



## HISTORICAL SUMMATIONS AS A COMPONENT ELEMENT IN THE FORMATION OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN DODECANESSE

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### ABSTRACT

Tourist attractions are considered as the fundamental elements of the tourist product. However, until today, few efforts have been made for their scientific approach and implementation in the various sectors of tourist activity. A review of the research methods, that have been developed and used internationally to study and estimate regional tourist attractions, reveals that most studies can be classified in the framework of three methodological approaches: The ideographic, the organic and the cognitive approach of attractions. Each of the above methodological approaches results in some specific classifications concerning the nature and the typology of tourist attractions. Based on the methodological framework of the approaches used worldwide to evaluate tourist attractions and define their structure, an effort of experimental implementation (case study) was undertaken in the region of Dodecanese, which is one of the most touristic Greek regions attracting the interest of international tourism, mainly due to its cultural goods and, in particular, its historical elements that are connected with the historical heritage which constitutes its cultural infrastructure. The aim of this paper is to establish the cognitive definition of cultural tourism and its evolution through international organizations, the institutional framework concerning tourism and culture, the quantitative and qualitative determination of the tourist product of Dodecanese and its connection with the general features of the region as well as its interaction with the natural and human environment.

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**KEYWORDS:** Ideographic approach, organic approach, cognitive approach, Piperoglou, Ferratio, Britton

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## THE MEANING OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

It is widely accepted that without tourist attractions there would not be any tourism, but at the same time without tourism there would not be any tourist attractions. Regardless of the tautology, a scientific subject has been internationally developed regarding, not only the fundamental meaning of tourist attractions, but also the attractiveness of the tourist regions, which are based on the component elements of the attractions.

The up to now efforts are restricted mainly to the definition of the meaning of "tourist attraction" as "resources" that can be utilized (Ferrario 1976), as commercial "products" (Wahab *et al.*, 1976), as "images" (WTO 1980a, 1980b), or as simple local "characteristics" or "features" (Polacek and Aroch 1984).

The attractions are elements, which exist in the environment of the region towards which the tourists are directed, and which work – both alone and combined – as the initial motive for tourist visits. These elements include:

- *Natural attractions*, such as the landscape, the sea, the beaches and the climate.
- *Constructed attractions*, such as a historical city (e.g. Paris, London, Rome), or a new city in the newly constructed recreation centers (e.g. Orlando, Florida) or in recreation regions (e.g. regions of integrated tourist development, such as Languedoc Roussillon in France), or in an expanded region with especially constructed tourist attractions, such as the regions of industrial heritage in United Kingdom or the thematic parks (especially in U.S.A. and Japan).
- *Cultural attractions*, such as theaters, museums, historical summations and folklore, many of which are often organized as festivals and expositions.

- *Social attractions*, which are regarded as opportunities to meet the local population of the tourist destination and, to some extent, acquire experience from their lifestyle.

Most researchers agree that the attractions are basic elements, based on which tourism is developed (Gunn 1979, 1980; Lundberg 1980; Pearce 1981).

Tourist attractions are composed of all those elements, which a foreign place may include and which attract travelers and drive them away from their homes. Most of the times, these places have an extreme natural beauty, so that someone can observe the natural environment or engage in certain activities or gain experiences. However, sometimes, the differentiation between attractions and non attractions is difficult. The transportation (e.g. cruises), the accommodation (e.g. hotels) and other services (e.g. restaurants) may become characteristics of an attraction and make the distinction between different sectors of tourist industry difficult.

Typologies constitute an instrument of analysis for the dynamic social relations, their kernel is the tourist, and they function as broad notional frameworks of the dual relation "tourist – travel".

McCannell (1976) suggests that an attraction should consist of three elements: a tourist, a place as tourist destination, and a symbol or an image which makes the place important. Actually, these elements contribute so that something is regarded as tourist attraction. If the term is broadly defined, one could include not only the historical places, the entertainment centers and the phantasmagoric scenes, but also the services and the infrastructure which cover the everyday needs of tourists.

