

Chapter 32

Mechanisms for the Formation of Tourism Organization Models in Greece Through a Comparative Analysis of Ten Greek Destinations’ Development

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ABSTRACT

The scope of the chapter is to research and interpret how the organization models of tourism development have advanced in Greece at traditional, mainly coastal, tourist destinations. Using the notion of organization models, the chapter examines the size and category of tourism facilities and a series of qualitative characteristics, as well as the spatial “behavior” of the phenomenon.

INTRODUCTION

The scope of the chapter is to research and interpret how the organization models of tourism development have advanced in Greece at traditional, mainly coastal, tourist destinations¹. Using the notion of organization models, the chapter examines the size and category of tourism facilities and a series of qualitative characteristics, as well as the spatial “behavior” of the phenomenon.

The chapter proceeds as follows: the introduction pinpoints the special structural characteristics of the Greek touristic space. Firstly, I propose a method of operational analysis for the development of a destination, connected to relevant examples drawn from the international bibliography² and experience³, which are adapted to the Greek case. Next, I examine the implementation of the comparative analysis framework overtime on 10 selected Greek destinations. Then, I critically analyze the main factors and

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mechanisms that have influenced the tourism organization models in the examined areas. Finally, after drawing some basic conclusions, I briefly present the trends and the new issues arising in the current period 2010- 2014, which coincides with the economic crisis.

The period of study of the phenomenon begins in the 1960s, when the most areas under analysis started developing tourism, and it ends in 2010. The choice of an evolutionary approach for the phenomenon has led to selecting traditional – coastal in their majority- destinations that have passed through successive stages of development and today they are at a stage of maturity. Moreover, many of the selected cases represent a significant part of the Greek touristic space that has not been extensively studied: “minor” destinations that have a non-industrial tourism development model. These cases represent at their totality a large part of the Greek touristic space.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE GREEK TOURISTIC SPACE

The Greek touristic space has some special building structural characteristics: the dominance of small land properties and of an indigenous “artisanal” model of tourism development. This refers to the characteristics of the organization (small family units, low percentage of specialization, pluriactivity). These are features which are directly interrelated, since, at a local level, property affects directly tourism development. The average size of the total accommodation capacity (any type of accommodation) in Greece is only 31 beds, when in Turkey it is 200 beds, in Portugal 138 beds, in Cyprus 102 beds and in Italy 47 beds⁴. The average size hotel capacity in Greece is very small, at 76 beds/ 40 rooms, and it should be noted that 50% of hotel beds belongs to units of up to 50 beds, while units of more than 400 beds represent only 10.7% of the total beds in Greece⁵.

THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS OF A DESTINATION’S EVOLUTION

In the article I examine tourist destination as part of the touristic space, the analysis of which may be understood only in connection to the conditions that prevail in the origin and destination areas (external influence factors), as well as to its natural, cultural, economic and political environment (internal influence factors). In the article I assume that the life cycle model of the tourist product, defined by Butler in 1980⁶, may be used as the basis for a descriptive framework to illustrate the destinations’ evolution.

A complex operational framework was used to meet the needs of the study, which refers to the international experience and is adapted to the specific features of the Greek space: It examines the transition to the successive *stages of development* (volume of tourism activity) and at the same time but separately, the change of the *organization models of tourism activity* (size, category and elements of organization of tourism businesses), by connecting, at the same time, such changes to the mechanisms that formed them.

Analysis Indicators and Criteria

In order to approach and describe the transition of the selected Greek destinations to the different successive stages of development and to illustrate the life cycle curve, I used the rate of alteration of hotel beds as an indicator⁷. The change of different stages was interpreted on the basis of mechanisms that

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