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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MUNICIPAL LEADERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership and Change

by

Panagiotē G. Tsolis

July 2024

H. Eric Schockman, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

The dissertation, written by

Panagiotē G. Tsolis

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Doctoral Committee:

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DEDICATION

Χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά.

Beautiful things are difficult.

This Ph.D. is dedicated to those who have supported me throughout the years. My loving Stella Kapolou, for always standing by my side. To parents Christos and Panagioula, and my siblings Konstantinos and George. Our unity as a family is our strength.

Furthermore, this is dedicated to Greeks worldwide who are looking to preserve our natural and cultural heritage. Hellenism has a beautiful future if we all start willing to work together.

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This journey to completion has many challenges, from navigating through a pandemic to moving across the world and starting a new life. My immediate family are Christos Tsolis, Panagioula Tsolis, Konstantinos Tsolis, George Tsolis, and Stella Kapolou. The extended family members whose contribution to my success could be a dissertation in itself. These extended family members include George Balomenos, Evangelia Balomenou, Argyris Balomenos, Anastasia Rafti, Ari Balaskas, Andriani Balaska, Theodosia Balaskas, Haralambos Balaskas, Nikos Marinakis, Billy Hioureas, Maria Marinakis, Dionysus Kountroupis, Eleni Kountroupi, Katerina Kountroupi, Lina Kountroupi, Achilleas Koukas, my father's bother, Anastasios Tsolis and the family of Thia Fotini, Konstantinos, Georgios, Nasia, Fotini, and Antonia.

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Thank you to my colleagues and friends from the Hellenic American University, Dr. Ermioni Karachaliou and Dr. Panagiotis Kalozoumis, for their support in translating and transcribing Greek and English.

Last but not in any way least, those who helped or did all they could to help. Regardless of the outcome of your efforts, your help was greatly appreciated. Giannis Kapolos, Dimitris Mpakaliaris, Kostas Mitsis, Leonidas Karakidis, Dr. Christos Papakosta, Dr. Damianos Giannakis, Nikos Rotas, Alexander Skouras, and George Xoulogis for your help and support. I want to thank the mayors who were willing to participate in this research. I hope this research gives your profession more tools to service your communities.

VITA

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Education:

Pepperdine University – Graduate School of Education and Psychology – 2024

Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership and Change

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- Taught via face-to-face, hybrid, online, and asynchronously in the MBA, and BSBA programs.
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- Provide academic standards to levels accepted by the Hellenic Ministry of Education and NECHE and initiate the IACBE business accreditation process.
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A WSCUC Accredited institution in San Marcos California. Responsible for teaching one to two online and asynchronous courses per semester. Designed multiple courses from scratch that provided multiple learning techniques.

Director of Managed Services and Consulting, VizExplorer 2015–2020

A VC-funded start-up business intelligence tool focused on the entertainment, hospitality, and casino gaming market. Analyzed customer marketing programs and developed customer success programs and provided ROI opportunities. Developed training programs, learning outcomes for both onsite and online training. Developed sales demonstrations for potential clients. Identified development opportunities for the CRM software campaignViz.

Consolidated Marketing Manager, MGM Resorts International 2014–2015

A department was built and designed to test and analyze the marketing consolidation of several properties. Worked with the marketing heads of the fourteen separate brands and identifying test populations to review against current programs. Marketing segmentation based on multiple customer profiles within the 20-million-member database of the Mlife loyalty program. Developed customer lifecycles for online booking patterns, SEO optimization, gamification, and customer acquisition strategy.

Casino Marketing Manager, Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas 2010–2013

Pre-opening management team tasked to open the \$4 billion resort casino during the peak of the great recession. Talent acquisition, training, and development of over fifty employees within a month of grand opening. Managed and developed a \$100 million annual budget managing expenses, P&L, and revenue opportunities. Developed the VIP customer experience with tournaments and events. Managed high-end customer experience and ticketing for top concerts with artists such as Adel, Smashing Pumpkins, Florance and The Machine, and Blink 182. Developed marketing programs both nationally and internationally. Developed reporting regarding productivity, event performance, and corporate partnership success. Developed the customer lifecycle and loyalty program launch.

Casino Marketing Supervisor, The Mirage Casino-Hotel 2008–2010

Directly supervised the casino marketing call center for twenty coordinators and five telemarketing representatives. Indirectly managed and supported thirty casino hosts and three full-time Sadow Creek Golf Course marketing associates. Developed company marketing strategy targeting customers via email and direct marketing for events and promotions. Develop analytics and reporting. Hire, train, and develop team members and nurture their development to meet multiple departmental needs. Design marketing collateral and copywriting.

Lead Gourmet Food Runner, Japonais at The Mirage Casino-Hotel 2006–2008

Ensured efficient order flow between the waitstaff and kitchen. Prioritize orders and assist in dish preparation, ensuring accuracy and presentation. Train Food Runners on the menu, drink, and wine selection.

Pool Services Supervisor, The Mirage Casino-Hotel 2004–2006

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- Member of the Board of Advisors, Gaming Knowledge Centers 2022–2023

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- Associate Board of Ambassadors, American Cancer Society 2016–2019
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- Alumni Board Member, UNLV Lee Business School EMBA Program 2015–2017
- Food Festival Committee, Saint John the Baptist GOC 2015–2016
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- Board Member, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of American – FDF 2013–2014

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- 2023: Hellenic American College – Athens, Greece: Η επιχειρηματικότητα σε περιβάλλον αβεβαιότητας: τα συστατικά της επιτυχίας.
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 - BUS375 Foundations of Entrepreneurial Management, Hellenic American University
 - BUS 385: Business Analytics for Decision Making, Hellenic American University
 - BUS 400: Special Topics in Business, University of Saint Katherine
 - BUS 489: Business Internship, Hellenic American University
 - BUS 499 Business Capstone, Hellenic American University
 - HM 122: Food and Beverage Management, Hellenic American University
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 - MK 350: Market Research for Consumer, Hellenic American University
 - MK 360: Services Marketing, Hellenic American University
 - MK 380: B-2-B Marketing, Hellenic American University
 - MK 410: Advertising & Public Relations, Hellenic American University

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 - 2024: University of Houston C.T. Bauer College of Business – Facilitated business visits in Athens, Greece. Companies include Kaizen Gaming, Delta Foods, Elpen Pharmaceuticals, and Markellos Olive - Olive Oil tour & tasting.
 - 2024: Stetson University – Facilitated business visits in Athens, Greece. Companies include the Ellinikon Project, Lamda Development, GEK TERNA, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Athens, Delta Foods, and U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Greece.
 - 2023: Gaming Knowledge Center – HAU: Collaboration SDSU and NDSU to lecture on casino management with site visits to the Hellenic Gaming Commission, Kaizen Gaming, and Regency Gaming.

