

# Tourism Development in Greek Insular and Coastal Areas: Sociocultural Changes and Crucial Policy Issues

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The paper analyses two issues that have characterised tourism development in Greek insular and coastal areas in the period 1970–2000. The first issue concerns the socio-economic and cultural changes that have taken place in these areas and led to rapid – and usually unplanned – tourism development. The second issue consists of the policies for tourism and tourism development at local, regional and national level. The analysis focuses on the role of the family, social mobility issues, the social role of specific groups, and consequences for the manners, customs and traditions of the local population. It also examines the views and reactions of local communities regarding tourism and tourists. There is consideration of the new productive structures in these areas, including the downgrading of agriculture, the dependence of many economic sectors on tourism, and the large increase in multi-activity and the black economy. Another focus is on the characteristics of mass tourism, and on the related problems and criticisms of current tourism policies. These issues contributed to a model of tourism development that integrates the productive, environmental and cultural characteristics of each region. Finally, the procedures and problems encountered in sustainable development programmes aiming at protecting the environment are considered.

## Social and Cultural Changes Brought About by Tourism Development in the Period 1970–2000

The analysis here focuses on three main areas where these changes are observed: sociocultural life, production and communication. It should be noted that a large proportion of all empirical studies of changes brought about by tourism development in Greece have been of coastal and insular areas.

### Social and cultural changes in the social structure

The most significant of these changes concern the family and its role in the new ‘urbanised’ social structure, social mobility and the choices of important groups, such as young people and women.

The first changes were registered in areas such as Mykonos (Loukissas, 1982; Stott, 1973), Crete (Kousis, 1989; Tsartas *et al.*, 1995), Corfu (Tsartas, 1991; Tsartas *et al.*, 1995), the Cyclades (Loukissas, 1982; Tsartas, 1992), Samos (Galani-Moutafi, 1993–4, parts I & II; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996), and Rhodes (Kasimati *et al.*, 1995) and concern the special features and functions of a typical family. Gradually, the paternal model, in which the father was the one who decided on the main choices of the family members (such as in relation to profession, education and savings), started to lose its dominant position. The gradual social and financial independence of other members of the family, owing to

revenue from tourism, led to a new type of family, in which individualism and collectivism coexist in decision making. In this context, the role of the younger – and usually more educated – members of the family, who have been socialised in the period of rapid tourism development, is being upgraded. The family now operates on the basis of strategies (Kousis, 1989; Stott, 1973; Tsartas 1992) for the expansion of this small ‘economic unit’, with the aim of taking advantage of opportunities arising from the ‘touristification’ of the social structure.

A different social structure is being formed, which is directly, but not exclusively, affected by the ‘urban-type’ social and economic relationships imposed by tourism. In this structure, one may find the social models of the ‘closed’ agricultural structure typical of the Mediterranean together with urbanised consumption models which, especially in the first phases of tourism development, are restricted to the urban centres, leading to a superficial ‘modernisation’ (Galani-Moutafi, 1993; Tsartas *et al.* 1995). In this context, the role of customs (e.g. festivities), as elements that reconfirm the tradition and the history of the region, starts to be downgraded. Their place is taken by new ‘urban-type’ entertainments (e.g. going to restaurants, tavernas and bars). At the same time, the pressing speed of employment and the new production relationships of all people living in these areas (Kousis, 1989) become the key argument for the gradual abandoning – especially by the younger population – of a way of life where the relationship between work and leisure time was more balanced and where social and professional mobility was less intense (Tsartas, 1991).

The social structure of these areas is gaining other new characteristics, the most important of which are an accelerating social mobility and a change in the way in which social positioning is measured. For many generations, social mobility used to be very restricted in these areas, since wealth and political power were usually concentrated within a relatively small social group (Tsartas, 1991, 1992). However, the spread of tourist income to larger groups of the population has led to the creation of an ‘expanded’ middle class, with high levels of consumption and dynamism in investment. In this context, social positioning has started to be measured more on the basis of income indices (levels of income) and less on social indices (such as education, family tradition and profession). This trend is most probably also related to the downgrading, mainly on the part of men, of education as a means of social mobility. In this new social reality, employment in tourism and the subsequent rise in income are considered to be a more secure way to gain upward social mobility.