Although the importance of tourist attractions is easily recognized, tourist researchers do not have yet come to a full agreement regarding the nature of the

attractions as a phenomenon in the environment as well as in the tourist's conscience.

The whole spectrum of theoretical approaches about tourist attractions, as well as the different categories / typologies developed, are presented below in summary. However, the review of theoretical approaches is the first step for the understanding of the structure of tourist attractions as a whole and their further empirical utilization.

## **THEORETICAL APPROACHES OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

Tourist research uses three main approaches in order to define tourist attractions (Lew 1987):

The *ideographic approach* describes the types, the organization and the development of tourist attractions.

The *organic approach* focuses on the spatial, the capacity and the temporal nature of tourist attractions.

The *cognitive approach* studies tourists' opinions and experiences regarding attractions of different groups.

Each theoretical approach includes categories, types, kinds, and features of tourist attractions. The aim of research for tourist attractions as well as of the whole structure of typologies developed is to clearly define and group the general characteristics of the attractions and, if possible, to quantitatively estimate them and use them in empirical analysis.

The existing specific examples of each theoretical approach clarify the differences among them and provide a general methodological framework which can be used in an empirical level.

### **THE IDEOGRAPHIC APPROACH**

The typologies of tourist attractions which are based on the ideographic approach describe in detail the uniqueness of a tourist place. More specifically, in these typologies, the attractions are identified only by their

names (Pitts and Woodside 1986; Woodside *et al.*, 1986). The nominal list of certain tourist attractions is often used in the studies of small regions or towns.

The various typologies developed in the framework of the ideographic approach do not aim in covering the whole spectrum of tourist attractions. There are various subcategories or typologies of tourist attractions of the ideographic type, which are usually ignored (i.e., shops, resorts, central areas of cities, athletic events, outdoors entertainment and cruising activities).

Some of the most characteristic examples of the ideographic approach are those developed by Ferrario (1976), Gearing *et al.* (1976), Ritchie and Zinns (1978), the World Tourism Organization (1980a).

Ritchie and Zinns' typology is typical of the ideographic approach and permits the objective comparison of one tourist destination to another according to the contents of the attractions.

Schmidt (1979) distinguished different kinds of attractions based on characteristics, which made them unique and therefore interesting for the tourists. At the beginning, he divided tourist attractions in five different types based on their geographical, social, cultural, technological or intellectual characteristics. These main ideographic categories were further divided into subcategories which were related to the origin, the destination and the changes. This typology was invented in order to explain the reason why certain places (regions) attract tourists.

Researchers have developed various comprehensive typologies, so that every possible tourist attraction can be classified. This variety of typologies shows, in a way, an arbitrary methodology. A review in the number of ideographic typologies shows that tourist attractions are mainly distinguished either by natural origin, or by human origin. This distinction is the only clear one, and it was expressed by typologies suggested by Grabum (1977), though this basic

classification has been invented by Gunn (1979). Most ideographic typologies are based on this distinction, however, they have natural and human attractions further divided into different categories.

### **THE ORGANIC APPROACH**

The organic approach is a different research approach, which is focused on the spatial, capacity and temporal characteristics of tourist attractions.

More specifically, spatial typologies emphasize the spatial differences that exist among the attractions that are interactively developed. As far as the magnitude is concerned, the smaller attractions have a bigger differentiation and a smaller correlation. However, this is not valid for the attraction's market, where options such as publicity (a comparing measurement) and rumor (cognitive approach) are regarded more important. The spatial typologies place more emphasis on the internal organization of the attraction. The temporal typologies focus on the organic influence of time, expressing it in terms of the timing an event takes place and the time a visitor spends for that event.

