise as a globalised industry; Marti (2003) identified and reviewed the status of the world and the extended length of cruises for the period 1985-2002; while Jaakson (2004) described the tourist bubbles and their flows in a cruise port of call. As regards the economic impact of the cruise sector, there are several studies from, or on behalf of, the port industry as well as studies by researchers. Numerous studies for the impact of cruise on South American ports, e.g. Port of Portland, Maine, (2002) Seattle (Martin, 2004), or on Australian

ports (Dwyer et al., 2004) and the work of Dwyer and Forsyth (1998), who developed a framework for assessing the economic impact of the cruise industry, are illustrative examples of the former and latter case respectively. Recently, Guerrero, et al. (2008) examined the economic impact of Western Mediterranean leisure ports. There are also studies that stand critical to the assessment of the social and environmental impact of cruise (i.e., Klein, 2003; Butt, 2007; Brida and Zapata, 2010).

Also from the port economics, management and policies point of view, the cruise sector has been neglected. A recent review of all relevant port studies published in academic journals the period 1997-2008 (Pallis et al., 2010), identified only four papers (Baird, 1997; McCalla, 1998; Butt, 2007; Guerrero et al., 2008) dealing with cruise terminals.

In this context, a vital question has yet to be answered: What makes a cruise port so attractive that a cruise company might opt to use it as a homeport? There is a lack of comprehensive research on this issue. In one of the few relevant studies, McCalla (1998) examined the factors affecting the attractiveness of a port to the cruise companies from the cruise ports point of view. The findings of this study, to be discussed later in this paper, are particularly important. McCalla's study did not however intend to pay attention to the cruise companies' point of view. With these companies being the key decision makers in the port selection process, this gap needs to be filled. In the literature there are studies referring only sporadically to this issue, i.e. they make only a spatial reference to some factors influencing the attractiveness of a cruise port (cf. Baird, 1997).

This paper attempts to generate knowledge and to respond to the aforementioned question. The first step is the creation of an extensive list of the potential decisive factors. The list is based on literature review, and brainstorming sessions involving a pool of key experts from the industry and the academia. Then, the identified factors are empirically tested via a questionnaire and a field survey involving the principal actors of the cruise industries in Greece. While the participants were assessing the importance of each of the factors identified, the data gathered from the survey unveil the importance of each factor for the selection of a homeport.

The second section of the paper analyses the key features of the global cruise industry and focuses on the Mediterranean region. Section 3 presents the methodological framework of the research and the results of the literature review and the brainstorming sessions. Section 4 analyses the results of the field survey concluding on the importance of each factor. Finally, the paper concludes by discussing the research results and their importance. In the light of this analysis, the concluding section also

discusses suggestions for further research as well as their potential use for policy formation, both from the cruise ports and the States or the Regions.

## **THE CRUISE MARKET**

Cruising is a very dynamic tourism as well as shipping sector - since 1990 the cruise industry has grown at an average annual passenger rate of 7.4% (CLIA, 2008). The market is an oligopoly that, following a number of consolidations and takeovers, is dominated by three groups of companies. The major player is the Carnival Group, which controls 10 cruise brands<sup>1</sup>, 95 cruise ships, and a capacity of 190.471 pax. The second largest is Royal Caribbean International that controls five brands<sup>2</sup>, 40 cruise ships and a capacity of 90.481 pax, followed by the Norwegian Cruise Lines/Star Cruises (four brands<sup>3</sup>, 18 cruise ships and 31.350 pax) (data: Cruise Market Watch, 2009). These three groups control 75% of the total cruise ships capacity including the orders for new ships that already have been placed to shipyards (see: Cappato and Canevello, 2008). There are minor differences in the regional market shares, for example between the North American market and the rest of the world (as shown in table 1), with Carnival increasing its market shares steadily.

Market concentration increased in recent times as a result of the withdrawal of many small companies (Coleman et al., 2003) and due to the aggressive horizontal integration strategies of big companies. The current economic crisis reinforces this trend as many remaining small companies withdraw from the market, or concentrate on niche markets where competition is not so fierce.

The main cruise market is the Caribbean, which serves the 44% of the total cruise passengers, followed by the Mediterranean region (12.7%), and Alaska (7.9%) (UNEP, 2002). The dynamism of the sector the period before the financial crisis sustained despite the obstacles posed by exogenous factors (i.e. fuel prices, H1N1 flu, housing crisis), though the industry continued to growth at a smaller pace than in the past. Definite conclusions on the implications of the economic crisis are still pending.

USA is the source market of the 66% of the world cruise passengers. Europe (EU-25 plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) follows with 22%. In the European market the major source is UK with 7% of the global demand, followed by Germany and Italy with 4% (GP Wild & BREa, 2007). Figure 1 illustrates the demand for cruise services internationally and for the two major markets since 2000.

Worldwide demand increased by 80% over this seven years period. The European market, experienced a 100% increase within a seven years period, leading to forecasts for a new 'El Dorado' for cruise companies serving 5.2 million cruise passenger by the year 2015 (European Cruise Council, 2007). As in the case of North America (where cruise passengers prefer to cruise in nearby areas such as Caribbean and Alaska), European passengers prefer to cruise in regions within Europe such as the Mediterranean Sea. In 2006 Europe hosted 44 European cruise companies managing 118 cruise ships with a total capacity of 102.000 pax, and 47 cruise ships managed by non-European interests with a total capacity of 51.300 pax (Cappato and Canevello, 2008).

**Table 1.** Cruise companies market shares 2008

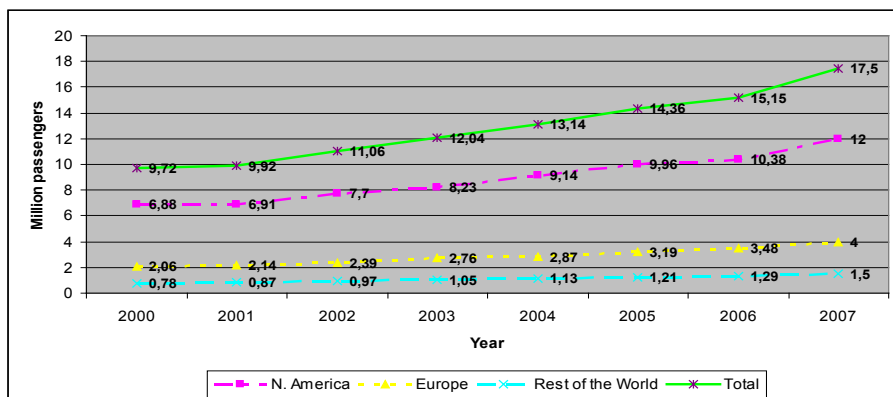
<b>Cruise company</b>	<b>Share in the North America cruise market</b>	<b>Market share in the rest of the world</b>
Carnival	55%	51%
Royal Caribbean	26%	19%
MSC	2%	10%
NCL	10%	
Disney	2%	
Star		5%
Thomson		4%
Louis		4%
Hurtigruten		4%
Others	5%	4%

*Source: Cruisemarketwatch.com; assessed February 2010.*

Despite the current financial crises, in the long-term the demand is expected to sustain this increasing trend (Lloyd's List, 2008). This is mostly because the 'cruise product' is now more accessible to a wider part of the population (CLIA, 2009). Cruising used to be a luxurious vacation consumed mainly by passengers of middle to high age and of high income. In the last few years this tendency has been reversed. The construction of bigger and more efficient vessels resulted in economies of scale having a major impact (Coleman et al., 2003). Operators achieve the break-even point in lower prices (Papatheodorou, 2006). Costs per passenger were reduced, and cruise companies offered prices reductions. They also started to differentiate the product offered to their customers, in order to target other potential groups of passengers, by meeting the

peculiarities of demand side and thus creating niche markets. This trend is reflected in the development of cruise companies offering a diversified product, i.e. Easy Cruise that aims at attracting low-income passengers.

**Figure 1.** Demand for cruise services 2000-2007 (in million passengers)



Source: Authors processing, Data obtained from Cappato and Canevello, 2008.

Today, cruise companies provide (a) a great variety of cruise ships, (b) a variety of potential itineraries (c) choices regarding cruise durations; and (d) a plethora of activities onboard the cruiseship but also many choices in the areas visited by the cruise ship.

## Cruising the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean region is one of the major cruise destinations in the world. In 2005, 2.8 million passengers undertook a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea (GP Wild and BREIA, 2007). This number increased to 3.8 million in 2008 (Bond, 2008). In 2008, 128 ships with 127.525 lower berths capacity sailed in the region. This figure projected to rise to 139 ships and 162.000 berths in 2012 (Seatrade, 2009). A survey conducted at the end of 2009 by the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA, 2010), with the participation of its members (cruise lines and travel agents), unveiled that the Mediterranean is among the top “hot” destination for 2010 according to the consumers’ interests.

The Mediterranean cruise area can be distinguished into two major submarkets, the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean with the Italian peninsula being the boundary. The Mediterranean region presents some

advantages for the cruise companies as it gives the potential for differentiation of cruise services. In contrast to the situation in the Caribbean region, where the cruise product encompasses the triptych “fun-sun-sea”, the Mediterranean region provides many additional alternatives for the potential cruise passengers. It does so by providing, apart from the abovementioned three factors, a variety of cultural and historical sites of major ancient civilizations (e.g., the Greek, the Roman and the Egyptian). Moreover it possesses a significant geographical advantage as it stands in the crossroads of three continents (Europe, Africa and Asia).

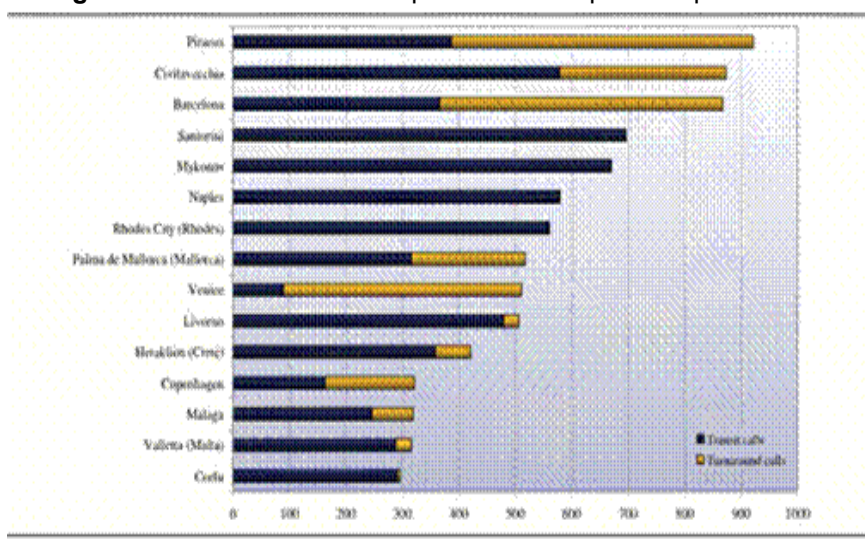
To sum up, cruise expansion in Med, is due to a number of factors. First, cruise development is supported by the diversity of the Mediterranean region and the dense port system, which enables innovative itineraries for cruises to be arranged within a relatively small area. Cruise companies have started looking to the Mediterranean as both a source market and a cruise destination. Second, there have been serious improvements in security standards and port facilities such as passenger terminals. Third, the global cruise market looks for a bigger cruising season, an opportunity offered in the region (McCarthy. 2003).

Figure 2 shows the number of cruise ship calls in the top 15 European Union ports, broken down into turnaround calls at homeports and transit calls. All but one of the biggest cruise ports in terms of cruise ships calls in the European top-15 listing are Mediterranean ports. Piraeus is the largest, with more than 900 calls, followed by Civitavecchia with almost 900 calls. Barcelona is the biggest port in terms of passenger numbers, receiving over 1, 6 million passengers per year. Piraeus is the fourth biggest port, due to the fact that the ships sailing in the Aegean waters around the Greek islands are relatively smaller (European Community, 2009).

At the end of 2008, a number of infrastructure projects (whether new terminals, or upgrade of existing ones) were underway. Some of them are carried out via public private partnerships. For others, the preferred strategy is the concession of the cruise terminal. That strategy, already widely in use in container ports, seems to gain ground in the case of cruise ports. Of the 11 cruise port projects in Europe, five ports were financed by the EU, the port authority and the state, or by a combination of these sources or all of them. For the remaining six projects, private concessionaire's funds are involved (Reyna, 2009). For these and other cruise ports, knowing the potential of becoming homeports would help to decide which upgrade infrastructure to prioritise and which type of funds and strategy to pursue.

To facilitate (handle) the increasing demand, many ports developed or upgrade their infrastructures in order to host cruise ships. In total, more than 150 ports in the area can facilitate cruise ships but the majority of them are ports of call. The major homeports are located mainly in the West part of the region. These are in Italy (Venice, Genoa, Civitavecchia, and Savona) and Spain (Barcelona, Valencia and Palma Majorca). On the East part, few ports can claim that they are major homeports. Piraeus is one of them as it is the homeport for some regional cruise companies (mainly Louis cruises).

**Figure 2.** Number of cruise ship calls in the top 15 EU ports



Source: Policy Research Corporation, in EC (2009).

For the Mediterranean cruise ports, the increase of demand creates great opportunities to attract cruise lines, gain revenues for the port but also for the port-cities. At the same time the oligopolistic nature of the cruise sector, and the observed consolidation<sup>4</sup>, produces an increasingly intensive competition between the incumbent cruise companies, remarkably higher entry barriers and, ultimately less contestable market (Lekakou and Pallis, 2005). One might assume that the cruise companies rather than ports maintaining cruise terminals would retain the market power. This implies that ports need to fulfil the requirements of cruise companies if they are to be attractive destinations and, if possible, become homeports.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Aiming to identify the crucial factors that influence the decision of cruise companies as regards the selection of a homeport, this study endorsed the methodological framework that is portrayed in Figure 3. The first phase included a literature review that allowed summing up those homeport selection factors that previous studies had already identified. The outcome of this review was an input to the second phase. The latter included brainstorming sessions enabling to decide which of these or any other additional factors could be used as a decisive factor from the cruise company point of view; and (b) avoid double counting of some factors (as sometimes a factor might be referred with a different name or description). The third research phase included a questionnaire development and the field research in Greek cruise sector. The final stage was data elaboration.

The literature review unveiled a lack of studies on homeport selection criteria. In an early approach, Marti (1990) examined the North American cruise market and referred to some factors influencing cruise companies when selecting a cruise port. In particular, Marti concluded that two major categories of factors exist. These are the *site* conditions of the port, which refer to physical factors of outstanding significance (such as port infrastructures and superstructures), and the *situation* conditions, which refer to physical or cultural qualities (such as the proximity to markets of cruise passengers and the attractiveness of the port region for cruising). The former category had been first mentioned by Weigend (1958). McCalla (1998), based, in essence, in the abovementioned works, used also the *site* and *situation* framework. Through content analysis and field research he concluded on some important *site* and *situation* attributes that the cruise ports consider as crucial for their success. McCalla pointed out that it is important to examine the issue of the attributes from the cruise lines point of view as well. This research topic, the present paper tries to study. Beyond these, there are also some sporadic references in factors affecting the cruise ports' attractiveness especially for the cruise companies and the homeport selection (Nolan, 1987; Peisley, 2003).

The literature review concluded on the identification of 34 different potential factors that can be influential for the homeport selection. The following brainstorming sessions with key experts resulted in the deletion of some in order to avoid, any, duplication due to different naming but similar essence. Moreover, participants in these sessions decided to restructure the identified list of factors, as many of them referred to a



general port feature that can be considered as a single group of factors instead as a unique element.

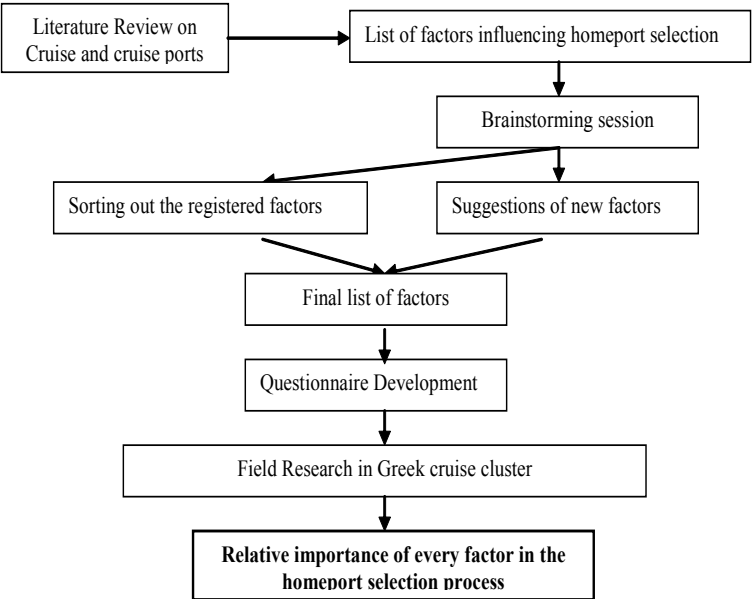
The research team examined the interactions between a cruise port and a cruise ship using a holistic approach. The potential factors that contribute to the attractiveness of a cruise port can not be only related with the port itself (i.e. port infrastructures). In this vein, the empirical part of the study examined the cruise port in a wider perspective. A first issue of interaction between the needs of a cruise company and the port attractiveness is the port competitiveness. Port competitiveness as a factor of attractiveness is not related only with port infrastructures. Rather than this, it also includes a range of port services provision to cruise ships and passengers. A part from the variety of the port services a cruise company is interested in the cost and efficiency of all these services.

Another component of the cruise port attractiveness is the objectives of the port management (i.e. if it is customer oriented etc). Moreover the political conditions and the regulatory framework are always issues that need attention especially in the cruise shipping. Apart from jeopardizing investments an unstable political environment acts as a threat against the passengers' decisions. The regulatory framework must support the start up of homeport operations instead of construct barriers to the cruise companies.

The integration of cruise ports in intermodal transport chains was another field of research for identifying the factors that influence the attractiveness of a cruise port. The interoperability of the transport modes is of crucial importance for the cruise companies as the origin for the majority of the cruise passengers is distant from the cruise homeport.

Finally, the spatial analysis of ports is another field of interest that has also drawn the attention of port economists in the last few years (see: Lee et al, 2008). The spatial analysis of a cruise port in order to evaluate its attractiveness focuses on four axes. The first is the proximity to markets of cruise passengers. The second is the natural characteristics of the cruise port. The amenities that the port-city provides to cruise passengers is the third axis as it is important for cruise passengers to have access to some facilities that will make their stay in the city more pleasant. Finally the attractiveness of the areas nearby the cruise port is also a part of the spatial analysis of a cruise port. The term attractiveness of the neighbouring areas means the existence of places or activities that are attractive to cruise passengers. Figure 4 shows the topics that are of particular importance when trying to identify the factors that formatting the attractiveness of a cruise homeport.

**Figure 3. Methodological Framework**



The whole process resulted in 12 categories of factors and 81 unique factors. Their hierarchical categorization according to the “site” and “situation” concepts is illustrated in Figure 5.

These factors were included in a questionnaire sent to experts of the Greek cruise sector and aiming to assess the importance of every category of factors and of every factor using a five-point Likert scale. The participants assessed any factor, so the crucial categories were extracted as well as the critical factors of each group. The following section presents the results of the field research.

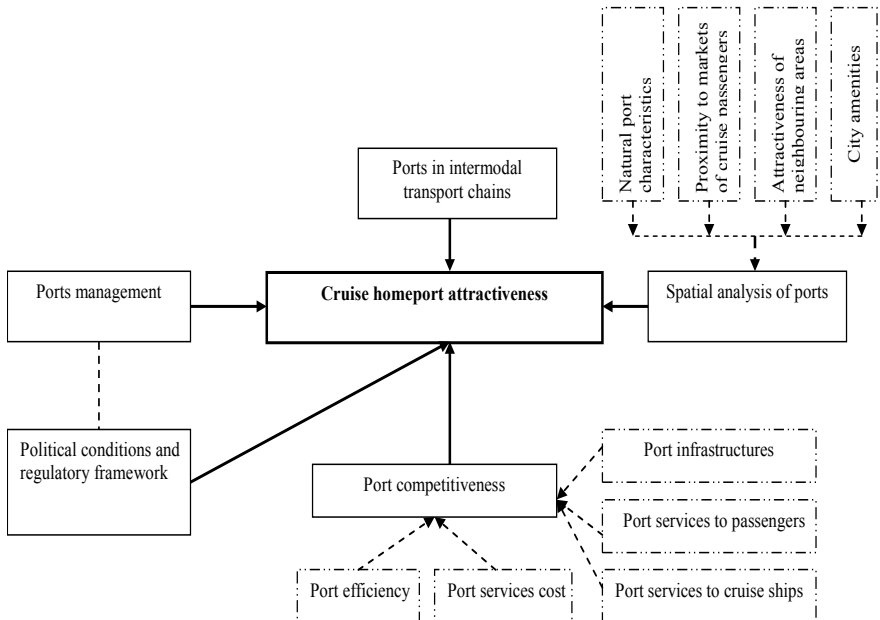
The experts’ pool consisted of 24 persons mainly from cruise companies (Greek companies as well as agents of foreign companies in Greece) and cruise ports. The questionnaire along with a cover letter was sent to them by e-mail followed by a telephone call. The field research conducted between 15 of January and 15 of February of 2009. In total, 22 completed questionnaires have been returned formulating a Response Rate of 91,67%. Table 2 presents the composition of the experts’ pool.

**Table 2.** Composition of the Experts pool

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number of participants (total: n=21)</b>
Cruise companies	6
Agents	6
Cruise brokers	2
European Community Shipowners Association	1
Port Authorities	2
Port consultants	1
Cruise Consultants	2
Cruise Captains	1
Harbor Master	1

*Source: Authors*

**Figure 4.** Framework of Cruise homeport attractiveness



## EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The respondents assessed every factor identified as an element of the homeport selection made by a cruise company. The results were elaborated with the use of statistical software and motivating findings were provided. Table 3 presents the results as regards the main factors, which are the ‘site’ related ones and the ‘situation’ related ones.

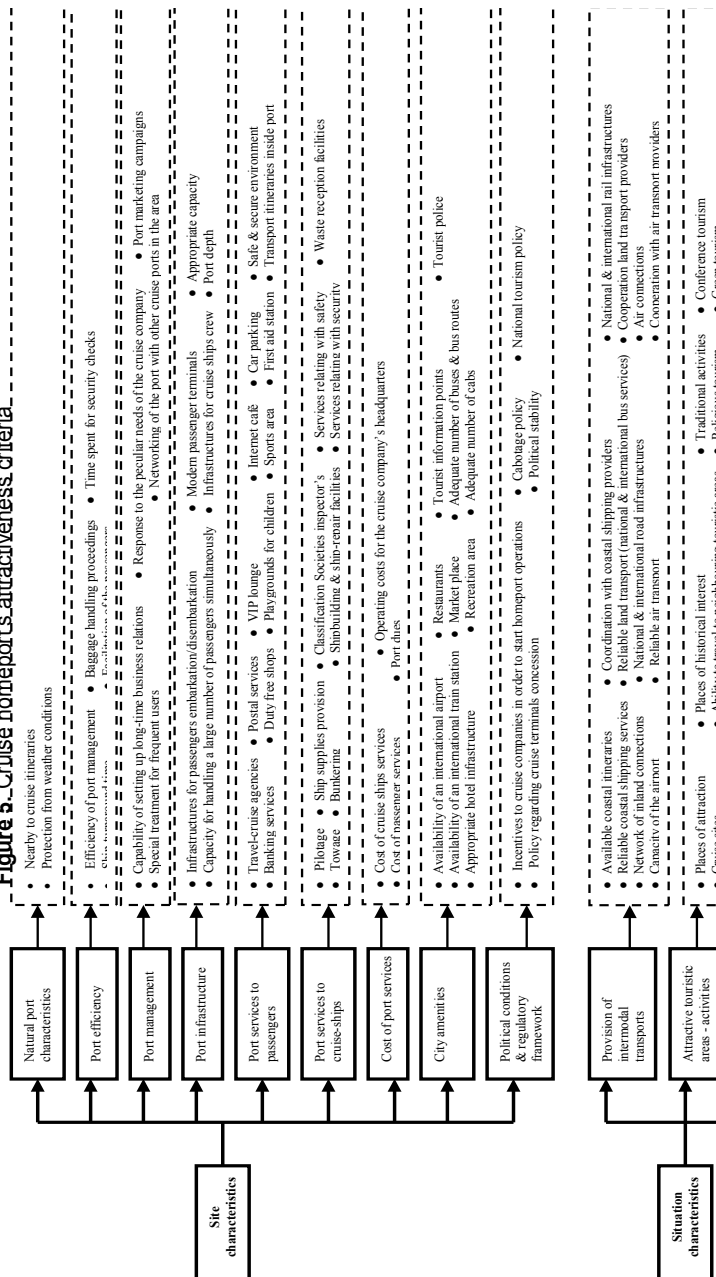
**Table 3.** Gravity of “site” and “situation” conditions

FACTOR	Average (n=20)	Std Deviation	Variance	Skewness
Situation	4,27	0,702	0,493	-0,442
Site	4,27	1,077	1,160	-1,357

The findings suggest that the “situation” and “site” are of the same importance. The standard deviation for the “site” is higher than that of the “situation” demonstrating stronger cohesion between judgments of the various experts in the latter case. For the “situation” factor 13 out of 22 respondents gave the highest grade possible (5) while in the case of the “site” factor only 9 out of the 22 respondents gave the highest grade. The negative skewness rate suggests that the mass of the expert’s judgments distribution is concentrated above the mean score.