Young people and women constitute the two groups in the population that play increasingly important roles in these insular and coastal areas (Stott, 1973; Tsartas *et al.*, 1995). Young people tend to be those initially pressing for rapid tourism development, considering it to be the ‘ticket’ to modernisation and to change in their way of life. They tend to participate actively in all processes of social and economic change brought about by tourism in their areas, while, more recently, they have also taken the lead in forming groups seeking to change the mass tourism development model, which they now consider to be problematic for local development. Women, too, are benefiting from tourism development, which improves their position not only in the field of production but also in the social structure of these areas. The economic side of this improvement is more important, as in many cases women become employed for the first time, they

earn income and they have a significant presence in the creation of businesses. On the social side – although their status is improved – women, and especially the older ones, are often left aside, having at the same time to deal with the quite different and complex reality of their social and family relationships.

### The 'meeting' of tourists and locals: Changes in customs and manners, preferences and stereotypes

Researchers in Greece and elsewhere have argued that tourism is not the only cause of change in a region's customs and manners. Other social changes have moved in the same direction, such as the spread of mass media, expanding urbanisation, better communication, and extended use of information technologies. However, in the case of the Greek coastal, and especially insular, areas where tourism has developed, the historic phase of this development has been a very important influence. In most cases, tourism development took place before the above-mentioned social changes (Galani-Moutafi, 1993; Labiri-Dimaki, 1972; Stott 1973; Tsartas, 1992) so that it functioned as a strong transmitter of messages and it clearly contributed to the change in social relationships. At this point it is useful to consider the views and positions of people living in these insular and coastal areas, as they have been examined in two research studies carried out by the Greek Tourism Organisation for the period 1979–1986 and by *EKKE* for 1980 and 1989. Aspects of these views and positions are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

One may see that the views about tourism among residents of islands at the initial stages of tourism development are often more positive (Naxos, Kalymnos, Leros and Kythira in Table 1, and Serifos and Lasithi in Table 2). On the other hand, people living in islands where tourism had already been developed seem more sceptical and their views are divided between positive and negative assessments of tourism (Mykonos, Paros, Santorini, Ios and Corfu). As regards residents' assessments of the 'bad' or adverse impacts of tourism, it is worth mentioning some of the answers given to the *EKKE* researchers. These related to 'Problems of morals and nudism', the 'Low quality of tourism', 'Vagrancy and bad influences on the young', 'Changes in customs and manners', the 'Destruction of families', increased 'Freedom of the young', 'Disputes', and 'Drunkenness'. Such answers were also registered more frequently in the case of islands where tourism had already been developed.

Thus, a conflicting social situation arises, as the one also identified by Greenwood (1972: 90), whereby at the end of the tourist season the local population is glad to see the tourists go, but at the same time they also worry in case the tourists do not come back next year. This situation is related to the many changes in social customs (derived from the rapid urbanisation brought by tourism), which have affected social relationships, including relationships between the sexes and within families. The result is a new and often conflictual social reality. In this context, there is evidence of a change in social relationships due to the dominance of individualist models and of modernising views in the tourist settlements (as against the rural areas) of Corfu and Lasithi. In these two areas there have also been problems in the relationships between the sexes, usually due to the short-lived relations between men and foreign tourists (the *kamaki* phenomenon) and due to conflicts within the family resulting from the autonomy of the young and the adoption of more modern ways of living.

**Table 1** Views about tourism among residents of selected Greek insular and coastal areas (in percentages)  
 Question: 'What does Tourism bring?'

	Mykonos		Naxos		Kalymnos		Leros		Paros		Santorini		Kythira	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Money and employment	93.9	100.0	100.0	94.2	96.8	97.4	98.0	96.4	87.6	92.7	98.1	80.7	100.0	93.8
Modernisation	68.2	73.7	70.0	78.3	52.3	89.6	76.0	86.1	51.4	54.9	74.5	73.7	92.3	89.1
Corruption of morals	40.9	52.6	46.7	59.4	25.4	53.9	24.0	33.3	67.6	74.4	60.8	47.4	57.7	62.5
High prices	51.5	52.6	36.7	47.9	42.9	57.4	18.0	35.1	37.1	23.2	41.2	70.2	53.9	56.3

*Note:* 1. The percentages shown refer to positive answers. The research in Mykonos and Naxos was carried out in 1979, in Kalymnos and Leros in 1980, and in Santorini, Paros and Kythira in 1986. '1' refers to answers given by professionals (in their shops), while '2' refers to answers given by the general public (in their households).