In the organic approach, the classification scale of the attraction's spatial characteristics is based on the magnitude of the region where the attraction is located (Hills and Lundgren 1977; World Tourism Organization 1980a). For instance, a spatial hierarchy regarding attractions may range from the smallest spatial element (place) to a region or a country or a continent (Pearce 1982). The examination of the scale can be realized through the organization of the attractions, their relation to the other attractions and the relationship of attractive images to the attractions themselves. Studies of this scale are important in the marketing plan of tourism.

The capacity of a tourist attraction is related to its spatial scale. The spatial magnitude of an attraction, however, may have small relation to its capacity to accept a big number of tourists. Apart from what is desired, other factors that can influence the capacity of

an attraction are the availability of services (accommodation, food, market, entertainment, etc.), the attraction's sensitivity, the level of education and technological development, as well as the social and political support of tourism. (Rodenberg 1980).

The organization and the development of an attraction are influenced both by its spatial dimension and by the notions of "permanent" and "change". This is obvious in the distinction between "temporary" and "permanent" attractions.

### **THE COGNITIVE APPROACH**

The study of tourists' opinions and experiences regarding attractions is the third main approach in tourist attractions research. The cognitive approach is often found combined with categories / typologies of the ideographic approach.

Pearce (1982) defines the tourist place as "whichever place creates a feeling of being a tourist". A way to understand this feeling is through the contrast of "interiorization" and "exteriorization". One of the tourist's aims is to reach the interior or the background of the attraction in order to be able to feel the genuineness of the place. For tourists, moving towards genuineness presupposes the undertaking of a risk. The examination of cognitive typologies shows that the extent to which tourists are willing and able to take a risk is a basic indicator of the general experiences which are offered by the different kinds of attractions.

Every environment has elements of safety and danger. This distinction is useful in order to understand the cognitive approach. Tourist attractions can be furthermore distinguished in those, whose initial aim is the tourists, and those, which are not specifically designed for them (Schmidt 1979). Tourists are, by definition, foreign to the tourist destination and tend to focus on safety and minimize risk. Therefore, safe tourist attractions are often found in non genuine and, to a great extent, well-structured environments, where tourists

are attracted by the image promoted or advertised and not by the direct experience of the place.

McCannell (1976) refers to this fact using the term "marker involvement", because the tourist is more interested in the label that has been attributed to the attraction rather than in the attraction itself. The attractions which are not directed to the tourists present a greater risk, are less structured and are more genuine in general. The tourist's interest is stimulated by the sightseeing itself. In this case, the experience is the "sight involvement", where what someone actually sees and feels is not involved with what someone should see. Many amazing natural landscapes and cultural places are examples where "sight involvement" prevails over "marker involvement".

### **INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FROM THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

The structure of tourist attractions can be applied in various ways on national or regional planning as well as on the study of the image of a tourist destination. The international experience includes four studies, which are characteristic examples of the tourist attractions' theoretical framework application.

#### **PIPEROGLOU'S STUDY**

Piperoglou's study (1966), estimates tourist attractions of Western Greece following the steps presented below:

- Definition of three kinds of attractions: "Ancient Greece", "Picturesque Villages and Islands" and "Sea and Sun".
- A case study with tourists, in order to define their preferences for each attraction.
- An evaluation of the attractions, in order to define their "uniqueness".
- Location of the attractions on the map, in order to define which one had better access.

- Setting priorities for development, based on the total value of each region.

Although the study includes elements from all the three approaches, Piperoglou placed more emphasis on organic measures, using many of them. However, he also placed emphasis on the value such measures gain due to the fact, that they are the key factors according to which local attractions are evaluated.