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- 2023: Pokeraki.gr: Παναγιώτης Τσόλης στο pokeraki.gr: Οι χαμένες ευκαιρίες και το μελλοντικό στοίχημα για τα καζίνο στην Ελλάδα
- 2023: Pokeraki.gr: 3ο GAME Greece: Όλα όσα έγιναν την πρώτη μέρα του μεγάλου event – Athens, Greece: Recap of my participation in the conference.
- 2023: Star Channel: Ελλάδα στην καρδιά μας – Athens, Greece: Interview with the mayor of Alimos on Tourism for municipalities in Greece
- 2023: UNLV Alumni Magazine – Las Vegas, Nevada: Quote on time management.
- 2023: PODCAST: INVIGORATE YOUR BUSINESS WITH GEORGE STROUMBOULIS – Athens, Greece: Speaking to Business Students at the American Hellenic University | George Stroumboulis E016
- 2022: PODCAST: INVIGORATE YOUR BUSINESS WITH GEORGE STROUMBOULIS – Athens, Greece: CASINOS & EDUCATION WITH PETE TSOLIS | E008 PODCAST
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ABSTRACT

The Hellenic Republic relies heavily on the summer tourism industry for economic growth (Kouri, 2012). The objective has been to increase demand for lesser-known destinations and encourage visitation outside the peak summer period. However, expanding the tourism offering is complex, as tourism destination networks are some of the most complex systems (da Fontoura Costa & Baggio, 2009). There are no official national framework for sustainable tourism in the Hellenic Republic. However, multiple national frameworks for sustainable tourism within the Hellenic Republic have been designed, focusing on tourism or regions and natural preserves. The problem is that municipal leaders' perspectives are not mentioned within any current frameworks for sustainable tourism in the Hellenic Republic. Municipal leaders are the closest form of government and directly affect local populations. This study facilitated qualitative phenomenological methods to interview twelve municipal leaders from nine of the thirteen regions of Greece. Research findings indicate that municipal leaders approached leadership as individuals or as a municipality leading its community. Leaders stress their need to create improvements within the bureaucratic system in Greece. They shared their desire to deter mass tourism. Leaders discussed collaborating with higher education and academics to develop sustainable tourism development programs. The need and desire to expand the tourism season into the offseason was evident. Within their answers, participants had knowingly or unknowingly mentioned multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and, in some instances, connected multiple goals in their answers. Recommendations for further research include expanding this research between municipalities and their regions and the relative ministries.

Keywords: agrotourism, complexity, cultural tourism, development, green economy, infrastructure, private-public partnerships, systematic planning, sustainable, tourism policy

Chapter 1: Introduction

Traveling to Greece means different things to different people. For some, it is the thrill of island hopping in the Cyclades. For others, it is reading poetry under the pine trees of Philopappos Hill while facing the Acropolis. Culture, antiquity, and landscape are some of the top reasons Greece is and continues to be a worldwide tourist destination. Greece relies heavily on the "sun-sea-antiquities tourism product" (Kouri, 2012, p. 63). However, as Greece emerges from the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has become a topic of interest for policymakers and investors alike.

The tourism sector encompasses many industries and has been a leading driver of economic growth in many countries, including Greece. Tourism alone generates up to 18% of the gross domestic product and accounts for nearly 900,000 jobs in Greece (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). Tourism offerings for visitors visiting Greece need to focus on more than just seeing a museum or swimming in the sea. Greece's location in the eastern Mediterranean makes it easily accessible to travelers with direct flights from all over Europe, the eastern United States, north Africa, the Middle East, and as far into Asia as Singapore and Beijing. The direct access to substantial populations gives Greece the foundations to build and grow on its success in tourism as it looks to extend its tourism season and develop alternative visitations. Expanding the tourism offering is not a simple task, as tourism destination networks are some of the most complex systems (da Fontoura Costa & Baggio, 2009). These systems include multiple industries, such as hospitality, food production, ground transportation, sea transportation, air transportation, education, and support services.

In 2012, the United Nations (n.d.) held a conference on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro, which resulted in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs have

since become the global benchmark for sustainable development, with all 193 member states signing the agreement to meet the goals by 2030 (United Nations, n.d.). Many countries use these 17 goals in their directing policy, private-public partnerships, and sustainable planning in tourism. SDG 8 (promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all) has the target to promote beneficial and sustainable tourism with the indicator of the tourism's contribution to the gross domestic product. SDG 12 (to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) specifically mentions tourism as a target to develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable tourism with the indicator to monitoring sustainable tourism. Although few SDGs directly mention tourism, all SDGs can provide a model for sustainable development (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020).

Currently, there are no official frameworks for sustainable tourism in Greece. The lack of strategic thinking has left many Mediterranean destinations suffering from the consequences of mass tourism. Policymakers such as tourism ministries, provincial and local governments, and industry stakeholders are making decisions that affect local communities. The effects of missing frameworks for development and lack of structures in Greece are seen on popular island destinations of Santorini and Mykonos, where visits, prices, and bookings for two of the most iconic destinations dropped sharply during the summer of 2023 (Paravantes, 2023a). Resulting in overpriced food, mass tourism, and developmental expansion disregard of cultural heritage and island sustainability. Therefore, it is imperative to take existing frameworks and identify gaps for the tourism policymakers as they are the driving stakeholders for the conversation on sustainable tourism.

