

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **11.0 INTRODUCTION**

The present research was undertaken from 1996 to 2000 using a multi-method approach. A literature review on the tourism development and planning process was undertaken in Chapters Two and Three. To understand the development patterns of the island of Crete and the benefits and costs associated with tourism expansion, secondary data were collected and presented in Chapters Four and Five. To investigate community perceptions in the tourism development and planning process, to identify problems and opportunities resulting from the island's tourism development, as well as to give solutions to problems and reinforce positive outcomes, primary data were collected during 1997 by interviewing three community groups (residents, local authority officials and owners/managers of tourist enterprises). Chapter Six presents a detailed analysis of the techniques used for the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data and Chapters Seven to Nine present the findings. The previous chapter discussed the development and planning process in order to identify the reality of the island's tourism industry, and people's perceptions of it. This chapter attempts to see if the reality matches with what the community perceives to be true. By doing this the aim is to draw conclusions and to recommend future planning priorities and strategies for the design of a community tourist product. Finally, future research priorities are suggested.

### **11.1 SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS FROM THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS**

The investigation of the tourism development and planning process has contributed to a better understanding of the tourism development and planning in Crete and the position of Cretan tourism in 1997. It is evident that the growth of tourism in Crete has been a blessing for the island and its communities. Benefits

attributed to tourism development include employment and income generation, public sector revenue, infrastructure and elimination of the immigration pattern. Additionally, tradition, culture and arts are maintained for tourist consumption, the social interaction between tourists and the local community enhances awareness and interest in international understanding and friendship (Greger, 1985) and tourist demand often results in the preservation of historical and cultural monuments and the conservation of natural resources.

Despite the afore-mentioned benefits, tourism has had undesirable effects. Unlike all other industries, the tourism industry is involved in the transportation of people rather than commercial goods. Tourism requires the customer (tourist) to visit the product (the host community). According to Berno (1999) “this physical presence of the ‘customer’ creates a unique set of socio-cultural consequences missing from other export industries” (p.671). People are attracted by the destination’s resources. Therefore, the tourism industry depends not only on the quantity but also the quality of these resources. Although many developing countries and islands promote tourism for its positive effects, they ignore the fact that the tourism industry should be developed according to the capabilities of each destination (Godfrey, 1993). Communities have certain limits. Growth beyond these limits can exceed the acceptability limits of the local community that may result in an anti-tourism attitude towards unsuspecting tourists. This can have a major influence on the future success of a destination, since community attitudes are one of the most essential determinants of visitor satisfaction and repeat visitation (Swarbrooke, 1993; Dogart and Dogart, 1996).

In Crete, the uncontrolled expansion of the tourism supply often has resulted in a deterioration of the island’s tourism image (Peterson and McCarthy, 1990a), to the extent that today the island attracts many low-spending segments of the tourism markets, highly concentrated in space and time and organised by foreign tour operators (OANAK, 1995). The spatial and seasonal distribution of tourism activity and services, with concentration of tourism businesses on the north coast, and tourist arrivals limited to five months a year, have accentuated chronic imbalances (OANAK, 1995). Incoming tourists come during the summer season,

stay in accommodation establishments (AEs) located on the northern coast and take day trips to the inland and southern coastal areas in order to visit the archaeological, cultural and environmental attractions. As a result, a large proportion of the population has migrated to the urban centres of the North, where the resorts of the island are located and there are tourism jobs. The problem of tourist concentration in space and time is that it causes considerable congestion at peak times often at places of outstanding beauty or sensitivity in ecological terms (Nikolakakis, 1998b). Based on the present research, it is not possible to draw conclusions on the question of capacity. Although, some areas of the island may be saturated in terms of the supply of tourist accommodation and services, and some signs of environmental conflict have emerged, as reported by Kousis (1999), the island's capacity to absorb tourism has not been exceeded.

In areas where foreign developers control tourist activity, conflicts between the host population and tourism development may occur (Baud-Bovy, 1982). Although the population of many island destinations (e.g. the Caribbean and Pacific islands) receive limited benefits from tourism expansion, due to the external control of the main facets of their tourism industry, the Cretan community still retains significant control of many means of production in the local economy, although there is dependency on foreign tour operators.

In order to identify the positive and negative outcomes of tourism development for host communities, knowledge of the notions and preferences of the population living and operating within a tourism community is required (Pearce et al., 1996), since host perceptions to tourism and tourists are important in that they determine the level of welcome visitors are likely to receive, and generally affect the quality of the destination's product (Swarbrooke, 1993). Therefore, Maddox (1985) asserts, measuring and monitoring public attitudes can provide useful information to help the mitigation of problems before they become intolerable. Similarly, Ritchie (1992) states: "no longer can it be assumed that the residents of a tourism destination/region will automatically accept all (or any) forms of tourism development that the industry proposes or attempts to impose" (p.16). Given the importance of community opinions, views and desires for the acceptability of