Table 4 presents the data analysis for the categories of factors influencing the selection process of a homeport. This table reveals that the leading category is the offering of *port services to cruise ships* with a mean of 4.50. The low standard deviation and the zero skewness observed shows that the majority of the answers were close to the mean. The second most important category is *the natural characteristics of a port* with a mean of 4.41, with the majority of the respondents giving lower grades than the mean. In fact the 50% of the respondents gave the higher grade possible (5). *Port services to passengers* and *Port infrastructure* are the following categories with the same high mean significance score (4.36). *Attractive touristic* areas and activities hold the fifth ranking. This is a rather expected result, as cruises are a function that is well connected with visits in sightseeing areas. In total, seven out of the 12 categories achieve an average significance above 4.0. On the other hand, a point that should be noticed is the relative low importance of the *provision of intermodal transport* (in this case the standard deviation is also low).

Figure 5. Cruise homeport's attractiveness criteria



This is despite the fact that the overall “situation” conditions have scored the same value comparing to “site” ones. This means that the most significant category included in the “situation” parameter is the existence of attractive touristic areas. As regards the category *proximity to cruise passengers markets*, this is associated with a high standard deviation rate, which means that there is no consensus between the respondents insofar the importance of the specific category, at least for reaching the particular decision. The low overall significance of this category (3,55) is also notable.

**Table 4.** Gravity of Factors Categories

	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Average (n=20)</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kyrtosis</b>
1	Port Services to cruise ships	4,50	0,512	0,262	0,000	-2,210
2	Natural Port Characteristics (near to cruise itineraries, protection from weather conditions, etc)	4,41	0,667	0,444	-0,699	0,429
3	Port Services to passengers	4,36	0,492	0,242	0,609	-1,802
4	Port infrastructure	4,36	0,581	0,338	-0,200	-0,621
5	Attractive touristic areas – Touristic activities	4,29	1,007	1,014	-0,967	-0,597
6	Port services cost	4,18	0,907	0,823	-0,811	-0,205
7	Port efficiency	4,14	0,560	0,314	0,100	0,459
8	Port Management	3,77	0,685	0,470	0,323	-0,697
9	Provision of intermodal transports	3,68	0,646	0,418	0,404	-0,540
10	Political Conditions & Regulatory Framework	3,64	0,902	0,814	0,000	-0,646

11	City amenities	3,59	0,667	0,444	-0,365	0,273
12	Proximity to markets of cruise passengers	3,55	1,011	1,022	-0,1	-0,955

Table 5 presents the results regarding any criterion that has included in the above-mentioned categories. These criteria are related to almost every aspect of a cruise port (i.e. area attractiveness, port services to ship and to passengers, regulatory framework, costs etc.).

Almost all the factors have scored above the average 2,5 (of the five-point Likert scale). The respondents identified almost all factors as being important for a cruise company when selecting a cruise homeport. In the first place, (with a mean price of 4.77) stands the availability of an international airport. The skewness rate of this factor was -2,394, which means that the majority of the responses rate this factor above the mean. In fact, 18 out of 22 respondents gave the highest rate to this factor. The *availability of an international airport* seems to be of vital importance for every cruise homeport as, in the majority of cruises, it stands as the crucial link and facilitator between the origin of the passenger and the departing point of a cruise ship, especially when the planned cruise is too far (i.e. in another continent) from the passengers' country of residence.

**Table 5.** Gravity of the homeport selection criteria (n=22)

AA	Criterion	Average		AA	Criterion	Average
1	Availability of an international airport	4,77		42	Efficiency of port management	3,73
2	Safe and secure environment	4,59		43	First aids station	3,73
3	Air connections	4,55		44	Pilotage	3,73
4	Reliable air transports	4,50		45	Coastal itineraries	3,68
5	Capacity for handling a large number of passengers simultaneously	4,45		46	Car parking	3,64
6	Port depth	4,41		47	Transport itineraries inside port	3,64



7	Infrastructure for passengers embarkation/disembarkation	4,41		48	Operating costs for the cruise company's headquarters	3,64
8	Cabotage policy	4,36		49	Adequate number of buses and bus routes	3,64
9	Services relating with security	4,36		50	Response to the cruise company's peculiar needs	3,64
10	Capacity of the airport	4,32		51	Reliable land transports	3,59
11	Places of historical interest	4,32		52	Towage	3,55
12	Incentives to cruise companies in order to start homeport operations	4,32		53	Tourist information points	3,55
13	Political stability	4,27		54	Market place	3,50
14	Facilitation of the passengers	4,27		55	Attractive activities	3,50
15	Proximity to cruise itineraries	4,18		56	Reliable sea transports	3,50
16	Cost of services to cruise ships	4,18		57	Capability of setting up long-time business relations	3,50
17	Appropriate capacity (length of berths)	4,18		58	Travel-cruise agencies	3,50
18	Ship Turnaround Time	4,18		59	Tourist police	3,45
19	Modern passenger terminals	4,14		60	Restaurants	3,45
20	Areas of touristic attraction	4,14		61	Religious tourism	3,32
21	Cost of services to passenger	4,14		62	Infrastructures for cruise ships crew	3,23
22	Bunkering	4,14		63	Rail infrastructures	3,23
23	Places of cultural interest	4,14		64	Cooperation with land transport providers	3,23
24	Cruise sites	4,09		65	Recreation areas	3,23

25	Ship supplies provision	4,09		66	Cooperation with sea transport providers	3,23
26	Port dues	4,05		67	“Green” tourism	3,23
27	Baggage handling	4,05		68	Conference tourism	3,18
28	Protection from weather conditions	4,05		69	Banking services	3,18
29	Cooperation with air transport providers	4,05		70	Participation in traditional activities	3,18
30	Services relating with safety	4,05		71	Networking of the port with other cruise ports in the area	3,18
31	Special treatment for frequent users	4,00		72	Classification Societies inspector’s	3,18
32	Adequate number of cabs	3,95		73	Port’s marketing campaign policy	3,14
33	Time for security checks	3,95		74	Shipbuilding and Ship-repair facilities	3,09
34	National tourism policy	3,95		75	Duty free shops	3,00
35	Waste reception facilities	3,95		76	Internet café’s	2,91
36	Policy regarding cruise terminals concession	3,86		77	Athletic tourism	2,82
37	Appropriate hotel infrastructure	3,86		78	Postal services	2,77
38	Land Connections	3,82		79	VIP Lounge	2,73
39	Ability to travel to neighbouring touristic areas (i.e. islands)	3,82		80	Children’s playground	2,55
40	Road infrastructures	3,77		81	Sports area	2,45
41	Availability of an international train station	3,55				

The research had identified *the provision of a safe and secure environment* (4.59) by the port and the network of air connections that are

*facilitated by the port-city's airport* (4.55) as second and third more important factors respectively. Regarding the safe and secure environment, the incidents of the last few years (unlawful acts aiming at transport modes and systems) have raised the awareness and concluded on the formation of relevant policies (Pallis and Vaggelas, 2008). As a result security and safety is a major issue in the contemporary transport industry. The significance of *air connections* and *reliability of air transports* (ranked in the fourth place) are expected results, as they related to the leading availability of an international airport criterion.

Factors relating mainly to port infrastructures and regulations ranked in the fifth till the tenth position. *Cabotage policy* granted a high mean score (4,36) and ranked in the eighth place. The findings suggest that this is a quite important factor for any cruise company that might wish to start up homeport operations. The high ranking of this factor is largely based on the fact the majority of cruise ships are registered in open registries. The issue demands however further qualitative research regarding what is actually expected by the industry beyond the profound opening of the market. In the Greek case for instance, the abolishment of cabotage has been approached as a policy measure that would reverse the negative implications of long-term protectionist and implicitly interventionist state policies (cf. Lekakou and Pallis, 2005)<sup>5</sup>. Today, the industry stands in favour of abolishing the remaining flag restrictions in European cabotage, in particular the island cabotage and the existing host-state rules, in order to allow any flag to operate in the market. Within market competition is assessed to be a mean towards a level-playing field, and a generator for incentives for developing competitiveness via either fleet renewal and modernization (product innovation) or via the improvement of the provided services by both shipping companies and ports (process innovation).

The political stability is an additional factor worth to be mentioned, as it ranked in the thirteenth place. It is a factor that has been neglected in the international literature. The choice of a cruise port as a homeport implies large investments from the cruise company, relating to buildings, dedicated superstructures for the ship and the passengers, planning cruise itineraries and of course launching a marketing campaign for attracting passengers. Even more than some others direct foreign investments; a stable political environment is of crucial importance.

Despite the fact that the situation and site characteristics are of equal significance, major factors relating with the former (*e.g. places of historical interest; areas of touristic attractions; cruise sites and places of cultural interest*) are encountered in lower positions although their importance is high. A reason for this might be the fact that the differentiation of the

means (i.e. the ship) is easier than the differentiation of the “itinerary”. Towards this strategy, the last few years cruise companies aim at building bigger new generation cruise ships which offer a greater variety of services and facilities to the passengers on board (for example the newly build ‘Oasis of the Seas’ of the Royal Caribbean International). The aim of this strategy is to keep passengers onboard in order to operate further as an income generator for the cruise companies. As a result the visits to places of touristic interest might be increasingly acting (at least for a major part of the passengers) as complements to the cruise and not as the major reason to undertake a cruise but this is not the case for East Mediterranean, where smaller cruise ships stand as the more frequent callers.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The paper explored the issue of homeport selection by the cruise industry. A field research involving the participation of experts in the cruise industry mainly in Greece and Cyprus unveiled the vital factors that the cruise companies take into account in homeport selection. Using the notion of “site” and “situation” and a literature review, a list of 81 relevant factors has been developed and tested. The ranking of these factors give some insightful conclusions on the factors that a cruise port should pay attention in order to attract homeport operations.

The results suggest that the “situation” factors are of the same significance with the respective “site” factors. The availability of an international airport near the cruise port, the provision of a safe and secure environment for the passengers, and issues relating with political factors and the legislative framework (such as cabotage policy), are among the most important influencing factors.

This study also concludes the absence of any significant regional variation insofar as the criteria used by the cruise industries to pick their home. This is confirmed when comparing the findings with those of the UNCTAD (2001), that examined the reasons behind the success of Miami as a homeport, to conclude that the five key points towards a successful homeport choice include: (1) outstanding port services and an equally appealing city; (2) modern and efficient airport with substantial airlift; (3) attractive tourist destinations and itineraries; (4) large population centre; and (5) drive accessibility to that population. Evidently any variation is minor.

Interestingly, these empirical results illustrate the importance of the sector’s peculiarities as regards selection criteria. Contrary to these findings, for example, stand the airport choice factors for low cost carriers.

For them airport selection is based on cost, i.e. demand for low-cost services is the most important factor (Warnock-Smith and Potter, 2005). Differences in the demand structures between this and the sector examined (i.e. derived vs. primary demand) might play a role; the issue however deserves further attention.

The outcome of the research might be a useful tool for those cruise ports aiming to deploy strategies towards their selection as homeport, that go well beyond the increasingly applied measure of terminal concessions<sup>6</sup>. Besides, by acknowledging their potential to be future homeports, relevant port authorities might develop practices to solve problems that might be associated with such selection (i.e. environmental related ones – cf. Butt, 2007). Moreover, the results could be a valuable input for policy measures regarding cruise tourism – particularly for these countries which had not updated their operational environment and their legal framework - as this maritime sector is an important income generator for the visited areas.

Given that the responses were collected mainly from a significant yet local cruise market, i.e. the Greek one, the peculiarities of the particular market are reflected on the findings of the study, and certain local bias (i.e. in the case of cabotage issue) might be present. This is similar to what is observed in other regions, i.e. the US, where regulatory restrictions limit the potential of cruise fleet deployment in specific market niches (Mak et al. 2010). Expanding the research to a European or even to an international level could broaden the scope of the paper by examining the international perspectives regarding the factors that influence the attractiveness of a port as regards its potential as cruise homeport.

Developing a cruise port to a homeport would be beneficial for tourism in the region, while helping port boosting their business. From a ports' perspective, understanding and seeking to satisfy (potential) users homeport criteria is essential. This is possible as the relative level of cruise shipping activity in a port, i.e. the total number of cruise ship calls, compared with calls of other industrial port activities (ferries, container ships, bulk carriers, etc), is ultimately only a minor part of ports total activity. In Piraeus, for instance cruising represents only 3.2% of total shipping activities in ports (European Community, 2009).<sup>7</sup> Competition might intensify further in the foreseen future. The Mediterranean region, particularly its East side, has the highest port density per nautical mile compared to any other cruising region, while a nearby region, the Black Sea, currently stands as the upcoming cruise region. All these place further pressures to Mediterranean ports and their authorities.

The conducted research and further studies over the issue of port selection criteria provide tools for responding satisfactorily to cruise

companies and enjoy the positive effects of developing a relatively new competitive tourist industry in Europe, with significant economic impact on port regions, cities and countries. Opportunities exist, as cruise organisations and itinerary planners are under constant pressure not only to source new ports of call but also to carefully select the ports of (dis)embarkation, as essential to the overall perspective of the cruise (Barron and Bartolomé, 2006). Yet, some negative effects might not a priori be excluded (i.e. environmental impact on port regions, capacity issues in specific ports etc), demanding considerations on the extent that the positive effects of cruise tourism are achieved in a sustainable manner.

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## ENDNOTES



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<sup>1</sup> These brands are: Carnival Cruise Lines, Princess Cruises, Holland America Lines, Seabourn Cruiseline, Costa Cruises, P&O cruises, Cunard Line, Ocean Village, Aida, Ibero cruises.

<sup>2</sup> These brands are: Celebrity Cruises, Celebrity Xpeditions, Island Cruises, Pullmantur and Royal Caribbean.

<sup>3</sup> Namely: NCL America, Norwegian Cruise Line, Orient Lines and Star Cruises.

<sup>4</sup> The takeover of one of the four major players (P&O Princess Cruises) by the largest one (Carnival Corporation) in 2003 is the most remarkable example of this consolidation.

<sup>5</sup> The strong views and the participation of the sector in the interests' advocacy that has been expressed during the relevant lengthy policy making (Pallis, 2002) might have resulted in a bias towards a higher than in reality significance result insofar as the particular factor is concerned.

<sup>6</sup> In Europe, for instance, there are three cruise terminals concessioned to cruise companies in Southampton, UK, the new cruise terminal (Palacruceros) in Barcelona, Spain, has been concessioned to a leading cruise brand (Costa Crociere), and the Cyprus Port Authority is in the process of concessioning the Limassol cruise terminal.

<sup>7</sup> Most ports have significant ferry activities (Barcelona, Civitavecchia, Piraeus) and/or cargo (Barcelona, Civitavecchia, Piraeus), which make up most of the port's activity.

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## THE WORLD OF AGRITOURISTS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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*An ethnographic study conducted in order to investigate agritourist satisfaction in the Mediterranean Island of Cyprus brings to the surface novel information in regards to motivation; the formation of expectations; satisfaction achievement; and behavioural intentions, of agritourists. The findings of the study contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of tourism by divulging further details regarding the relatively unexplored niche market of agritourists. Further to this and perhaps more importantly, the fieldwork findings assist destinations and practitioners alike to achieve guest satisfaction and foster the positive future behavioural intentions of their guests.*

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**Keywords:** Agritourism, Agritourists, Psychology, Ethnography, Cyprus

### INTRODUCING TOURIST SATISFACTION

Parker and Mathews (2001) note that satisfaction is related to other words such as 'make pleased' or 'contented' while Solomon (2002) suggests that satisfaction or dissatisfaction is determined by the overall feelings a person has about a product after he/she has purchased it. Nonetheless, in specific regards to the tourism field, Pizam, Neumann and Reichel's (1978) approach to conceptualize the term resulted in defining tourist satisfaction as 'the result of the interaction between a tourist's experience in the destination area and the expectations he/ she had about the destination' (p.315).

Arnould and Price (1993) challenge the abovementioned definition on the grounds that it assumes that expectations play a pivotal role in



determining satisfaction while at the same time commenting that the most satisfactory experiences can be those which are least or not expected. Anton's (1996) approach towards defining customer satisfaction resulted to a more comprehensive and contemporary definition as Choi and Chu (2001) regard it to be, by basically suggesting that it is a state of mind in which the customer's needs, wants and expectations have been met or exceeded, resulting towards repurchase and loyalty. That being established, Parker and Mathews (2001) state clearly that satisfaction means different things to different people thus laying emphasis on the fact that satisfaction is a personal affair. As a matter of fact relevant studies (e.g. Choi and Chu 2000; Poon and Low 2005) conclude that the way people perceive fulfilment, differs.

## **TOURIST SATISFACTION: INVESTIGATION AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS**

Over the last few decades, a number of researchers from many fields (e.g. Hartman 1973; Prakash 1984; Gronroos 1990; Thirumanlai and Sinha 2005) focused their attention on the investigation of customer satisfaction while co-researchers in the hospitality and tourism fields have also followed the same path since this is reflected by a plethora number of relevant studies (e.g. Moutinho 1987; Oh 1999; Su 2004; Bowie and Chang 2005; Truong and Foster 2006; Stradling, Anable and Carreno 2007). That said, there has been relatively little consideration to the investigation of rural tourist satisfaction and this is limited to a few noteworthy studies which have examined aspects of the rural tourist satisfaction process (e.g. Reichel, Lowengart and Milman 2000; Saez, Fuentes and Montes 2007).

Darnell and Johnson 2001; Hansemark and Albinsson 2004; Matzler, Fuchs and Schubert 2004; Martin- Cejas 2006; Yu and Goulden 2006 suggest that satisfaction is associated with positive impacts such as for instance the fact that it positively affects the hotel/organisation or even the destination through repeat purchases and positive word of mouth. Achieving customer satisfaction is seen as the key to business success since empirical studies (e.g. Johnson, Nader and Fornell 1996; Zeithaml 2000; Kanoe 2003; Kengpol and Wangananon 2006) actually confirm the positive correlation between customer satisfaction and profitability. Researchers such as Akama and Kieti (2003) and Su (2004) concur on the fact that providing and maintaining tourist satisfaction is one of the biggest contemporary challenges of the hospitality/tourism industry. Its significance to the relevant sector is widely recognized by others (e.g.

Kozak and Rimmington 2000; Choi and Chu 2001; Arnould, Price and Zinkhan 2004; Yoon and Uysal 2005) to be an extremely important factor leading to the success of the sector. According to Fuchs and Weiermair (2004) satisfaction is considered by destinations to be as one of the most important sources of their competitive advantage. Furthermore it is acknowledged by Deng (2006) and Ueltschy et al. (2002) respectively to be a critical issue in today's competitive global market and a major element needed to create and sustain a competitive business. Yu and Goulden (2006) highlight the importance of tourist satisfaction by commenting that understanding tourist satisfaction is essential to destination managers for them to improve their products and services and to effectively promote these to target markets in search for new and repeat tourists.

Hui, Wan and Ho (2006) stress the fact that higher probability is linked to guest satisfaction when they choose the destination again, and engage in positive word of mouth behaviour. Crosby (1993) and Akama and Kieti (2003) regard the word of mouth as being the cheapest and most effective form of hotel/destination promotion. Likewise, Poon and Low (2005) agree on the fact that customer satisfaction most likely leads to both purchases repetition and favourable word of mouth. As a matter of fact, there is plenty of evidence (e.g. Taylor 1997; Kozak and Rimmington 2000; Gonzalez, Comesana and Brea 2006) to support the contention that satisfaction influences customer/tourist behaviour in a positive manner. Kozak (2001) states that one of the objectives of tourism businesses and destinations should be to offer tourist satisfaction. Even so, worth mentioning is the fact that on the other side of the spectrum, dissatisfied tourists may choose other alternative destinations or decide to continue visitation with no intention for further interaction with the service providers [Reisinger and Turner (2003) ; Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2004)] . Based on Schlesinger and Heskett (1991) any decision on behalf of the guest to swap over to a different destination obviously creates a negative impact on the abandoned one, given that more efforts to attract new guests are required which incidentally is a more costly procedure than retaining the existing ones. Chon, Christianson and Lee (1995) highlight the fact that dissatisfaction may further lead to unfavourable word of mouth with its associated negative impacts.

However, despite the number of researchers who have attempted to investigate tourist satisfaction it appears evident, that holistic endeavours to examine tourist satisfaction by acknowledging what precedes and what follows tourist dis/satisfaction are restricted to only some isolated studies (e.g. Chen and Tsai 2006). Academics (e.g. Yu and Goulden 2006) stress

the need for understanding tourist satisfaction while Kirkby and Nelson (2003) make reference to additional research regarding the behaviour of customers, prior, during and after the experience, so as to effectively manage the total experience. Nonetheless, the lack of a holistic investigation of the agritourist satisfaction process is indeed evident. That said, while taking into serious consideration both the positive and negative impacts associated with tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction respectively, any attempt to investigate the tourist satisfaction process would have most likely brought to surface further information of great importance to both the tourism academic community as well as to the stakeholders involved in the rural tourism industry.

## **INTRODUCING ETHNOGRAPHY IN INVESTIGATING TOURIST SATISFACTION**

Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006) approach the subject of ethnography from a rather philosophical point of view by stating that ‘researchers undertake ethnographic studies to see the world in a new way from the point of view of the people under investigation, not just to confirm their preconceptions about a particular issue or group that they are studying’ (p.171). Gummesson (2003) characterizes ethnography to be an in-depth research method while Genzuck (2003) mentions that ethnography has its roots planted in the fields of anthropology and sociology.

Nonetheless, as applied to tourism research, ethnography according to Veal (1997) ‘seeks to see the world through the eyes of those being researched, allowing them to speak for themselves, often through extensive direct quotations in the research report’ (p. 140). Bryman (2004) states that ethnography is not exactly synonymous with observation since this methodological approach refers to more than just the process of observing, given that it also embraces informal plain chats/conversations or even conducting in-depth interviews with individuals. Others (e.g. Palmer 2005; Daengbuppha, Hemmington and Wilkes 2006; Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2006) concur on the fact that the abovementioned informal conversations put people at their ease, thus enabling the researcher to obtain information that may indicate the underlying feelings of the respondents. Ryan (1995a) and Kawulich (2005) seem to share similar views by stating that the process of conducting an ethnographic research involves, besides observation, formal interviews and/or informal conversations which enable the researcher to check for verbal and nonverbal expressions of the

participants' feelings. Furthermore it is claimed that the tourism field, direct interaction with respondents by the researcher playing a real part, rather than simply acting as a detached observer, generates rich and significant data (Ryan 1995b). Case to the point, in an attempt to understand in-depth the travel culture of backpackers, Sorensen (2003) gained rich data by using an ethnographic approach whereby he employed semi-formal and informal interviews in the shape of extended conversations at accommodation venues, restaurants, bars and on excursions (safaris, trekking). Bowie and Chang (2005) adopted an ethnographic approach in order to evaluate tour/tourist satisfaction whereby they carried out participant covert observation by combining observation of participant's actions and conversations with tourists being engaged in tour trips, during the meals and their leisure time. Bowen (2001b) with the opportunity to study customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the tourism field decided that the most appropriate method to use was participant observation, backed up by semi-structured tourist interviews. Furthermore, Arnould and Price (1993) in a study of the relationships between tourist expectations and satisfaction in river-rafting trips conclude that participant observation data enrich the interpretation of qualitative results.

In an endeavour to stress the importance and likelihood benefits of ethnographic techniques, Fielding (1993) makes reference to the ethnographic techniques which entail the study of behaviour in natural setting, 'getting the seat of your pants dirty... in the real world, not the library' (p.157). Canniford (2005) postulates that an ethnographic approach allows naturalistic investigation into the host of influences that affect individuals' day-to-day lives. Furthermore, Bates (2005), the researcher shapes an understanding of the experience and world view of people under investigation. In addition, ethnographic techniques and particularly participant observation is referred to by Van Maanen (2006) to be a softer approach than the harder approach presented by questionnaires while the same researchers also stress the fact that it maintains an almost obsessive focus on the empirical. In regards to the questionnaires, researchers such as Saleh and Ryan (1992) and Bowen (2001a) make reference to Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires which unlike an ethnographic approach, return merely glanced over the surface. Palmer (2005) notes that the wealth of data generated and the level of detail from the participant observation could not be created by neither quantitative nor qualitative customer satisfaction questionnaires.

Gale and Beefink (2005) add that most tourist satisfaction models follow a positivistic approach (e.g. Moutinho's 1987 Vacation Tourist

Behaviour model) in which tourists are viewed as rational beings who evaluate their level of satisfaction through a disconfirmation paradigm whereby the tourist's satisfaction is evaluated based on whether their expectations (e.g. regarding the amenities) prior to their trip were met or exceeded. Others (e.g. Decrop 1999; Crossan 2003) argue that this particular approach (positivistic) may not accurately capture the complexity of factors involved in the satisfaction evaluative process of tourists; in a row, they suggest to move beyond the rational decision making principles found in positivistic approaches, towards an interpretivistic approach which incidentally according to Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006), is associated with predominately qualitative methods (e.g. observation studies) that have as a purpose to build an understanding of the motives and intentions that underpin social behaviour.

Probably one of the main reasons behind the usefulness of observations in terms of providing an in-depth tourist satisfaction understanding seems to be the fact that it allows the use of the aforementioned conversations (Kawulich 2005) which unlike a positivistic approach, it allows an interactive and cooperative relationship to be developed between the investigator and the people being researched (Ryan 1995a; Decrop 1999). Actually, Bowen (2001a) underlines the significance of conversations in the tourism field and proceeds by laying emphasis on the fact that their relevance in the research of satisfaction will soon become apparent. Worth noting is also the fact that Bowen adds that participant observation is to be looked 'at far closer as an important technique in the understanding of tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and in any attempt to overcome the limitations of a positivist and quantitative approach' (p.38).