Background of the Study

Over the years, the Hellenic Republic has made a targeted effort to grow its offerings to visitors to more than just these leisure options. In southern Europe and on the bottom of the Balkan peninsula, surrounded by the Ionian, Mediterranean, and Aegean seas, Greece has a coastline spanning 13,676 km (8,498 mi). This coastline is the largest in the Mediterranean Sea, giving Greece the 11th largest coastline in the world. Containing over 6,000 islands and islets scattered across the seas, the 227 inhabited islands provide unique cultural identities and historical significance. Known as the cradle of Western Civilization, Greece, or the Hellenic Republic as often referred to, depends heavily on tourism. The country has 10.8 million residents (Hellenic Statistical Authority, n.d.-a). Given the success of tourism in recent years, the government and industry are looking to expand offerings by developing the season and promoting fewer known regions. Dimitris Fragakis, the Secretary-General of the Greek National Tourism Organization, said:

Greece is not just sun and beach, and it's not only the islands. The beaches are also beautiful in northern Greece, and western Greece. Nobody knows these kinds of places. So, we want to promote them. We want to show the people that you can go to a lot of places in order to have a quality vacation. (as cited in Carbonaro, 2022, para. 9)

The 2007–2008 U.S. subprime mortgage collapse heavily affected Greece, resulting in a global banking crisis and credit crunch. With borrowing costs rising, Greece was unable to service its outstanding debt, resulting in an economic depression from 2010–2018 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). The financial crisis disrupted every aspect of Greek society with "GDP loss (almost 30%), rising unemployment (reaching an unprecedented 28%) and deepening poverty (with more than one-third of the population at risk of social exclusion)" (Tzifakis et al., 2017, p. 2178). These economic troubles were from years of mismanagement of funds,

overspending on projects such as the 2004 Summer Olympics, and government corruption. Greece ranks 58/180 for corruption, scoring 49/100 on the national corruption index—a slight increase from years past (Transparency, 2022). Although there is recent growth within these metrics, Greece has needed much improvement to be considered one of the most business-friendly countries. Another metric that stifles the country's ability to grow is a significant underground economy. In Greece, this is known as *μαύρο χρήμα* or "black money," which includes untaxed income and undocumented labor. There is a strong correlation between tax evasion, the underground economy, and high poverty levels in the Greek population (Danopoulos & Znidaric, 2007). The increased tax evasion also limits the country's funds for infrastructure development and other social benefits. Furthermore, Greece ranks high on the Corruption Perception Index as Danopoulos and Znidaric noted that Greece has a poor development state and inadequate private initiative entrepreneurial efficiency. An attempt to lower this is in alignment with SDG 16 (to promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies with the target of substantially reducing corruption and bribery). Indicators to support SDG 16 and improve the corruption perception index are 16.5.1 (bribery prevalence) and 16.5.2 (bribery in business).

The economic recovery has shown exceptional growth in the last several years as unemployment dropped from 24.9% in 2015 to 14.7% in 2021 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, n.d.-a). However, this decrease in the unemployment rate has not meant an increase in the standard of living for every Greek household. The United Nations and World Bank classify a person as living in poverty when the resident's income is less than 60% of the average per capita (Danopoulos & Znidaric, 2007). The World Bank (n.d.) reports that in 2021 18.8% of the Greek population is living below the poverty line. The growth may support Greece in the effort to

achieve SDG 8 with inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all with indicator 8.1.1, GDP per capita growth. During the economic recovery, the lower wages helped as the labor was priced more competitively than in other Eurozone countries. Sustainable poverty reduction can happen when low wages are high enough to reduce poverty yet low enough to compete against rivals in labor-intensive industries (Patwary, 2020). Poverty and homelessness among Greek citizens, the influx of refugees, and the number of immigrants are statistics that Greek authorities consistently refuse to recognize (Arapoglou, 2004). The lack of data does not properly support SDG 1 to end poverty.

Furthermore, the lack of data minimizes the country's ability to identify issues and develop policies to rectify them. These issues affect qualitatively in multiple ways because poverty, inadequate housing, living conditions, long periods of unemployment, and the absence of a supportive social/family network show signs of significant physical and mental health burdens (Papadakaki et al., 2021). The mental health impact from the economic crises had carried into the COVID-19 pandemic as seen by data from the Helpline for Psychosocial Support amid COVID-19. The Helpline, operated by the First Department of Psychiatry at the University of Athens, where 30.4% of the calls received during the pandemic were regarding anxiety over the economy as “fears for the economy are reminiscent of the prior financial crisis” (Peppou et al., 2021, p. 408).

Government Structure: Hellenic Republic

The Greek government is a unitary parliamentary republic with a prime minister and deputy prime minister. Tourism mainly falls under the Ministry of Tourism and the minister of state. The Tourism Ministry also has a deputy minister for tourism education and special forms of tourism with several other ministries that indirectly can affect tourism. Compared to most of

its counterparts in the Eurozone, Greece has very centralized administrative, political, and fiscal structures (Psycharis et al., 2015). Psycharis et al. stated that this approach:

Contradicts the constitutional demand, which states that public administration of the country should be organized according to the decentralization principle (Greek Constitution, Article 102). It also opposes the European Charter of Local Self-Government protocol of 1985 ratified by Greece, which demands the highest possible autonomy of local government (Council of Europe, 1985). Contrary to these demands, Greece has remained largely a fiscally centralized state, giving limited autonomy to local government. (p. 263)

Chorianopoulos (2012) argued that, unlike postwar Western European countries, Greece's first two decades were met with civil war (1945–1949) and a military dictatorship (1967–1974), resulting in an era of civil rights restrictions and authoritarian rule. Furthermore, during the dictatorship, the local-level authorities and public sector officials were appointed by national authorities.

Instability is a common theme with the Tourism Ministry of the Hellenic Republic. Greek National Tourism Organization was founded in 1950 (Tsilimigkas et al., 2022). The Ministry of Tourism was officially founded in 1989 and has continued through abolition, reinstitution, and mergers (Kouri, 2012). Before the economic crisis, the center-right government (New Democracy Party 2004–2009) made it a national aim to have the ministry attract and develop year-round tourism by investing in alternative tourism such as offseason promotion with the Ministry of Tourism Development. In 2009, the ruling socialist government of Greece (PASOK) made significant revisions by merging the ministries of culture and tourism to create the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kouri, 2012). Kouri described the opposition from rival