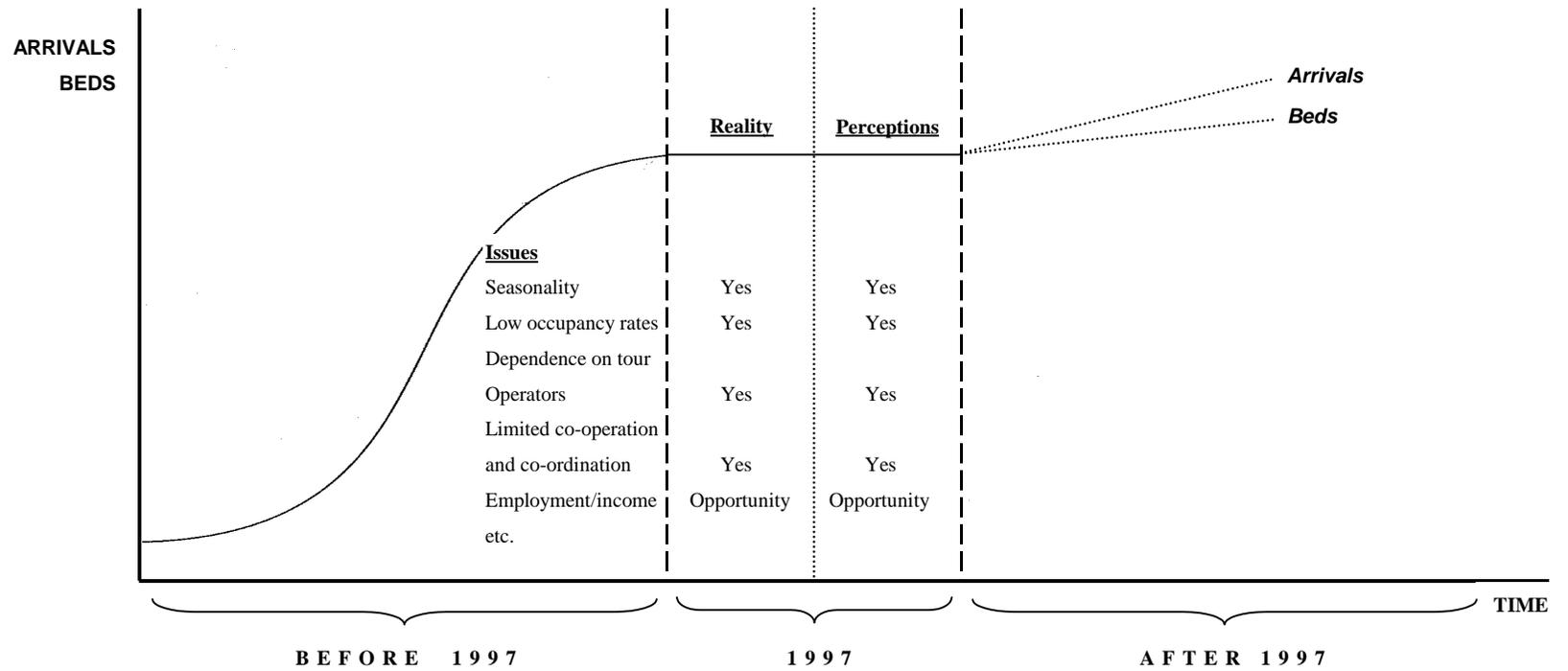
tourism and tourists, the survey of the three community groups (residents, local authorities and businesses) was undertaken in 1997.

Among the three study groups the business sector and the local authorities have long been involved in tourism development, while residents are destined to live with the outcomes of tourism development and planning, and the decisions taken by the other two groups. By studying the three groups' perceptions of tourism development, it was attempted to identify their acceptability of tourism, in order for guidelines to be provided for the future tourism development of the island.

Although subject to some limitations, mainly a small budget and limited time, the study revealed the preferences of the community. To generalise the results of the survey, it is clear that residents, local authorities and the tourism business sector are in favour of tourism, with controlled and planned tourism development not only accepted, but also generally encouraged. Nevertheless, although most of the impacts perceived by the study groups matched the reality, there was a case where the community was not aware of significant infrastructural projects (e.g. airports, ports, marinas etc) undertaken on the island. On the other hand, although during the early stages of tourism evolution many social costs were profound (Basil, 1964), social costs associated with tourism development were not mentioned often by the respondents of this study, perhaps because today many of the locals have adopted a life style similar to that of incoming tourists.

In Chapters Four, Five and Ten, this study investigated the period before 1997, from the exploration to the maturity stages of tourism evolution. However, there is a difficulty in graphing a resort cycle curve for the island based on tourist arrivals or number of beds because of limited data. Nevertheless, since the evolution of the island's tourism industry presents many similarities with Butler's (1980) life cycle model, as found also by Kousis (1984) in Drethia, Figure 11.1 hypothesises that for the period up to 1997, the resort cycle curve for Crete will approximate Butler's resort cycle model.