Unlike other approaches which are used to research tourist satisfaction such as for instance the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985), the approach of participant observation based on others (e.g. Swan and Bowers 1998; Bowie and Chang 2005), allows the researcher to interact with those being studied and minimize the distance between the researcher and the participants. The result of this active interaction is a deeper understanding of how consumers experience satisfaction, thus becoming a key method to research particular phenomena such as leisure and tourism elements. A model which is currently used to measure tourist satisfaction is the SERVQUAL model (e.g. Pawitra and Tan 2003) which basically suggests that the gaps between customer expectations and their perceptions of actual performance drives the perception of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985; 1988). The SERVQUAL model (sometimes

with slight variations) has been widely used in the hospitality and tourism field such as for instance in travel agencies (e.g. Bigne et al. 2003) and hotels (e.g. Tsaur and Lin 2004). However, although it is regarded (e.g. Lam and Woo 1997) as a leading tool in measuring service quality, it is criticised by a number of scholars (e.g. Cronin and Taylor 1992; Buttle 1996; Truon and Forster 2006) on the basis that its approach does not holistically address the total holiday experience. Gale and Beefink (2005) challenge the aptness of these models (e.g. SERVQUAL and Moutinho's Vacation Tourist Behavior Model) for the investigation of tourist satisfaction on the basis that they assess the gap being created between expected/predicted and delivered service/reality which may not, after all, influence tourist satisfaction since tourists through 'active involvement' (p.347) play a significant role in deciding and shaping their own experiences towards achieving satisfaction. In more detail, tourist experiences can be regarded as the result of an active endeavour by a person to create a situation in which he/she achieves satisfaction, thus the active involvement of the tourist in the shaping of the performance (e.g. of a tour) and the creation of his/her personal experiences also needs to be acknowledged (Geva and Goldman 1991; Foster 2000; Gale and Beefink 2005).

The abovementioned emerge to reinforce the statement of Palmer (2005) which makes reference to positivistic approaches which are not able to capture the 'complexities involved in trying to understand social phenomena' (p.13). Stewart and Floyd (2004) suggest the use of the afore-discussed interpretivistic approach such as observation which can add value by revealing these complexities which would have otherwise been missed through an evaluation of the gaps between expectations and reality because it enables the researcher to 'directly or completely capture someone's lived experiences and social reality' (p. 4).

Others (e.g. Jafari and Way 1994; Elliott and Elliott 2003; Agafonoff 2006; Mariampolski 2006) stress the fact that ethnography reaches the parts other research approaches can not reach, even compared to other qualitative methods. Bowen (2002) highlights that the advantages of participant observation are favourably contrasted with customer service questionnaires, while the focus of their research was tourist satisfaction, the researcher envisages the employment of participant observation research into other tourist behaviour studies, as well as, express hopes that other researchers will attempt to fully adopt the technique. As a shift from traditional tourism research, Daengbuppha, Hemmington and Wilkes (2006) argue that their study, which embraced ethnographic techniques,



offers useful guidance for similar investigations of tourist experiences which seek the emergence of new knowledge in tourism.

## **INVESTIGATING THE AGRITOURIST SATISFACTION PROCESS - FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

Capitalising on the aforementioned interesting ethnographic cases, the rather exigent ethnographic techniques were employed in order to investigate the agritourist satisfaction process in the Mediterranean Island of Cyprus. In this regard, the study embraced, apart from active participation, observations of the daily routine, several informal interviews and dozens of chats with agritourists who chose to stay in traditional venues in the Island's countryside. Particularly, apart from the several informal interviews which were conducted in traditional venues, dozens of other chats/casual conversations took place with agritourists mainly found at key points of interest or highlights of the countryside (e.g. villages, national parks, ancient sites, thematic parks, museums and monasteries), as well as during festivals and special events held in the countryside throughout one year. The employment of ethnographic techniques revealed some interesting and novel findings. These findings could assist practitioners (e.g. destination managers and official bodies) and other entrepreneurs (e.g. hosts) to foster guest satisfaction achievement and positive behavioural intentions (e.g. positive Word-of-Mouth and revisit intentions).

Broad categories of agritourists that have been identified (e.g. 'activity driven') resemble more or less groups of rural tourists who have been identified/categorized in other studies. Nonetheless, several sub-groups of agritourists have been pin-pointed in this study. The study reveals that rural tourists' needs differ according to the individual, leading to the conclusion that attempts to generalize and categorize satisfaction, either by academics or practitioners, without acknowledging the uniqueness of each tourist may not be wise. Indeed, such attempt to categorize tourists in broad groups seems not to take into consideration the fact that tourists have their individual needs, which they seek to satisfy while at the destination (in this specific case, the countryside). Therefore, even though the researchers proceeded towards the categorization of tourists into niche/small groups based on their similar (shared) needs, it is emphasized that each tourist is unique with his/her own personal requirements. Rural tourism is made up from a heterogeneous market though several differing niche sub-groups of

agritourists have been identified, whilst earlier studies tended to suggest bulky groups of agritourists. Examples of such small groups include amongst others, the 'authenticity seekers', 'nature seekers', 'bird watchers', 'gastronomics' and 'spirituality seekers'. Even so, future researchers may want to examine in more detail/depth these niche groups of agritourists. Be that as it may, it seems that agricultural activities are not a major source of agritourist motivation. In opposition, the natural/artificial environment and the interaction/contact with hosts are found to be basic motivators for agritourists. In fact, the natural environment seems to act as the primary motivator for specific agritourists, such as the 'flora seekers', 'bird watchers' and 'entomologists'.

The fieldwork findings reveal that information derived from various sources (e.g. the venue's website) seems to append towards the formation of agritourists' expectations. However these expectations have been attached to those existing ones being created from previous personal experiences and other sources throughout the agritourist's lifetime (e.g. television and travel books). Notably, guest expectations varied according to the individual while the emphasis given by each agritourist upon particular expectations differed from individual to individual based on his/her primary personal reason/occasion which led him/her to the destination. For instance, those which were motivated to visit the countryside due to reasons associated with the destination's natural environment (e.g. 'flora seekers', 'fauna seekers', 'nature seekers', 'bird watchers' and 'entomologists') expressed and shared similar expectations in regards to the natural environment and related services they were expecting to view and consume whilst at the rural setting. Contrary to the above, expectations in regards to the man-made or artificial environment were mentioned and stressed by (e.g.) the 'archaeology seekers' which were mostly interested in viewing and studying the country's ancient sites, monuments and archaeological parks. Agritourists in the same sub-groups were found to share more or less similar expectations. Even so, expectations were found to differ to some extent even if agritourists were categorized under the same sub-group. The reasoning behind this dissimilarity of agritourists' expectations is the result of differing occasions for countryside visitation as well as the individual differing mode of information and personal past experiences.

Further to the above, the findings of the study reveal that whilst at the rural destination, agritourists emphasize their attention on different factors of their experience. For instance, the natural environment (particularly flora species) and related services are important for those who visit the

countryside mainly in order to examine the indigenous species (e.g. ‘flora seekers’). In opposition, the ‘archaeology seekers’ emphasize their attention on the artificial environment (particularly ancient sites) and related services (e.g. informative signs at monuments/sites). As a result of this outcome, different factors/offering are critical for the success of differing occasions. Therefore, negligence on behalf of the destination to focus on the quality of certain offerings, such as for instance the natural environment, will particularly impact on the satisfaction of those who highly value anything related to the natural environment. Based on the findings of this study, those impacted most in this case, are the ‘flora seekers’, ‘fauna seekers’, ‘bird watchers’ and ‘entomologists’. This is because the destination fails to provide those factors which the guest emphasizes his/her attention on, values the most and expects from the destination. Eventually, this leads towards the dissatisfaction of certain agritourists who visit the countryside for a specific occasion (e.g. to study the endemic flora). Thus, it is suggested that the rural destination takes into serious consideration the fact that agritourists are driven to the countryside because of different reasons/occasions. The acknowledgement of these differing occasions for countryside visitation assists the identification of those factors which are important/critical for the success of the guest’s visit. More specifically, if the destination aims to achieve overall agritourist satisfaction then it must be prepared to address the various needs and expectations of all agritourist differing occasions (e.g. ‘authenticity seekers’, ‘walkers’ and ‘cyclists’). Yet, it should be noted that agritourists seem to take for granted both ‘tangible’ features and ‘intangible’ aspects of their countryside experience and they are not surprised if these are offered by the destination since they take them for granted. As a result of this, the destination is faced with the challenging task of addressing the high needs and expectations of a well informed, sophisticated and demanding market and on top of that, to offer to the guest what is not or least expected. An unexpected and pleasant offering, seems to be ‘hospitalableness’. Apparently those traditional values of hospitality in the countryside seem to pleasantly surprise and please guests. The ethnographer’s and agritourists’ experiences support the fact that traditional values of hospitality are particularly evident in (e.g.) remote areas. These seem to add value to the guest’s experience and they foster both guest satisfaction and positive behavioural intentions. Furthermore, the emotional dimensions of the guest-host relationship are being stressed. Indeed, by focusing on the qualities of hospitalableness, hosts may encourage positive word of mouth. They may even foster the

guest's revisit intention at the same venue, especially if the guest values such qualities.

Despite that, agritourists invest money, physical effort, risk and time in return to a countryside experience. These personal investments by agritourists for the consumption of the destination offerings should be taken into consideration by the appropriate bodies, tourism managers and other entrepreneurs of the countryside in an attempt to satisfy the monetary and other personal values set out by the agritourists. Nonetheless, there are other external factors which may interfere in the process of achieving guest satisfaction. These are beyond the control of the destination. Severe weather conditions or climatic changes are examples of such external influences which may adversely impact on agritourist satisfaction.

That said, it should be noted that only half of those agritourists who remained satisfied with their experience articulated intentions for a revisit, either in the short or the long term. The rest expressed no such intentions, justifying their decision on various reasons (e.g. alternative global destinations and time/money restrictions). However, this should not lead towards the false conclusion that agritourist satisfaction achievement is not important. On the contrary, this is not the case, since revisit intentions were expressed only by those who had a satisfying, hence positive experience. Additionally, all those who remained satisfied, expressed the intention to spread a positive word-of-mouth about the rural destination and the intention to recommend it to others. In opposition, all those agritourists who remained dissatisfied with their countryside experience, expressed no-revisit intentions. Also, they indicated that they would (upon return to their place of residence) discourage others from paying a visit to the rural destination.

## **CONCLUSION**

A substantial number of researchers in the tourism and hospitality fields alike, stress the importance in achieving tourist satisfaction. This basically emanates from the positive impacts that tourist satisfaction inflicts upon the organization and/or destination. However, despite the extensive attention given by the tourism academic community in the investigation of tourist satisfaction, it is clear that the agritourist satisfaction process has escaped the attention of researchers. Even so, the contemporary findings of an ethnographic methodological approach which attempted to investigate the agritourist satisfaction process while using as a case study the Mediterranean Island of Cyprus, resulted in

findings which may be of great use to tourism academics in terms of enhancing their understanding in tourist psychological issues (e.g. agritourist motivation, formation of expectations and satisfaction). Nonetheless, and perhaps most importantly, the fieldwork findings assist practitioners (e.g. destination managers and hosts), who are active in the field in their endeavors to achieve to satisfy their guests and foster their future positive behavioural intentions.

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## PARTICIPANTS IN THE ECOTOURISM ACTIVITY AND ECO-TOUR PLANNING

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*Ecotourism is a concept that evolved in the past 20 years as the conservation community, people living in and around protected areas, and the travel industry witnessed a boom in nature tourism and realized their mutual interests in directing its growth. It provides opportunities for visitors to experience powerful manifestations of nature and culture and to learn about the importance of biodiversity conservation and local cultures. At the same time, ecotourism generates income for conservation and economic benefits for communities living in rural or remote areas. The attributes of ecotourism make it a valuable tool for conservation. Also, ecotourism process embraces a huge range of participants doing different parts of the whole development stages. Of all the participants in the ecotourism activity, the tourism industry is perhaps the most important and the least appreciated by conservationists.*

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**Keywords:** *ecotourism, development, plan, eco-tour, tourism industry, management.*

### WHAT IS ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism is a relatively new concept, and it is still often misunderstood or misused. Some people have abused the term to attract conservation conscious travellers to what, in reality, are simply nature tourism programs which may cause negative environmental and social impacts. While the term was first heard in the 1980s, the first broadly accepted definition, and one which continues to be valid "nutshell"



definition was established by The (International) Ecotourism Society in 1990:

*\*Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.*

As awareness and experience of the activity has grown, so has our need for a more comprehensive and detailed definition. Most recently (1999), Martha Honey has proposed an excellent, more detailed version:

*\*Ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveller; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights.*

However, consensus exists among organizations involved with ecotourism (including The Nature Conservancy) around the definition adopted in 1996 by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) which describes ecotourism as:

*\*Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.*

The Nature Conservancy has adopted the concept of ecotourism as the type of tourism that it recommends its partners use in most protected area management, especially for national parks and other areas with fairly strict conservation objectives. For The Nature Conservancy, ecotourism represents an excellent means for benefiting both local people and the protected area in question. It is an ideal component of a sustainable development strategy where natural resources can be utilized as tourism attractions without causing harm to the natural area. An important tool for protected area management and development, ecotourism must be implemented in a flexible manner. However, the following elements are crucial to the ultimate success of an ecotourism initiative. Ecotourism must:

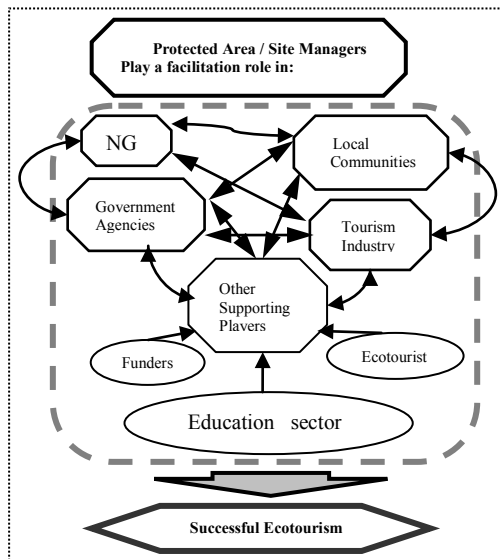
- Have a low impact upon a protected area's natural resources;
- Involve stakeholders (individuals, communities, eco-tourists, tour operators and government institutions) in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring phases;
- Respect local cultures and traditions;

- Generate sustainable and equitable income for local communities and for as many other stakeholders as possible, including private tour operators;
- Generate income for protected area conservation; and
- Educate all stakeholders about their role in conservation.

## **ECOTOURISM PARTICIPANTS/STAKEHOLDERS**

A huge range of players with varying interests and goals participates in ecotourism, some play more prominent roles than others, but almost all are represented in the development and management of ecotourism sites. A key to the success of ecotourism is the formation of strong partnership so that the multiple goals of conservation and equitable development can be met (see Figure 1). Partnerships may be difficult because of the number of players involved and their different needs, but forging relationships is essential. The key players can be classified as: protected area personnel, community organizations and individuals, private sector tourism industry members and a variety of government officials and nongovernmental organizations. Their affective interaction creates effective ecotourism.

**Figure 1. Ecotourism participants**



## Core decision makers

**Protected area managers.** Ecotourism involving protected areas places those in charge of the areas in a challenging position. Protected area personnel are often biologists, botanists or wildlife specialists whose job is to protect significant marine and terrestrial sites. Their key duties usually involve conducting inventories, managing wildlife populations and maintaining visitor facilities. Effective ecotourism, however, requires that protected area personnel be able to work closely and knowledgeably with local people and community leaders as well as with variety of tourism industry representatives including tourism operators, travel agents, travel guides, government tourism agencies and others. Protected area personnel must be able to guide the sometimes conflicting interests of all of the ecotourism participants so that they come together for the benefit of the protected area and its conservation goals. This task is difficult one but cannot be left to anyone else. In some cases, however, it may be useful for NGOs to assume this role, usually at the request of the protected area administration. Protected area managers and staff play crucial roles in ecotourism. As the main authorities on their protected area's plants and animals, they provide valuable input to create environmental education programs and impact monitoring systems. On the frontlines of management, protected area personnel are the first to notice natural resource changes such as environmental damage from tourism.

**Local communities.** People who live in or near protected areas are not a homogeneous group. Indeed, even within one small community there will be a diversity of people with a range of views and experiences. But we can make a few generalizations about local residents and their relationship to ecotourism. First, some rural communities that once featured quiet living are finding themselves in the middle of an international trend. Nature tourists are invading their homelands, but they are generally just passing through the neighbourhood, not coming to meet residents. Residents have mixed reactions to this intrusion. Some want nothing to do with tourists; they want privacy and do not welcome the changes that tourism brings. Others are intrigued by tourism and are taking steps to develop it. Tourism may be particularly alluring if other employment options are limited or if residents feel tourism may help protect their precious resources. Many communities in developing countries are hosting visitors and creating ecotourism programs. Sometimes their motivation is to protect their surrounding natural resources. For others, they may see ecotourism in a more economic

perspective, as a means to gain income. Whatever their initial reaction to tourism, local residents are often unprepared for its demands. Those who do not want tourism have no means to stop it. They often cannot compete with the powerful tourism industry or the fiercely independent travellers who want to discover new areas. Those who are interested in pursuing tourism may not be familiar with its costs and benefits. Many have little experience in tourism business enterprises and are not connected to international tourism markets. The interests and concerns of local residents regarding tourism development need a special attention. Tourism touches all the other groups involved professionally, in a mostly economic sense. For members of communities, it also touches their personal lives by affecting their lifestyles, traditions and cultures, as well as their livelihood and their long standing ways of organizing themselves socially and politically. In addition, most of the other players enter into tourism voluntarily, whereas in many cases communities must deal with tourism impacts whether or not they choose to. Local residents play an important role in ecotourism for two main reasons. First, it is their homelands and workplaces that are attracting nature travellers. Equity and practicality require that they be active decision-makers in ecotourism planning and management. Second, local residents are key players in conserving natural resources both within and outside of neighbouring protected areas. Their relationship to and uses of natural resources will determine the success of conservation strategies for protected areas. In addition, local or traditional knowledge is often a key component of visitor's experience and education.

**Tourism Industry.** The tourism industry is massive. It includes a huge variety of people including: tour operators and travel agents who assemble trips; airline and cruise ships employees; minivan drivers; staff of big hotels and small family lodges; handicraft makers; restaurant owners; tour guides; and all the other people who independently offer goods and services to tourists. The complexity of this sector indicates how challenging it can be for protected area staff and local communities to learn about and form partnership with the tourism industry.

Consumers are in contact with many members of the tourism industry through their journeys. For an international trip, the traveller often first contacts a travel agent, tour operator or airline. The agent will generally contact an outbound tour operator based in the tourist's country of origin, who in turn will contact an inbound tour operator based in the destination country. The inbound tour operator is best placed to make travel arrangements such as transportation, accommodation, and guide services. Once the traveller is at the destination, many local entrepreneurs will also



become part of this scenario. One element that binds all businesses within the tourism industry is the pursuit of financial profit. There may be additional motivations for some businesses, particularly those involved in ecotourism, but tourism companies exist only when they are profitable.

Members of the tourism industry are valuable to ecotourism for many reasons. First, they understand travel trends. They know how consumers act and what they want. Second, the tourism industry can influence travellers by encouraging good behaviour and limiting negative impacts in protected areas. Third, the tourism industry plays a key role in promoting ecotourism. Its members know how to reach travellers through publication, the Internet, the media and other means of promotion, thus providing a link between ecotourism destinations and consumers.

**Government officials.** Officials from many government departments participate in ecotourism planning, development and management. These departments include tourism, natural resources, wildlife and protected areas, education, community development, finances and transportation. Ecotourism involves officials primarily from the national level, although regional and local levels also contribute to the process. Government officials have several significant functions in ecotourism. They provide leadership. They coordinate and articulate national goals for ecotourism. As part of their overall tourism plans, they provide vision for the industry. They may even propose a national ecotourism plan; in Australia, the government created a National Ecotourism Strategy and then committed AUS\$10 million for its development and implementation (Preece et al. 1995). Government officials at the national level may also establish specific policies for protected areas. For example, government officials decide about visitor use fee systems at protected areas, and their policies outline what systems are established and how revenues will be distributed. They may also delineate private sector practices e.g., tour operators may be required to use local tour guides in certain areas or developer's property ownership rights may be regulated. Government policies direct ecotourism activities and may easily advance or hinder their growth. Additionally, government officials are responsible for most basic infrastructure outside protected areas ranging from airlines facilities in big cities to secondary roads leading to remote sites. The government generally takes the lead in all major transportation systems and issues. It may also provide other services important to ecotourism such as health clinics in rural areas. Finally, government officials promote ecotourism. Sometimes the promotion is part of a national tourism campaign. At other times, advertisements for specific nature sites are created or perhaps a

flagship species is identified and promoted. National government participation gives prominence to ecotourism destinations.

**Nongovernmental organizations.** Nongovernmental organizations are valuable players because they provide a forum for discussion and influence regarding ecotourism. They offer a means of communication with great numbers of interested individuals. These organizations can serve as vehicles for bringing together all the elements of ecotourism. NGOs can play many different roles in ecotourism implementation: directly, as program managers or site administrators; and indirectly, as trainers, advisors, business partners with ecotourism companies or communities and, in exceptional circumstances, as providers of ecotourism services. There are several different types of nongovernmental organizations. Among them are for-profit tourism associations consisting of private tour operators, airlines and hoteliers; ecotourism associations such as those in Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, etc., that bring together groups from all the sectors involved; and other trade organizations that handle travel issues. These NGOs often have members who meet regularly and communicate industry concerns through publications such as newsletters. Members are often asked to subscribe to certain principles or "codes of ethics". These associations and organizations are effective at keeping the industry informed about current trends and events. Another set of nongovernmental organizations involved with ecotourism includes the private, non-profit groups that focus on conservation and development or may be dedicated specifically to ecotourism. Their focus may be local, national or international. Frequently, these organizations serve as facilitators between protected areas, communities and all other players in ecotourism, sometimes providing financial and technical assistance or directly managing ecotourism sites. Some of these NGOs have constituencies that enjoy nature and would be interested in ecotourism education and promotion.

## **Supporting players**

**Funders.** Many different groups can fund the development of ecotourism through loans or grants: financial investment organizations; bilateral and multilateral donor agencies such as the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank; private investors; venture capital funds such as the EcoEnterprise Investment Fund; NGOs; and private banks. These contributions are often critical for protected areas that pursue ecotourism. Typically there are studies to carry out, facilities to build, infrastructure to create and people to train. With protected area budgets so

limited, outside funding is necessary. Several international NGOs based in the United States and Europe provide funding and/or technical assistance to ecotourism projects in developing countries. Many of them use funding provided by government agencies such as USAID, GETZ and DFID, the governmental foreign aid departments of the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom, respectively. The Nature Conservancy, through its USAID-funded Parks in Peril program, has helped many local NGOs develop ecotourism projects connected with protected areas. The recently created EcoEnterprise Fund also provides funding on favourable terms for sound ecotourism projects proposals.

Financial institutions do not generally participate in planning for ecotourism or in decisions about what is appropriate for a particular protected area. In this regard, they may be considered a second-tier player in ecotourism, but they are important nonetheless. For anyone that wants to develop ecotourism, access to funds is often the biggest obstacle confronted.

**Academics.** Academics at universities is another group that plays a secondary, though valuable, role in the planning and daily functions of ecotourism. It is a group that helps to frame the issues of ecotourism and raise questions to ensure that ecotourism meets its stated goals. Researchers and academics facilitate learning by asking such questions as: Who exactly is benefiting from ecotourism? How do we measure benefits? How does ecotourism contribute to our existing knowledge about conservation? What are the links between ecotourism and tourism? Academics can focus on the big picture and help us understand how ecotourism interacts with other concepts and global trends. In addition to helping shape the hypotheses, academics conduct research. In coordination with NGOs governments and local communities, they may:

- develop and execute surveys, e.g., of visitor preferences, willingness to pay, etc.;
- produce data about tourism patterns;
- inventory flora and fauna;
- document tourism impacts and share results to develop a good base of information;
- provide material to guide us in our discussions and conclusions about ecotourism; and
- facilitate the sharing of this information and conceptual thinking through conferences, publications, the Internet, etc.

**Travellers.** Travellers have a unique position as players in ecotourism. They are the most vital participants in the industry and provide motivation for everyone else's activities, but few participate in

formal meetings about ecotourism. Nevertheless, the choices they make when they select a tourism destination choose a tour operator or travel agent and, ultimately, the kind of tour in which they wish to participate, have a tremendous impact upon the eventual success or failure of ecotourism projects.

## **ECO TOUR PLANNING**

### **How should be plans created?**

Points to consider in planning tour programs:

Will products be competitive?

Eco tours are supposed to be products that highlight the attractions of the area concerned.

Products must therefore be unique and utilize characteristic elements of the area.

True competitiveness is achieved by providing exclusive products rather than pursuing low prices.

Will Risk management measures be taken?

Programs must ensure safety and a reasonable level of comfort.

All concerns must be addressed in advance, including the emergency skills of the staff, instructor abilities, contingency systems, liability insurance, response plans for bad weather and availability of backup equipment.

Will measures to reduce environmental burdens be taken?

Naturally, eco tours are organized for small groups because interpretation activities are difficult to conduct when dealing with large groups.

Also, in using resources themselves, the appropriate number of participants and methods of use must be considered.

It is also important to win participants' trust as well as reduce environmental burdens by taking measures to reduce energy costs, minimize waste and more.

Will measures to increase customer satisfaction be taken?

To enhance customer satisfaction, personalized services that meet customer needs are important, in addition to the messages and entertainment values carried by the programs.

Unlike mass tours, eco tours make communication easy, thereby allowing providers to explore customer needs and tendencies and thus provide not only conventional but also special services.