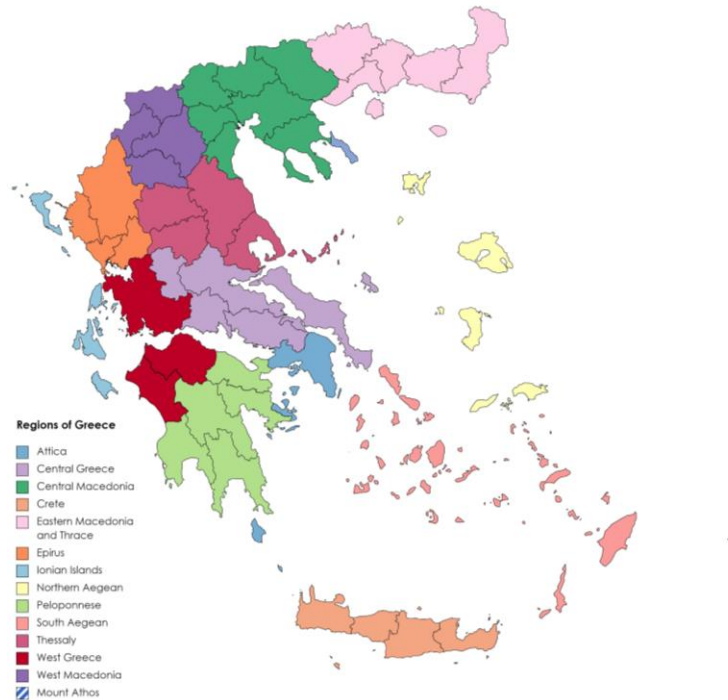
parties contesting the merger as it was thought to disadvantage the ministry in working during the economic crisis. This merger concerned policymakers internationally due to increasing tensions between sociocultural and financial objectives. In June 2012, Greece created the Ministry of Tourism with extended responsibilities in overseeing all policy, regulation, planning, and programming of tourism development (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014).

The tourism ministry in Greece is heavily associated with the ruling party and often is subject to administrative change after election periods. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis reappointed Olga Kefalogianni as the tourism minister of Greece after New Democracy's win in the 2023 elections. Mitsotakis remains prime minister (first taking office in 2019), while the tourism ministry has seen leadership changes from Harry Theoharis, Vasilis Kikilias, and Ioanna Dretra showing that changes may take place during the transfer of power between administrations as well as during a ruling party's term. Kefalogianni is serving her second term as minister, having served between 2012 and 2015 under Prime Minister Antonis Samaras (New Democracy). She is a seasoned lawyer and has worked for law firms in Athens and New York and has worked at the Legal Services of the European Commission in Brussels.

In 1986, Greece was broken into 13 regional governments (Periferias): Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Central Macedonia, Western Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Ionian Islands, Western Greece, Central Greece, Attica, Peloponnesus, Northern Aegean, Southern Aegean, and Crete. Policies and plans within the regions are executed at the regional level, while within regions, there are multiple municipal governments. Greece has historically shown poor structures at the local and regional levels (Karampela et al., 2016). The poor structures limit tourism development and stakeholder input. Jurdana (2018) explained that stakeholders often

have conflicting interests and objectives. Stakeholders could share their lessons learned to establish a successful network (Garcia & Cater, 2020). Additionally, tourism ministries could expose stakeholders to standardized SDGs to promote integrated thinking and reduce debates on sustainable development objectives (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). The approach aligns with SDG 17, which addresses global partnership for sustainable development. The relevant SDG 17 target for tourism is 17.14, targeting the enhancement of policy coherence for sustainable development. Including local and regional levels allows their constituents to participate via elections in situations that affect their community.

Municipal is relating to a town or district or its governing body. A city is a more significant human settlement or larger town. In Greek, the word “demos” can be used similarly to the English word municipal. In ancient Greek, demos was a village, township, or small community (Elden, 2003). The word can be used for the whole community, mainly when assembled, and sometimes a particular community section. In modern Greek, the term refers to a commune. The same word is the core of the term *democracy* or, in Greek, *demokratia*. For example, the city of Athens in modern Greece has a greater metropolitan area of 40 municipalities (demos), with the largest two being the demos of Athens and Piraeus. Figure 1 illustrates the different regions.

Figure 1*Regions of Greece*

Note. Adapted from MapChart, by MapChart, 2024 (<https://www.mapchart.net/greece.html>) and Adapted from Ένωση Περιφερειών Ελλάδας (Association of Greek Regions), by Ένωση Περιφερειών Ελλάδας (Association of Greek Regions), 2024 (<https://enpe.gr/el/perifereies>) in the public domain.

Greece is a unique country with a mainland with municipalities on mountains, lakes, and several island clusters. These elements can stimulate or hinder a municipality's economic prosperity and autonomy (Psycharis et al., 2015). For example, an island's beauty may drive tourist demand, yet its distance from the mainland may result in importing the resources to the island via ferries to host tourists. Greece is a centralized state giving limited autonomy to local governments (Psycharis et al., 2015). In 1997, Law 2539, implemented during the Kapodistrias reform, reduced the number of municipalities and communities in Greece communes to 1,034

(900 municipalities and 134 communes) from the previous total of 5,775 (377 municipalities and 5,398 communes). Then, in 2010, Law 3852, implemented during the Kallikratis reform, continued the reduction from 1,034 municipalities and communes to 325 municipalities (Psycharis et al., 2015). The reduction has improved the number of different municipalities but has yet to allow municipalities more autonomy on policy. The municipality can gain more autonomy if its mayor sides with the national ruling party. The municipality's alliance with the ruling party gives the mayor more authority while persuading the populace to keep the ruling party in power. Therefore, this practice has remanences of political cronyism in which appointments are based on associations (Zudenkova, 2015).

The centralized approach found in the literature contradicts some scholars as it is believed it is necessary to link the tourism industry with the regional economy while linking the ecological environment with the opportunities for economic growth (Balsalobre-Lorente et al., 2021; Huang & Wang, 2022). Community-based tourism is a type of tourism that can enhance communities' socioeconomic growth and cultural heritage (Nomnian et al., 2020). It can be the community's most valuable asset if managed and appropriately planned, differentiating it from other communities (Nechita et al., 2018). Therefore, allowing individual communities more autonomy in tourism will see greater economic returns while preserving their heritage for future generations.

The Hellenic Republic and Tourism

Hosting over 17 million visitors annually is an enormous undertaking for a country of roughly 11 million inhabitants. The concept of tourism and leisure stems from the ancient Greek civilization, as the concept was considered the basis of culture and virtue (Moirá et al., 2017). *Philoxenia*, the Greek word for hospitality, is translated as a friend to a stranger. Strangers,

without any expectation, were under the protection of Zeus Xenios and Athena Xenia, deities in the ancient Greek pantheon and patrons for foreigners. Not providing exceptional hospitality can result in harm happening to the host, as seen by Odysseus blinding the cyclops in the *Odyssey* (Homer, 1919).