Figure 11.1: Hypothetical life cycle for Crete – Reality and perceptions of the community



This study has been concerned so far with the history of the island, with little (if any) reference to its future. However, the reason for this study for investigating the reality and the perceived tourism impacts of the community was to provide an input into the future of the island's tourism industry. Therefore, the following sections will be concerned with the future of tourism on the island, providing recommendations for the development of the island based on what has happened (reality) and what people perceive has happened.

Before doing this, it is important to identify the options that exist for the development of a destination. For these options, different tactics are possible: dealing with perceptions; dealing with reality and when there is a concurrency of reality and perceptions, either to address the problem (if any) or to build on the positive. Additionally, there may be cases where problems may or may not exist, but the community believes that there are opportunities to take advantage. Table 11.1 summarizes the six options and provides policy implications for each of them.

**Table 11.1: Development and planning / reality, perceptions and policy implications**

| Options | Reality    | Perceptions | Policy   |
|---------|------------|-------------|--|
| 1.      | No problem | Problem     | Change perceptions by educating the local community                            |
| 2.      | No problem | No problem  | Build on positive  |
| 3.      | No problem | Opportunity | Exploit opportunity  |
| 4.      | Problem    | Problem     | Provide solutions to the problem   |
| 5.      | Problem    | No problem  | Inform the community about the problem and highlight attempts for its solution |
| 6.      | Problem    | Opportunity | Solve problem - exploit opportunity  |

## 11.2 IMPLICATIONS - RECOMMENDATIONS

The need to suggest recommendations and policy implications for an on-going planning and development process of tourism in Crete is evident. The future of tourism development in Crete, as in many other destinations world-wide, is dependent of the acceptability of local residents, businesses and the officials. A destination may have the necessary conditions for expansion of the industry but they will not be sufficient without local community's acceptability. This is evident

from an article in the Guardian (2000) related to the adoption of Europe's single currency by British citizens:

Pressure is building up on Tony Blair to lead from the front and embark on the herculean task of persuading a majority of British people to support adoption of Europe's single currency. It looks impossible since 70 percent of the public is against it... What is needed is not focus groups but good old-fashioned political leadership. Officially, the government says that the decision will be put to a referendum in the next parliament if the economy passes five tests. In reality these tests are neither a necessary nor sufficient reason for joining. Not sufficient because if all the tests were passed but public opinion is overwhelmingly against it is unlikely that the government would push ahead. They aren't a necessary condition either because if they were not fulfilled but public opinion was overwhelmingly in favour the government would probably go ahead anyway (p.15).

To achieve acceptability of the host community of tourism and tourists, the following recommendations are proposed.

### **11.2.1 Community involvement in the development and planning process**

Woodfrey (1993) suggests that the involvement of the local community in the development process is a prerequisite for sustainability. Residents acceptance of tourism development is considered important for a destination's long-term success of tourism, since if tourists are greeted with hostility their numbers will decline (Ritchie, 1988). As Lankford and Howard (1994) indicate "local governments and tourism promoters should lay particular emphasis on the finding that if people feel they have access to the planning/public review process and that their concerns are being considered, they will support tourism" (p.135). A comparison of reality with the results of the primary research finds that acceptability of the local population of the industry is high (with limited exceptions), but there were signs of only limited involvement of the local population in decision-making. Therefore, attempts should be made to ensure that the aspirations of the locals for their community and its future development are integrated into the determination

of development objectives, policies and plans. Through greater community involvement, it is assumed that the local population can gain more benefits, adverse socio-cultural impacts can be lessened and the quality of services provided to tourists can be improved.

A systematic analysis of local opinions and perceptions can play a vital role in tourism policy formulation. Only through a continuous dialogue between community groups about tourism costs and benefits and the desired future strategies of tourism development, can a consensus on development policies and programs be assured in the long run. All community members have to realise that they will not lose out from tourism development and that through collaboration and co-ordination, benefits will increase more, than if differing objectives are set. Similarly, the private sector and the local population should understand that government may be obliged to prevent developments which will bring economic benefits in the short-term in order to achieve sustainability in the long-term. However, bearing in mind the limitations of community participation such as increased costs and delays in plan implementation, the structure of the Greek Government and the centralisation of public administration in Athens it may be the case that few things will change in the near future.

### **11.2.2 Education, training, awareness raising**

The community survey and the investigation of the tourism development and planning process undertaken in this study have shown that although some problems exist, the local population has expressed positive attitudes towards tourism development. Therefore, it is proposed to build on the positive. Authorities should promote the positive attitudes of the local community to incoming tourists as a competitive advantage of the island's industry.

Nevertheless, opinions can change. "This can mean that past supporters of tourism may become opposers" (Ryan and Montgomery, 1994, p.369). Therefore, efforts should be made through education, awareness raising and enhancement of the

social welfare, to ensure that the support for tourism will continue in the long-term. Issues to be addressed should include the economic benefits of tourism for the island and the incentives that tourism provides for the conservation of cultural and natural resources that may not be supported by the local community. Attempts should be made to help the 'Socially and Environmentally Concerned' and 'Economic Sceptics' segments to understand the significance of the tourism industry for the island and to educate them about the many positive impacts that tourism brings to the destination. The ways to achieve this are through educational programmes, public meetings, workshops and advertising campaigns in the mass media, schools and various community organisations, e.g. environmental, religious, youth, cultural and traditional organisations.