Services filled with hospitality and provided from customers' viewpoints impress customers and subsequently attract repeat customers. It is integral for providers to have an image of such service in advance.

Does the program have entertainment elements?

Demand for eco tours will not be aroused unless their entertainment, not just educative, aspects can be portrayed to customers. In addition to "raw materials" (i.e. existing local resources), interpretation skills, various unpredictable surprises, programs organized with an emphasis on a story, a consistent theme that gives the tour depth as well as overall enjoyability and interestingness are important and comprise the value of the product.

Does the program have a message?

It is important that eco tours lead to the establishment of a system by which local resource can be protected and economic value can be created using such resources. If tourists understand the preciousness of local communities and resources, they will understand the meaning of eco tours. Such customers are likely to come back. It is necessary for interpreters themselves to firmly understand the value of local resources and convey these messages to customers.

## DEVELOPING PROGRAMS

**Figure 2.** Project missions



### Explore the market

We should pay attention on some couple of activities which will guide us toward good planning of the eco tour:

- Number of inbound tourists: Overnight and day visitors and their fluctuations
- Seasonality: High and low seasons
- Tourist types: individuals, families, married couples and schools
- Tourist flow: Places they drop by and travel through.

### **Looking for raw materials**

- Discover local attractions such as nature, culture and history and turn them into products.
- Focus on regionality rather than rarity
- Highlight attractions using expertise

### **Messages to be valued**

Typical messages that we can disseminate with our eco tour and invoke interest are:

- Would like to do “XXX” using both local and tourism resources,
- Would like to protect local resources,
- There are things about our area we would like to convey to the people.

Protection of local resources is an important principle for tour guides.

### **Roles of Interpreters**

- Highlight local attractions and turn them into products,
- Tell people about local attractions and their importance (realize the above mentioned messages).

### **Messages that increase satisfaction**

- Messages define guide outlines, invoke the sympathy of customers and increase trust and a sense of security
- Interpretation is about “conveying” rather than “talking”.

If we use this kind of practise, product value increases.

### **EVENT PLANNING ELEMENTS**

When we start the planning process we should be aware of these elements:

- Event outline
- Event content
- Operational plan

### **Event outline**

- Date
- Time
- Maximum number of participants
- Fees
- Targets
- Deadline for booking
- Event content
- Schedule

### **Pricing methods**

Should be:

- Based on profitability
- Based on market prices
- Based on strategic prices

### **Program structure**

When we work on this activity in the planning process we should prioritize:

- Aim of the program (what do you want to convey to the customers?)
- Strategic aims (marketing)

### **Operational plan**

Should define particularly:

- Advertising methods
- Sales target
- Profitable number of customers  
Minimum level (Break-even point)  
Profitable level (Target gross profit point)
- Staff

## **Tour review**

Controlling and checking up conducted tour is giving us chance mistakes to be seen, give us ideas for the new tours, and be permanently in touch with the needs of the customers and conditions on the market. We can check out if our tour was made correctly as planned, through analyzing these parts:

- Were there any problems with the operation?
- Was customer satisfaction high?
- Were target sales achieved?
- Is there anything that should be improved for the next tour?

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## **ENDNOTES**

1. At present, the advantage for quality tourism is on behalf of the regions with protected natural environment and authentic characteristics.
2. Planning ecotourism process is difficult, complicated, emphasizes all of the stakeholders and complex networking between, and it takes time to be implemented properly. It should be market targeted and as a new trend it takes time to evolve in every area as it is made for.

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## COGNITIVE COMPONENTS OF RURAL TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGES: THE CASE OF LAKE PLASTIRAS, GREECE

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*This paper aims at exploring issues related to rural tourism destination image (TDI) focusing on the cognitive component. By means of empirical research addressing tourists visiting the Lake Plastiras area, Central Greece, factors comprising the cognitive component of the area's TDI were identified along with their effect on destination attractiveness. Furthermore, the influence of tourists' characteristics on their cognitive TDI was explored. The results indicate that: (1) the area's TDI can be delineated in six cognitive factors; (2) the area's attractiveness is significantly influenced by three of these factors; (3) visitors can be classified in four clusters according to the cognitive factors; (4) tourists' clusters differ in terms of age, education and income as well as number of visits and perception of the area's attractiveness. Such findings point towards the need of both a new strategy for the area's placement within the tourist market and further research.*

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**Keywords:** *tourism destination image, attractiveness, cognitive component, rural tourism*

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the intense competition among tourism destinations makes the identification of the destination image (TDI) held by actual and potential tourists extremely important (Ahmed, 1991; Buhalis, 2000). This is so since TDI has been found to exercise a decisive influence on tourists' behaviour (Cooper et al., 1993; Beerli and Martin, 2004b). In the first place, there is a general consensus that TDI plays a significant role in



the process of decision-making/choice (Gartner, 1989; Chen and Hsu, 2000); in this respect, it is maintained that destinations with stronger positive images have a higher probability of being considered and chosen (Hunt, 1975; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Beerli and Martin, 2004b). Moreover, TDI affects tourists' evaluation of the vacation experience and their future intentions (Cooper et al., 1993; Bigne et al., 2001). It has thus, for example, been argued that the image of a destination affects both repeat visitation and the intention to recommend it (Bigne et al., 2001; Cai et al., 2003; Beerli & Martin 2004b; Lucio et al., 2006; Castro et al., 2007).

Thus, considerable research has been carried out on the subject during the last three decades (Xiao and Smith, 2006; Ballantyne et al., 2009). However, the definition of TDI is problematic and a variety of different interpretations has been advanced since its emergence through Hunt's work (1975) (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Pike, 2002; Gallarza et al., 2002; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Beerli and Martin 2004a; Grosspietsch, 2006; Martin and Bosque, 2008; Alcaniz et al., 2009). Hunt (1975), for example, states that image is the impression that people hold about a state in which they do not reside. According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) image is defined as an individual's mental representation of knowledge, feelings, and global impressions about a destination. A commonly cited, loose definition of a destination's image refers to "the sum of beliefs, ideas, or impressions that a person has of a destination" (Crompton, 1979). Finally, Gartner (1989) described destination image as a function of brand and the tourists' and sellers' perceptions of the attributes of activities or attractions available within a destination area. Such diversity, according to Gallarza et al. (2002) owes to the features of the image construct: "this nature is complex ... multiple ... relativistic ... and dynamic".

Despite such difficulties, nowadays there is consensus on the importance of image for a destination's viability and success, forming the axis of the marketing strategy (Chon, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Grosspietsch, 2006; Alcaniz et al., 2009). Calantone et al. (1989) have pointed out that it is important to understand the perceptions of tourists, as this helps to target appropriate markets for tourism promotion. It may also assist in improving or correcting the image of the destination; the development of an appropriate image may further enhance tourism development in the destination. Therefore, according to Tasci and Gartner (2007) proper TDI development is important to the overall success of a destination.

Today, there is agreement that TDI is a multidimensional overall impression. Additionally, an increasing number of researchers support the view that TDI is formed by two distinctly different but interrelated components: a cognitive/perceptual/designative component and an affective/evaluative one. The first concerns beliefs and knowledge about the perceived attributes of the destination while the second concerns the individual's feelings towards the destination. Furthermore, the combination of these two components produces a third, compound or overall component of the image, i.e. tourist's overall image of the destination (Hunt, 1975; Lawson and Band-Bovy, 1977; Holbrook, 1978; Phelps, 1986; Calantone et al., 1989; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Dann, 1996; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Beerli and Martin, 2004b; Pike and Ryan, 2004; Baloglu and Love, 2005).

From a theoretical point of view, there is a general agreement that the combination of cognitive and affective components produces an overall, or compound, image relating to the positive, or negative, evaluation of the product or brand. In the context of tourism, Baloglu and McCleary (1999a, 1999b) and Stern and Krakover (1993) have empirically shown that such cognitive and affective evaluations have a direct influence on the overall TDI. It should also be mentioned that the two dimensions are hierarchically interrelated: the perceptual/cognitive and affective evaluations have a direct influence on the overall image, and also the former, through the latter, have an indirect influence on that image (Beerli and Martin, 2004b).

It should also be mentioned that the study of the cognitive dimension of image predominates (Hunt, 1975; Phelps, 1986; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Chaudhary, 2000; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Grosspietsch, 2006) with the affective component been addressed since the late 1990s (Sirakaya et al., 2001; Beerli and Martin 2004a, 2004b; Ryan and Cave, 2005; Son and Pearce, 2005; Hong et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, as in the case of TDI definitions, literature reveals a lack of homogeneity with respect to the attributes relevant to measuring TDI. One of the most influential studies on image scale development was published by Echtner and Ritchie (2003) who suggested a conceptual framework for the operationalisation of all specified components of destination image, and showed that: a) place image should be envisioned as having two main components: attribute-based and holistic; b) each of the components contains functional (or more tangible) and psychological (or more abstract) characteristics; and c) images of destinations can include "common" functional and psychological traits (components) or

more distinctive or even unique features and feelings). Kim (1998) presented a comprehensive review of destination attractiveness studies while Beerli and Martin (2004a), based on a review of the attractions and attributes, classified all factors influencing the image assessments into nine dimensions: natural resources; general infrastructure; tourist infrastructure; tourist leisure and recreation; culture, history and art; political and economic factors; natural environment; social environment; and, atmosphere of the place.

More specifically, from a cognitive point of view, TDIs are assessed on a set of attributes that correspond to the resources or attractions that a destination has at its disposal (Stabler, 1995). Alhemoud and Armstrong's (1996) classification of tourist attractions includes: natural attractions; historic attractions; cultural attractions; and artificial attractions. Gallarza et al. (2002) have presented a selection of empirical TDI research that measure attributed-based image. Beerli and Martin (2004b) developed and empirically validated a model which explains the different factors forming the post-visit image of a destination and delineate TDI in terms of natural/cultural resources, infrastructures, atmosphere, social setting/environment, and tourist leisure/recreation. Such attractions provide the motivations and the magnetism necessary to persuade an individual on visiting a specific place (Alhemoud and Armstrong, 1996).

The aim of the present paper is to shed more light on the study of rural tourism which, according to Fronchot (2005: 345) has been "heavily studied from the supply outlook but remains to be further analysed from the consumer's perspective". Our objective is threefold. First, explore the cognitive components of rural TDI. Second, identify the effect of cognitive TDI on destination attractiveness. Third, investigate the influence of tourists' characteristics on their cognitive TDI. The paper is based on research carried out at the Lake Plastiras area, a Less Favoured Area (LFA) in Central Greece, one of the most rapidly developing (rural) tourism destinations in Greece.

## **THE RESEARCH AREA**

The research was carried out over the 31,400 ha. Lake Plastiras Area, comprising 14 communities located on the Agrafa mountains in the SW part of the Karditsa Prefecture, Central Greece. The Plastiras Lake is an artificial one, constructed in 1958 – 1962, covering a previously fertile mountainous plateau to supply drinking and irrigation water and produce electricity.

The climate is characterised as half-dry Mediterranean. The area is divided into two main vegetation zones; the first one is dominated by fir trees and the other by oak and chestnut trees. Various rare species of flora and fauna have been identified in the area, including 16 plants endemic of Greece, 27 plants included in the list for the preservation and protection of endemic, rare and endangered plants of the Greek flora and 10 plants included in the CITES convention. The area is part of the NATURA 2000 network. In addition, the area has also got a rich history. Nowadays the most prominent sites are the 6 byzantine churches and 5 monasteries dating since the 16 - 17<sup>th</sup> century. Quite a number of cultural events mostly related to religious feasts also take place especially during Easter and the summertime.

According to the Censuses, in 1961 – 2001, the area's population has declined by 18.6%. The main population exodus occurred in the period around the time the lake was developed (1961–1971: -32%) while in the period 1991-2001 there has been a considerable increase (+23%). However, field research (ANKA, 1999) revealed a population smaller by 20% than the 2001 Census. Furthermore, it was found that only 43% of the population lives permanently (more than 6 months) in the area.

Census data (1971–2001) also show a decline in the number of farm holdings by half and of cultivated lands by almost 60%. Agricultural land is fragmented (4.5 parcels per holding on average) and small sized (average of 0.33 ha. per parcel). Fallow lands and grasslands account for almost half of the agricultural land and productivity is low. Livestock farming has always been of a 'traditional' character, i.e. labour intensive with low rates of capital investment and heavily dependent on pasturelands for around 6 months per year.

The secondary sector is not well developed in the area. In most of the villages, small-scale family based activities relating to traditional distillation, weaving, carpentry and smithy are found; watermills are still present in a couple of villages. One can also find traditional cafes and taverns (or mixed family businesses) in every village; in some cases the same places serve as small groceries.

Despite its beauty, the lake area was not considered as an important resource for the surrounding communities until 1987. A local development project undertaken by the Prefecture authorities then indicated rural tourism (with an emphasis on agrotourism and various forms of alternative/soft tourism) as the path to development. The dominant vision for the area revolves around the development of soft tourism in a way that will also 'carry along' the rest of the area's (productive) activities. Soft tourism was expected to create alternative

sources of income and facilitate the promotion of local products which would, in turn, tackle the declining socio-economic situation.

Therefore, the local authorities took the initiative/risk to build 7 hostels (owned by local communities but run by private entrepreneurs) around 1992-93 and resulted in increasing numbers of visitors to the area. Advertisement of the natural beauty of the area, investments in infrastructure from public funds (IMP, Regional Programmes etc.) and, later, private investments triggered by the local LEADER II and later LEADER+ programmes, changed the area and making it a major tourism destination among Greeks. In terms of employment, by the end of LEADER II (2001) businesses which had pre-existed that programme employed 257 people (148 full-time, 14 of which resulted from LEADER II) while new businesses employed 241 people (162 full-time). Today there are 31 hostels in the area (vs. 7 before LEADER II), 27 businesses with rooms to rent (vs. 6) and 12 restaurants (vs. 5)

## **METHODOLOGY**

Data were collected through personal, questionnaire-based, interviews with visitors in the period November 2006 to January 2007. The random sample of tourists was drawn among those who visited the Lake Plastiras area and stayed in any of the 70 lodgings of the area for at least one night. The total number of questionnaires was 220.

Given that evaluative attributes are rather abstract and far less applicable (Chen 2001), the survey focused on the cognitive component of TDI. In this respect, a multi-attribute approach was taken; TDI was assessed through a battery of attributes corresponding to the attractions of the locale. Consequently, the first two sections of the questionnaire, aiming at measuring the cognitive component of TDI, comprised a 42 item scale with a different position in the functional –psychological continuum, addressing both area (25 items) and accommodation attributes (17 items). The scale was developed based on both a review of other measurement scales (Kim, 1998; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Beerli and Martin, 2004b) and the specific attractions of the destination (AN.KA., 1999). Tourists were asked to indicate their level of agreement on each item on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7).

In this study destinations’ attractiveness was measured also using a seven-point Likert scale. The item was selected since it is regarded “as a cognitive evaluation of destination attributes which are performed on site” (Um et al., 2006: 1146). The importance of attractiveness has been

pinpointed by Hu and Ritchie (1993: 25) as reflecting “the feelings, beliefs, and opinions that an individual has about a destination’s perceived ability to provide satisfaction in relation to his or her special vacation needs”. It follows that determining the relative importance of each attribute in influencing tourists’ evaluation of attractiveness is critical since it “identifies respondents’ salient image attributes and it is these which are most likely to serve as behaviour determinants (Crompton, 1979)” (op. cit: 26).

The third section of the questionnaire comprised questions on tourists’ socioeconomic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, annual family income, marital status, education, etc.). Many models have shown that such characteristics influence tourists’ perceptions of places (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Martin and Bosque, 2008); furthermore, according to Crompton (1979) and Obenour et al. (2005) TDI is not only an individual perception but can also correspond to the perception held by a segment of tourists. Finally, this section also contained questions concerning the characteristics of travel such as the number and duration of both previous and the current visit, companion, means of transport, etc.

In this piece of work data from section one (re: area attributes) and partially from section three (re: socioeconomic data) were utilized. Besides frequencies, in order to explore the structure of cognitive TDIs an explanatory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted; a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also carried out in order to validate the factor structure extracted from EFA. Following, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) investigated the effect of cognitive image factors on destination attractiveness. Subsequently, a cluster analysis based on the cognitive TDIs factor solution revealed a number of tourists segments. Finally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) explored between segments differences on tourists’ socio-demographics. Data analysis was performed with SPSS/PC 16 and LISREL v.8.54.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Tourists’ socio-demographic characteristics are shown on Table 1. Gender was equally distributed across respondents. Most of the respondents were between 25-44 years old, married, with higher education and diversified income levels (34.5% did not respond); the majority visited the area for the first time and considered it as very or extremely attractive.

Additionally, 98.6% of respondents were Greeks, mainly residents of the two major Greek urban centres, Athens and Thessalonica (53%). Most



(52.3%), stayed at least for two nights (50.9%), mainly with friends (49%) or else with family (32.3%) or their partners (30.5%). The main reasons for visiting the lake area were: i) the fame of the lake (37.3%), ii) recommendation by friends (28.2%) and iii) previous visit (25.5%).

**Table 1. Summary of Tourists' Characteristics (N = 220).**

Characteristic	Frequency	%	Characteristic	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>			<i>Education</i>		
Male	116	52.7	Primary ( 6 yrs)	11	5.0
Female	104	47.3	Gymnasium (9 yrs)	11	5.0
			High School (12 yrs)	72	32.7
<i>Family income (in Euros)</i>			Higher (> 12 yrs)	126	57.3
<10,000	14	6.4			
10-15,000	34	15.5	<i>Marital status</i>		
15-20,000	27	12.3	Single	77	35.2
20-25,000	20	9.1	Married	126	57.5
25-30,000	14	6.4	Widowed	6	2.7
>30,000	35	15.9	Divorced	10	4.6
No response	76	34.5			
			<i>No. of visits</i>		
<i>Age</i>			1 (first-time)	115	52.3
15-24	34	15.6	2	45	20.5
25-34	60	27.5	> 2	60	27.3
35-44	59	27.1			
45-54	41	18.8	<i>Area attractiveness</i>		
55-64	13	6.0	Moderate	13	5.9
>65	11	5.0	Attractive	28	12.7
			Very attractive	89	40.5
			Extremely attractive	90	40.9

Following, an EFA was conducted with the 25 items used in this study to address the cognitive component of TDI relating to area's attractions. The extraction method used was Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation. A satisfactory solution was found to be a six-factor solution using 18 items of the initial scale. The factor solution explained 67.7% of the total variance, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure score was 0.827 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity 1470.85 (df=153; p=0.000). Factors retained in the solution were those with eigenvalues

above 0.9 since the scree plot analysis revealed that the sixth factor should be kept in the interpretation (Hair et al., 1995; Malhotra, 1996). Results and reliability scores are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** EFA on cognitive TDIs.

Variables	Loadings					
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
<i>F1: Culture and scenery</i>						
Lake's history	0.83					
Scenic sights	0.69					
Monasteries	0.67					
Cultural heritage	0.65					
<i>F2: Local products</i>						
Visits to local craft stores		0.82				
Visits to local food stores		0.80				
Visits to local museum		0.74				
<i>F3: Vacations and hospitality</i>						
Quiet and calm area			0.78			
Ideal place for vacations			0.78			
Hospitable local people and society			0.61			
<i>F4: Alternative activities</i>						
Alternative athletic activities				0.80		
Observation of wild life and birds				0.74		
Organized group tours				0.60		
<i>F5: Cuisine and entertainment</i>						
Local cuisine					0.71	
Good night life/entertainment					0.69	
Place to meet people					0.59	
<i>F6: Weather and environment</i>						
Weather and climate of the area						0.85
Natural environment						0.61
Variance explained	31.4	11.1	7.5	6.8	5.8	5.2
Cronbach's alpha	0.66	0.70	0.77	0.82	0.65	0.49

In order to validate the extracted factor structure, a CFA was performed in the factor solution extracted by the EFA. The model showed satisfactory fit: comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.00, normed fit index (NFI) = 1.00, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.078 and  $\chi^2[120] = 279.77$ .

The six factors were labelled as: “*Culture and scenery*” (Factor 1; 31.40% of the variance), “*Local products*” (Factor 2; 11.10%), “*Alternative activities*” (Factor 3; 7.50%), “*Vacations and hospitality*” (Factor 4; 6.77%), “*Cuisine and entertainment*” (Factor 5; 5.80%) and “*Weather and environment*” (Factor 6; 5.15%).

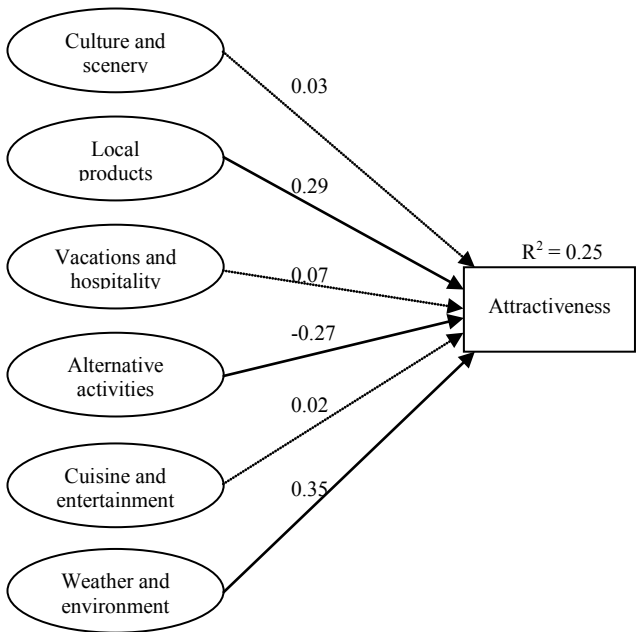
Next, the causal structure of the proposed research model was tested using structural equation modelling (SEM). The fit measures for this model suggested a satisfactory fit: the comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.00, normed fit index (NFI) = 1.00, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.077, and  $\chi^2[132] = 302.96$ . The standardized solution is shown on Figure 1. The factors “Local products”, “Alternative activities” and “Weather and environment” were found to be statistically significant thus playing a key role in tourists’ perception about the area’s attractiveness. “Local products” and “Weather and environment” had a positive effect on destination’s attractiveness, “Alternative activities” had a negative effect.

Further, a cluster analysis was conducted based on the factor solution on the cognitive TDIs. The cluster method employed the k-means procedure, with the option of identifying four clusters, which was indicated by a hierarchical cluster analysis. The first cluster was labelled “Low TDI” (15% of sample) since tourists in this cluster scored low across all TDI factors while the third cluster in which tourists scored the highest values across most TDI factors was labelled “High TDI” (22% of sample). Consequently, the second cluster was labelled “Medium/low” (29% of sample) and the fourth cluster “Medium/high” (34% of sample).

Table 3 reports the means of each factor for the four clusters. The means of the factors were significantly different among clusters. In addition, comparison of means using Duncan’s post-hoc test revealed that each cluster was significantly different from every other cluster for all six factors, with few exceptions. Thus, the solution was found to be quite satisfactory and robust.

Table 4 provides the description of the clusters’ profiles. Socio-demographic characteristics that statistically differentiate the clusters are age, education, income and previous number of visits. Moreover, tourists differ on their overall evaluation of the area’s attractiveness.

**Figure 1.** Final Model of Area's Attractiveness.



**Table 3.** Mean Factor Scores across Each Cluster.

	Low TDI	Medium/ low TDI	High TDI	Medium/ high TDI	F (p-value)
Culture and scenery	3.1 <sup>a</sup>	3.7 <sup>b</sup>	5.7 <sup>c</sup>	4.6 <sup>d</sup>	68.1 (0.000)
Local products	2.0 <sup>a</sup>	2.9 <sup>b</sup>	4.6 <sup>c,d</sup>	4.5 <sup>c,d</sup>	80.6 (0.000)
Alternative activities	4.4 <sup>a</sup>	5.5 <sup>b</sup>	6.1 <sup>c,d</sup>	6.2 <sup>c,d</sup>	38.4 (0.000)
Vacations and hospitality	2.7 <sup>a,b</sup>	3.1 <sup>a,b</sup>	5.3 <sup>c</sup>	4.2 <sup>d</sup>	48.4 (0.000)
Cuisine and entertainment	1.8 <sup>a</sup>	3.8 <sup>b,d</sup>	5.4 <sup>c</sup>	3.8 <sup>b,d</sup>	109.2 (0.000)
Weather and environment	4.2 <sup>a</sup>	5.3 <sup>b</sup>	6.3 <sup>c</sup>	5.7 <sup>d</sup>	29.1 (0.000)

Note: Different superscripts indicate significantly different means following a Duncan post hoc test.