#### **FERRARIO'S STUDY**

Ferrario (1976) estimates the tourist attractions of South Africa with the following methodological steps:

- Definition of 22 kinds of attractions (most of the categories come from the ideographic approach). Their further division into 51 classes, which were subdivided even more. All the nine categories of the ideographic approach were included.
- A study about tourist demand for the 22 basic kinds of attractions (*combining type, evaluation type*). Basically, this was used for the classification of different kinds of attractions.
- Definition of the fame of different kinds of attractions (*combining type, evaluation type*). This is based on the frequency with which each specific kind of attraction is mentioned in a number of tourist guides. This was a kind of special judgement, which attributed weights on the preferences identified by the tourist case study.
- A study with specialists' opinions regarding access to the specific attractions, which was measured taking into consideration: a) *Seasonality (organic opinion, temporal characteristic)*. b) *Preservation (organic thought, spatial characteristic)*. This criterion is mainly associated with the sensitivity of the

attraction or its ability to endure a big number of visitors. c) Popularity (*combining type, evaluation type*). This is based on the number of visits. d) Access to the nearest city (*organic opinion, spatial characteristic*). e) Existence of an entrance or an entrance control (*organic opinion, spatial characteristic*). f) Importance (*combining type, evaluation type*).

- Definition of tourism feasibility (*combining type, evaluation type*) for the 2,365 attractions, based on a formula which uses all the aforementioned measures. In this case, numerical values permit direct comparison among the attractions' categories based on different opinions.
- Placement of these values on the map and introduction of the importance of integration (*organic opinion, spatial characteristic*). The integration of attractions with low mobility was appreciated less in relation to the remote but basic attractions.
- Definition of the basic regions or groups of attractions and proposals for their development (*combining type, evaluation type*). The regions were identified on the basis of the comparative numerical values resulting from the steps 5 and 6 above. These values do not represent kinds of attractions, however, they permit comparisons of the total attractiveness between two places.

The aim of Ferrario's study was the same with that of Piperoglou's. In other words, both were aiming in estimating the possible future development of tourist attractions and their groups.

### **BRITTON'S STUDY**

In his study, Britton (1979) examines the issues used to promote a picture of the Third World as a tourist destination. Via the misleading advertisement for the Caribbean, six main issues were identified. These issues

and their relationship to the suggested structure of attractions include:

- Demystification and imagination, according to which the places are presented as paradises – intact and exotic (*ideographic opinion, mainly categories of Nature and of Human-Nature Interaction*). Most ideographic categories can be readjusted, so that they match to this schema, though the characteristics of urban lifestyle belong to the issue of Romanticism. The Cognitive Opinion (*attractions' characters, tourist experience*) is characterized by an emphasis on genuineness and a sensation of escape related to this specific classification.
- Minimization of the foreign element in places which are regarded as "peculiar" and, perhaps, inconvenient for tourists (*cognitive opinion, tourist experience*). Advertisements often try to balance the risk with experiences of safety, i.e., showing the picture of a luxurious hotel next to another hotel which emphasizes the exotic element of the place.
- Amusement, entertainment and pleasure with the least or no mentioning at all of cultural attractions. (*ideographic opinion, participation and amusement structure*).
- "Romanticization" of the traditional (and often very poor) lifestyles (*ideographic opinion, local infrastructure*). The cognitive opinion, tourist activity may conclude in this, if the advertisement promotes the feeling of exploring.
- The situation according to which, images of other more well-known attractions related to the attraction in question are used instead of the attraction itself (*cognitive opinion, attractions' character*).
- Realistic images of attractions (*ideographic opinion, local infrastructure*) are restricted, however, their number

increases due to efforts which are currently made in order to pull some of the negative social consequences of tourism on the Third World.

### **THE STUDY OF THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION**

This study is a publication of the World Tourism Organization – WTO (1980b), which presents a research method for the development of the national tourist attractions' images. The World Tourism Organization's approach is mainly addressed to the identification and development of a new national "image", meaning an image which can easily be related to the name of the country it represents in the visitor's mind. Examples of such images are the leaf in Canada's flag and the Eiffel's tower in France. Therefore, it is clear that this approach regards each country as the tourist product, instead of a variety of attractions inside the country. This approach includes:

- An extremely detailed analysis of reality, including a study of both the weak and the strong points of a country in six types of resources: natural environment, social-cultural environment, governmental support for tourism, infrastructure, economy, tourism planning and resource management.
- Definition of an appropriate "identification image". This is achieved via the analysis of tourist attractions according to visits to the country and via a study of selected groups which are used to define the country's image.
- Development and marketing of the new image or readjustment of the old one.