The reality and the primary research show evidence of insufficient/low quality provision of services. To achieve greater visitor satisfaction, businessmen and local authorities should show greater concern for customer needs. Only if there is customer care assurance through better provision of services and hospitality, will there be an increase of tourist spending, length of stay and repeat visits. Training should be provided, as well as information and leaflets should be distributed to entrepreneurs, tourist employees and civil servants with guidelines on how to improve services and products offered to tourists. Due to the high competition faced by tourism enterprises, service quality has been recognised as an essential element of the tourist product by some enterprises (e.g. Grecotel) and it is believed that more enterprises will follow their example in the future.

The reality and primary research revealed that many managerial positions are held by expatriates. With the investments currently undertaken or proposed, many new positions for specialised professions, e.g. alternative forms of tourism, will be created. One aim of development is to create jobs for the local population. In order for tourism jobs to be occupied by the indigenous population rather than outsiders, there is a need for effective educational and training programmes and instruction seminars. However, the freedom of EC nationals to enter the island and work in its tourism industry and the illegal arrival of non-EC nationals may mean that job opportunities in the future for outsiders will increase.

Many of the residents used in the sample were not aware of the contribution of public sector bodies to the tourism development of the island. In particular, although the reality indicated that many infrastructural projects are under way, the community frequently complained about insufficient provision of infrastructure by the public sector. Therefore, public sector bodies should inform residents about the actions they undertake for tourism development and the positive outcomes of their activities for the host community's life. Thus, inaccurate perceptions can change, the dissatisfaction expressed by the local community with actions undertaken by the public sector may be reduced and consensus towards policies and planning initiatives may be achieved. Consequently, the support of the community to the actions of the public sector may be increased.

### **11.2.3 Better use of existing resorts and future focus on small-scale development**

The concentration of tourist supply in existing tourist resorts has some obvious advantages because infrastructural investments in just one centre, keeps tourism problems to these areas, permits greater use of existing infrastructure and creates economies of scale by requiring a smaller level of infrastructural investments. However, in the existing developed resorts and urban centres of the island no new accommodation is required, as existing establishments already possess a supply well in excess of demand. As a result, any growth in the supply of accommodation may further reduce the occupancy rates and may have detrimental effects on the already saturated environment. Therefore, for existing resorts the focus of tourism policy should be on the best use of existing establishments, rather than building new ones.

Nevertheless, as the investigation of the tourism development and planning process and the community survey suggested, the tourism product of these areas requires the enhancement of various types of facilities (shopping, recreational, sport, leisure, gambling and conferences centres and infrastructure) in order to meet existing and future demand. These facilities should be compatible with the

aim of sustainable development in order to avoid further degradation of environmental resources. Entrepreneurs should be encouraged by the Greek Government through various incentives to improve the standards of the tourist services, upgrade amenities and construct a range of facilities that will bring distinct benefits to the areas. The review of past incentives given by Development Laws and the opinions of some respondents suggested that the public sector has neglected small enterprises. Therefore, future investments should not only be directed to large enterprises but also to smaller, as long as they contribute to the enhancement of the tourism product.

Residents of the less-developed areas of the island may think that the control of tourism expansion in their areas will harm the goal of the economic revitalisation of their communities. In addition, from the business survey, it emerges that larger AEs tended to import managerial labour, compared to small and medium-sized establishments and that linkages for purchases of supplies from the local economy by large establishments fall dramatically, where smaller and medium-sized establishments tend to purchase locally. To increase benefits from tourism through higher participation of local investors in development, create employment opportunities for locals and reduce leakages from future developments, more small-scale tourist facilities and tourism centres should be developed, in the underdeveloped southern and inland areas of the island.

“Local entrepreneurs of small enterprises can, with modest outlay, contribute considerably to economic growth because they supply smaller markets, demand relatively small amounts of capital, use local resources and raw materials and do not require costly and sophisticated infrastructure” (Gannon, 1993, p.54). Therefore, as Ioannides (1994) has proposed for Cyprus, future small-scale developments in Crete may appear in the form of tourist villages, incorporating small traditional hotels or bed and breakfast establishments, restaurants, shops and various recreational, leisure and sport facilities, owned by local entrepreneurs under a shareholder scheme. Visitors in these villages can be regarded as ‘paying guests of the local community’. For the distribution of tourism to these areas, construction of infrastructure is necessary. Nevertheless, the incentives given by

the last Development Law (2601/98) and the responses of some interviewees show that the intentions of the Greek Government are directed to an increase in the number of large establishments leaving smaller enterprises without any help and giving less chance for the implementation of the above recommendations.

