

Chapter 6

Are New Cartographies Strengthening a Sustainable and Responsible Island Tourism?

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry through interaction with information and communication technologies is being strongly influenced and transformed rapidly. Spatial information in the form of novel smart web maps can become a significant factor in documenting the identity of tourist destinations. As geoinformatics and cartography evolve, they can play a substantial role in promoting the tourist destination and eventually, sustainable tourism development for the region, which is required by all stakeholders. In its first part, the chapter discusses the current tourism model and the necessity for sustainable management. In this framework, it then delves into the role of new cartographies and the use of maps in official tourist platforms for popular island tourist destinations in Mediterranean Sea, as well as the requirements of new tourists according to new cartographic trends. The aim of the chapter is to highlight the current and potential contribution of new cartographies to a sustainable and responsible tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

Through smart technologies, new applications are constantly being developed, improving access to information and services, contributing to decision making for the choice of destination and travel planning, even individually, to areas that may have been unknown a few years ago. The rapid growth of tourism

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and the high demands of the modern responsible traveller, impose a smart management of the tourist destination, which ensures the sustainable development on one hand and the optimal satisfaction of the visitors on the other. The protection of destinations from the undesired impact of uncontrolled tourism development necessitates appropriate management of tourist areas with essential sustainability criteria, as well as design strategies combined with modern data, tools and trends.

Sustainable tourism development is being studied and promoted by the academic community and all stakeholders, through the formulation of definitions, goals, guidelines and actions. Taking into consideration the high numbers of tourist arrivals of the last decade, and the potential negative impacts of over tourism on destinations and local communities, the necessity for sustainable tourism management is getting more and more essential. At the same time, the profile of new tourists evolves, influenced by the wealth of information available online, following new trends and requirements.

As spatial information, cartography and maps had always played a significant role in planning a trip and getting to know the destination, it is interesting to investigate the current role of the online map products of New Cartography that are available to users/potential tourists.

In this context, there are several important questions to answer, such as: “To what extent digital maps are used to present and promote tourist destinations?”, “To what extent new tourists use online maps to choose a destination and organize a trip?”, and “To what extent are tourists satisfied with the available spatial/cartographic information online?” The chapter focuses on Mediterranean islands- well known tourist destinations- in order to find answers to such questions. Additionally, another objective of the chapter is to investigate the presence of the concept of “sustainability” or “responsibility” in the presentation of Mediterranean island tourist destinations, as well as, the level of awareness of new travellers regarding these concepts.

The chapter is organized in four sections. Section one provides definitions and discussions for tourism development and new trends. Section two, presents the main focus of the chapter and the methodology. This section also includes: (a) the findings of a survey for the requirements of new tourists, regarding online map content and the level of awareness of sustainability as a concept, and (b) the results of a research study regarding the presence and the quality of maps published in official touristic platforms of Mediterranean Islands. Finally in sections three and four, future research directions and conclusion are presented.

BACKGROUND

This section provides definitions and topics for the modern model of tourism development according to new trends and requirements. Smart tourism and new tourists are defined according to relevant research publications. Additionally, New Cartography is briefly discussed in order to clarify its conceptual approach and content to the readers. To our knowledge, there is no literature on the current role of New Cartography in official destination platforms. Lastly, the high numbers of tourist arrivals in Mediterranean Islands -famous as tourist destinations- are presented in addition with brief tourism typology of these Islands, so as to highlight the necessity of sustainable approach of tourism development in these regions, due to their limited area and resources.

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