Tourism, in the modern sense of visiting places for leisure or pleasure, began in the 18th and 19th centuries, with travelers partaking in the history of ancient Greek civilization (Tsilimigkas et al., 2022). Modern travelers still enjoy the ancient heritage. Museum visitation increased 36.4% from 1,759,045 in 2022 to 2,399,578 in 2023 while archaeological sites increased 38% from 1,250,413 in 2022 to 1,725,022 in 2023 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, n.d.-b). GDP growth is associated with the increase in visitation. According to Hackl and Hatzimarinakis (2023), tourism grew from 2010 to 2019, from 7,026 to 10,994 million Euros, an average annual growth rate of 5.1% directly related to tourism. A significant driver of tourism to Greece is the wonders of the over 6,000 islands and islets, with 227 of them inhabited. Major islands include Crete, Euboea, Rhodes, Chios, Mykonos, and Santorini. The islands are interconnected with a network of ports and ferry boats. Ferry boats can often transport motor vehicles along with passengers between the islands. The level of development on each island may be different. Karampela et al. (2016) explained that on many Greek islands, confusion, and lack of explicit operational guidelines for sustainable tourism have led to confusion about achieving sustainable goals.

Over the past few years, Greece has created multiple approaches to lure visitors away from the peak tourist seasons of the summer to those in the winter (Krinis, 2023). The campaigns launched by the tourism ministry highlight that Greece has more to offer than just the islands and summer activities. It includes more direct flights and an extended flight schedule from previous

years. The approach is to combat the risk of more popular sites falling to "over-tourism," as over-tourism can affect the locations and communities within these places. Diverse popular tourist destinations, such as Venice, Dubrovnik, Barcelona, and Bali, have their resident communities charting towards the higher zones of Doxey's Index of Irritation, an index for understanding how residents feel about tourists and the development of tourism in the different stages of a destination's life cycle (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2017).

In 2023, many European cities-imposed initiatives to combat over-tourism. Amsterdam created an advertising campaign targeting British men ages 18 to 35 to discourage overdrinking and the use of drugs. Florence proposed a law to ban any additional short-term rentals to combat housing shortage trends and to turn cultural centers and neighborhoods into open-air museums. Venice imposed the "tassa di soggiorno," or overnight tax, and the "contributo di accesso," or contribution for the access for day-trippers. The design of this initiative increases revenues to combat the ecological footprint left by in-and-out visitors. Greece can impose similar initiatives targeting its unique market. For example, new short-term rental licenses in the center of Athens could be awarded to developers for restoring abandoned and crumbling neoclassical properties with the option to develop additional levels until height regulations are reached. Mykonos and Santorini could impose a similar visitation tax that can be used to pay for the public housing of seasonal employees.

Over-tourism policy aims to shift the distribution of tourism guests and funds to other parts of the country or city. The movement of tourists during peak seasons also requires the movement of labor throughout the country. Extending the tourism season to year-round supports the small, low quality, inefficient, and family-owned and -operated facilities that dominate Greece (Danopoulos & Znidaric, 2007; Tsilimigkas et al., 2022).

The construction and infrastructure projects before the economic crash, in preparation for the 2004 Athens Summer Olympic Games, and other investments have helped Greece's tourism infrastructure. Greece ranks high compared to other EU countries regarding tourist function development (Stec & Grzebyk, 2022). Although Greece has achieved high tourist function development, it ranks on the lower end of sustainable development compared to other EU countries (Kiselakova et al., 2020). Additionally, there is room for improvement in social development as Greece ranks towards the bottom of socioeconomic development compared to other EU countries (Stec & Grzebyk, 2022).

There are multiple laws and policies that directly and indirectly relate to tourism. Greece has 19 UNESCO World Heritage sites, with additional sites under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture & Sports. There are laws in place that prohibit the construction of tourism infrastructure near many heritage sites via a protective zone; the tourism industry views this as an impediment to development (Kouri, 2012). Many of the conservation laws preserve natural landscapes for future generations. For example, Law 856/1937, on national woodland parks, was the first law to protect areas that established five national parks. In 1938, the first national park, Mount Olympus was established, followed by the National Woodland Park of Mount Parnassos (Mylonopoulos et al., 2011). Since then, 10 national woodland parks, 17 national parks, 610 wildlife refuges, and other protected areas have been established. These locations of ecological significance require evidence-based management to continue conserving environmental and economic aspects (Katselidis et al., 2013). The preservation of forests aligns with SDG 15, specifically 15.4 (ensuring the conservation of mountain ecosystems).

In support of these natural resources and other social causes, there are roughly 200 officially recorded environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Greece (Svoronou

& Holden, 2005). Many of these NGOs operate to conserve much of Greece's natural and cultural heritage. Svoronou and Holden analyzed the efforts and initiatives made by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to establish an ecotourism project in the Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest Reserve in north-eastern Greece and to enhance the conservation of threatened raptor species. The case study emphasizes the proactive role an NGO, such as the WWF, can take in positioning tourism as a tool for species conservation and community development. Tosun et al. (2005) discussed the role NGOs and national governments such as Greece and Turkey can have in cross-border marketing efforts and preservation within natural preserves as natural destinations often cross borders.

Greek Culture in Tourism

As defined by UNESCO (2023), cultural heritage combines tangible and intangible items. Tangible items such as artifacts, monuments, buildings, and museums drive visitation. The intangible includes symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological, anthropological, scientific, and social significance. Nations can position their cultural heritage for the benefit of tourism as additional offerings for visitors. Cultural tourism can engage with local and cultural traditions of a specific location, including folk traditions, heritage sites, arts and crafts, festivals, museums, and performing arts (Stoddard et al., 2012). Cultural heritage is mentioned in target 11.4 of SDG 11.

Cultural heritage is a significant factor in the national tourism policy in Greece (Economou, 2012). Greek traditions, such as local festivals, drive spectators as the customs span from antiquity to modern, as seen with the Carnival in Naousa tradition of Genitsaroi and Boulas, where the men of the town dress in attire from the early 18th century and dance. The festival has its roots in antiquity with the worship of the god Dionysus (Vassiliou, 2023). The

modern tradition includes an early 1700s resistance to Ottoman rule. Promoting traditions such as these within tourism programs can expand on the objective of diversifying offerings, creating economic opportunities for rural regions.

