

Developmental Trajectory of the American Yacht Clubs: Using Temporal-Spatial Analysis and Regression Model

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ABSTRACT

The yacht industry is one of the leading industries used to guide residents' increase in consumption. This study analyzes the evolving spatial pattern of yacht clubs in the United States from 1900-2017, aiming to explore the developmental trajectory of yacht clubs in the United States. This study finds that: 1) Yacht clubs in the United States clustered aggregately and unevenly. The concentration of yacht clubs ranges from the northeastern part of the United States to the western and southern regions. 2) The driving factors influencing the development of yacht clubs in the United States changed along with time. The state ship and boat building industry was the main driving factor in Phase I (before 1900). The state steel industry was the main driver in Phase II (1900-1950). In Phase III (1950-2000), state tourism GDP became the main driver, and in Phase IV (2000-2017), state GDP and state ocean tourism and recreation GDP became the main factors. This study enriches the literature in the area of yacht tourism in terms of understanding the temporal-spatial pattern of yacht clubs.

KEYWORDS

Arc GIS, Driving Factors, Temporal-Spatial Pattern, Yacht Clubs

INTRODUCTION

The yacht industry is a collection of high-value-added industries, which not only guides residents to upgrade their consumption (Chen & Shu, 2013), but also boosts the regional economy by means of yacht manufacturing, marina construction, yacht maintenance and construction of tourism supporting facilities (Cheng et al., 2013; Wang, 1999). Based on the data from the International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA), yacht sales reached \$40 billion (USD) in 2018, and the related maintenance industry yielded an even greater \$50 billion worldwide (ICOMIA, 2019). In particular, yacht consumption has been always at the core position of the yacht industry. Sales of yachts are prevalent in developed countries. On average, the number of yachts per capita has reached about 30 people/yacht, and the proportion is even as high as 15 people/yacht in certain developed countries (Cruise & Yacht Branch of China Transportation Association, 2017). In academia, yacht tourism is the crucial context to understand and improve yacht consumption for local communities (SEVINÇ & GÜZEL, 2017; Sezer, 2012). The history of yacht tourism growth in developed countries can be traced back to the 1960s, and its expansion has entered an advanced stage (Paker & Vural, 2016).

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Extant online research on yacht tourism in developed countries mainly focuses on issues about impacts of yacht tourism (Alcover et al., 2011; İçemer et al., 2011; MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018; Roma et al., 2019; Stoll et al., 1988), business models of yacht companies (Battistella et al., 2018; Sherman et al., 2008), personnel development, and evaluation in yacht companies (Cha et al., 2013; Koenigsfeld et al., 2012; Paker & Gök, 2021; Sari et al., 2016; Yorulmaz & Sevinc, 2021), tourists' yacht tourism experience (Lam González et al., 2015; Mikulić et al., 2015; Tseng et al., 2009). However, research on the antecedents for yacht tourism development at a regional level seems to be less discussed.

In developing countries, yacht tourism developed around the 1990s, but its growth rate remains at a relatively low level. For example, the first yacht club established in Shenzhen, China was in 1987, but there were only six yacht clubs in Shenzhen, China by 2019 (Yuboinfo, 2020). According to the National Association of Manufacturers (NMMA), yacht consumption is a natural demand that will emerge when per capita GDP grows to around \$3,000 USD per year (Hopkins, 2009). However, the state of yacht tourism in developing countries is highly inconsistent with the country's economic level. For example, per capita GDP in mainland China has exceeded USD \$10,000 in 2019, while some coastal provinces and cities, where the yacht industry is mainly based, have exceeded USD \$20,000 (Yao & Luan, 2018). But the total number of yachts in mainland China was only about 6,000 in 2017 (Cruise & Yacht Branch of China Transportation Association, 2017). As such, how to develop yacht tourism remains a paramount issue needed to be addressed in several developing countries (Navarro & Jones, 2022; Cruise & Yacht Branch of China Transportation Association, 2017; Paker & Vural, 2016; Sariisik et al., 2011). Growing academic attention in developing countries has been paid to status analysis and policy/strategy-making to support the development of yacht tourism (Hua, 2004; Sariisik et al., 2011; Wang & Feng, 2005; Wen & Tian, 2013; Yao & Luan, 2017, 2018). For instance, based on the experience of developing yacht tourism in developed countries, Sariisik et al. (2011) applied a SWOT analysis to discuss the development situation in Turkey and proposed strategies to improve the situation. Wen and Tian (2013) applied Potter's diamond model to analyze the structure of yacht tourism industry chain in Hong Kong and proposed suggestions for the Hainan province on how to develop yacht tourism. A large number of scholars suggest the factors that influence the development of yacht tourism, such as natural conditions (water area) (Sariisik et al., 2011; Wang, 2007; Yao & Luan, 2018), economic conditions (population, GDP, industrial support, etc.) (Cai & Niu, 2010; Yao & Luan, 2018), shipbuilding industry and the number of inbound tourists (Yao & Luan, 2018). However, many scholars call for more academic efforts to enrich the body of knowledge of yacht tourism, especially on the ways to develop yacht tourism industry (Levinska, 2015).

Spatial analysis helps to reveal the characteristics that may be neglected without the visualization process, in turn, to generate new knowledge (Demsar, 2009; Fotheringham & Rogerson, 2009; Waller, 2009). Spatial analysis is a technique of spatial data analysis about the location and morphological characteristics of geographic subjects (Fotheringham & Rogerson, 2009; Wang et al., 2000). In terms of yacht tourism, few works have attempted to delineate the spatial pattern of elements in such an industry (Sidman & Fik, 2005; Yao & Luan, 2018). Yao and Luan (2018) analyzed the spatial distribution of 117 yacht clubs in China and found that the distribution of Chinese yacht clubs was mainly concentrated in the three major economic zones of China. As such, understanding the temporal-spatial pattern of yacht clubs contributed to enriching the body of knowledge of yacht tourism.

Generally, the scale of yacht industry in the United States ranked the first in the world. In 2017, there were about 19 thousand yacht sales and manufacturing enterprises in the U.S., yielding about \$95.8 billion (USD), in which, yacht sales accounted for 32.2%, yacht tourism for 21.9%, and related added-value for 45.9% (ICOMIA, 2019). As such, the United States acted as a benchmark in terms of yacht tourism development. Based on spatial analysis and regression model, this study aims to answer two questions: 1) what's the temporal-spatial pattern of yacht clubs in the United States? 2) What are the driving factors for the development of yacht clubs in the United States? And it provides suggestions for developing countries to improve their policy or strategy making in terms of yacht tourism development.

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