#### **11.2.4 Controlled growth and conservation of resources**

As it was evident the community is open to accept an increase in the number of tourists. The investigation of the tourism development and planning process has also shown that the island's capacity has not been reached. Therefore, a small increase in the number of tourists should be allowed (as Figure 11.1 illustrates) in order to increase the occupancy rates of the existing AEs and to attract customers for the proposed new small-scale investments. However, the island has many areas of ecological and environmental sensitivity or natural beauty that are its major attractions. Since the attractiveness of these areas depends upon their ecological balance, it is of the utmost importance to ensure environmental conservation by special legislation. Although, all tourists have an impact on a destination, alternative tourists are considered as low-impact (Krippendorf, 1982). Therefore, in these areas, alternative forms of tourism, such as eco-tourism, trekking and bird watching should be promoted. No building or any other types of development that destroy the unspoilt environment should be allowed. Sensitivity of local communities towards the preservation of the natural resources should be ensured through public information campaigns and the introduction of environmental courses into the curricula of schools. A series of car parks, trails, guided walks and signs should be provided to encourage environmentally-friendly activities with control and regulation of visitor viewing and activities. Likewise, more incentives for environmental conservation, such as biological cleaning, water and marine parks, green areas etc, should be given through European Community (EC) funding. For example, two unexploited coastal areas, the Agii Apostoli in Chania owned by the HNTO, and the ex-American base in Guves owned by the Ministry of Defence, could be transformed to green areas or thematic parks.

Any type of growth based on archaeological and cultural richness should be adjusted to their architectural, cultural and historical identity. Tourism should be developed and operated so as to promote conservation of archaeological sites and historic places, and revitalisation of the desirable aspects of traditional cultural patterns and arts, all of which represent the historic and cultural heritage of Crete. Priority should be given to their preservation and regulations should be applied to this end. Conversion of traditional or preservable buildings into hotels or for any other type of touristic use, e.g. restaurants, museums, cultural centres and traditional workshops, could be allowed under the condition that preservation will be ensured. Since archaeological and historical sites are major attractions for tourists, admission fees can cover the cost of investments for their enhancement and preservation. However, since governmental funding is limited, and the actions undertaken for environmental and cultural conservation and revitalisation are often contradictory, there are not many signs that any of the aforementioned recommendations will be adopted in the near future.

Since the local community perceives that there is limited control of the industry, something that is true, in order to avoid the mistakes of the past, the development of new destinations should not be based only on economic considerations but on environmental and cultural conservation and continuous and unprejudiced control. Only then, will these investments be environmentally-friendly, directed to the attraction of alternative and cultural forms of tourism and inspired by the local culture and architectural tradition. Therefore, mechanisms should be introduced to curb illegal building, the operation of unlicensed enterprises, as well as any kind of illegal transactions. For example, HNTA officials and local tourist authorities should visit tourist enterprises and inspect the standards of products/services offered and to see if they comply with regulations. An agency should also be established, responsible for the inspection of the conservation of environmental and cultural resources.

For the achievement of the above the development process needs to consider application of specific socio-cultural and environmental control measures in order to assure that no problems will result from future development. There should be

an environmental plan which will be the prerequisite for the achievement of the sustainable development of the island. This plan should consider the saturated areas and each area's carrying capacity limits, as well as the consequences if these limits are exceeded. In addition, it should aim at better control of tourism development (e.g. control to avoid further ribbon development, environmental preservation etc), taking into account all existing and planned facilities and the cumulative effects on the socio-cultural, natural and built environment. Development incentives not contributing to product improvement or causing problems for the island should be removed and disincentives, e.g. high license fees, should be reinforced for the discouragement of developments incompatible with the strategies of product improvement, image enhancement and environmental conservation. Likewise, the government should introduce the principle the 'polluter pays' so as to force developers to become accountable for any environmental degradation they cause. However, the political costs associated with the adoption of many of the above control measures may be an impediment to a higher control of the tourism industry.

#### **11.2.5 Elimination of the seasonality pattern and dependency on tour operators / Increase of economic benefits**

Both the reality and perceptions shared seasonality to be a problem of the island's tourism industry. Given the importance of the tourism industry to the viability of the island's economy, the profitability of many enterprises and employment and income creation, efforts should be made to extend the season. Attention should be given to the existing plan, mainly to its implementation stage, since past evidence shows that although many plans have been designed for the development of the island, most of them have not been implemented (Komilis, 1987).

Nowadays, the number of older people going on holiday is increasing. This demographic change of future tourists means that the senior citizens segment represents an untapped opportunity for the island. Demand for conference/incentive travel is also increasing and efforts should be made for the

attraction of these types of tourism. Appropriate incentives should be offered to attract conferences in winter and spring months, in particular in the existing large-scale AEs. Cultural and alternative forms of tourism should also be promoted. The rich environmental and cultural resources and the good weather (limited rainy days every year) can help in this end. For example, trekking holidays in the numerous forest trails of the island could reduce the seasonality characterised by the sun-seeking type of tourists.

A target of four markets: senior citizens, conference/incentive travel, cultural and alternative tourism offers an opportunity to the island for a more even seasonal pattern of tourism activity (the elderly tend to travel during low season periods and conferences are organised year round); increased tourist spending (conference delegates and early retired are regarded as big spenders) and distribution of tourists to the new tourist villages (cultural and alternative type of tourists tend to demand places with less tourism concentration).