*Sources:* Stavrou (1979), p. 3 (Naxos), p. 2 (Mykonos). Stavrou (1980), Table V (Kalymnos), Table V (Leros); (1986) pp. 13, 33, 65.

**Table 2** Views about tourism among residents of Ios, Serifos, Corfu and Lasithi (in percentages)

Questions	First study (1980)		Second study (1989)	
	Ios	Serifos	Corfu	Lasithi
1. Do you consider that tourism in your area has a good impact?	15.7	60.3	22.3	42.0
2. Do you consider that tourism in your area has a bad impact?	1.4	9.5	4.5	3.8
3. Do you consider that tourism in your area has both good and bad impacts at the same time?	82.9	30.2	72.9	53.8

Note: In the 1989 survey a percentage of the population replied 'I do not know / No reply' (0.3% in Corfu and 0.4% in Lasithi).

Sources: Tsartas (1989: 159–68); and Tsartas *et al.* (1995: 166–73).

The locals have also been found to prefer tourists of specific nationalities. This has undoubtedly been affected by the process of stereotyping tourists and also by the economic dynamism of tourism which in most areas is associated with foreign tourists. The views of the locals about differing nationalities of tourists are clearly affected by the related perceived economic benefits (positive attitudes and expectations) and social issues (both positive and negative attitudes and social issues raised). Here it is worth examining the views of the local populations as identified in the two research studies used previously (Tables 3 and 4).

Greek tourists are mainly preferred by the residents of the insular and coastal areas with less tourism development, such as Leros, Kalymnos, Kythira, Serifos and Lasithi (with the exclusion of Naxos). On the other hand, people living in areas with high tourism development are more likely to prefer foreign tourists (Mykonos, Paros, Santorini, Corfu and Ios). These preferences are justified by comments such as, 'Greeks are quieter, you can discuss with them, they have families', while 'foreigners are more easy going, they do not complain, they spend more'. Thus, choices are commercialised and what counts most are the economic characteristics of tourists as a commodity. This trend is increased if we add to it the high percentage who declare that nationality makes no difference, especially when they go on to say that they are only interested in 'how many tourists come, irrespective of their nationality'. The shaping of national stereotypes has been registered quite clearly in research conducted in the Cyclades (Tsartas, 1989: 166), where locals commented that, for example, 'Germans and Scandinavians spend more and are just in their transactions', and the 'French spend enough, but quite often they are demanding and arrogant'. It is very interesting to note that the economic element is very important in these preferences. A good example is the case of Corfu, where the British tourists have been a catalyst for the island's tourism (50–70% of arrivals per annum). However, only a few of the inhabitants seem to prefer them, since the British are often considered to be 'cheap tourists'. Views about tourists among locals seem to be positively affected by factors such as age (younger age groups), work ties with tourism and acquaintance with tourists (a high percentage of interviewees in Corfu and Lasithi noted

**Table 3** Views about tourists of different nationalities among residents of selected Greek insular and coastal areas (in percentages)  
 Question: 'What is your order of preference of tourists?'

	Mykonos		Naxos		Kalymnos		Leros		Paros		Santorini		Kythira	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Greeks	4.6	7.9	30.0	21.7	46.0	31.3	66.0	24.9	32.4	45.1	27.5	43.9	53.8	67.2
Foreigners	63.6	56.6	46.7	34.8	44.4	19.1	22.0	18.2	51.4	47.6	56.9	29.8	38.6	26.6
Makes no difference	13.6	21.0	–	29.0	4.8	2.6	8.0	29.7	14.3	7.3	15.6	26.3	7.6	6.2
Both Greeks and foreigners	18.2	14.5	23.3	14.5	4.8	47.0	4.0	27.3	1.9	–	–	–	–	–

*Note:* The research on Mykonos and Naxos was carried out in 1979, in Kalymnos and Leros in 1980, and in Santorini, Paros and Kythira in 1986. '1' refers to answers given by professionals (in their shops), while '2' refers to answers given by the general public (in their households).