**Table 4.** Tourist Clusters' Profiles

	<b>Low TDI</b>	<b>Medium /low TDI</b>	<b>High TDI</b>	<b>Medium /high TDI</b>	<b>F (p-value)</b>
<i>Age</i>					3.1 (0.028)
15 - 24	15.2	27.7	6.3	10.8	
25 - 34	21.2	29.2	27.1	28.4	
35 - 44	33.3	18.5	33.3	27.0	
>= 45	30.3	24.6	33.3	33.8	
<i>Gender</i>					1.4 (0.251)
Male	66.7	52.3	43.8	52.7	
Female	33.3	47.7	56.3	47.3	
<i>Marital status</i>					2.1 (0.102)
Single	39.4	43.1	29.2	29.7	
Married	51.5	53.9	54.2	64.9	
Divorced/widowed	9.1	3.1	16.7	5.4	
<i>Education</i>					4.4 (0.005)
Primary	3.0	3.08	12.5	2.7	
Gymnasium	3.0	4.6	10.4	2.7	
High school	18.2	30.8	33.3	40.5	
Higher education	75.8	61.5	43.8	54.1	
<i>Income</i>					3.2 (0.025)
< 10,000	6.1	0.0	10.4	9.5	
10 – 15,000	9.1	16.9	20.8	13.5	
15 – 20,000	9.1	9.2	10.4	17.6	
20 – 25,000	3.0	10.8	10.4	9.5	
25 – 30,000	6.1	4.6	8.3	6.8	
> 30,000	24.2	15.4	18.8	10.8	
No Response	42.4	43.1	20.8	32.4	
<i>Number of visits</i>					2.9 (0.037)
1 (first-time)	54.6	47.7	43.8	60.8	
2	18.2	21.5	14.6	24.3	
>2	27.3	30.8	41.7	14.9	
<i>Attractiveness</i>	5.7	6.1	6.5	6.3	6.8 (0.000)

The tourists' cluster labelled as 'high TDIs' comprises individuals who are the most often repeat visitors and tend to regard the area as very-extremely attractive. The cluster concerns individuals largely over 35 years old with varying incomes and educational levels. On the other hand, the 'low TDIs' cluster concerns mainly first-time visitors who consider the area to be attractive-very attractive; it comprises visitors over 35 years old characterised by higher education and medium (between 15,000 and 30,000 €) to high (over 30,000 €) incomes. The 'medium-low' cluster comprises younger tourists with higher education, rather medium incomes, almost equally divided between first-time and repeat visitors who find the area very attractive. The last cluster, 'medium-high TDIs' largely concerns first time visitors, over 35 years old, mostly with moderate incomes and high to higher education, who find the area very attractive.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The current presentation aims at exploring the main characteristics of tourists visiting the Lake Plastiras area, a Less Favoured destination in Central Greece, as well as their TDIs and perceived attractiveness of the area. According to Kokkali et al. (2008) tourists' characteristics match with those of tourists in similar rural destinations in Greece and abroad. In addition, the cognitive components of TDIs were delineated, thus arriving at six factors: 'Culture and scenery', 'Local products', 'Alternative activities', 'Vacations and hospitality', 'Cuisine and entertainment' and 'Weather and environment'. It was also found out that the factors 'local products' and 'weather and environment' contribute positively to the area's attractiveness while 'alternative activities' does negatively.

Furthermore, tourists have been classified according to the aforementioned six cognitive factors; subsequently the clusters were tested for differences in tourists' characteristics. In the first place, four tourists' clusters were identified with each cluster being significantly different from every other cluster for almost all the six cognitive factors. Moreover, age, education and income were found to differentiate the clusters along with the number of visits and tourists' perception of the area's attractiveness. Results indicate that first-time visitors with higher education and medium- to high incomes are more cautious with reference to their cognitive TDI components and their perception of the attractiveness of the area as compared to the rest of the first-time visitors;

younger, well-educated visitors also seem rather cautious as compared to other tourists but the ones comprising the aforementioned cluster.

It follows that the Lake Plastiras area attracts tourists as a place characterised by its beautiful, unharmed natural environment and its local products. On the contrary, tourists seeking alternative activities are not attracted to the area. However, quite a number of such activities (ski, canoe-kayak, mountain bike, horse-riding, trekking, climbing, bird-watching etc.) are found in the area (Kokkali, 2008). Results also clearly indicate differentiations among segments of the area's visitors in both their characteristics and their cognitive TDI components thus on their perception about the area's attractiveness.

Our findings are thus considered important for destination-marketers since in the first place, recognising the images tourists have of a destination is necessary to identify its strengths and weaknesses. This, in turn, allows for the creation and management of positive expectations based on the construction of distinctive and appealing images as well as, tentatively, the creation of differentiated offers than those of competitors. It finally facilitates the design of an efficient strategy concerning the area's placement within the tourist market, notably through the segmentation of the market and the development of specific communication for each group based on different components of TDIs (see, for example: Ahmed, 1991; Calantone and Mazanec, 1991; Buhalis, 2000; Bigne et al, 2001; Martin and Bosque, 2008). The Lake Plastiras area seems to be and has the potential to develop further as an important (rural) tourism destination in Greece. This is so as it offers diverse accommodation options, a wide range of activities as well as important environmental assets and lovely sights (Kokkali, 2008). However, it has to be stressed that its marketing, due to its environmental and socioeconomic peculiarities and, thus, restrictions, should not have as its exclusive target the increase of tourists' inflows to the area (see: Koutsouris, 2007 and 2009).

Our findings also point towards the need for further research concerning the investigation of TDIs tourists hold before visitation in the area, the complex processes of their formation and the sources contributing to it (Gartner, 1993; Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002; Govers et al., 2007), as well as the evaluation of tourists' satisfaction and revisitation intentions and loyalty (see: Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2007).

The contribution of this piece of work concerns the fact that although TDI has been extensively investigated, it advances this line of research by exploring the cognitive component of image in a rural, mountainous area. From a conceptual point of view, due to the fact that this paper only

begins to analyse the topic, it is limited since other factors which are known to exist and affect TDI were not included, notably the second section of the survey questionnaire addressing accommodation items. In the first place, further analysis of the existing data is therefore deemed necessary; moreover it would be interesting to undertake further research that includes those types of variables not included in the survey (i.e., affective TDI component). These are expected to improve the obtained results since the examined components of the cognitive image only explain 25% of the variance of attractiveness (see also: Alcaniz et al., 2009). Finally, the generalisation of the results is another constraint; our results may not be generalised beyond this population and the Lake Plastiras area. Hence, it is advisable to replicate such research and analyse factors that influence TDI in other rural destinations.

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## EVENT TOURISM: STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS IMPACTS ON RURAL AREAS

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*This paper focuses on event tourism sector and its affection on the economy and the society of the rural community. The significance of events for rural development is argued by various researchers. In the current paper several cases from the event tourism literature and their results are studied. A general conclusion is that rural events affect host communities mainly by building community commitment. Cash injection is significant but not at a level that can lead to rural development. So, impacts on local population should be at the centre of event management in order to achieve development of destination. Further research is needed to be done in order to support such a statement.*

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**Keywords:** Event Tourism, Events, Rural Areas, Rural Development

### INTRODUCTION

The statement that tourism can lead to regional development has been well- documented by various researchers. Tourism has a multi-dimensional affection on the host destination. The direct and indirect benefits of tourism combine to create an extensive list of opportunities. In both developed and developing countries, tourism is a mean of raising the economic activity of regions (Mangion & McNabb, 2005). Also, it is widely perceived as a potential economic base, providing elements that may improve quality of life. (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, Vogt, 2005) and has various social and environmental impacts. Tourism is an economic sector able to offer a significant contribution to the economic growth of a region and to the labour market and produces occupation directly and indirectly through the supply of goods and the necessary services for tourist activities. Moreover, tourism produces social benefits



to the region (i.e. small and medium enterprises development, creation of new job, improvement of infrastructure etc.). On cultural plan, tourism is considered an element of community enrichment, thanks to the meeting of different cultures. Also, tourism can positively contribute to the maintenance of natural environment by protecting, creating or maintaining national parks or other protected areas. Especially, in less developed countries tourism afflicted by debilitating rural poverty, tourism is perceived to be one of the few feasible options for development.

The main subject of this paper is the examination of how a form of tourism – event tourism- can affect rural development. How much a rural event affects host communities? Can a small-scale event which takes place to a rural environment play significant role to the socio-economic development of the region?

## EVENTS

Before starting the analysis of the event tourism sector it is essential to be cleared what is an event. The definition of the event is difficult to be accurate as tourism events and it can be flexible to suit different situations.

*'A Special Event is a one- off happening designed to meet specific needs at any given time. Local community events may be defined as an activity established to involve the local population in a shared experience to their mutual benefits'. (Wilkinson in Watt, 1998:1)*

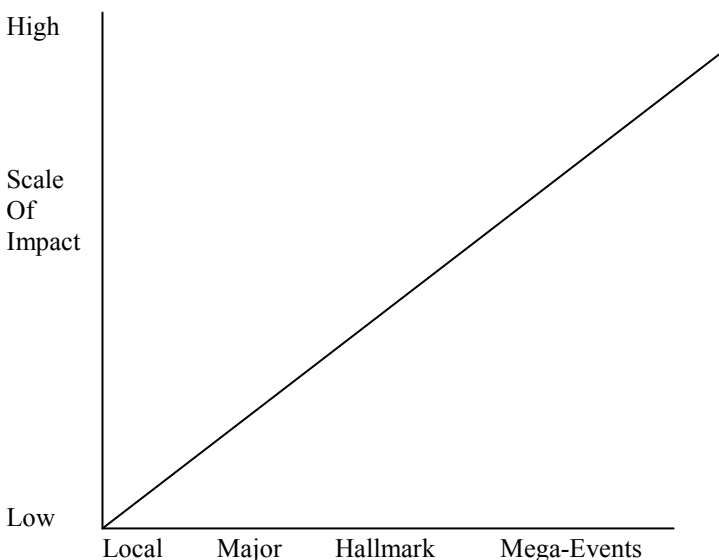
*'A Special Event recognizes a unique moment in time with ceremony and ritual to satisfy needs.' (Goldblatt in Watt, 1998:1)*

Donald Getz (2008) determined: *'Planned events are spatial-temporal phenomenon, and each is unique because of interactions among the setting, people, and management systems including design elements and the program. Much of the appeal of events is that they are never the same, and you have to 'be there' to enjoy the unique experience fully; if you miss it, it's a lost opportunity.'*

*'A special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body. To the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for a leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience.'*(Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell & Harris, 2002: 12) The fourth definition is the most appropriate from the tourism perspective and is the one that is used to the current paper.

Figure 1 depicts the basic typology of the events according to their size. This categorization of events is according to their demand, tourist value and impacts to the host destination. ‘Mega events’ are those that attract an enormous number of visitors such as Olympic Games, World Cup etc. and have long been related to image-making or developmental roles for the host community. ‘Hallmark events’ are ‘Major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination’(Ritchie, 1984). ‘Local’ events are small events and constitute the main subject of this paper. ‘Some of them have tourism potential that can be developed, requiring investment, and some are not interested in tourism—perhaps even feeling threatened by it.’(Getz, 2008). Hence, the matter of capability of such events to contribute to rural community rises.

**Figure 1. Typology of Events**



*Source: Allen J., O'Toole W., McDonnell I. & Harris R. (2002:12).*

Events can be divided to eight main categories according to their purpose, form and program (Getz, 2008). Cultural celebrations, arts and entertainment, sporting events and recreational events are mainly pertain event tourism. Especially, performing arts and other festivals are now a



worldwide tourism phenomenon (Chacko and Schaffer, 1993). Also, educational and business events could appeal tourism but for special reasons. Political and private events are not included in the event tourism industry.

## EVENT TOURISM

Before analyzing rural events it is of great importance to understand the role of events from a tourism perspective: *“Event Tourism is a systematic planning, development, and marketing of festivals and special events as tourist attractions, image-makers, catalysts for infrastructure and economic growth, and animators of built attraction”* (Getz & Wicks, 1993 :2 ).

Donald Getz (2008) placed event tourism between tourism management - tourism studies and event management - event studies. Tourism management deals with tourism development by analysing the behaviour and motivation of all kind of tourists. On the other hand, event management deals with event marketing, design and managing of an event. Also, tries to understand the event experiences and to manage them. Hence, event tourism is in the middle of the two sectors. In other words, event tourism aims at full exploitation of the capabilities of events in order to achieve tourism development of host communities. Event tourism planners must take into account all the details of the event management and make a sedulous research on managing event from the tourism perspective.

Now ‘event tourism’ is generally recognized as being inclusive of all planned events in an integrated approach to development and marketing. Event tourism has great similarities with other special forms of tourism. Because of that, in event tourism demand and supply sides must be analysed (Getz, 2008). A demand side analysis must go through who travel to events and which are the motives of those travellers. According to various researchers there are several domains of event tourism motivation: escape, novelty, family togetherness, socialization, excitement etc.(Uysal,Gahan & Martin, 1993; Mohr, Backman, Gahan & Backman, 1993; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Formica & Uysal, 1996;1998; Lee, 2000; Kim, Uysal & Chen, 2002; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004). Moreover, from the supply side perspective, events should be approached and managed effectively in order to achieve positive impacts and reduce negative impacts of hosting an event.

Events can have a positive affect to economy, tourism, society and culture of hosting area. First of all, events generate revenue for the area

and create employment (Yolal, Cetinel & Uysal, 2009). Also, they contribute to tourism as a tool for destination marketing and promotion by increasing awareness of the region and as a catalyst for creation of new accommodation and tourist infrastructure. Moreover, socio-cultural impacts appear by hosting an event such as: increase in standard of living, enhance of local pride and community spirit, increase of local interest, strengthening traditions and values of the hosting region (Hall, 1992; Arcodia & Witford, 2006). Environment may also be positively affected mainly by the improvement of area's accessibility and infrastructure. On the other hand, events may affect the hosting area negatively (Increased prices and crime during the event period, poor reputation of the area because of inadequate facilities etc.). The following table (table 1) summarizes impacts of event tourism to five main categories: economic, tourism/commercial, physical/ environmental, psychological and political/administrative.

**Table 1.** Impacts of Event tourism

<b><u>Type Of Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Positive</u></b>	<b><u>Negative</u></b>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased expenditures</li> <li>• Creation of employment</li> <li>• Increase in labour supply</li> <li>• Increase in standard of living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price increases during event</li> <li>• Real estate speculation</li> <li>• Failure to attract tourists</li> <li>• Better alternative investments</li> <li>• Inadequate capital</li> <li>• Inadequate estimation of costs of event</li> </ul>
Tourism/ commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of the region as a travel/tourism destination</li> <li>• Increased knowledge concerning the potential for investment and commercial activity in the region</li> <li>• Creation of new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of a poor reputation as a result of inadequate facilities, improper practices or inflated prices</li> <li>• Negative reactions from existing enterprises due to the possibility of new competition for local</li> </ul>

	<p>accommodation and tourist attractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in accessibility</li> </ul>	<p>manpower and government assistance</p>
Physical/ environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in permanent level of local interest and participation in types of activity associated with event</li> <li>• Strengthening of regional values and traditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercialization of activities which may be of a personal or private nature</li> <li>• Modification of nature of event or activity to accommodate tourism</li> <li>• Potential increase in crime</li> <li>• Changes in community structure</li> <li>• Social dislocation</li> </ul>
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased local pride and community spirit</li> <li>• Increased awareness of non-local perceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency toward defensive attitudes concerning host region</li> <li>• Culture shock</li> <li>• Misunderstanding leading to varying degrees of host/visitor hostility</li> </ul>
Political/ administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced international recognition of region and values</li> <li>• Development of skills among planners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic exploitation of local population to satisfy ambitions of political elite</li> <li>• Distortion of true nature of event to reflect elite values</li> <li>• Failure to cope</li> <li>• Inability to achieve aims</li> <li>• Increase in administrative costs</li> <li>• Use of event to legitimate unpopular decisions</li> <li>• Legitimation of ideology</li> </ul>

		and socio-cultural reality
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*Source: Hall (1992:8)*

## RURAL AREAS

Many rural communities host events on a yearly basis, to exploit the benefits that event tourism provides (Getz, 1991; 1997). However, to this point, it is of great importance to specify what is 'rural'. One of the difficulties with identifying a definition for rural areas lies with the fact that it is often defined by what it is not (non-urban) rather than by what it is' (Frochot, 2005). In other words 'rural areas' can be defined as those beyond major towns. So, it can be defined as the opposite of urban. Moreover rurality includes socio-economic activities outside of urban centers (OECD in Frochot, 2005). Notwithstanding, geographical orientation of rural areas by itself is not adequate. Population must be the second parameter but even this can not give a well- defined and general orientation of rural areas. Because of the great variety of density of population this parameter varies between different countries. Hence, defining rural tourism is not simple.

However, rural tourism has standard characteristics such as versatility and diversity which makes the above definition problem more complicated. There are many different forms of tourism that can be concluded in rural tourism. Ecotourism, nature tourism, farm tourism are some of them. Although, there are four criteria which can define rural tourism (Lane, 1994):

- tourism taking place in rural areas
- take advantage of rural heritage
- representing the rural world

As it is mentioned above, rural areas are defined by contrast to the urban areas. At the same time tourists are attracted to rural areas because is the contrast between overcrowded and stressful urban environment with the peaceful and low density areas (Lane, 1994). The antithesis with the ordinary urban life comes from the peaceful and 'authentic' environment of rural areas. By extent, this might affect event tourism. Rural events can be more authentic for the visitor and because of that more attractive. Talking about rural tourism it is essential to report that rural tourists tend to be the lower spenders of all kind of tourists, especially those of urban and seaside areas (Frochot, 2005). A more comprehensive analysis of the characteristics of rural tourists is not of interesting for this paper as the

main subject of the research is event tourism sector by implementing rural events. For this paper, the term event tourism refers to the events taking place in rural areas.

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Because of its great benefits, many rural areas depend mainly on tourism for their economic and sociocultural development. Throughout Europe, in particular, tourism has been widely promoted and relied upon as a means of addressing the social and economic challenges facing rural areas (Sharpley, 2002). Especially, in less developed countries tourism afflicted by debilitating rural poverty, tourism is perceived to be one of the few feasible options for development. 'Worldwide, demand for products such as found in a rural setting are said to be on the increase. There are trends that indicate the demand for rural based tourism will continue to increase... New approaches to product development and marketing of rural tourism products should be considered' (Gartner, 2004). Economic reasons, mainly, are forcing rural destination to increase the supply of rural- based tourism products in order to attract available tourists.

Rural areas usually face problems such as limited sources of income and limited opportunities for employment. Declining economic activity, restructuring of the agricultural sector, dwindling rural industrialisation and out-migration of higher educated youth, has led to the adoption, in many western nations, of tourism as an alternative development strategy for the economic and social regeneration of rural areas (Hannigan, 1994; Derno, 1991). Tourism has been embraced by an increasing number of rural communities as a means to offset losses in traditional agricultural industries and to diversify their economic bases (Cai, 2002). However, a rural community generally is unable to take full advantage of the tourism industry, as it does not have sufficient infrastructure to support year round visitors (Mangion & McNabb, 2005). So it is essential to understand the importance of taking advantage of event tourism as a potential tool to overcome the problems of rural areas. Further down, researches that deal with the capability of rural event tourism to contribute to rural development are analysed.

## **CONTRIBUTION OF RURAL EVENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOST DESTINATIONS**

Firstly, it is important to understand and to measure the spending patterns of event tourists or goers in order to measure the cash injection to host community. A useful study for understanding the categories of event tourists' spending is of the Chhabra, Sills & Cubbage (2003) which provides estimates of the total economic impact of two short-term events in rural North Carolina, using an input-output (I-O) model. This research found that visitors spent the most on lodging, food and beverage and this varies according to the length of stay for attending the event and the number of activities offered. The business that are the most benefited from events are the tourism enterprises such as restaurant, other food and beverage, lodging, entertainment, shopping, admission fees, and auto-related expenses have been identified as the main categories of spending (Table 1) (Chhabra, Sills Cubbage, 2003:423). The total spending figures from the current case study for North Carolina (Tables 1), are also consistent with findings on other events such as the case studies of Ryan (1998) for New Zealand and the 9-day tourism exposition in Michigan (Gartner and Holecek, 1983). As regards with the festivals' attendance approximately the half of the visitors where repeat visitors. Of course this is fact reduces the risk of event failure in the future. 'For a nonlocal visitor, a visit to a once-only event in an unknown destination is a high-risk travel decision, whereas the decision to visit an annual event that has been enjoyable in the past is much easier(Chhabra, Sills & Cubbage, 2003: 426).

**Table 1. The Results of the North Carolina Case Study**

Item	<u>Grandfather Mountain Highland Games</u>		<u>Flora Macdonald Highland Games</u>	
	Expenditure \$	Percent tage	Expenditu re \$	Percentag e
Food and beverage	386.937	17.1	28.249	26.6
Groceries	104.517	4.6	82	0.1
Lodging	964.744	42.5	21.494	20.3
Scottish goods	280.196	12.5	26.652	25.1
Miscellaneous retail	97.846	4.3	818	0.8
Gasoline	174.310	7.7	12.323	11.6
Vehicle repair	3.592	0.2		
Vehicle rental	3.079	0.1		
Admission and registration	251.287	11	16.458	15.5
Total	2.266.511	100	106.076	100

The general conclusion of the research of North Carolina is that the two events are significant contributors for rural economies mainly for lodging and restaurant sectors. Notwithstanding, labor income and total output are quite a little affected. The main reason for that is that rural economies have low value-added and labor income multipliers. But the fact that the events can attract new visitors and the half of them are repeat visitors already ensure that in the future the two events can keep up the small but significant contribution to the tourism development of the host communities (Chhabra, Sills & Cabbage, 2003).

Another interesting research is the one of D. O'Sullivan & M. Jackson (2002) which deliberates events as a tool for sustainable local economic development. The case study analyzes three types of festivals in order to comb their contribution to sustainable development of the host community. The three typologies are depicted to table 2. They are categorized mainly by their amplitude. Also, references about their initial goals, the type of sponsorship and the spatial geography are of great importance. 'A 'home-grown' festival is essentially small scale, bottom-up and run by one or more volunteers for the benefit of the locality. A 'tourist-tempter' festival is one that is aimed specifically at attracting visitors to stimulate local economic development. A 'big-bang' festival is essentially a marketing tool that promotes a myriad of related activities over a defined geographical area (D. O'Sullivan & M. Jackson, 2002:331).' The different festivals were analyzed and tested according to a model of sustainable local economic development in order to examine the compatibility with the agenda of the model.

**Table 2.** Typology of the examined festivals

	<b>'Home Grown' Festival</b>	<b>'Tourist-tempter' Festival</b>	<b>'Big-bang' Festival</b>
Size by population	Small	Medium	Large
Spatial geography	Rural/Semi-rural	Urban/Urban fringe	Urban
Major theme	Arts/culture/Entertainment	Arts/culture/Entertainment	Arts/culture/Entertainment
Organizing drivers	Community led/ Public and private sector support	Local authority driven	Partnership driven
Key management group	Voluntary sector driven	Local authority driven	Partnership driven

Primary purpose for holding a festival	Cultural and/or entertainment benefits for locals and visitors	Economic development via tourism	Economic development for partners/ cultural and entertainment benefit for locals and visitors
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**Table 3.** Results according to the principles of sustainable development (Forum for the Future Model)

Principles	‘Home grown’ festival	‘Tourist-tempter’ festival	‘Big-bang’ festival
Capacity building and training	No	Yes	No
Access to credit and capital	No	No	No
Community enterprise	No	Some	No
Local Business development	Some	Some	Some
Sustainable approaches to inward investment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Responsible business practice	No	Yes	No
Access and Distribution of Work	No	Some	No
Trading locally	No	Some	No

Source: O’Sullivan D., Jackson M.(2002 :331:334)

Table 3 depicts the results of the case study. Home grown festivals which are the main subject of this paper (because they take place to rural areas) demonstrated less evidence of the activities which contribute to the initial principles of sustainable tourism development. Its voluntary nature led, unsurprisingly, to low abundance with the principles. Although, this results can not be transferred to other cases there are some conclusions: ‘It is clear that that although strong synergies between festival tourism and sustainable local economic development are feasible, they are often fairly weak in practice. The results of this study suggest that while festival tourism may have the potential to make a valuable contribution to a locality, it does not automatically make a significant contribution to sustainable local economic development.’ (D. O’Sullivan & M. Jackson,



2002:337-338). Moreover this case study indicates the fact that rural events can only play an auxiliary role to the local development.

Besides the above researches Donna Mangion & Yvonne McNabb examined the impacts of a rural event to the host community. 'The findings suggest that the benefits attributed to tourism events are not apparent when applied to a rural setting over a prolonged period.' (D. Mangion & Y. McNabb, 2005:57) The interviewers revealed that positive impacts far outweighed the negative impacts of the festival. Positive impacts were: providing a unique image to the destination, international exposure, community involvement ('the festival gives the community a focus to all work towards'), cultural exchange between visitors and locals, economic benefit from tourist spending.

**Table 4.** Results of Moscardo's (2007:27) analysis of Case Studies

<b>Themes of contribution to regional development</b>	<b>Number of Cases in which theme was identified</b>
Level of community involvement in the event	15
Building of networks in planning the event	10
Support for non-tourism-related regional products and services	8
Fun and entertainment for residents/participants	8
Opportunities for residents/families to socialize	8
Celebration of achievements	8
Event connections to a specific place	7
Contributes to stronger shared local identity	7
Can use tourism to maintain traditional culture/heritage sites	6
Coordination/partnerships needed to run the event	6
Leadership	5
Opportunities for locals to develop skills	4
Relevance to the local community	4

However interviewers stated some negative impacts such as: pricing of festival tickets, no benefit to non-tourism related business, non-local

businesses during the festival which take away the profits, consumption of alcohol and inappropriate behavior. A notable point is that the findings show little evidence to support optimism to long term economic benefits, mainly because of the fact that the increase in level of employment as a result to the festival. Community members have no appreciation of the level of festival income nor do that profits remain to the host community. As a conclusion for the study of Mangion & McNabb is that the great benefit for the destination is community commitment and the creation of a destination image. Economic benefits are significant but their role is not of great importance in order to achieve regional development.