However, seasonality depends on the availability of tourist attractions and services. Therefore, attractions and services outside the main summer season should be created or be available off-season. A significant opportunity for out-of-season tourism could be achieved in the largest cities of the island, where 'multi-season' attractions could be promoted through the organisation of cultural activities related to local circumstances. However, increased marketing activities are required from the authorities, such as promotional campaigns for off peak seasons, lower off peak prices, business and sporting events.

A major problem identified in this study was the control of the tourism industry by foreign tour operators. To eliminate this problem, the Cretan owned Charter Company, Air Greece, can be utilised to control a share of tourist flows to the island and reduce, to an extent, the monopolistic powers of the large tour operators, by selling the tourist package to tourists. In effect, an instrument for a more even dispersal of tourist arrivals in Crete can be achieved, by establishing regular charter flights from the major tourist generating countries, reducing the leakage of money to foreign airlines and allowing a higher import of foreign

exchange. Concurrently, the position of the island when competing with other tourist receiving destinations, which have established airlines, could be enhanced.

To enable the transfer of information between bodies and individuals interested in the purchase of tourist services and products, the establishment of a central reservation system is necessary. This system can be available on computer terminals at the HNTTO offices in Greece and abroad, as well as local offices. The Internet should be used for the provision of information to the travel market and to allow potential visitors to book accommodation, excursions, tourist attractions and events on-line. An over-dependence on Western European markets for a significant proportion of tourist traffic is evident which implies that the island runs the risk of reduced foreign exchange through tourism, if there is a fall in demand from such markets. Therefore, there is a need through promotional campaigns to attract other markets, than the Western European ones. For example, since TEI (1998) found that Russians spent the highest amounts of money during their stay, the share of this market in total arrivals should be increased in order to increase economic returns to the destination. This is potentially easy since there is a high demand by Russians to visit Greece and the only impediment to this is the difficulty of visa issuing. Easing of visa issuing to Russians may bring encouraging results.

There were some evidence that the island attracts the low spending markets and therefore owners/managers and residents argued that in order to increase the economic benefits of foreign exchange, the island should attract higher-spending tourists. The spending power of tourists attracted to Crete is directly related to the quality of the services offered and advertising. Crete has to improve the quality of services and use better advertising in order to attract higher spending tourists. The rich cultural and environmental heritage of Crete properly promoted could lead to a competitive advantage in the battle of the Mediterranean destinations to achieve a high portion of the high-income tourist market.

Although the island has a well-established tourism industry, the product is limited compared to the product provided by competitive destinations (Anagnostopoulou

et al., 1996). The narrow range of entertainment, recreational and sport facilities indicates high vulnerability compared to competing destinations offering diversified products tailored to specific tourist markets, and it exhibits a continuous over-reliance on the sun-sea-sand segment of the market. Therefore, it is important to re-design the tourist product so as to create a greater avenue for visitors to spend their money. Developments that generate higher tourist expenditure in entertainment, recreation, shopping etc., and organisation of festivals, cultural and sport events should be encouraged in the existing resorts and urban centres of the island. The use of differentiation strategies is essential in order to enhance tourist satisfaction, strengthen the island's competitiveness and in general provide a uniquely formulated product.

Agriculture has expanded substantially to serve the tourist industry of the island. As a result, a high share of agricultural production is consumed by the island's tourism industry. However, past research (Papadaki-Tzedaki, 1997) and the current study have shown that linkages with other sectors of the economy are limited. Mechanisms for increasing the linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy should be created. Local authorities should encourage tourism enterprises to use local materials and employ the local population. At present, most souvenirs sold on the island are made elsewhere. As a study by ATLAS (1997) shows incoming tourists demand local production. If profits from tourism are to remain in the community, efforts should be made by the government and the local authorities to encourage the production of folk art, ceramics, weaving, woodcarving and jewellery. By doing this, leakages will decrease and higher linkages between the tourist industry and other sectors of the economy will be created.

### **11.2.6 Stable tourism policy and co-ordination of activities**

From the responses of the study groups and the investigation of the tourism development and planning process, it was evident that there is a lack of co-ordination between private and public sector activities. Until now, the

administrative structure of the tourism system in Crete has not involved the local community adequately or early enough in the planning process. Consequently, policies very often fail in their implementation, resulting in adverse effects for the island and its population (Anagnostopoulou et al., 1996). Without the inclusion of the local community in decision-making, and sufficient collaboration of the private and public sector bodies, planning has little hope of long-lasting success.

All community members should realise that the benefits from working together are much greater than pursuing individual objectives. Local community and public and private bodies should work to design an integrated autonomous (Cretan) tourism policy, although in accordance with national and EC policy. Consultation mechanisms that empower a representative sample of Cretan community members to affect decision-making may help to this end. This requires discussions with representatives of both commercial and community interests and academics in order to establish a multi-disciplinary team of experts on the island, so that a co-ordinated master plan to be formulated. This plan should be directed towards the elimination of negative tourism impacts, better use of EC funding and the reinforcement of measures for the balanced development of the island.