*Sources:* Stavrou (1979), p. 5 (Naxos), p. 3 (Mykonos); Stavrou (1980), Table VII (Kalymnos), Table VIII (Leros); Stavrou (1986) pp. 15, 35, 59.

**Table 4** Preferences for tourists of specific nationalities (in percentages)  
Question: 'Which tourists do you prefer?'

	<i>Serifos</i>	<i>Ios</i>	<i>Corfu</i>	<i>Lasithi</i>
Greeks	22.2	8.8	27.7	32.4
Foreigners	20.6	58.8	30.8	25.9
Makes no difference	57.1	32.4	40.4	41.6
<b>Preferred nationalities</b>				
	(Serifos and Ios combined) Germans 29 French 12 British and Irish 11 Scandinavians 10 Others 17 Makes no difference 21	Germans 21 Italians 21 British 14 French, Dutch, Belgians, Americans, Japanese, Swiss, Austrians 10 Scandinavians 9 No difference 24	Germans 19 Scandinavians 18 British 16 French, Dutch, Belgians, Americans, Japanese, Swiss, Austrians 14 Italians 4 No difference 29	

Sources: Tsartas (1989: 165–6); Tsartas *et al.* (1995: 169–71).

that they had become friends with foreign tourists and had visited their countries) (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Tsartas *et al.*, 1995).

### The new economic structure in coastal and insular areas resulting from tourism development

The holistic presence of tourism in the local production structure constitutes a key feature in most cases under review. Indeed, the tourism sector tends directly or indirectly to become the main source of income for almost all social strata, irrespective of their main occupation. This process starts with the gradual abandonment all other employment sectors, especially agriculture, which traditionally constituted the basic source of income in these areas. This has consolidated tourism as a basic source of income, while occupations in the primary (e.g. agriculture) and secondary sectors (e.g. handicrafts) are on the decline. At this point, it is informative to note Labiri-Dimaki's (1972: 89) description of Mykonos, where 'the number of persons who are exclusively farmers or manual workers is decreasing, and the number of persons who are "partly farmers" and employed in small tourist businesses is increasing'. This transition phase, from an agricultural economy to a 'touristified' productive structure was identified at the beginning of the 1970s, but has gradually been consolidated in subsequent years. In this way, tourism has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the transformation of the local economy and the dominance of the tertiary sector. The research carried out in Corfu and Lasithi (Tsartas *et al.*, 1995: 63–84) showed that the following occupational groups stated that they received income from tourism (at a rate of 25% to 100%). These were traders (82.6% in Corfu and 55.4% in Lasithi), farmers (55.7% in Corfu and 11.7% in Lasithi), builders (69.6% in Corfu and 17.9% in Lasithi), manual workers (48.3% in Corfu and 38% in Lasithi), scientists and

self-employed (30.4% in Corfu and 19.4% in Lasithi), and employed persons (40% in Corfu and 19.2% in Lasithi). This situation results from the increasing importance of tourism as a source of income, but also because it is a prestigious employment sector in the local economy.

A consequence of tourism's pervading presence is the high incidence of people employed in two or three different occupations, one of which is related to tourism. This multi-employment concerns both sexes, and it is either of an individual nature or it results from family strategies. An example of the first case is the Sithonia peninsula in Halkidiki, which is mentioned by Bidgianis (1979: 28–9). Here a farmer usually: (1) cultivates his own land, (2) is employed in construction or in the Carras enterprise (involved in agricultural products and hotels), and (3) works in the tertiary sector (rooms to let, or commerce). In the second case, Loukissas (1975: 10) notes that on Mykonos:

a local, claiming that he is a farmer, may also rent rooms to tourists, or fish, or rent his boat for the recreation of tourists. His wife may work as a cleaning lady, or take care of the rooms-to-let, while at the same time she may sell her handicraft to local shops. Her children may fish with their father, or work in restaurants as waiters.