The progress in positioning ancient culture as a driving factor for tourism can be seen in city centers such as Athens with the opening of the Acropolis Museum in 2008. Investment into the archeological heritage is reflected in recent projects slated. Two notable ones in Athens announced in 2023 are the renovation of the National Archeological Museum and the museum at Plato's Academy, with the latter being considered Greece's first green museum. The green museum will be constructed partially underground with sustainable materials (Miletic, 2023).

Tourism has many social benefits, as it can promote peace, community well-being, and social justice (Senbeto, 2021). This is most prevalent in Greece's efforts to raise awareness of tourism opportunities for rural communities. Agriculture is directly mentioned in SDG 2 (to promote sustainable agriculture), including items such as production and ending hunger, and ensuring food security. Where agriculture may benefit from tourism is in agrotourism. The Hellenic Agritourism Center (Ελληνικό Κέντρο Αγροτουρισμού) in 2003, proposed agrotourism as a parallel development to increase economic activities in rural areas to support local production, small-scale tourism, and cultural heritage (Mylonopoulos et al., 2017). Mylonopoulos explains that enterprises developed and characterized as agrotourism were created without guidelines or institutional frameworks, inevitably allowing operators to do without surveillance or certifications. The weakness in regulatory frameworks is confusing regarding who can develop agrotourism activities in Greece.

In recent years, programs have been designated to provide certification for agrotourism. According to the Greek Ministry of Tourism (2021), multifunctional farms of Article 52 of Law

4235/2014 (A 32) may be included in the agrotourism businesses and be granted a special license for agrotourism, provided they have previously obtained a special license for a multifunctional farm. Agricultural licenses are received from the Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food. Additionally, the tourism ministry states that the property must have incorporated the necessary hospitality offerings such as (hotels, camps, hostels, self-catering accommodation, rooms to rent) up to 40 beds. Multifunctional farms (Article 52 of Law 4235/2014 (a` 32) may be included in the agrotourism businesses and be granted a unique rural tourism label, provided they have previously acquired a multifunctional farm label. Aside from the weak legislation in the classification, the country has many laws concerning culture and tourism. Furthermore, Greece has legislated extensively and provided laws for protecting cultural heritage concerned with the natural environment (Economou, 2012). For example, the 1997 Constitution, Laws 86/1969, 998/1979, and 1650/1986, were designed to preserve and conserve Greece's forests, which cover 30% of the country (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, n.d.).

As mentioned previously, there are multiple initiatives for sustainable tourism development in Greece at multiple levels. The local municipal perspective on sustainable tourism development is missing from the literature. Local politics affect citizens' daily lives to a higher degree than national politics. Therefore, this study investigated the sustainable tourism development initiative at the municipal level.

Statement of the Problem

Several scholars have written on the economic importance of tourism and sustainability (Bricker et al., 2022; Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Tahar et al., 2021). The UN's SDGs provide a foundational benchmark for each member state. However, the goals focusing on sustainability and development have aspects that are contradictory (Bianchi & de Man, 2021; Moyle et al.,

2021; Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). Several scholars have provided varying degrees of frameworks for sustainable tourism development (Draper et al., 2011; García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013; Laitamaki et al., 2016; Saarinen & Lenao, 2014; Slabbert & Du Preez, 2022; Stoddard et al., 2012). Multiple frameworks are also designed for sustainable tourism within aspects of the Hellenic Republic (Mylonopoulos et al., 2017; Pridham, 1999). However, these focus on particular aspects of tourism or regions such as coastal or forested areas. The problem is that municipal leaders' perspectives are not mentioned within the current literature for sustainable tourism in the Hellenic Republic.

Within the scholarly literature of frameworks mentioning systematic planning (Chatterjee, 2017; Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Kasim et al., 2014; Stroebel, 2015; Vidickienė et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022), private-public partnerships (Bianchi & de Man, 2021; Garcia & Cater, 2020; Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012; Patwary, 2020; Singh, 1997; Svoronou & Holden, 2005), and tourism policy (Boluk et al., 2019; Chatterjee, 2017; Danopoulos & Znidaric, 2007; Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012; Vidickienė et al., 2021), there are few studies that sought to understand those who create and implement those policies.

With tourism being one of Greece's most significant economic drivers (Katselidis et al., 2013), it is still ranked on the low end of European countries concerning sustainable tourism development (Kiselakova et al., 2020). Therefore, a framework for systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and tourism policy directed at national policymakers from municipal governments to identify the gaps regionally within the Greek government is needed. The literature confirms this need as the tourism policy identified is often poorly executed or has

significant gaps (Kouri, 2012; Mylonopoulos et al., 2011). The development of frameworks is highlighted in SDG 17, which is to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study explored municipal leaders' perspectives, strategies, leadership approaches, and policy approaches for tourism in the Hellenic Republic. This study focused on municipal leaders in Greece regarding sustainable tourism as an economic aspect of their local economy. Leaders holding office in the winter of 2023–2024 are the target audience for this study.

Research Questions

The following research question (RQ) and secondary questions (SQs) are used in this study.

- RQ1: What perspectives, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic have on systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?
- SQ1: What development strategies, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use to best approach systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships?
- SQ2: What, if any, leadership approaches do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships for sustainable tourism development?
- SQ3: What policy approaches, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic believe are the best for systematic planning, private-public partnership, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?