To achieve the above the establishment of the Tourism Company offers hopes. In order the Company to bring optimal outcomes it should be an autonomous organisation, relying on Greek Government only for grant aid. For a more competitive tourist product, the Tourism Company should act as an ongoing network for communication between the private sector, government agencies and local community, by embracing all tourism interests and allowing a consultation mechanism that will be able to provide help for tourist problems. The Tourism Company should be committed to working together with EC, local communities, and the public and private sector, to the mutual advantage of the island and its population. Only then will implementation approaches be tailored to local circumstances and local, regional, national and European policies. However, since the funding of the establishment and running of the Tourism Company is relatively low and there is a high intervention of the central government in its actions the success of the Company is questionable.

### **11.2.7 Planning - monitoring - timing**

To sum up, it is essential to note that none of the aforementioned recommendations is sufficient alone. The Cretan tourism industry has many opportunities for expansion, but also faces serious problems and various attempts are required to tackle them. There is a need to draw up a plan for tourism development, backed by the whole community in order to achieve the optimisation of benefits, maximum efficiency of available funds and minimisation of costs. It is imperative for this plan to clarify the goals, strategies, means and bodies of implementation. Tourism is a dynamic activity and does not function in a vacuum, but in an environment where at any time conflicting interests and changing circumstances can detect the development process (WTO, 1998). Thus, continuous monitoring and reassessment of the international, national and domestic factors affecting tourism development in Crete are necessary.

The above recommendations need a time plan. In the short-term, emphasis should be on the completion and/or improvement of existing infrastructure, construction of more infrastructure and small-scale AEs in the large villages, designing various plans for marketing, education and training, environmental management, and better use of existing facilities. Marketing should be mostly targeted at existing market segments until some product improvements are made. In the medium-term, the aim should be on the implementation of the plans and marketing should be directed particularly at attracting new market segments. Over the longer-term, the strategy should build upon previously established initiatives, completing and monitoring plans and making any necessary changes. When the product has advanced, new markets can be targeted and the island can be promoted as a major world tourism destination. However, limited funding, current tourism policy, bureaucratic and organisational difficulties and centralised administration leave few hopes for the implementation of many of the above recommendations.

### 11.3 FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Although this study has provided insight into community perceptions in the tourism development and planning process and gave proposals for the further development of the island, research is needed to substantiate further the findings of the present study.

If one of the goals of tourism development is to achieve sustainability, future research should be directed towards the impacts of tourism development on the local community. Although there are many studies examining the residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and the stages of community transformation from tourism development, most studies have not placed emphasis on changes in local community attitudes at the different stages of development.

Most past research (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Allen et al., 1988; Davis et al., 1988; Ap, 1990; Mok et al., 1991; Allen et al., 1993; Evans, 1993; Getz, 1994; Johnson et al., 1994; Ryan and Montgomery, 1994; Seid, 1994; Madrigal, 1995; Akis et al., 1996; Carmichael et al., 1996; Hernandez et al., 1996; Lawson et al., 1998; Ryan et al., 1998; Snaith, and Haley, 1999; Chen, 2000; Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Tomljenovic and Faulkner, 2000) is concentrated on the investigation of residents' perceptions of tourism ignoring the perceptions of other community groups. The opinion survey carried out for the purpose of this study was restricted, for time and financial considerations, to the local authorities, residents and business sector. However, there is a need to collect information from more stakeholder groups. Tourism development directly or indirectly involves the support of many community groups, such as non tourism-related entrepreneurs and managers, tourism employees, tour operators, consultants, airline operators, national government and transportation experts, whose attitudes should be incorporated into future developments.

Any study of local community perceptions of tourism development must consider differences in perceptions within the community. As Phillips (1994) states communities are not fixed in their attitudes, nor are they likely to share identical

attitudes and therefore it is essential to identify the factors affecting their attitudes. This study has examined eight possible types of segmentation: city, length of residence, employment reliance, income, age, gender, education and clustering. The segmentation of residents identified considerable uniformity of opinion. Further segmentation using additional variables is needed. For example, birthplace, residents' involvement in tourism decision-making and residents' image of their region. Similarly, despite attempts to investigate local community perceptions of the role of public sector bodies in tourism development, there is a need for further research into this subject, since support for the local or national government and voting/political preferences, may be explanatory of attitudes towards tourism development.

Similarly, in any study of tourism enterprises, categorisation would be helpful, in order to investigate any variables that explain enterprises' characteristics and development patterns. This study used three categories: size of AEs, sector and location. Further categorisation could be undertaken on the basis of organisational structure (e.g. partnership or sole proprietor), business motives (e.g. profit orientation, supplementary income, community service), local or foreign ownership/management and number of employees.