This multi-employment strategy has also been noted by many other researchers examining Greek insular areas, e.g. in Crete (Kousis, 1998), Samos (Galani-Moutafi, 1994; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996), Corfu and Lasithi (Tsartas *et al.*, 1995), and in Rhodes (Kasimati *et al.*, 1995). It is characteristic that of all people employed in different sectors, 60% in Corfu and 35% in Lasithi declared a certain professional relationship with tourism (shop owners, or employees in rooms to let or hotels) (Tsartas *et al.*, 1995: 77–80). This multi-employment constitutes a characteristic feature of the insular tourist areas of Greece, and the research on Corfu and Lasithi suggests it often related to the black economy. Furthermore, especially in areas with a significant farming tradition, employment in the farming sector is being seriously downgraded, since the dynamism of the sector has been lost. The key source of income in multi-employment is tourism. People residing in Agios Matthaïos village in Corfu commented that those having tourism as their main occupation and agriculture as their secondary occupation maintained this second occupation for 'tradition', for 'preserving the family property' and as a 'hobby' (Tsartas, 1991: 128–32).

The social, cultural and economic changes that have been discussed came about very quickly in these insular and coastal regions, and they have had important results. There has been a two-way relationship between these changes and the tourism-related policy exercised in these regions over the past three decades (as explained in the second part of this paper). In this analysis it is assumed that a large share of the problems in the social and cultural field is attributable to the state's decision to promote mass tourism in these regions. The problems are also due to the acceptance of this model by the locals, as they have believed it was the best answer to their regions' low level of development. This situation has changed over recent years, as people started to recognise the associated problems. The influences on this change in people's views include: (1) the shaping of a new institutional framework which allows for participation by locals in the planning process, (2) the upgrading of scientific dialogue on tourism development,



and (3) a growing sensitivity to the need to protect the environment. Changes in the basic priorities for tourist policies have also contributed to this direction, as they emphasise development models drawing on local characteristics. In recent years there has been a search for development models designed on the principle of sustainability and that upgrade the tourist product offered in the insular and coastal regions.

## **The Search for Locally Integrated Development Models and the Protection of the Environment and Sustainable Development**

### **The organised mass tourism model as the dominant model of growth: Questions and challenges**

The 1980s were crucial for the country's national tourist policy, since new development models began to be sought. The coastal and insular areas of Greece have been developed on the basis of the mass tourism model. Starting with the economic success of the islands, where this model was developed in the 1960s and 1970s (in Rhodes, Corfu, Mykonos etc.), mass tourism has sprung up in most regions of the country. The basic arguments behind this decision were that it produced important economic gains for Greece in terms of foreign exchange, that it increased incomes in the tourist regions, and the tourist resources of the country could keep pace with the demand for this type of tourism (Bouhalis, 1998; Tsartas, 1998a; Varvaressos, 1987). It was also pointed out by the Greek Tourism Organisation (1985: 23–4) that Greece adopted this basic model following the suggestion of international organisations, with a view to increasing its foreign exchange reserves. However, investment was not evenly or rationally distributed among the regions, and the same applied to planning controls. As a result, there are many important problems related to land-use planning and the evolution of this model.

The first problem is the intense seasonality of demand for this type of tourism (Arthur Andersen, 2002; SETE, 2002). In the 1970–2000 period most tourists (35–40%) arrive in Greece in July or August. Hence the infrastructure is not used to its full capacity and it is difficult to achieve full returns on the investment when in most regions the tourist season does not last more than 2–3 months.

A second problem is the progressive reduction of the economic benefits of this model. After a first historical phase when important increases in incomes were observed at the local level (*EKKE*, *GNTO*), there followed a phase of stagnation or diminishing incomes. This is clearly related to the life cycles of the products in many regions, which were progressively being downgraded (Andersen, 2002; Patsouratis, 2002; Tsartas, 1998a). It is also related to the intense competition among enterprises and among different areas in the same region (e.g. on the same island), among different regions of the country, or between countries.

A third problem is connected with the frequent disregard for land-use planning and urban planning provisions in most regions with a developed and organised infrastructure (Konsolas & Zaharatos, 2001; Spilanis, 2000; Zacharatos, 1989; Zacharatos, 2000a). This fact is connected with the intense pressures that tourism development has created in many areas in terms of the continuing construction of buildings in coastal and island regions. It is also related to the

state's failure to set up the mechanisms needed to implement the agreed tourism policies.