Nature of the Study

This research used qualitative methods to investigate the research questions. There is extensive data on tourism in Greece, sustainable development in tourism, and tourism policy. There is a gap in data for tourism policy approaches from municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. Qualitative methods allow researchers to view the world from different perspectives, through different prisms, and in different ways, such as organizing chaos (Richards & Morse, 2012). Additionally, the methods allow deeper understandings or explanations from the participants of the data they provide and their prior knowledge. Qualitative methods help make sense of the world, and given the complex nature of tourism, sustainability, and leadership approaches, a qualitative policy method was identified as the proper choice. Qualitative phenomenology describes what participants have in common (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Van Manen (2014) identified phenomenology as relevant to the research of individuals in professional fields. The research subjects in this study were public officials.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations SDGs (Appendix A) served as the conceptual baseline of this research as they are the globally recognized targets for sustainable development. The SDGs were developed globally and disseminated to countries. Nations collectively agreed to the goals as an intergovernmental organization. The challenge of achieving sustainable development at a global level is difficult to exaggerate (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Individual countries have agreed to implement programs to achieve these goals. Although the national government makes such decisions, the government consists of multiple players of regional and local governments. Leaders and their followers from all these levels of government are either directly or indirectly tasked to understand these goals, create programs, and work towards their

achievement. This difficulty is due to the complexity of the SDGs concerning the interconnected global environment. SDG 17 (revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development) has multiple targets and indicators focused on global objectives. As municipal leaders can rarely work on a global scale, the literature review in the next chapter discusses aspects of the SDGs within the framework of sustainable tourism through systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and tourism policy developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2012). Municipal leaders may be fully familiar with the SDGs or may have no direct knowledge of the objective yet may be working towards obtaining the goals unknowingly. As these leaders were the focus of this study, an additional theoretical lens for this study was leadership theory.

Theoretical Frameworks

This research gathered municipal leaders' perspectives in the Hellenic Republic through open-ended interview questions on sustainable tourism leadership approaches, policy, private-public partnerships, and systematic planning. The research is based on multiple theoretical frameworks, which are discussed in further detail in the literature review. The lens through which to look at the frameworks is complexity theory and the United Nations' SDGs. The goals were the baseline of the research as they were the driving framework for sustainable development created by global leaders (members of the United Nations). Therefore, I used phenomenology to find the commonality of a lived experience between study members (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The commonality is the lived experience of holding a municipal office role in a touristic municipality in the Hellenic Republic. The data were collected by conducting individual interviews. Participants were grouped based on their respective regions.

Complexity Theory

Complexity theory examines the interworking of systems (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2003; Meekes et al., 2023; Richards & Morse 2012). In the complexity theory for sustainability, the whole is not equal to the sum of all its parts (Meekes et al., 2023). The system interworks, as seen in the connections between specific SDGs. An example of the complex interworking of the goals is seen in SDGs 1, 3, and 4. SDGs directly relate to each other in a complex system. For example, it is difficult to pursue an education if someone hasn't eaten in a few days. Those living in poverty may not have quality food options. For this study, the intersections were based on the Sustainable Development Solutions Network's (2012) breakdown of systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and tourism policy. The literature review in Chapter 2 examines the nodes and the decisions made as identified in the literature.

Complexity leadership theory is organized by decentralizing formal leadership roles, interdependence, creativity, and innovation (Gibbs, 2021). This approach is helpful when analyzing the success of small- to medium-sized enterprises and education processes for all stakeholders in tourism. Complexity theory considers leadership as the outcome of interdependent interactions in complex networks (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2003). The basis of beginning with a lens of complexity theory allows the researcher not to limit the scope of the research to literature purely directed at sustainable tourism, sustainable development, or ecological conservation.

Situational Leadership and Followership

The complexity theory of leadership contains synergies with situational leadership theory. Situational leadership theory determines that the leader's relationship with the follower depends on the follower's knowledge and abilities (Cote, 2017; Gates et al., 1976; Jackson & Naziri, 2020; Lynch, 2015; Miller, 1983). The relationships of multiple contingency factors

allows the researcher to explore the combined impact of those with different leadership styles (Boehe, 2016). Multiple scholars explain that followership theory determines that the follower's relationship with the leader is driven by the leader (Burns, 1978; Gao & Wu, 2019; Hollander, 1992; Popper & Castelnovo, 2019; Riggio, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). In essence, all SDGs are associated with these two leadership theories since decisions are made and implemented throughout the system. For example, the national representatives of the United Nations decided that SDGs needed to be achieved by 2030. Elected officials commit to these global goals. The elected officials may be from offices at the national, regional, and municipal levels. Delegation of policy implications up and down the chain of command is complex as they may have unknown effects on each other. Complexity theory is better at explaining historical events than predicting the next steps (Pariser, 2019).

Furthermore, the complexity and leadership interworking dynamics are more complicated as private and publicly held organizations are involved, along with the interests of the local communities that vote on the previously stated political hierarchy. Situational leadership theory takes into consideration the leader-follower relationship. Complexity theory determines the environmental networks. Complexity leadership theory does not take the linear approach like other leadership theories because it considers unpredictability (Jensen, 2021). Qualitative methods were used in this research to analyze the leaders within the complex network. "If the purpose is to make sense of complex situations, metacontext data, and changing and shifting phenomena, you need ways of simplifying and managing data without destroying complexity and context" (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 28).

Contingency Theory

Complimentary to the previously mentioned leadership theories is the contingency theory, which states the relationship between the leadership style and the leader's effectiveness, which is contingent on the unique demands of the situation (Boehe, 2016; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983; Schneier, 1978). Therefore, the unique demands of sustainable tourism development are the foundation of much of the research conducted in the literature review. Within the literature, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2012) discussed a sustainable development framework consisting of systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and policy. These categories, in one shape or another, are consistent in the literature for sustainable tourism. Therefore, they are used in the framing of sustainable tourism development.

Methodologies

This study is a qualitative phenomenological study aimed at identifying the perspectives, strategies, leadership approaches, and policy approaches to sustainable tourism development by municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. The target population is municipal leaders in Greece reelected and active in office following the October 2023 election. Interviews are conducted in Greek and transcribed based on Abfalter et al. (2021). The coding of the transcribed data was done using Nvivo.

Significance of the Study

Greece is a nation heavily dependent on tourism, with its natural resources of sea and sand driving factors for tourists to flock to the islands in the Aegean. Tourism has become an important aspect of development for both regions and cities for tourists. Yet, despite the wide variety of studies and research on sustainable tourism in Greece, national strategic frameworks for sustainable tourism management and development are lacking (Iliopoulou-Georgudaki et al.,

2017). Greece's dependence on tourism is not unique, as tourism globally accounts for 30% of commercial services and 7% of exports (Stanciulescu & Molnar, 2018).

For a country that relies so heavily on its natural environment, it is imperative to have a robust framework for sustainable tourism development. Climate change is a current threat affecting countries regardless of wealth (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012).

The importance is heightened given Greece's large coastline and natural resources.