Past research into Cretan community perceptions of tourism development is limited and focused on single aspects of tourism, e.g. family change through tourism (Kousis, 1984; 1989) and the social impacts of tourism (Tsartas et al., 1995) and have made no attempt to examine community perceptions of the overall tourism environment. Other studies (e.g. Greger, 1988; Herzfeld, 1991) were concerned with changes resulting from the overall development of a Cretan community and investigated tourism as a factor of change among others in the development process of the destination. Most of the existing research has been conducted in one community or region of the island without providing any statistical evidence of their findings. Only Tsartas et al. (1995) provided some statistical evidence by conducting interviews in more than one community. However, these communities were not spread throughout the island, but were located in Lassithi Prefecture.

This study is among the first attempts to investigate various aspects of tourism development (social, environmental and economic) as perceived by community groups. The sample used for this study was a significant improvement over past attitudinal studies in Crete, examining community groups from 16 areas of the island, more evenly distributed throughout Crete. However, due to various constraints, these areas are not representative of all Cretan communities, since the study areas were concentrated in the northern part of the island which is relatively dependent upon tourism. Given the importance of the host community to the goal of tourist satisfaction, there is a need for research into local community attitudes of areas with varying levels of tourism development throughout the island in order to investigate the extent of tourism development diffusion and its outcomes for these areas.

Development and its effects are a dynamic process. Therefore, the effects of tourism today do not necessarily reflect the impact several years later. A longitudinal study of the same community groups in five to ten years time will be appropriate to see if the perceptions of the community members have changed and if tourism development has increased problems or benefits. Regular monitoring of community attitudes could provide information on the needs, views and desires of host communities. A system of collecting longitudinal data should be established in order to monitor any changes in local community's perceptions and support for tourism development. If developers and planners are aware of the community's perceptions of tourism impacts, they may be able to take action aimed at increasing the community's welfare and anticipating any resentment towards incoming tourists. Similarly, there is a need to establish a permanent system of monitoring and reviewing a representative sample of establishments to provide up-to-date information on potential changes. By collecting data on the operational characteristics of enterprises, the efficiency of tourism policies for the welfare of enterprises can be realised.

On the supply side, through the investigation of community attitudes and desires for tourism development this survey can help developers and planners to identify a community product as suggested by the local community. However, a dilemma

may arise. Does the product match the aspirations and expectations of tourists? Given the challenges which tourism faces in the near future, there is a need to link this research of supply with surveys that describe demand characteristics through visitor surveys. Tourist-generating countries exhibit considerable variations in their socio-economic structures which critically influence their spending power and the tourist goods and services they are likely to buy. There is a need for answers to questions such as: Who are the tourists? Why do they come? What do they do during their stay? How satisfied are they with the island's tourism product? Replies to these questions are essential, to underpin effective tourism development policies and strategies, produce more effective promotional campaigns and find out the types of tourists that better meet the development objectives of the island.

Although, the island attracts thousands of tourists every year, bringing various impacts to the island, not many surveys have been carried out investigating various aspects of tourism development which parts of this study sought to address. In particular, little research has been done on the economic effects of foreign tourism on the island, e.g. multiplier effects, direct and indirect effects of foreign tourism on income and employment, as well as environmental impacts. Carrying capacities of tourist areas have not been specified. In order to identify the number of tourists to be attracted without any further degradation of the environmental and cultural resources, further research should determine the carrying capacity of each site.

The idea of community representation in the development and planning process has been touched on frequently in this thesis. The data presented in this study shows clearly that the investigation of the outcomes of the tourism development and planning process and the perceptions of the local community can contribute to the development of a destination by identifying community's needs and desires. Various techniques are available to incorporate community groups in the development and planning process. The technique adopted in this thesis was personal interviews with three study groups. There is a need for future research to use other mechanisms to solicit community opinions, such as public meetings,

focus groups, nominal group techniques, and drop-in-centres, in order to test their efficiency in the tourism development and planning process.

#### **11.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Despite some negative consequences arising from the unplanned evolution of tourism in Crete, the island has many unspoiled beaches, perhaps among the last in the Mediterranean. Many areas, mainly in the underdeveloped coastal southern part of the island and the hinterland, have remained untouched by tourism expansion. The prediction is that tourism activity will expand further. Although the diffusion of tourism activity to more areas of the island will further increase the economic benefits, there will be further exploitation of resources and a subsequent increase in negative environmental and social impacts. To avoid or at least minimise potential problems from the future tourism expansion of the island, there is a need for careful planning, financing, and policy implementation, as well as incorporation of the local community perceptions into the development and planning process in order to ensure host acceptability of further tourism development.

The methodology used in this thesis can be thought of as a process for reinforcing positive outcomes and solving problems through the investigation of the reality and community perceptions. The process used is comprehensive and integrated and proceeds from the investigation of the tourism development and planning process to specific strategies and recommendations. It has been adapted for communities of the island of Crete, which have an already established tourism industry. However, tourism dynamics vary from destination to destination and each community may need to adopt its own response to development, since a similar process can result in different outcomes. In this sense, it is extremely difficult to make generalised universally-accepted proposals for tourist destinations. What is certain, is the significance of the tourism industry for the island and the islanders.