Finally, the downgrading of the natural and built environment constitutes a further significant problem for all the regions that have adopted the mass tourism model. The economic dimension of tourist growth is jeopardised by this when the quality of the environment constitutes a key attraction of Greece for Europeans, who constituted the large majority of foreign visitors in the period 1970–2000 (Tsartas, 1998).

From the beginning of the 1980s, these problems contributed to the wider questioning of this type of tourism and led to the search for different development models or to the search for policies to help upgrade this particular model. This questioning came from people living in tourist regions who were directly or indirectly involved in the process of planning tourism development, as well as from many researchers who were involved in the tourist sector. The criticism was initially focused on the inability of the tourist policies to set limits and to manage the growth of organised mass tourism (Buhalis, 1998; Konsolas and Zacharatos, 2001; Tsartas, 1998b).

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were the first studies of the social, economic and political impacts of this type of tourist growth, with these being discussed in the first part of this analysis. These studies demonstrated that many problems exist at the local level and they also identified the intense scepticism of the locals about this development model. Another side of this criticism is that mass tourism was the only type of tourism offered by the country for many decades. This itself has contributed to the downgrading of the Greek tourism product, especially at a time of intense international competition (Arthur Andersen, 2002; Patsouratis, 2002) when many countries have enriched their tourism product with new products and services (mainly related to special interest and alternative forms of tourism). One common denominator in these criticisms, on one side, was the need to find new models of growth in the coastal and insular regions which would be integrated into the local socioeconomic and environmental realities; and, on the other side, the need for this particular model to be upgraded with concrete measures and interventions.

### **The progressive shift towards locally integrated tourism development models**

Again from the 1980s, tourism development has increasingly tried to promote 'locality' (Tsartas, 1998a; Varvaressos, 1999). Measures, interventions and policies have sought to achieve a softer integration of tourism at the local level, aimed at a more balanced tourism development which combines mass tourism with the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism. Clearly this was not a concrete and coordinated policy. It was made up more of individual policies (national, regional and local), which together contributed to the promotion of models of balanced local development, particularly in islands and coastal regions. In many cases the policies led to the adoption of new methods and the realisation of development projects, while in other cases the policies were only partly implemented, mainly due to a lack of coordination. Initially, the shift towards 'locality' is located in the planning and management of development, where emphasis is given to programmes of soft

tourism development, mainly aimed at the promotion of the local environmental and cultural resources of the region. Thus, the type of holiday is combined with infrastructure and activities originating from the specific special interest, such as cultural tourism, rural tourism, marine tourism, conference tourism, golf tourism, health tourism, agrotourism, adventure tourism, ecotourism, and sports tourism (Anthopoulou *et al.*, 1998; Athanasiou, 2002; Installations for Naval Tourism, 2000; Spathi, 2000; Tsekouras, 1991; WWF, 2000). Considerable amounts of public and private sector funds have been invested in these forms of tourism over the past 20 years. A key aspect of this planning, which is recorded in almost all the studies of tourism development carried out in the last 20 years, is that planners have adopted the special interest and alternative forms of tourism as a basic tool for local tourism development. The argument is related to the specialised demand for these products as well as to the need to promote local tourist resources – an integral part of the local tourism product. In reality, it is a shifting perception of holiday tourism in a country where such resources were previously ignored or downgraded, often considered as a secondary element of a tourism product consisting of only the sea and the sun. A more systematic effort to develop these forms, especially in coastal and insular areas, is best located at the local level (through local development programmes) or at the regional level (prefectures or tourist areas).

From the 1990s, all insular prefectures and prefectures with coastal regions in Greece have offered a significant amount of infrastructure, services and organised activities related to special interest and alternative tourism. The variety and the large increase of this infrastructure is evidenced in the two tourist fairs (Panorama and Philoxenia) organised in Greece each year, which mainly address the domestic tourist market.