The World Tourism Organization's approach is based on the cognitive approach and differs from Britton's study in that it incorporates categories of organic thought, which are ignored by Britton. The reason for this difference might be related to the nature

and the operation of WTO as an organization, since it consists of state agents of tourism and works for them. The state is more interested in the development of infrastructure and planning, while the private sector places more emphasis on the marketing industry which is examined in Britton's study.

Thus, the structure of WTO, not only reflects the various research approaches, but it also presents different viewpoints which are adopted by different parts of tourist industry.

### **CASE STUDY: THE STRUCTURE OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN DODECANESE**

Tourism uses and takes advantage of two basic resources, nature and history. Nature includes the natural, the climatological, the regional, the social and the anthropogenetic environment, which provide the raw material for the creation of a tourist product in a tourist region. The term history, as the second tourism resource, refers to the use of history by the economic activity and its transformation into a product. This product includes the material remainders of life of past periods of time and of ancient populations, as well as immaterial cultural goods, such as ideas, moral values, art, philosophy, science, etc., that develop the cultural heritage. These two basic resources are incorporated in the broad structure of tourist attractions, which during the last years have been diverted into commercial products and are sold in the universal tourism market via the modern trade nets developed.

Dodecanese, of which the center is Rhodes, is the first region in Greece, according to the number of tourists, covering 33,28% of foreigners' visits of the total number of visits in Greece (1999). Dodecanese offers all kinds of tourism, ranging from the very cosmopolitan international tourism of Rhodes to the mixed (international-internal) tourism of Kos and Patmos or the tourism of small islands, such as Karpathos, Kalymnos, Leros, Nisyros, Astypalea, etc.

Rhodes, which collects 67,16% of the Dodecanesian tourist movement (1999), is unquestionably regarded as the first genuine center of international tourism in Greece. Rhodes has organized massive international tourism using direct flights (charters) which transfer about 90% of its foreign visitors. Its fame as one of the first international tourist centers in Mediterranean is due to its natural as well as its cultural wealth. Except of its natural beauties, its cultural treasures, such as those of Lindos and of the Medieval City which is a monument of traditional settlement, are of great interest. A second tourist center is Kos, which owes its fame to the fact that it is the homeland of Hippokrates – the father of Medicine. In addition, its natural beauties, its good climate, and its cultural treasures (ancient Asklipio, etc.) have established Kos as an important tourist center of the international as well as of the internal tourism. Even Patmos, the holy island of Apocalypse, with its rich intellectual tradition, is a place of attraction for tourists.

Dodecanese is a region which provides:

- Natural – ecological resources, which include beaches, forest regions, parks and oak forests, ecosystems, caves. (Natural attractions).
- Social resources, which include traditional settlements, tourist villages, cultural activities, monasteries, churches. (Social attractions).
- Tourist infrastructure, offering accommodation of all types and categories as well as tourist entertainment centers, which offer activities according to the specific preferences and beliefs of the tourists who participate. (Manufactured attractions).
- Architectural monuments, monuments with international interest, historical summations, findings from archaeological excavations, museums, castles, archaeological monuments, etc. (Cultural attractions).

All the above compose the structure of Dodecanesian tourist attractions and can be further analyzed, more systematically, in order to define the determinants, which influence and form the Dodecanesian tourist product, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Therefore, the theoretical approaches defining tourist attractions can be applied on the region of Dodecanese. The typology of the ideographic approach includes the nature with its natural beauties, the mountains, the beaches, etc., which interact with the tourist, who has the opportunity to observe the country and rural areas and to participate in summer and winter activities with the population of the region, who – in cooperation with the state authorities – creates the regional tourist infrastructure which supports regional functions and offers recreation centers with performances, athletic activities, amusement, festivals and other cultural activities.