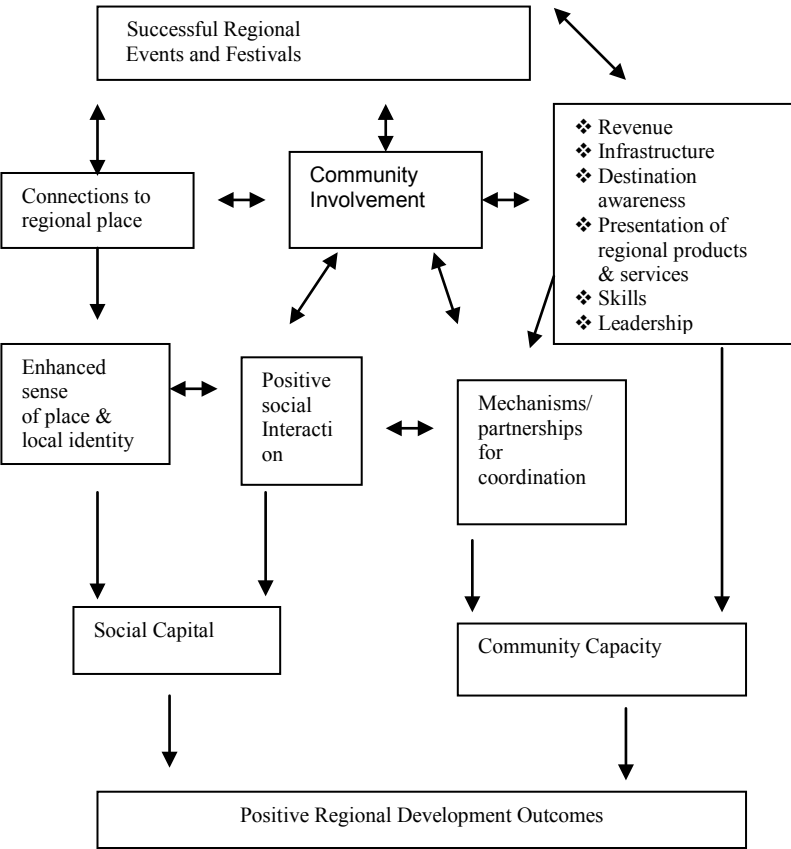
Another interesting study is the one of Gianna Moscardo(2007) which explored events from the view of contribution to regional development, by analyzing a sample of 36 case studies of festivals and events in regional destinations. At first place, the contribution of the examined festivals/events was divided to three main categories: building social capital (socializing, build family bonds, sense of place, sharing local identity etc.), increasing community capacity (by participating, leadership etc.), and support of other activities (tourism or non-tourism activities). Although, the results (Table 4) pertain to not only rural festivals, the study concluded with an interesting 'preliminary conceptual framework' (Figure 5), aiming to understand the role of events in regional tourism development. Obviously, community involvement is the main element. 'The framework proposes that an event may attract substantial numbers of visitors and generate revenue, but if it does not create community involvement it is unlikely to contribute to regional development.'(Moscardo, 2007: 29)

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

According to literature review, it is obvious that rural and small festivals can not have a significant contribution to the overall development of the hosting area. Various researchers stated that there was some economic contribution according to the spending patterns of the visitors (Ryan, 1998; Chhabra, Sills & Cabbage, 2003), but it was inadequate to lead to regional development because it focused mainly on tourism enterprises. From the view of sustainability, rural festivals can only play an auxiliary role. Although they have the potential for an important contribution to the locality, managerial and practical problems (e.g. voluntary nature, small size etc.) obstruct the possibility for sustainable development of the area (D. O'Sullivan & M. Jackson 2002). These findings are reinforced by the study of Mangion & McNabb (2005) who reported several benefits from

the implementation of a rural festival (destination marketing, community involvement etc.), although not enough to achieve development of the region. Finally, Moscardo (2007) stated that community involvement should be the main element of any festival and proposes a framework in order to reach regional development.

**Figure 5.** The Role of Events To Regional Development



Source: Moscardo G. (2007: 29)

The above results corroborate the statement that a successful implementation of event tourism should focus on the community. The

majority of the studies examine effective ways of event management to increase revenue, and as a result community is being ignored. Event managers should take into account that minimizing negative social impacts can lead to the success of a festival. The study of Arcodia & Whitford (2006) reinforces the above statement. They examined ways of developing social capital by building community resources, through social cohesiveness and through celebration. They concluded, that is a necessity to include community resources to the implementation of a festival as it encourages co-operations between different groups within the society. Also, common goals and celebration provided from the festival contribute to social cohesiveness and to enhance community spirit. Especially at rural areas, where hosting an event affects vitally the everyday life of local population, positive social impacts should be the initial goal for event managers.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The statement that tourism is an effective tool to achieve regional economic and social development has been well documented. Rural economies have been concentrated on the benefits of tourism industry to attain cash injection on their economies. Especially, by implementing event tourism they have tried to achieve such goals. In particular, rural destinations host events as part of the economic development strategy because the possible sources of gross regional product are more limited than in urban areas. So, events are often seen as crowding points on the annual calendar for many communities. This fact has various positive and negative economic, social, environmental impacts on host community.

In regard of rural events, it is unclear whether the identified impacts of tourism events are experienced to the host communities. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the impacts of event tourism as perceived by a rural economy. Researches to the current theme of study pointed out that most important benefit of rural events are the building of destination image and community commitment. The cash injection is significant but not enough to achieve rural economic development. The role of their economic impact is to assist the tourism businesses of the region but not the entire economy of the host community. As a general conclusion, researchers should aim to understand the role of events to rural development, mainly by putting social impacts and community in the centre of event management. As it shown to the conceptual framework (figure 5) community involvement should be the main element of a successful festival.

However, further research is needed in order to deliberate effective ways of managing events, concentrated on reducing negative social impacts and achieving rural development.

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## WINE TOURISM. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WINE ROUTE NETWORK IN THE REGION OF THESSALY IN GREECE

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*Wine tourism is globally regarded as a traditional, yet at the same time dynamic form of alternative tourism. In this paper, the development of a Network of Wine Routes in the region of Thessaly, Greece is presented. Thessaly is a region where wine tourism could potentially increase the flow of tourists as well as improve their quality. More specifically, four routes are proposed and the conditions needed for the successful functioning of the network are presented. These include the establishment of visitable wineries, collaboration with tourism enterprises and synergy among all parties involved. The plan was based on international and Greek experience in wine tourism as well as on the results of primary research, studying the members of the "Wine Roads of Northern Greece" network, which are briefly summarised.*

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**Keywords:** Wine Tourism, Wineries, Wine routes, Wine Roads, Greece, Thessaly.

### INTRODUCTION

The scope of the present paper encompasses the planning of a network of wine routes in the Region of Thessaly and emphasizing the significant parameters essential to the successful organisation of this network. The development of wine tourism has only developed in Greece since the mid-90s and research in this field is limited. The plan was based on international experience in wine tourism as well as on the results of





primary research studying wineries which are members of the “Wine Roads of Northern Greece” network.

Travelling to regions with vineyards and wineries does not merely consist of visiting the wineries (buildings, machinery, cellars etc.) and wine tasting. It includes visiting natural sites, having contact with wine producers, tasting local products, local gastronomy and generally being exposed to the local tradition. Hence a trip to a wine producing region is essentially a simultaneous jaunt through nature and flavour. Wine tourism is clearly associated more with the entire journey than merely the wine itself. The wine becomes the vehicle with which one can relish the destination.

Wine tourism, the form of travel where the central theme of the trip is vineyards and wine, originated from the efforts of wine producers to promote their wines and bring consumers in contact with their environment and production methods. Subsequently, the wineries created specifically designed rooms where their guests would be given guided tours and accommodated. Visitable wineries then became part of vacation tours and are now included in tourist “packages” with other archaeological, cultural and natural sites. They are characteristically referred to as “Wine Routes”. According to the definition of the Winemakers’ Federation of Australia (1998), wine tourism is the *“visitation to wineries and wine regions to experience the unique qualities of contemporary Australian lifestyle associated with the enjoyment of wine at its source including wine and food, landscape and cultural activities.”* According to Carlsen (2004) this product-based approach has given rise to a range of studies of the many products and places that comprise wine tourism (Getz, 2000; Carlsen and Dowling, 2001; Williams, 2001). A market-based definition by Hall et al (2000) is that wine tourism is the *“visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and / or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors”*. This definition has informed a proliferation of consumer studies of wine tourists and wine festival visitors (Hall and Macionis, 1998; Foo 1999; Mitchell and Hall, 2001; Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002).

Wine tourism is not a new phenomenon. However, research into the many factors that motivate wine tourists as well as wineries and wine regions has yet to be fully developed. At the first Australian wine tourism conference in 1998, the parameters of wine tourism research were set and the potential synergies of the sectors of wine and tourism were explored (Dowling and Carlsen, 1998). The aim of those synergies was the

promotion of wine regions and events through tourism, increased cellar door sales to tourists, added value to regional production and new business opportunities in wine tourism. Some potential conflicts were also identified, not the least of which was the belief that wine tourism benefits tourism operators more than wineries. (Macionis, 1999; Hall and Johnson, 1999).

Market forces and demographic trends are important consumption-related factors impacting on wine tourism. A number of studies have indicated that wine tourists tend to include mainly those in the older age groups (40s and 50s) that have greater knowledge of wines and also tend to be more socially aware (King and Morris, 1998). Other studies (Taylor, 2004) and anecdotal evidence (Nixon, 1999) indicates that wine tourists are younger (30s). Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) found that wine tourism age demographics vary from region to region. Bruwer (2002) stresses the importance of the next generation of wine consumers to the growing number of small wineries that they choose to visit. *"Beyond the cellar door, there are number of studies of wine routes, wine regions, wine festivals and events and wine tourism strategies that have informed the production of wine tourism. There is also a small but growing amount of literature on the business dimensions of wine tourism including family owned wineries and small business networking in food and wine tourism."* (Carlsen, 2004).

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF WINE TOURISM

### The History of Wine Tourism

Since the beginning of the 19th century visitations to vineyards began to constitute a part of organized travel destinations which were a privilege of the aristocratic class and nobility of the time. From the mid 19th century onward, wine itself began to become the key motivating factor for travel and special tourist packages were organized. Notably, the legal protection of wines from certain appellations which gave wines an identity and made particular wine producing regions unique transformed them into tourist attractions. A prime example is the Bordeaux region in France, which became the most famous wine tourism destination for over a century after the official classification of wines in 1855 and the institutionalization of the region as a zone producing some of the most expensive and prestigious wines in the world. (Filippidis and Kyparissiou, 2002:181).

In Germany, wine trails constituted significant tourism activity for the country from 1920 onwards and encouraged the introduction of visitors to local wines and consequently boosted their sales. The “Wine Route” concept as it is known today started to materialize approximately a century ago. At that time, the wine villages along the Rhine, and later the Alsace region comprised a tourist attraction where the main motivation factors for visiting these destinations were the spectacular sight of the vineyards from riverboats, riverboat excursions and visits to the wine cellars and taverns of the region. Nowadays, all the wine producing regions of Germany have their own Weintrassen (Wine Roads) that traverse over 40 towns and villages.

In France, all the major wine producing regions offer at least one label which promotes them in various ways. From 1922 onward, with the support of the “Dionysos” European program, the rate of wine routes established (such as those in Alentejo, Oporto, Sicily, Charente, Catalonia, Lombardy, Macedonia, etc.) has rapidly increased. Most organized Routes du Vin were developed in the Champagne, Alsace, Jura and Languedoc-Roussillon regions. In all of Europe, from the legendary chateaux in Bordeaux and the medieval farms of Tuscany to the modern wineries in the traditional wine producing regions of Spain, Portugal, Austria and elsewhere, wine producers have not only made their properties accessible, cooperate with each other, with hotel, restaurant and cellar owners and with the local authorities, but they have also created wine route networks and flavor trails.

Nowadays, wine tourism is globally regarded as one of the most significant forms of tourism and entire regions and countries of the New World feature it as their basic means of promoting the tourism industry. Prime examples of tourist destinations chosen specifically for their provision of particularly high standard wine tourism services are Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile, the Mendoza region in Argentina and California in the United States. Examples of the services they offer include luxury guest houses, gourmet restaurants, specialty museums, reception areas, avant-garde spas offering wine and grape therapies, excursions, alternative activities as well as a variety of sports such as horseback riding, golf, or cycling, all found in or next to the vineyards and wineries of modern design.

## **The Wine Tourism in Greece**

The cultivation of vineyards as well as the production and consumption of wine in Greece is directly related to the history and

cultural traditions of its inhabitants. The wine producing regions of Greece cover almost all the semi-mountainous areas and islands of the country, while vineyards surround practically all its archaeological monuments and natural beauty. The presence of vineyards is evident in all regions of Greece and along with its olive groves presents the image of a beautifully subtle Mediterranean landscape. Nevertheless, wine tourism only began to develop here in the 1990s. There are certain wineries in various regions that receive a great number of visitors either because of their unique architecture and rich history as for example the Achaia Claus in Patras, the Cooperative on the island of Samos or the Domain Mercouri of the western Peloponnesus or because of their location in or next to tourist destinations.

Nowadays, all modern wineries have special welcoming, wine tasting and dining areas and even accommodations for their guests. Hence, guests visiting the aforementioned tourist regions or other traditional or newer wine producing regions such as Attica, Naoussa, Nemea, Mantinea, Rapsani, Goumenissa or Drama or other wine producing areas can include tours of vineyards and wineries in their trip as well as wine tasting and wine purchases directly from their area of production (Tsakiris, 2003, Lazarakis, 2005, Hatzinikolaou, 2001). According to the results of a study in 2004 of 48 wineries<sup>1</sup> in Greece (Triantafyllou & Pitsaki, 2005), they reported that they had a total of approximately 520,000 visitors. Hotel groups and convention centres in Greece are still at an infant stage with some exceptions. The visit to wineries is seasonal and the busiest months are from May to September. As for the service visitors receive, 91.7% of the wineries have personnel which deals exclusively with the guests, of which 35% are oenologists. In terms of their functioning, most are open year-round except for some wineries in the island regions. Few wineries have prepared separate areas for special VIP guests and only 18.7% of the wineries reported that they have restaurant services on their premises.

The first organized and systematic effort, which also set the foundations for wine tourism in Greece, was the "Wine Roads of Northern Greece", which was made by the Wine Producers Union of Macedonia, Thrace and Epirus and which involved the synergy of wineries as well as restaurants, hotels and local organisations. The purpose of this effort was to promote the vintages, gastronomic and cultural traditions of each region visited by guests via the proposed routes. Wine producers of the Peloponnese have adopted the same model, creating the Wine Producers Union of the Peloponnese Vineyards in 1998 and the "Wine Roads of Peloponnese". Their aim is also to promote and improve the image of their wines while sustaining the development and

tourism of the vineyards of the region and supporting the Greek cultural, wine and vineyard heritage.

Recently, there have been efforts for the development of new Wine Routes in other regions of Greece. In the island of Crete, the “Wine Route of Heraklion” is comprised of 16 wineries in the Prefecture and was established in 2007. The main goal of this effort was to encourage a relationship between Crete’s guests and the local products of the Prefecture as well as of the island as a whole and to reveal the true identity of the land. In April of 2008, 24 wine producers in Central Greece established the Wine Producers Union of the Central Greece Vineyards. By creating the “Wine Roads of Central Greece” the Union aims to promote the wine production and expect that the wine tourism will play a key role in the area’s tourism. Recently, the Wine Producer Union of the Attica Vineyard intends to create the “Wine Roads of Attica”, aiming at the exploitation of the specific Vineyard and its wines, the endorsement of cultural heritage and know-how about the Attica wine and the tourism development of the region through the Attica Vineyard.

### **Results of research studying the members of the “Wine Roads of Northern Greece”**

For the planning of the Network of wines routes in Thessaly, a study of the network of the Wine Roads of Northern Greece was deemed necessary in order to record the experiences of the network members. The Wine Roads of Northern Greece was the first form of organized wine tourism in Greece and acts as a model for its development and promotion. It was initiated in 1993 when 15 wine producers from northern Greece founded the Wine Producers Union of Macedonian Vineyards and the “Wine Roads”. Then the Union expanded with the participation of wine producers from Epirus and Thrace, thus developing the Wine Producers Union of Northern Greece. Its goal was the development of a system of receiving, welcoming, informing and serving guests with a common perception and attitude which in turn would have positive repercussions on each region. (Stathopoulos, 2006). Currently, in the Wine Producers Union of the Vineyards of Northern Greece named the “Wine Roads of Northern Greece”, 37 wine producers from the northern region of Greece participate. They offer 42 visitable (touristic) wineries on 8 routes which traverse Northern Greece. These routes are the Wine Route of the Olympian Gods, the Wine Route of Epirus, the Wine Route of the Lakes, the Wine Route of Naoussa, the Wine Route of Pella – Goumenitsa, the

Wine Route of Thessaloniki, the Wine Route of Halkidiki and the Wine Route of Dionysus (W.P.A.N.G.V., 2008).

Out of the 37 members of the association, 26 took part in the study. This number represents 70.3% of the total members. Research was conducted through personal interviews in February of 2007 and the most significant results are concluded below:

- ⇒ **Volume of visitors.** The number of visitors should be characterized as small since 50% of those interviewed had less than 1000 visitors per year, 34.6% had between 1000 and 5000 guests and only 15.4% (that is 4 wineries) had more than 5000 visitors per year.
- ⇒ **Seasonality.** Visitation was noted throughout the year, with a clear preponderance in the winter which indicates that wine tourism could extend the period of tourism and minimize the problem of pronounced seasonality which characterizes tourism in Greece. More analytically, the results indicate visitation in winter (57.7%), spring (38.4%), summer (34.6%) and autumn (15.3%).
- ⇒ **Charging.** In response to the question “Is there a charge for the visit, tour, tasting?”, 61.5% answered that “Entrance was free of charge” and the rest reported that it depended on the circumstance.
- ⇒ **Organization of visitation.** Guests travelled: (a) alone, 20%, (b) with general tour groups, 6.7%, (c) with wine tourism groups (wine clubs, gastronomy clubs, etc), 10% and (d) 63.4% responded all of the above. These numbers lead us to conclude that even though we are investigating the most organised network of visitable wineries in Greece, wine tourism is still in its early stages since the visitation presented is small and has the potential to increase greatly.
- ⇒ **Duration of visit.** Guests’ visits to the region lasted: 1 day at 46.4%, 2 days at 28.6% and more than 2 days at 25%. The length of the trips were very short since they were usually restricted to visits to a certain winery without including a comprehensive tour among wine and other tourist sites or a comprehensive wine tourism vacation package.
- ⇒ **Visitor Accommodation.** In response to the question of whether guests stayed in and ate at accommodations and restaurants in the region: 65.4% answered positively and the remaining 34.6% responded negatively. Evidently, the benefits of wine tourism are obvious to everyone involved in this tourist network (restaurant and hotel owners, etc.) However, a more systematic collaboration among members is necessary as well as synergy with new businesses as well.
- ⇒ **Parallel activities.** In response to the question of if their itinerary included visits to other sites of the region: 46.1% responded

positively, 50% said “sometimes” and only 3.8% responded negatively. These results indicate that the market is primarily targeted to visits to wineries and not to the whole gamut of tourist services offered possibly because of a lack of collaboration among the wine and remaining tourist industry.

- ⇒ **School Field Trips.** In response to the question “Do school field trips take place?” the answers were: (a) Yes, frequently (53.8%), (b) No (7.7%), (c) Occasionally (38.5%). The generally positive response to this question is one of the most optimistic messages about wine tourism. Education about wine and its culture will create responsible consumers in the future who will constitute a better market for the goals and values of wine tourism.
- ⇒ **Facilities.** Table 1 shows that basic services are provided. However these are not supported by other services of high additional value which could strengthen and upgrade the quality of the services offered in the network and attract more and better quality tourism.

**Table 1.** Facilities at Wineries researched

1. Special wine tasting room	92,3%
2. Wine Sales: Cellar door	92,3%
3. Specialised guide	38,5%
4. Video presentation	30,8%
5. Museum or exhibition of old equipment, tools, bottles etc.	26,1%
6. Wine tasting and oenology course	19,2%
7. Sales department: books, wine accessories, etc.	15,4%
8. Restaurant	15,4%
9. Outdoor activities	15,4%
10. Accommodation	7,7%

Source : Research results.

- ⇒ **Benefits from participation in the Network.** In response to the question regarding benefits procured from participating in the Wine Road network, the answers were:
- a) The company’s image (16.7%)
  - b) Recognisability of their wine’s brand name(s) (10%)
  - c) Wine sales (0%).
  - d) The tourism in their area/region (10%)
  - e) All of the above (56.7%)
  - f) No particular improvement was noted in any of the above (6.7%)

The answers to this question generally show the positive outcomes of wine tourism in various areas, based on the opinion of the network participants, who have the potential to improve further.

## **Discussion of the Results**

The research was based on the experience of the first established Wine Road network in Greece, which was created in 1993. It has showed that the level of organisation in wineries was satisfactory, since the majority of the wineries in the network, comply with the specifications of a formally visitable (touristic) winery and are capable in supplying the needs of wine tourists. Moreover, the level of provided facilities is also satisfying. The weak points in the organisation of wineries are to be found mainly in the lack of specialised and educated personnel and in the lack of high benefits of added value that will strengthen and upgrade the quality of offered services of network and attract more quality tourism. Despite the satisfying organisation of the wineries and their networking, they still present low visitation, small volume of sales and the profits are generally small from the creation of visitable for tourist wineries.

According to the research results presented by Triantafyllou and Pitsaki (2005) which were conducted in wineries all over Greece, the higher recorded visits are found in tourist regions, meaning in tourist developed regions where the majority are foreign visitors. On the contrary in continental Greece the majority of tourists are Greeks. Research results show that the development level of Wine tourism in Greece is low and it depends on the tourist development of each region.

Therefore, Wine tourism should be connected with other forms of tourism, which is currently not the case in the "Wine Roads of Northern Greece" that are owned by small level Strategic business cooperations. This is also shown by the limited duration of tourist visitations in each region. Moreover, participation in package tours is very small and the majority of tourists individually visit the wineries and not in the form of a completed wine tour program or a touristic package tour.

The above results, as well as the problems faced by the Network, are taken into consideration in the proposals presented below.



## THE REGION OF THESSALY

### Characteristics and Tourism of Thessaly

The Region of Thessaly is located in central Greece and is divided into four Prefectures: the Prefecture of Magnesia, the Prefecture of Larissa, the Prefecture of Trikala and the Prefecture of Karditsa. Thessaly is surrounded by mountains; to the west lies the Pindos Mountain range, to the east, Mount Pilio in Magnesia and to the north, Mount Olympus, the tallest and most well-known Greek mountain. Thessaly is characterised by its fertile plains which are the primary source of agricultural farming for its inhabitants but also by its beaches in its eastern prefectures as well as the Sporades, an archipelago along the eastern coast of Greece. Thessaly has protected conservation areas. Apart from the Mount Olympus National Park and the National Marine Park of Alonissos (home of the Mediterranean Monk Seal – *Monachus monachus*), there are many extensive protected areas of great national importance such as: the Tembi Valley, the Ossa Forest Complex, the pine forests of Skiathos and the Meteora, one of the largest and most important complexes of Eastern Orthodox Monasteries which is also included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It should be noted that 26 areas in the prefectures of Thessaly are listed on the Greek Natura 2000 network, a European Ecological Network of sites, which hosts natural habitats and species of community importance.

The hotel capacity in the region of Thessaly accounts for 3.9 % of Greece's total hotel capacity, of which 70% is recorded in the prefecture of Magnesia.

**Table 2.** Hotel Capacity in the Region of Thessaly in year 2007

Prefecture	Hotel units	Hotel beds	% of the Region
Karditsa	34	1488	5.5%
Larissa	47	2991	11.0%
Trikala	73	3786	13.9%
Magnesia	418	18930	69.6%
Region of Thessaly	572	27195	3.9% of Greece
Greece	9207	700933	

*Source: NSSG (2008).*

Thessaly's share of Greece's tourism is very limited and does not exceed 3% of the total annual nights spent. This is due mainly to the fact

that tourism from abroad plays a very small role in the tourism of Thessaly. Visitors from within Greece make up the greatest portion of tourism in this region at a rate of between 60 and 65%. Conversely, at a national level tourism from abroad makes up 75% of the total demand. Due to its seaside tourism, the prefecture of Magnesia receives the greatest share of tourism in Thessaly at a rate of 61%. The demand in winter is almost exclusively made up of Greek Tourists.

### **Vineyards and Wineries in Thessaly**

The vineyards and wineries in the region of Thessaly provide 6.1% of Greece's total production. This sector has unique advantages in Greece, even in relation to comparable sectors in other wine producing countries. These include a long tradition in Greece of vineyard cultivation and wine production, the large number of indigenous Greek varieties, the climatologic and soil distinctiveness of Greece, the cultural relationship of the Greek people and wine in all its expressions of human behavior but also the Greek nutritional prototype (the Mediterranean diet) where wine dominates and affords distinct benefits to human health. According to the EU (European) regulations, wines are divided into two categories; Table wines which also include Local Wines (Table wines with regional determination) and V.Q.P.R.D. wines (Vins Qualité Produits dans un Region Déterminé). The V.Q.P.R.D. wines that are produced in Thessaly are: MESSENIKOLA (Messenikolas Black, Syrah and Carignan grape varieties) from the Prefecture of Karditsa, RAPSANI (Xinomavro, Krassato, and Stavroto) from the Prefecture of Larissa and AGHIALOS (Roditis and Savatiano) from the Prefecture of Magnesia (Greek Ministry for Rural Development, 2007). Local wines of Thessaly with a distinct identity are the Kraniotikos local wine, the Tyrnavos local wine, recently (2008) the Meteora local wine (white and red), and the Karditsa local wine (white, rose and red). The Estimated Wine production in the Region was about 28325 tons. (27660 tons of Table Wine and 665 tons V.Q.P.R.D.) in 2004. About 70.6% of the production was in the prefecture of Larissa and 19.5% in the prefecture of Magnesia. When comparing the available data on the expanse of Greece's vineyards (132,000 ha) with its corresponding European Union members, it was found that Greece ranks low in comparison with the size of vineyards in countries such as Spain (1,210,000 ha) and France (978,000 ha). As for the geographical distribution of Greece's expanses, the largest number of vineyards (1996 data) is found in Crete with 29,348 ha followed by the

Peloponnese with 25,957 ha, the Prefectures in Western Greece with 19,580 ha and with Thessaly falling far behind with 6,233 ha.