A second element that has enhanced local tourism development has been the progressive decentralisation of competencies to the local level (to the local authorities, prefectures and regions) that has allowed for the direct involvement of representatives of local interests in decision-making processes (Hatzinikolaou, 1995; Varvaressos, 1999). Institutionally, the upgrading of the role of local authorities has facilitated this process. The municipalities and prefectures now have more competencies in planning, programme development and the management and promotion of local tourism product.

As a result, the number of representatives of professional and institutional bodies involved in local tourism development has increased considerably in the 1990s. Another feature of that decade has been the large increase in the number of institutions dealing with the protection of the environment or the promotion of the cultural heritage in tourist regions all over Greece. These institutions have been established through the activities of locals – mainly young representatives of the local authorities and scientists – who are interested in upgrading the tourism product offered by their region, or they represent the supra-local organisations that deal with the protection of flora, fauna and the cultural heritage, such as WWF, MOM and ICOMOS. In both cases, the presence and interventions of these institutions constitute a new feature of the Greek reality, particularly in regions with ‘sensitive’ environmental resources.

A third axis for interventions and policies that have strengthened local tourism development has come from the European Union (Sotiriadis, 1994; Tsartas,

1998a). Since 1985 there have been a considerable number of initiatives, funding schemes and development programmes financed by the European Union that have focused on local tourism development or on facilitating the completion of infrastructure and activities required for special interest and alternative tourism, such as ecotourism, agrotourism and cultural tourism. Different institutions and organisations have promoted these policies from the European Union, and a large number of different institutions have implemented them at national and regional levels in Greece, and this makes their complete and systematic assessment a very difficult task. It is suggested that their contribution has been very positive for many sectors and activities, and that they have been directly or indirectly related to local tourism development.

A first advantage of these developments has been the transfer of know-how in planning and the realising of local development programmes in the countryside. Much progress has been made through collaborations and the completion of programmes for the upgrading of the countryside, such as through Leader, Life, Envireg and Interreg. Another positive effect was the implementation of training and education activities for employed and unemployed people in occupations related to tourism (and particularly with alternative forms of tourism). In many tourist regions of the country the beneficiaries of these programmes have been primarily young people and women. Such activities were financed by the European Social Fund or by specialised programmes (e.g. Leonardo) and initiatives (NOW, Youthstart, etc.). A third advantage has been the financing of completed local development projects that emphasised the protection of the cultural heritage and the environment, maintaining employment, developing the countryside and promoting balanced tourism development. These projects were undertaken by ministries involved in development and planning issues and by local authorities (municipalities and prefectures). As a result of the above, new infrastructure were created and new services were offered, thus shaping 'new' tourist products, such as ecotourism, health tourism, rural tourism, marine tourism and sports tourism.

All of these policies and actions that have contributed to the emergence of a new type of tourism development in coastal and insular regions of the country have made people realise that new models of viable and integrated tourism development should be sought. These models should play a part in the protection of the natural, the built and the cultural environment of these regions.

### **From the protection of the environment to sustainable development**

Among all of the different consequences of tourism in insular and coastal areas, the most important for the quality of the tourist product offered is the environment (both natural and man-made). This is primarily explained by the special characteristics of the traditional development model adopted by these areas: tourism both takes up space and downgrades the environment as it consumes resources and it involves large numbers of visitors. As a result, many problems of pollution and aesthetic degradation become apparent in many insular and coastal areas of the country (Briassoulis, 1993; Chiotis and Coccossis, 2000; Kousis, 2000; Loukissas, 1975). This development has caused many problems in Greece because research on the motives of foreign tourists visiting the country suggests that a key parameter for their choice is the environment (see Tsartas,

1998a: 74–5, Table 20, calculations based on EOT data for the 1977–1994 period). Furthermore, the negative effects on the environment have been one of the basic reasons for the forming of organised movements in tourist areas (analysed in the case of Crete by Kousis, 2000). These negative consequences of tourism development, and the policies adopted for the protection of the environment, have pointed to two significant issues for tourism development policy at the local level. The first is the need to protect the environment through specific actions and policies undertaken by both the private and the public sectors. The second is the need to promote soft and environment-friendly tourism infrastructure and activities, such as those of alternative tourism.