The organic typology of tourist attractions refers to the nature of one attraction. In the region of Dodecanese, tourist attractions are many and important. There are cultural resources – some of which are of international fame – which cover the capacity, temporal and spatial characteristics of the organic approach. However, more attention should be paid to the possibilities of utilizing cultural resources for the creation of new specialized tourist products.

However, the initiatives of the Organizations of Regional Administration for the utilization of tradition and cultural heritage should take into consideration the specific physiognomy of each region and be in terms with it.

The cognitive approach is expressed via the tourist attractions of Dodecanese, since the experiences offered to the tourists by different kinds of attractions in the region constitute an indication of how able and willing are the tourists to take a risk. The number of arrivals and stays in the region of Dodecanese shows the tourists' interest and desire to feel the region's genuineness.



The development of new technologies, computer nets and multimedia systems, such as the rapid expansion of the Internet worldwide, has created a new era in the transmission of information, in education, in communication, in culture and economy. Via the standardized and easily accessible "multimedia" possibilities of our personal computer, we can watch tourist attractions and look for details, such as historical or archaeological sites, via certain portals.

Therefore, Internet can be used for the promotion of the tourist product and, more specifically, for the demonstration of tourist attractions, which constitute the basic element of the tourist product and attribute a competitive advantage.

Greek tourism's current level of development demands accelerated action to be undertaken by the country's tourist policy towards a rational development and full utilization of cultural goods, in the framework of a development strategy, which promotes a new model of tourist development demonstrating the eternal value of cultural goods and the natural beauty of the region, so that these values will become the basis for the development of an "Integral Business Services Region" (Lagos 1997). The creation of cultural infrastructure in Rhodes, in the framework of the national cultural city net, constitutes a substantial parameter which will cover the existing gap. The city-*junction*, where the cultural net will be developed, will offer the opportunity for the utilization of other tourist attractions and, via the net of other cities, the technical infrastructure for tourists' information will be created.

Within the scope of culture and amusement, the existence of substantial cultural resources in the region of Dodecanese offers an opportunity to create new specialized tourist products, via their utilization. Of course, the risk of uncontrolled building and of other city-planning interventions, which might damage the physiognomy of certain regions, exists and it requires state

intervention – when necessary – in order to preserve the social-cultural resources of Dodecanese.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The review of the theoretical approaches to tourist attractions, developed by different researchers, ascertains that no approach alone is able to cover the whole spectrum of the research interests for tourist attractions. The ideographic approach, regardless of its detailed, broad, and descriptive categories and typologies, is unable to enlighten the empirical issues of tourist attractions. The organic approach mostly refers to the specialization of ideographic categories/typologies and to the differentiation of human experiences. The cognitive approach is inefficiently addressed both to the complementary and competitive nature of the particular attractions and to their spatial and temporal relationships.

The ideographic approach is the one which is more often used in combination with one of the other approaches. The combined correlation of all the three approaches offers a good path for the development of a commonly accepted typology of tourist attractions.

The analysis of the tourist attractions' typologies, which have been used in the four examples presented above, shows the possible use of structure as a tool in the appraisal of the tourist attractions research.

All the three typologies can be equally used to evaluate the basic aims of the relevant research, to compare the research plans of related studies, and to examine the type, the quantity and the quality of information collected.

The nature, the structure and the features of tourist attractions of Dodecanese can be defined in the framework of the combining approach, which provides a complete picture of tourist attractions which can present the offered tourist product both qualitatively and quantitatively.

More specifically, historical summations, as component elements of tourist attractions that have a specific importance and attract the interest of international tourism, should be

distinguished accordingly. Moreover, appropriate political measures should be taken in order to positively influence the content of tourist attractions.

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