An inventory of wineries and distilleries was taken after conducting primary research through an expedition in the Region of Thessaly and interviews with its wine producers. During the personal interviews, the eagerness of the wine producers to collaborate in the promotion of the local vineyards and their wines was evident as well as the desire of many of them to be included in a network of visitable wineries.

**Table 3.** Inventory of wineries and distilleries in the Region of Thessaly in 2007

Prefecture	Number of wineries & distilleries	Able to Visit	After Call Contact	Shortly able to Visit	No able to Visit
Larissa	21	4	7	2	8
Karditsa	8	2	2	0	4
Magnesia	5	1	2	0	2
Trikala	3	0	1	1	1
Region of Thessaly	37	7	12	3	15

## PLANNING OF THE WINE ROUTE NETWORK IN THESSALY

The planning of the wine route network includes proposals for four routes in the Region of Thessaly as well as a presentation of the fundamental requirements and measures needed to be taken for the successful functioning of the network. The conditions pertain to the creation and organization of visitable wineries, participation/inclusion in tourist packages and also on strategic business collaborations.

### Proposed Wine routes in Thessaly

#### *A. The Wine Route of the Olympian Gods*

This wine route will be an extension of the existing route, once new visitable wineries in Tyrnavos, Larissa and Elassona are included. Due to the geographic identity of Thessaly, it could potentially be the fundamental route in the Prefecture of Larissa. Moreover, its vital position which crosses sections of the national road is promising for the

future of the wine routes. Each passing visitor will potentially be given a tour of this area at some point in the future. More specifically, the route traverses the Mount Olympus region, an area whose vineyards are located directly above the Tembi Valley and comprises the Rapsani V.Q.R.P.D. wine zone. In terms of tourism, the region begins from the village of Ambelakia just before the Tembi Valley, continues to Rapsani, Pyrgetos, Krania and can end in Pieria (Agios Panteleimonas, Litochoro, Dion) or vice versa. Throughout the region, accommodations and sites to visit are available. Moreover, this route may also include the beaches of the prefecture of Larissa as well as Mount Kissavos.

With Larissa as their base, visitors can take wine tourism routes towards all the other wine producing regions in Thessaly such as (A) towards Tyrnavos, Damassi, and from there towards Tsaritsani, Elassona (and the junction between Velvendou with the Wine Roads of Northern Greece), (B) towards Trikala – Kalabaka, (C) towards Vounena, Karditsa, Messenikola, and (D) towards Aghialo, Volos, and from there towards the local sites of each area. Tourist sites of the greater area include the traditional settlement in Ambelakia, the Tembi Valley, Mount Olympus, Tyrnavos, Larissa, and Rapsani.

### *B. The Wine Route in the Land of Argonauts and the Centaurs*

Magnesia is a place which combines legends, beauty and history. It was named after the ancient Magnes and quickly became renowned. Magnesia is the homeland of the mythical hero Jason who assembled a great group of heroes, known as the Argonauts after their ship, the Argo and began his quest for the Golden Fleece from there. It is also the home of the Centaurs and venerable Centaur Heiron who became the mentor of all the demigods and heroes and taught the art of medicine to Asklepios in old Pilon as Shakespeare called it. Its location in central Greece makes access for guests from different places by any means of transportation both easy and comfortable. The airports of Skiathos and New Aghialos are the gates which connect Magnesia to the rest of the world. Correspondingly, the Volos Port connects Europe and the Balkans with Asia and Northern Africa. Lately, there has been a creation of innovative wineries and an increased emphasis on wine. Up until recently, for thousands of tourists Magnesia has been a tourist attraction which was famous for its plentiful natural beauty however with little emphasis on its wines. Nevertheless, the development of wine roads may redefine and enhance the tourist product of the region. The Magnesia Wine Route could be comprised of wineries found mainly in the region of Aghialos –

Almiros combined with a tour of Pilio, the mountain of the Centaurs as well as excursions to the prefecture's beaches and the Sporades islands.

### ***C. The Wine Route of the Meteora Monasteries***

Vineyard cultivation in Trikala is developed in the Meteora – Kalabaka area, which is already touristically developed. A Wine Tourism route could include this region, the city of Trikala, as well as a tour of the villages of Pili – Elati - Pertouli and Aspropotamos – Kalabaka. Pili have access to Mouzaki in the prefecture of Karditsa and from there to Argithea and Lake Plastiras. Kalabaka has access to two Wine Roads of Northern Greece – one via Grevena towards Naoussa and the other wine producing regions of Macedonia and the other via Metsovo, which essentially unites wine tourism in western and eastern Greece. Tourist attractions include the conglomerate rock and monasteries at Meteora, the Pertouli mountain range and ski resort, etc.

### ***D. The Wine Route on the Agrafa Mountainside***

The primary vineyard cultivation zone in the prefecture of Karditsa is made up of vineyards in Messenikola, Mouzaki and Daphnospilia – Paliouri, namely in the semi-mountainous region of the Agrafa mountains which neighbor on Lake Plastira, an area particularly conducive to and known for its agro-tourism activities. The wine producing areas, the wineries and all the tourist attractions of the prefecture can easily be connected and make up a comprehensive wine route tour proposal with the natural Lake Plastira landscape as its base. Karditsa can act as the connection point with the other Wine Roads in the prefectures of Thessaly. Meanwhile, a portal connecting the Wine Routes of Thessaly and Central Greece can be created to the south via the new Smokovos Lake and neighboring Domokos. Apart from Lake Plastiras, excursions to visit the touristically “untouched” region of the villages of Argithea and the healing waters of the springs of Smokovos can be organized.

## **Creating Visitable Wineries**

A fundamental requirement in the development of a Wine Road – Network is the creation of visitable (touristic) wineries. The winery cannot merely consist of a wine cellar. It also needs to live up to its guests' expectations. These expectations may include: wine tasting opportunities, education in a friendly and entertaining environment, and

also opportunities to discover new wines which may also be purchased. A successful wine tourism enterprise identifies itself with a specific region and offers some basic enticements such as a brand name, easy access, good marketing and public relations a variety of tasty foods, a choice of accommodations and a range of activities for its guests. Only when the majority of these live up to the client's demands will a region attain the strong mass acceptance needed to become a tourist destination. Successful wine tourism enterprises have set "informing their potential guests and creating a yearning" before the upcoming visit as their leading commercial goal. This is more easily achieved when there are a number of wineries in a region rather than when one wine tourism agent tries to achieve the same result. (Jarvis, 2002).

In today's environment of enormous increases in wine production, increased global competition, and smaller profit margins in retail sales, direct cellar door sales in combination with sales of food, beverages and commercial goods make up a significant source of income for wineries. (Dodd, 1999:18). Quality wines, that are brand name wines or labels, will help in this area. A strong label will help the consumer appreciate the benefits of the product's use and become a regular client. According to a study by The Boston Consulting Group, in 19 out of 22 categories of products in the USA, the dominant market brands were the same in 1995 as they were in 1925 (Fuller, 2002:78).

The personnel also play a vital role at visitable wineries. Therefore, some wineries focus the training of their staff on their own exclusive products. As a result, the staff members may have exceptional knowledge of their products, but not the required qualifications to receive and serve their guests in the appropriate manner. According to Jarvis, (2002) the training of wine cellar personnel should include training in behavior towards the client, commercial knowledge, in-depth knowledge of the vineyard's products and knowledge of the region as well as in sales.

### **Networking and participation in package tours**

It is difficult for wineries to be marketed as a separate product in the tourism chain distribution since wine tasting experiences are usually free of charge and thus do not offer a commission. However, participation in a package offered with other tourist products allows for the opportunity to develop certain products and take advantage of the tourism industry distribution network. Package deals are a marketing strategy that involves offering several products for sale as one combined product with one combined price. An example of such a package could be an excursion to a

famous site (eg. Mount Olympus, Mount Pilio, the Meteora, Lake Plastira) which will include in its offer a visitation to a winery. Instead of regular wine tasting which is free of charge, they could prepare presentations and extend the chance to savor local products for a cost per person which will cover the price of both the food and wine.

Wine Tourism is a product which can convey a certain tradition and culture. It provides numerous motivation factors for visitations and is bound to its local history and identity. Thus, most of all, it becomes the vehicle to promote the regions' culture. Historical monuments in the Region of Thessaly, cultural events as well as the great archaeological, architectural and cultural wealth which is the legacy of the rich history of the area can support the formation and/or the reinforcement of Thessaly's tourist attractions. Beyond the sites and culture, the Region of Thessaly also offers potential for outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, climbing, fishing, horseback riding, sailing, etc. depending on the area.

The purchase of group vacations can provide a substantial number of day trips and more lengthy excursions to wine producing regions, either separately or combined with some other form of tourism, as for example part of a convention, or even to enrich common tourist packages.

### **Strategic business collaborations**

It is important that the winery owners function within the same network as other tourism enterprises. In new and developing wine producing regions, it is essential that the collaboration and networking between wineries and other types of tourism companies, such as accommodations, restaurants, and sites, be developed. Moreover, shops which sell folk art (such as wood carvings, embroidery, knitting, ceramics, etc.) and local products (cheese, honey, traditional Greek spoon sweets, etc.) can use local providers, so as to preserve the traditional skills and techniques, as well as support the local industry. Networking aims for:

- The development of collaboration among enterprises.
- An exchange of guests among enterprises, such as between wine producers, hotels, restaurants and vice versa, exhibition rooms, museums and convention centers.
- Collaboration with local authorities and tourist information centres in order to promote the area, its businesses and their products.
- Seeking out related businesses whose services and products will enrich the guests' experiences.

- The organization of special wine and food visitations in cooperation with other businesses in the area.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS**

Wine Tourism is multi-faceted and comprises a wide gamut of activities. It includes wine appreciation, the combination of gastronomy with the use, consumption and sale of local traditional products, enjoyment of the natural environment and vineyard work, day trips or longer stays, many additional cultural or eco-tourism activities and an introduction to the local community, its history and way of life. (Askeli, 2006).

The establishment of a network of visitable wineries that will develop and function according to the example of major wine tourism markets abroad is the fundamental prerequisite for the development and promotion of wine routes. Wine Tourism in Greece is essentially a new tourist product which could potentially contribute to an extension of the tourism period an increased recognition of wines and their sales, connecting tourism with culture and the preservation and distribution of the local cuisine of each region. This can be accomplished through:

- The creation of visitable areas at wineries, which will provide basic wine tourism services.
- Upgrading the quality of wine, while putting an emphasis on local wines and brand named wines.
- Establishing a comprehensive wine map of wine routes, wineries and sites in Greece.
- Endowing the network with accommodations, dining areas, tourist agencies and other tourist services provided in the network.
- Quality control standardization which will approve the services of the members and cooperating bodies.
- Training the staff of the wineries that are in contact with guests.
- The cooperation of the network with comparable networks in Greece and abroad as well as the exchange of know-how.
- Connecting the network with the cultural map of Greece.

When the aforementioned measures are brought into effect, the development of a wine tourism route, in addition to the creation of a dynamic, superior quality tourism product, will be possible. Thus Wine Tourism as an alternative form of tourism, along with the comprehensive functioning of the network of visitable wineries, sets forth a new



proposition which will act as strong motivating for travelers to visit regions where the network is being developed.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Of the 48 visitable wineries, 10 were in northern Greece, 9 in Central Greece, 12 in Southern Greece and 17 on the islands (4 in Crete, 2 in Rhodes, 6 in Santorini, 1 is Samos and 2 in Kefallonia).

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## VOLUNTEER TOURISM: WORKING ON HOLIDAY OR PLAYING AT WORK?

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The paper reviews the rapid growth of volunteer tourism, and discusses the changes that have taken place in the ethos and focus of this distinct market, the locations used as destinations and the organisations they represent. It is apparent that over the last two decades the organisations offering volunteer tourist vacations have increasingly focused their attention on conventional commercial tourism markets and their methods and practices perhaps reflect profit driven strategies. The paper concludes that the balance has clearly shifted away from the virtues of early volunteering towards hedonism and profit and that raises question about the long term value and credentials of volunteer tourism. Whether that pattern continues, remains to be seen.

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Defining Volunteer Tourism

A volunteer tourist has been defined as a tourist who “...for various reasons volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing, 2001: p1).

A key part of the definition of a volunteer tourist is the absence of pay. Volunteer tourists do not get remunerated while on their trip, instead, they pay for the privilege of volunteering. This payment could be either in the form of a relatively small one-off registration fee or a larger fee



covering expenses and contributing to the project or organisation involved (Wearing, 2001; Ellis, 2003). In terms of this payment, volunteers often pay relatively more than what they would have had paid for a 'normal' holiday to the same destination (Wearing, 2001) with the extra cost ideally being for the benefit of the cause or project the volunteer will work for.

This paper explores how the growth of interest in volunteer tourism and the large scale expansion of opportunities over the past few years, have significantly altered the nature of the activity.

## **Environmental Setting for Volunteer Tourism**

Conventional tourism has grown rapidly and extensively since its commercial origins in the mid 1920s. Criticism and reaction to mass tourism, especially in the second half of the 20th century has resulted in the emergence of what have been termed "new" forms of tourism (Poon 1993), some reflecting specialised interests, others reflecting a desire for an alternative approach, such as sustainable tourism. The turn towards 'green', less harmful products has had a great impact in the field of tourism with the development and increasing popularity of alternative tourism and ecotourism (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1987; Butler, 1990; O'Neil, 1991; Wheeler, 1992; Kamaro, 1996; Honey, 1999). This is manifested in tourists' taste as a desire for the new, the authentic, the sensitive and inevitably the more exclusive. The doctrine of low volume-high value that underlines alternative forms of tourism has often promoted exclusivity at high prices. Potential tourists have been 'coerced' into making the 'right' choice in tune with the times and usually this means a more expensive choice. It might appear to a cynic that tour operators have been presented with a new and exciting field to exploit and from which to make even larger profits by providing new supposedly authentic experiences within low scale development areas (Wight, 1993; Wheeler, 1992). As a result, on the one hand alternative tourism and ecotourism provide the customer with a feeling of having the moral 'high ground' while being sensitive, exclusive and 'fashionable' and on the other hand give the operators a 'licence' to print money. Thus it could be argued that by exploiting the guilty conscience of an industry and a market with many past sins, ecotourism and alternative tourism provide superficial validation; while the DNA of short term, money making, profit driven practices remains (Wheeler 1993).

The debate about such forms of tourism and their merits, motives and beneficiaries has been going on for two decades and signs are it will

continue for a considerable time. This paper contributes to an analogous debate, this time focusing on volunteer tourism, and by examining its pattern of development, suggests it is becoming the 'new ecotourism'.

### **Organized Volunteering**

Volunteering is a much older activity than volunteer tourism and covers a much wider field of endeavour without the holiday aspect that is characteristic of the latter. Lynn and David-Smith 1992: 16) define volunteering as "....any activity which involves spending time unpaid doing something which aims to benefit someone (individual or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment"

It has been suggested that volunteerism and community spirit took its present form in the 'New World' during the struggles of the first North American settlers (Johnson, 1997). It was not religion that was the origin here, as has been suggested elsewhere (Stebbins and Graham 2004) but rather the native people who displayed solidarity and support in abundance by voluntarily assisting the Europeans in many ways. Subsequently, farming neighbours frequently combined efforts to accomplish vital work. Not taking part in these schemes meant isolation and being an outcast in these days in such an unforgiving environment could mean certain death. Gradually these supportive relationships helped to instil amongst the settlers a sense of what is now called community identity (Johnson, 1997). A living illustration of those communities are the contemporary "Amish" communities in the United States and Canada, who reject modern technology and live apart from modern society in conditions which could be easily described as a throwback to the 18th century (Kraybill, 1997). As the numbers of settlers grew, the commitment to voluntary cooperation to achieve common goals continued and volunteer organisations began to form, some of which have survived today in institutional forms, like hospitals and universities (Johnson, 1997).

It could be hypothesised that perhaps the Europeans had needed a shock that would become a catalyst for voluntary and charitable initiatives and it came in the form of another kind of storm that awoke feelings of solidarity and mutual assistance. The First World War revealed a new form of misery and total destruction to the shocked nations of Europe and this had a considerable impact on the psyche of ordinary people and paved the way for the birth of the phenomenon of volunteer tourism. Early in the 20th century the International Fellowship of Reconciliation was an organisation of Christian pacifists who shared the values of non-violence, peace education and inter-religious dialogue. In 1919 they

organised an international conference in the Netherlands, at which a Swiss man, Pierre Ceresole, presented the idea of an international team of volunteers who would work together to repair the damage from the war which had just finished.

His idea was based on the premise that working together in a spirit of friendship would be an expression of solidarity which could heal the wounds of hate (Ceresole, 1954 in SCI.org). The sympathetic values determined by society, such as pacifism and "help the wounded" became the instigation behind the phenomenon of volunteer tourism. Ceresole envisaged an outlet for human effort and ingenuity designed to alleviate pain rather than causing it and quickly put his vision into action. As a result during the summer of 1920 a small group of volunteers lead by Ceresole himself, began rebuilding a village near Verdun. Similar motives of compassion drove Dunant to found the Red Cross in the same period (Boissier, 1985). Both the Red Cross movement and Ceresole's first work camps reflected a new drive towards peace initiatives. With its highlight being the Geneva Convention (1864-1949), the pacifist movement brought together many committed men and women who became increasingly disillusioned with the status quo, especially amid the frenzy of rearmament of the mid-thirties. This swelled the numbers of volunteers participating on Service Civil International (SCI) work camps designed to assist in areas in need (SCI, 2007).

The end of the Great Wars signalled the end of an era for volunteerism. It marked the end of the period of 'tangible' and 'direct' suffering which swelled the numbers of western volunteers. It would take another form of war to help in the evolution of international volunteer tourism. The "Cold War" resulted in ongoing competition for political support between the communist countries and those of the west (see Dockrill, M.L & Hopkins, M.F, 2006) and both parties engaged in a variety of actions to further their causes ( Gaddis, 2006).

In the early 1960s US authorities were receiving worrying reports about Soviet university students travelling to developing countries and providing expert assistance. The fear of more countries falling under Soviet influence drove the Americans into action and the US Peace Corps was formed in 1961 in order to win hearts and minds around the world. Within two years 7,300 volunteers were in the field serving in 44 countries from Afghanistan to Uruguay and by June 1966, more than 15,000 volunteers were working in the field, the largest number in the Peace Corps' history. Irrespective of the political agenda that lead to it, the founding of Peace Corps provided contemporary volunteer tourism with a blueprint of international expansion and involvement at a large

scale. Despite the Cold War, Volunteer Tourism found extra impetus in the economic boom between 1945 and 1973 which led to a rise in spare time and increased motivation to travel. The economic boom, the rise of social security and the reduction in working hours gave people the opportunity to seek self fulfilment and success in their spare time as well as at work (Rivlin, 1992). This change in attitude and goal setting meant that perspective volunteers were not prepared to settle for working in a camp to achieve a specific goal. Instead they began showing an inclination towards striving to expand their horizons and raise their levels of conscience. This change in volunteers' expectations meant that volunteer tourism had to transform in order to meet the new needs.

## **The Volunteer Tourism Market**

The desk study summarised in this paper does not claim to be representative of all organizations providing volunteer tourism experiences, however, it does aim to be comprehensive in terms of the proliferation of projects offered, the destinations promoted, the appeal to different types of volunteers, and the continuous segmentation and diversification which characterizes the market. The general aims are to explore the nature of the growth of volunteer tourism, the relationship between purpose of projects, their location and potential need, and the nature (origins, focus and status) of organisations offering volunteer tourism opportunities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Callannan and Thomas (2003) utilised the Volunteer Abroad database in their initial study on volunteer tourism, and the same source was used in this study, but for two different dates (2005 and 2007). Other data bases exist but Volunteer Abroad appears to be the most detailed and encompassing source of these organisations. The newly created data base contained the organization's name and contact details, the year of establishment and the founder as the basic information on each unit. In addition, details on each project were included, namely, name, nature, duration and location. Where it existed additional information on methods of operation was added including how volunteers were screened, if and how the organisation contributed to projects, and any additional services offered.



## **Volunteer Tourism Destinations and Assumptions**

The assumption that the number of projects offered to potential volunteers had increased greatly was supported as the data showed that the number of projects located in the ten countries which featured the most in the data base had increased from the 51 recorded for 2003 by Callanan and Thomas (2003) to 185 in 2005 and to 241 in 2007. It was decided to explore if the locations utilised reflected "need" for assistance as measured by the Human Development Score used by the United Nations. This was found not to be the case, with only 147 projects in the countries with the greatest need as so defined, while over 900 were located in countries with the least "need". When this aspect was examined in more detail to see if total aggregate need, involving population numbers revealed such a relationship, this was also found to be non-existent. Projects in India and China for example, were matched by similar numbers of projects in Costa Rica, Nepal and Ecuador. Clearly simple need on an average per capita basis or total need related to population was not related to location of projects.

## **Volunteer Tourism Products**

An examination of the Volunteer Abroad database revealed that some 995 projects did not meet the definition used in this study in that they either lasted longer than a year or included paid employment or internships. This left a total of 2,446 projects that met the criteria used in this research. These were then subdivided into nine categories, relating to the overall nature of the specific projects. They are summarised in Table 1 which shows the numbers of cases identified within each of these groups. Community welfare projects were the most numerous (805), followed by those relating to Teaching (572) and Environmental issues (502). The remainder were much less popular, with 236 in the Medical category, 131 in Cultural projects, and fewer than 100 in each of the other categories (Business Development 91, Building (54), Research (47) and Other (280).

Many projects were designed to support and improve the lives of local communities directly, and include working in orphanages, elderly homes or clinics for the disabled. Clearly the range and proliferation of community welfare related projects changes continuously but most organisations cite their projects as community development without making clear what the project entails. It is likely that community development and teaching top the list because of the limited investment in social services and weaknesses in the educational systems of the countries

listed and the ease with which many volunteers can fit into such a role. Increasing demand on such services is due to issues such as high population growth, conflict and resulting refugees, pandemics, and a shortage of qualified individuals for such work. Many organizations offer teaching qualifications (via TEFL tests) to volunteers before departure, giving them a qualification which may be useful on their return home.

**Table 1.** Project Groups and their Activities

<b>Group</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Total of Cases</b>
Community Welfare	Community Development Children Care Elderly Disability Peace Human Right/ Legal	805
Teaching	Teaching a Foreign Language Sports Coaching	572
Environmental	Nature Conservation Wildlife Protection Global Warming	502
Medical	Hospital Support Pandemic (HIV, Ebola) Support Drug Rehabilitation	236
Cultural	Arts Cultural Exchange Empowerment of Women Heritage Conservation Museum Support	131
Business Development	IT Support Accounting Support Farming/ Organic	91
Building	Construction Renovation Water Management	54
Research	Wildlife Monitoring Land-mapping/Zoning	47
Other/ Miscellaneous	Catastrophe Relief Olympic Games	28

*(Based on Callannan and Thomas, 2003)*

The third category, environmental projects, includes activities such as nature conservation activities like habitat protection and enhancement, and wildlife conservation. Those projects in the medical area include work in hospitals and clinics, not only actually assisting with medical treatment but also helping with post medical care and assistance programmes. What are defined as cultural projects deal mostly with strengthening and maintaining cultural aspects of societies, such as preservation of artistic forms and traditional celebrations and events, and can also include empowerment projects aimed specifically at women, with Afghanistan being a good example. This category also includes work on preserving and protecting heritage, particularly at archaeological sites and museums.

Business development and building projects are related, the former focusing mostly on assisting communities to develop support systems such as websites and training in marketing and accounting, and the latter category including more physical work involved with the construction and maintenance of features needed by communities, such as for water supply for human use and irrigation. Those volunteers on research projects generally are involved with scientific groups and provide assistance with tasks such as monitoring and measuring wildlife populations, indications of climate change, and in some cases, economic research.

The final category includes responses to disasters and sudden events, but there are few of these, partly because some projects will fall into the previous categories, and also because such relief and support is needed at extremely short notice, and volunteer organisations are unlikely to be able to assist in the necessary timescale.

The nature of the projects and their locations raise some potential issues. While India, a country with a low Human Development Score and a very large population has 186 projects, most of these in Community Welfare and Teaching (68 and 46 respectively), Costa Rica, with a lower score and a much smaller population has 135 projects, but with Environmental being the most popular category (55 projects). Ecuador has only one less project, again with Environmental being the most popular category (47 projects). It is perhaps legitimate to consider whether such a distribution is even remotely related to need or reflects, in the cases of Costa Rica and Ecuador, their reputations as ecotourism destinations. Many young people, who make up the majority of volunteer tourists, are "green" in outlook and likely to find ecotourism destinations both highly attractive and in tune with their attitudes towards the environment. There is also the question of whether the pattern of

distribution (demand) is being shaped by the volunteer organisations (the supply side of volunteer tourism) and if so, is it because such organisations find it easier and more rewarding to send volunteers to established ecotourism destinations in third world countries? This would suggest that volunteer tourism is moving from a predominant focus on assistance to communities in need to one serving both the altruistic and the hedonistic feelings of the potential volunteers. If this is the case then volunteer tourism is following the pattern of ecotourism in becoming "softer" and more pleasure focused than in its original form (Weaver 2001)

## **Volunteer Tourism Organizations**

The projects reviewed above were listed from 146 volunteer tourism organisations. The sheer number of such organisations reflects the great increase in popularity of volunteer tourism from its initial endeavours in the 1920s, when participation was highly individual, small in scale, and marked by an absence of promotion or marketing, or indeed, almost any assistance to potential volunteers. The change in scale is likely to have been mirrored by a change in motivation of those involved in providing opportunities for volunteers, and this is examined in the following section. The organisations reviewed range widely with respect to mission, nature of structure, size and experience in the field. It was decided to examine the characteristics of the leading forty organisations in terms of growth in recent years.