As regards the protection of the environment, we should note that there has been substantial investment in the construction of waste treatment networks in Greece's coastal and insular areas, while their use has now been extended to the hotel sector. At the same time, the number of enterprises using quality management standards has increased, and these standards are also related to environmental management and protection. A characteristic example is the Grecotel chain (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998: 155–60) which uses a structured programme of environmental management and protection in its hotels. Apart from the implementation of environmental quality standards, this chain also promotes the training of both its employees and tourists, together with the promotion of local cultural heritage.

Alternative tourism has been considered the opponent of the dominant mass tourism model and, at the same time, a kind of energetic protection of the environment. Its demand, from both foreigners and Greeks (Tsartas *et al.*, 2001), has increased over the years, as stressed previously here, and it is not by chance that it is proposed as a development model in areas with special environmental resources that need to be protected. Skopelos and Naxos offer two characteristic examples. After studies have been completed, it was proposed that different infrastructure and activities of alternative tourism should be developed based on ecotourism, such as trekking trails, birdwatching, ecotourism information centres, environmental training seminars and programmes for the management of specific areas (Vlami & Zogaris, 1997; Zogaris *et al.*, 1996).

From the 1990s, the crucial issue for tourism policy in Greece – directly linked to the need to protect the environment – was the effort to promote policies and actions aiming at sustainable tourism development (Andriotis, 2001; Coccossis & Tsartas, 2001; Pridham, 1999). During this period, the international scientific debate has been centred on sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Hunter, 1997), and this issue has become a constant parameter of tourism development policies suggested by such organisations as the WTO and EU (Ruzza, 2001; WTO, 1993). In the same period, the insular and coastal areas in Greece have been a constant reference point in research and analyses carried out on the issue of sustainable development. The most important policy issues that arise concern the selection of appropriate scientific tools and methods in order to control the course of tourism development and to form a framework for its management, so that it could be sustainable. In this context, the carrying capacity of islands and coastal areas with different features and different levels of development has constituted a field for important scientific research in Greece (Coccossis & Parpairis, 1993, 1996, 2000). On the basis of specific examples, the limits of tourism development

were assessed and actions and policies necessary to achieve its sustainability were pointed out. A second issue is related to the promotion of appropriate policy measures (for the private sector, the public sector and local authorities) at the local level, so that a tourist area could gradually acquire and maintain sustainable characteristics. Many studies have been carried out in this context, mainly in insular areas (Buhalis, 1999; Butler & Stiakaki, 2000; Spilanis, 2000; Stott 1996) with considerable tourism development. These studies have demonstrated the problems and also suggested solutions, especially in relation to planning, education, the institutional framework, and appropriate policy measures.

The basic parameters in these analyses in the context of sustainable tourism development is the protection of the environment (through a specific institutional framework), the promotion of local culture, the local dimension in planning, and finally, the linkage of tourism development with other production sectors of the economy.

## Conclusions

The considerable cultural, social and environmental impact of tourism in insular and coastal areas has led to changes in two key areas: changes of a social nature (social changes in tourist regions) and changes of an institutional nature (priorities and choices of tourism policies). The 1980s were a crucial decade for Greece because it was then that a stable and dynamic questioning of the dominant tourism development model was registered. Tourism policy now searches for softer and locally integrated models of tourism development. The need to protect the environment, the gradual expansion of alternative tourism and the promotion of 'locality' in planning constitute basic priorities of tourism policy. At a social level, these policies, in combination with the scientific dialogue concerning the repercussions of tourism, have helped the local people to realise that they should promote new models of tourism development. However, the powerful presence of mass organised tourism often functions as an obstacle to these efforts at the local level. The increase in the number of successful local examples of sustainable tourism development in insular and coastal areas constitutes a positive development, and is attributable to the combined effect of institutional changes, scientific debate and social changes at the local level in tourist regions. Two crucial tourism policy issues will arise in the years to come: (1) the ability of a sustainable development model to survive, constituting a basic element of the local tourist product; and (2) the operational linkage between this model and the classic model of mass tourism found in many areas.

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## Notes

1. *EKKE*: the National Centre of Social Research.
2. 'A *kamaki* is a harpoon for spearing fish, but the word is also used metaphorically in Greece. It describes the act of a Greek man pursuing a foreign woman with the intention of having sex' (see Zinovieff, 1991: 203).

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