## **Foundations and Mission**

The importance of key individuals in the establishment of these organisations is revealed by the fact that just over half (26/40) were founded by individuals, as shown in Table 2. Beginning with Pierre Ceresole, who, as noted above, founded Service Civil International (SCI) in 1920, the pattern revealed is one dominated by western nation personalities. A considerable gap in time occurs after the first two organisations appeared, it is over three decades before another volunteer organisation is founded, (the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers) in 1959. Thereafter organisations began to appear at a more rapid rate. The decade of the 1980s saw a rapid increase in numbers of organisations established (13), and the 1990s saw even more (32) founded. In the last decade almost a third (46) of the 146 organisations were founded, reflecting the ongoing interest and involvement in this area.

**Table 2.** Organisations and Founders

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FOUNDERS</b>
Service Civil International	1920	Pierre Ceresole
Voluntary Service Overseas	1958	Alec and Mora Dickson
Operation Crossroads Africa	1958	Dr James Robinson
BTCV	1959	Brigadier Armstrong
Amigos de las Americas	1965	Guy Bevil
Earthwatch	1971	Max Nicholson
Volunteers for Peace	1982	Peter Coldwell
Global Volunteers	1984	Michel Gran and Bud Philbrook
World Teach	1986	Michael Kremer
Volunteer Adventures	1987	Jean-Marc Alberola
Projects Abroad	1992	Dr Peter Slowe
Greenforce	1992	Marcus Watts
Cross-Cultural Solutions	1997	Steve Rosenthal
Global Vision International	1998	Steve Gwenin
United Planet	1998	Charles F. Clarke
Helping Hand USA	1999	Mel W. Slavick and Frank Cook
Global Volunteers Network	2000	Colin Salisbury
Cosmic Volunteers	2000	Scott Burke
Right to Play	2001	Johan Olar Koss
Mondochallenge	2001	Anthony Lunch
i-to-i	2003	Deidre Bounds
Global Aware	2003	Haley Coleman
Global Youth Opportunity	2005	Michelle L. Anderson

These organisations vary greatly in terms of the number of countries they are working in, with the larger ones being active in around one hundred countries (Figure 2), while the largest group (46) work only in one country and another 40 organisations are present in between 11 and 20 countries. This variation may reflect small locally focused organisations being involved in their own country only, while the more international groups have contacts and projects around the world. Data do not exist to allow a comparison to be made between the number of countries in which organisations operate and the number of countries from which they draw volunteers.

There is also considerable variation among the organisations in terms of their financial position, whether, for instance, they claim charitable or

non-profit status or exist as commercial operations. The declared status of organisations is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Declared Status**

Status	Number of Organisations
Not for Profit	17
Operated by or working for non profit	6
Ethical NGO	6
Not Stated	6
Special Tour Operator	3
Charity	2

The actual status of a number of these organisations is not clear, only two claiming charitable status, which has many financial advantages as well as a very positive image. A number (6) declared themselves as "ethical NGOs", whatever that may mean, while six did not define a status. It is clear from the above that there is great inconsistency in the way that volunteer organisations describe themselves and a lack of clarity over their financial arrangements and status. In a volunteer environment, charitable and non-profit making status are noticeable strengths and attributes for an organisation to possess and make them more likely to attract volunteers than regular commercial profit-making enterprises. Most volunteers would appear to want any financial gains to accrue to the communities in which they are working rather than commercial organisations in First World countries. Despite the inconsistencies noted, it is significant that all companies stated that their pricing policies and businesses are operated on ethical grounds, an important fact given that prices and costs of volunteer holidays have raised concern amongst the media (Times 2008).

In terms of pricing, the proliferation and variety is again apparent with different organizations adopting different pricing strategies (Table 4). Starting with the cheapest projects, only one of the forty organizations examined offered volunteer projects for the price of a one-off application/membership fee. This fee was around \$500 US and it provided the opportunity to customers to choose another project without charge, as long as they wished to travel within the same year. There was also one organization that offered volunteer opportunities in return for a

\$1,500 US deposit, which participants could collect after completing their volunteer efforts.

**Table 4. Pricing Policy**

<b>Pricing Policy</b>	<b>Number of Organisations</b>
Fixed Price	25
Not Clear (Call back service)	10
No prices	3
Single Application Fee	1
Deposit	1

Three organizations refrained from disclosing any details about their volunteer opportunities. Instead they offered guidebooks for sale at prices ranging from \$ 30 to \$ 75. The vast majority of organizations, 25 out of 40, provided volunteer opportunities at a fixed rate with an all inclusive packaged deal format. The fee in general included project fee, volunteer coordination, accommodation, and administration expenses. These fees range from \$ 300 US to \$ 1,000 US per week depending on destination, project and of course the type of accommodation. Most do not include the cost of travelling to the location of the project.

**Table 5. Extras on Offer**

<b>Extra Options</b>	<b>Number of Organisations</b>
Extra Supplements	20
Not Stated (Call back service)	10
Academic Credit	8
No Extras	2

Adding to the price of volunteer participation are certain extras which participants can purchase at their own discretion (see Table 5). These extras vary from short excursions and city tours to safari experiences. A recent development in the field is the option of obtaining academic credit, from mainly US academic institutions. The cost of such an optional extra varies from organization to organization and university to university. There were 10 organizations that would not disclose any details of this

option on their website. Instead they offer a call-back service, perhaps in an attempt to utilize direct contact in recruiting new volunteers. It becomes apparent that ambiguity, uncertainty and proliferation exist in the pricing and packaging of most volunteer organizations. This may have certain implications in terms of the impact and contribution of the organizations to the destinations utilised.

## **Long Term Viability and Value**

The great range of charges, financial status, scale of operation and training required of volunteers raises questions about the benefits to communities from volunteer projects. There is no doubt that there are extremely valuable organisations that contribute a great deal, but equally there are other organisations that may be putting profit ahead of community benefit and be more concerned with providing volunteers with a holiday than with actually improving conditions in destinations communities. Those organisations that appear to have a clear mission and philosophy to international volunteering can, to some extent, be identified from their mission statements, their stated philosophies, and their requirements from and commitments to the volunteers they recruit. One such mission statement from Frontier Org. is a good example:

“Our conservation projects are established with the central aim of empowering local communities to manage their livelihoods sustainably, improving the overall quality of their lives and preventing over-use of their natural resources” (Frontier.org)

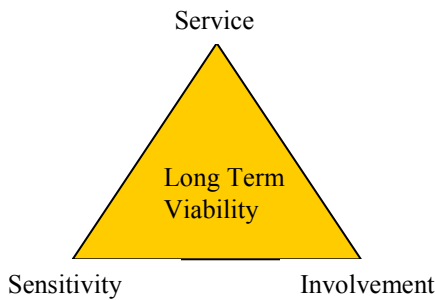
Statements from the International Volunteer Program Association (IVPA.org) make it clear that organisations should provide clear instructions to potential volunteers about what their role would be and what demands would be placed upon them. It is expected that organisations would offer a clear picture of their structure and what services are offered to volunteers such as instruction and preparation. The Association prescribes organisations to operate following four basic elements; these are sensitivity, service, involvement and long term viability (figure 3). This is in order to provide a satisfactory and safe experience to volunteers and to ensure the benefits of projects are maximised. In terms of sensitivity, this element is to ensure volunteers are culturally sensitive when in the field and can learn from their experience. Service ensures that volunteers are committed to provide appropriate and good service while working on their project. Involvement and long term viability are to maintain contact with volunteers on their return and to obtain feedback on their experiences and to enable projects to have long



term benefits to the communities involved, even after completion of specific tasks.

Such commitment to their project and their impact is underlined by the fact that these conservation efforts are part of longer term programmes which may last up to five years. This commitment to projects does not seem to affect prices, since Frontier.org are able to offer projects for the relatively low value of \$ 125 US per week (excluding flights).

**Figure 1. Elements of Good Price**



In order to ensure that volunteers have sufficient knowledge and sensitivity, it could be expected that most organisations would offer some level of training before putting volunteers in the field, however, as Table 6 shows, only 16 out of the 40 top organisations clearly offered training to volunteers. Such training might include teaching qualifications, PADI diving qualifications, and language training when locations are in non-English speaking countries, as are the majority of cases. The lack of clarity by the majority of organisations is disconcerting, some only offering pre-departure "briefing" after registration or open-day events, although the latter could be seen as more for recruitment than training purposes. The necessity of training will clearly vary with individual projects, in some cases it may not be necessary, on other cases, non-provision might be a means of reducing costs for the organisation.

Not all applicants are necessarily suitable as volunteers and there is some obligation on the organisations to ensure that people are appropriate to work on the various projects. Organisations would find it difficult to object on many grounds to potential participants and most welcome the majority of applicants if they are considered fit and able to do the necessary work. Letters from physicians may be required if the

work is highly physical, and age limits of 18-90 years seems general practice. Those under 18 normally require parental consent, but this is changing as more opportunities are being made available for family groups to participate. There is considerable variation in the detail of screening of potential volunteers undertaken by organisations which raises some possible problems. For example only a quarter (28%) of organisations surveyed makes background checks with respect to personal data, or more critical aspects such as police or criminal records.

**Table 6. Volunteer Training**

Training	Number of Organisations
Some sort of Training	16
Not Clear	24

In terms of gender, both male and female volunteers are welcome within generally mixed sex groups of volunteers. Members of the gay and lesbian communities appear to be welcome also, but organisations caution that in some destinations volunteers may need to keep a low profile. Looking at statistics provided by Peace Corps the profile of their volunteer participants shows 3/5 of their volunteers are female and 2/5 male. The average age of their participants is 27 years and the median is 25 years but 5 per cent of participants are over 50 years old with the oldest being 80 years of age. The vast majority of volunteers (93 percent) are single and only 7 percent are married. In terms of education, 95 percent of Peace Corps volunteers have at least an undergraduate degree, which suggests that their market is well educated people.

### **Financial Contribution Policy**

There is a certain hesitation about providing direct monetary support to communities or projects which might stem from the perceived discomfort related to former colonial stereotypes. Volunteer tourism organizations profess a non-handout-policy because, as they describe on their websites, they aim to create self-sufficient and sustainable projects in communities in need. On their website for example i-to-i stipulate that they avoid monetary handouts so that the projects:

“...do not become reliant on drip-fed financial aid for their continual existence” (i-to-i.com)

They argue that direct financial contributions can have a destabilising effect on the development and spirit of communities. They continue with their argument that in case their involvement ceases (“... the reasons can vary from an act of God, war, to a destination becoming less popular” (i-to-i.com)) then a once relied on source of income is instantly removed and some of the projects would collapse.

## Local Involvement

Another way the organizations can contribute indirectly to local communities is by providing employment for locals. This can empower the employees and create the right conditions for long term viability. As shown in Table 7, different organizations have different policies in terms of employment of locals. Over half (23) of the organizations made no explicit claims or statements on their website that they make sure they utilize local staff, while 9 organizations, even though they imply using staff on location they do not give any detailed information in terms of numbers or the nature of their employment.

**Table 7.** Employment of Locals

Employment	Number of Organisations
No Claims of Employment of Locals	23
Implicit Employment of Locals	9
Clear Employment of Locals	8

## CONCLUSION

It is impossible to overlook the role that individual initiative and business acumen has played in the development of structures and contemporary forms in volunteer tourism. Its transformation into a commercial business was probably inevitable due to the potential market appeal of volunteer tourism products. It could be argued that the mass-tourism model of packaging and segmentation now used in volunteer tourism was adopted because of its evident commercial success and popularity. Volunteer tourism has now been segmented and packaged into its contemporary form (see Ellis, 2003). Through purposefully designed websites volunteer organisations ensure that volunteers are portrayed as the archetype of a new kind of tourists who have compassion and empathy for the plight of the disadvantaged, the neglected, the

endangered and the needy, irrespective of species, situation or destination, an approach that has proven very successful.

As discussed earlier, a significant segment of the volunteer organization sector labels itself as non-profit. Yet the market is becoming more and more prolific with many organizations diversifying and offering various extras as part of the volunteering experience. Recently, there have been media calls for the volunteer organizations to stop charging large amounts of money for their services using the argument that where there is a need, volunteering and assisting should be free of charge. Volunteer Organizations now find themselves facing a dilemma as to which should be the way forward. The organizations can be viewed as being on a continuum in terms of their priorities between profit and altruism, with some being closer to one end in terms of their practices and others closer to the other. It can be argued that a similar continuum applies to the volunteer participants themselves. Volunteers have to balance their participation between altruistic sacrifice and hedonistic pursuits when selecting and participating in a volunteer project.

In conclusion, it is not possible at this point to determine the nature of the balance between supply and demand for volunteer tourism, and which sector is leading which. There has clearly been massive growth in the activity, but it cannot be stated whether this is due primarily to a genuine growth in numbers of people with altruistic or empathetic motives wishing to devote their holidays to worthy causes or due to effective and intensive marketing of volunteer holiday opportunities which allow well-meaning individuals to combine assistance to others with enjoyment and self-enhancement. The pattern has changed very greatly from the 1920s when volunteer tourism was essentially personally motivated and organised and more a case of doing-good in one's leisure time, to the 2000s when opportunities exist to have a holiday in a pleasant location and feel one is contributing to good causes. The balance has clearly shifted away from empathy towards hedonism and from altruism to profit. Whether the growth of volunteer tourism will continue, and the balance will swing back and if so, when remains to be seen.

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# TOURISMOS

*An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*

## AIMS & SCOPE

*TOURISMOS* is an international, multi-disciplinary, refereed (peer-reviewed) journal aiming to promote and enhance research in all fields of tourism, including travel, hospitality and leisure. The journal is published by the University of the Aegean (in Greece), and is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with different tourism sectors, both at macro and at micro level, as well as professionals in the industry. *TOURISMOS* provides a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, new research areas and techniques, conceptual developments, and articles with practical application to any tourism segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries. *TOURISMOS* aims at:

- Disseminating and promoting research, good practice and innovation in all aspects of tourism to its prime audience including educators, researchers, post-graduate students, policy makers, and industry practitioners.
- Encouraging international scientific cooperation and understanding, and enhancing multi-disciplinary research across all tourism sectors.

The scope of the journal is international and all papers submitted are subject to strict blind peer review by its Editorial Board and by other anonymous international reviewers. The journal features conceptual and empirical papers, and editorial policy is to invite the submission of manuscripts from academics, researchers, post-graduate students, policy-makers and industry practitioners. The Editorial Board will be looking particularly for articles about new trends and developments within different sectors of tourism, and the application of new ideas and developments that are likely to affect tourism, travel, hospitality and leisure in the future. *TOURISMOS* also welcomes submission of manuscripts in areas that may not be directly tourism-related but cover a



topic that is of interest to researchers, educators, policy-makers and practitioners in various fields of tourism.

The material published in *TOURISMOS* covers all scientific, conceptual and applied disciplines related to tourism, travel, hospitality and leisure, including: economics, management, planning and development, marketing, human resources, sociology, psychology, geography, information and communication technologies, transportation, service quality, finance, food and beverage, and education. Manuscripts published in *TOURISMOS* should not have been published previously in any copyright form (print or electronic/online). The general criteria for the acceptance of articles are:

- Contribution to the promotion of scientific knowledge in the greater multi-disciplinary field of tourism.
- Adequate and relevant literature review.
- Scientifically valid and reliable methodology.
- Clarity of writing.
- Acceptable quality of English language.

*TOURISMOS* is published twice per year (in Spring and in Autumn). Each issue includes the following sections: editorial, research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events.

## **JOURNAL SECTIONS**

### **Editorial**

The Editorial addresses issues of contemporary interest and provides a detailed introduction and commentary to the articles in the current issue. The editorial may be written by the Editor, or by any other member(s) of the Editorial Board. When appropriate, a “Guest Editorial” may be presented. However, *TOURISMOS* does not accept unsolicited editorials.

### **Research Papers**

For the Research Papers section, *TOURISMOS* invites full-length manuscripts (not longer than 6000 words and not shorter than 4000 words) from a variety of disciplines; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to strict blind peer review (by at least three anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate

Editors. The manuscripts submitted should provide original and/or innovative ideas or approaches or findings that eventually push the frontiers of knowledge. Purely descriptive accounts are not considered suitable for this section. Each paper should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

### **Case Studies**

Case Studies should be not longer than 3500 words and not shorter than 2500; these articles should be focusing on the detailed and critical presentation/review of real-life cases from the greater tourism sector, and must include - where appropriate - relevant references and bibliography. Case Studies should aim at disseminating information and/or good practices, combined with critical analysis of real examples. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of *TOURISMOS*. Each article should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the case to be examined and the aims and objectives of the article), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the presentation of the case study, the critical review of the case and relevant discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, and suggestions for further study), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices. All Case Studies are subject to blind peer review (by at least one anonymous referee). The decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor.

### **Research Notes**

Research Notes should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editors. The manuscripts submitted may present research-in-progress or my focus on the conceptual

development of models and approaches that have not been proven yet through primary research. In all cases, the papers should provide original ideas, approaches or preliminary findings that are open to discussion. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of *TOURISMOS*. Each paper should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

### **Book Reviews**

Book Reviews should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 1000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing books from the greater field of tourism. Most reviews should focus on new publications, but older books are also welcome for presentation. Book Reviews are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Book Reviews Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Books to be reviewed may be assigned to potential authors by the Book Reviews Editor, though *TOURISMOS* is also open to unsolicited suggestions for book reviews from interested parties.

### **Conference Reports**

Conference Reports should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing conferences from the greater field of tourism. Most reports should focus on recent conferences (i.e., conferences that took place not before than three months from the date of manuscript submission), but older conferences are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Conference Reports are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Conference Reports Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Conference reports may be assigned to potential authors by the Conference Reports Editor, though

*TOURISMOS* is also open to unsolicited suggestions for reports from interested parties.

### **Industry Viewpoints**

Industry Viewpoints should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 500; these articles may have a “commentary” form, and aim at presenting and discussing ideas, views and suggestions by practitioners (industry professionals, tourism planners, policy makers, other tourism stakeholders, etc.). Through these articles, *TOURISMOS* provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and for developing closer links between academics and practitioners. Most viewpoints should focus on contemporary issues, but other issues are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Industry Viewpoints are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editors. These articles may be assigned to potential authors by the editor, though *TOURISMOS* is also open to unsolicited contributions from interested parties.

### **Forthcoming Events**

Forthcoming Events should be not longer than 500 words; these articles may have the form of a “call of papers”, related to a forthcoming conference or a special issue of a journal. Alternatively, forthcoming events may have the form of a press release informing readers of *TOURISMOS* about an event (conference or other) related to the tourism, travel, hospitality or leisure sectors. These articles should not aim at promoting sales of any products or services. The decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken by the Editor.



# TOURISMOS

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## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

### Manuscript Submission Procedure

Manuscripts should be written as understandably and concisely as possible with clarity and meaningfulness. Submission of a manuscript to *TOURISMOS* represents a certification on the part of the author(s) that it is an original work and has not been copyrighted elsewhere; manuscripts that are eventually published may not be reproduced in any other publication (print or electronic), as their copyright has been transferred to *TOURISMOS*. Submissions are accepted only in electronic form; authors are requested to submit one copy of each manuscript by email attachment. All manuscripts should be emailed to the Editor-in-Chief (Prof. Paris Tsartas, at [ptsar@aegean.gr](mailto:ptsar@aegean.gr)), and depending on the nature of the manuscript submissions should also be emailed as follows:

- Conference reports should be emailed directly to the Conference Reports Editor (Dr. Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi), at [v.moutafi@sa.aegean.gr](mailto:v.moutafi@sa.aegean.gr).
- Book reviews should be emailed directly to the Book Reviews Editor (Dr. Marianna Sigala), at [m.sigala@aegean.gr](mailto:m.sigala@aegean.gr).
- Full papers and all other types of manuscripts should be emailed directly to the Associate Editor (Dr. Evangelos Christou), at [e.christou@aegean.gr](mailto:e.christou@aegean.gr).

Feedback regarding the submission of a manuscript (including the reviewers' comments) will be provided to the author(s) within six weeks of the receipt of the manuscript. Submission of a manuscript will be held to imply that it contains original unpublished work not being considered for publication elsewhere at the same time. Each author of a manuscript accepted for publication will receive three complimentary copies of the issue, and will also have to sign a "transfer of copyright" form. If appropriate, author(s) can correct first proofs. Manuscripts submitted to *TOURISMOS*, accepted for publication or not, cannot be returned to the author(s).

## **Manuscript Length**

Research Papers should be not longer than 6000 words and not shorter than 4000. Research Notes should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000. Case Studies should be not longer than 3500 words and not shorter than 2500. Book Reviews should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 1000. Conference Reports should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000. Industry Viewpoints should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 500. Forthcoming Events should be not longer than 500 words. Manuscripts that do not fully conform to the above word limits (according to the type of the article) will be automatically rejected and should not be entered into the reviewing process.

## **Manuscript Style & Preparation**

- All submissions (research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events) must have a title of no more than 12 words.
- Manuscripts should be double-line spaced, and have at least 2,5 cm (one-inch) margin on all four sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
- The use of footnotes within the text is discouraged – use endnotes instead. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum, be used to provide additional comments and discussion, and should be numbered consecutively in the text and typed on a separate page at the end of the article.
- Quotations must be taken accurately from the original source. Alterations to the quotations must be noted. Quotation marks (“ ”) are to be used to denote direct quotes. Inverted commas (‘ ’) should denote a quote within a quotation. If the quotation is less than 3 lines, then it should be included in the main text enclosed in quotation marks. If the quotation is more than 3 lines, then it should be separated from the main text and indented.
- The name(s) of any sponsor(s) of the research contained in the manuscript, or any other acknowledgements, should appear at the very end of the manuscript.
- Tables, figures and illustrations are to be included in the text and to be numbered consecutively (in Arabic numbers). Each table, figure or illustration must have a title.

- The text should be organized under appropriate section headings, which, ideally, should not be more than 500-700 words apart.
- The main body of the text should be written in Times New Roman letters, font size 12.
- Section headings should be written in Arial letters, font size 12, and should be marked as follows: primary headings should be centred and typed in bold capitals and underlined; secondary headings should be typed with italic bold capital letters; other headings should be typed in capital letters. Authors are urged to write as concisely as possible, but not at the expense of clarity.
- The preferred software for submission is Microsoft Word.
- Authors submitting papers for publication should specify which section of the journal they wish their paper to be considered for: research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events.
- Author(s) are responsible for preparing manuscripts which are clearly written in acceptable, scholarly English, and which contain no errors of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Neither the Editorial Board nor the Publisher is responsible for correcting errors of spelling or grammar.
- Where acronyms are used, their full expression should be given initially.
- Authors are asked to ensure that there are no libellous implications in their work.

## Manuscript Presentation

For submission, manuscripts of research papers, research notes and case studies should be arranged in the following order of presentation:

- *First page:* title, subtitle (if required), author's name and surname, affiliation, full postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Respective names, affiliations and addresses of co-author(s) should be clearly indicated. Also, include an abstract of not more than 150 words and up to 6 keywords that identify article content. Also include a short biography of the author (about 50 words); in the case of co-author(s), the same details should also be included. All correspondence will be sent to the first named author, unless otherwise indicated.
- *Second page:* title, an abstract of not more than 150 words and up to 6 keywords that identify article content. Do not include the author(s) details, affiliation(s), and biographies in this page.



- *Subsequent pages*: the paper should begin on the third page and should not subsequently reveal the title or authors. In these pages should be included the main body of text (including tables, figures and illustrations); list of references; appendixes; and endnotes (numbered consecutively).
- The author(s) should ensure that their names cannot be identified anywhere in the text.

## Referencing Style

In the text, references should be cited with parentheses using the “author, date” style - for example for single citations (Ford, 2004), or for multiple citations (Isaac, 1998; Jackson, 2003). Page numbers for specific points or direct quotations must be given (i.e., Ford, 2004: 312-313). The Reference list, placed at the end of the manuscript, must be typed in alphabetical order of authors. The specific format is:

- *For journal papers*: Tribe, J. (2002). The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.29, No.2, pp.338-357.
- *For books and monographs*: Teare, R. & Ingram, H. (1993). *Strategic Management: A Resource-Based Approach for the Hospitality and Tourism Industries*. London, Cassell.
- *For chapters in edited books*: Sigala, M. and Christou, E. (2002). Use of Internet for enhancing tourism and hospitality education: lessons from Europe. In K.W. Wober, A.J. Frew and M. Hitz (Eds.) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, Wien: Springer-Verlag.
- *For papers presented in conferences*: Ford, B. (2004). Adoption of innovations on hospitality. *Paper presented at the 22nd EuroCHRIE Conference*. Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey: 3-7 November 2004.
- *For unpublished works*: Gregoriades, M. (2004). The impact of trust in brand loyalty, *Unpublished PhD Tourismos*. Chios, Greece: University of the Aegean.
- *For Internet sources (if you know the author)*: Johns, D. (2003) The power of branding in tourism. [Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456](http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456). Accessed the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2005, at 14:55. (note: always state clearly the full URL of your source).
- *For Internet sources (if you do not know the author)*: Tourism supply and demand. [Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-](http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-)

authors/id3456. Accessed the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2004, at 12:35. (note: always state clearly the full URL of your source).

- *For reports:* Edelstein, L. G. & Benini, C. (1994). *Meetings and Conventions*. Meetings market report (August), 60-82.