Unfortunately, sustainable development objectives are often overlooked in pursuing higher economic growth (Balsalobre-Lorente et al., 2021). If designed purposefully, tourism can positively affect the local area's economic development with positive outlooks for biodiversity conservation and cultural, natural, and historical resources (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020).

Furthermore, tourism can create jobs supporting SDG 8. There is a need to research the broad context of planning and monitoring sustainable development (Bricker et al., 2022).

Sustainable tourism research has evolved from the basic framework of tourism, economics, and environmental management to a more critical review of the concepts (Laitamaki et al., 2016).

Sustainable tourism development must balance the local community's economic, societal, cultural, political, and environmental components (Jurdana, 2018). Municipal leadership plays a pivotal role in sustainable tourism development as they oversee the market businesses operations and are directly elected by the local population their decisions affect.

Definitions of Key Terms

- *Agrotourism* or *agritourism* includes agricultural activities and scenery on a farm or rural area for tourist visitation (Karampela et al., 2016; Mylonopoulos et al., 2017; Tepnadze, 2019).

- *Complexity* or *complex* is the interconnections among networks and actors to understand the emergence of adaptive structures in their interactions (Mason, 2008; Onyx, 2022).
- *Cultural tourism* is the compound set of activities of tourism planning, effectuating, and experiencing a destination with the motive of culture (Terkenli & Georgoula, 2021)
- *Development*, for the purposes of this study, is the planned process of building infrastructure, systems, and communities.
- *Green economy*, is a political approach for an economy to reduce environmental impact, risk, and ecological scarcities while creating economic growth (Kasim et al., 2014; Liburd et al., 2020; Stroebel, 2015).
- *Infrastructure* is the faculties that support tourism operations such as roads, airports, sea transportation, utilities, and buildings, air and road networks, and transportation (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Nazneen et al., 2021).
- *Private-public partnerships*, for the purposes of this research, are the planned development projects and initiatives between the private and public sectors.
- *Systematic planning* is the act of planning developments with long-term benefits for multiple stakeholders. (Ferrer-Roca et al., 2022; Jurdana, 2018; Karampela et al., 2016; Meekes et al., 2023).
- *Sustainable* or *sustainability*, for the purposes of this study, is the ability to maintain resources at a certain level for long periods.
- *Tourism policy*, for the purposes of this study, is the policy initiatives that are directly designed and developed specifically for tourism purposes.

Limitations of the Study

Any study has multiple limitations based on a topic that inevitably affects the globe, such as sustainable development. With leaders being analyzed, multidimensional leadership is needed to enact changes and explore innovations while maintaining the operational order (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Due to the relative size of the possibilities and levels of leadership associated with decision-making, municipal government officials were used as a baseline for this research. "In addition to national and local governments, businesses and civil society organizations must also be called upon to contribute to meeting the challenges of sustainable development" (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012, p. 2). The sample consisted of primarily male leaders and, therefore, lacked an even balance of the female leadership perspective. The primary data collected in this qualitative phenomenological study and my presence could have produced biased participant responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, leaders may decide not to participate in this study due to their schedule limitations. Municipalities may not have an opportunity to be included as they may be welcoming new municipal administrations after the 2023 election.

Chapter Summary

The allure of Greece as a tourist destination is multifaceted, offering island exploration, cultural enrichment, and breathtaking landscapes. Tourism plays a pivotal role in Greece's economy. Therefore, to sustain and expand this industry, it is essential to move beyond traditional approaches and develop official frameworks for sustainable tourism. The sector directly and indirectly involves various industries such as hospitality, transportation, and education.

Sustainability issues can only be solved with a critical lens that recognizes the influences of power, poverty, inequality, and ideology in tourism (Boluk et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study used the United Nations' SDGs as the foundation for the municipal framework with complexity, contingency, and situational leadership theories as the operative variables. I investigated municipal governments' decision making related to tourism, sustainable development, strategy, leadership approaches, systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and tourism policy. This research fills the gap in understanding the leadership approaches and policies related to sustainable tourism in Greece. Sustainable tourism can positively impact economic development, job creation, biodiversity conservation, and cultural preservation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Hellenic Republic is a country heavily dependent on tourism, which comprises 20% of its GDP (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). The country is emerging from an economic crisis that has plagued the nation for over a decade (Hellenic Statistical Authority, n.d.-a). Tourism's importance as an economic driver is well researched (Bricker et al., 2022; Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Tahar et al., 2021).

Sustainable development in tourism is heavily researched as well (Bianchi & de Man, 2021; Moyle et al., 2021; Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). The literature provides multiple frameworks with varying approaches to sustainable tourism development (Draper et al., 2011; García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013; Laitamaki et al., 2016; Saarinen & Lenao, 2014; Slabbert & Du Preez, 2022; Stoddard et al., 2012). The frameworks range from global, national, and regional perspectives. In addition, there are multiple frameworks for sustainable tourism development in Greece (Mylonopoulos et al., 2017; Pridham, 1999). There are no research approaches to the framework of sustainable tourism and its holistic leadership paradigms: policy, private-public partnerships, and systematic planning. The literature review presents research on sustainable tourism development from the multilevel approaches of national governments, local communities, and the United Nations' SDGs within the framework of leadership theory, systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and policy.

Theoretical Frameworks

The research is designed with the foundational goals outlined in the United Nations' SDGs analyzed through the outlines designed in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2012). The Sustainable Development Solutions Network established a framework for sustainable development, systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and policy are used to

frame the United Nations' SDGs into actionable categories for the study. I used phenomenology to find the commonality of the lived experience among participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Leadership theories discussed in the literature review are situational leadership theory, complexity theory, contingency model of leadership, and followership theory. Situational leadership theory is the notion that the leader's relationship with the follower depends on the follower's knowledge and abilities (Cote, 2017; Gates et al., 1976; Jackson & Naziri, 2020; Lynch, 2015; Miller, 1983). Followership theory means that the follower's relationship with the leader is driven by the leader (Gao & Wu, 2019; Hollander, 1992; Popper & Castelnovo, 2019; Riggio, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Complexity theory views leadership as an approach that relates to the environment as it does not take a linear approach like other leadership theories because it considers unpredictability (Jensen, 2021). Therefore, complexity theory will have associations with multiple aspects of sustainable tourism development. The complexity theory of sustainability is the notion that the whole is not equal to the sum of all its parts (Meekes et al., 2023). Contingency theory within leadership style the relationship between the leadership style and the leader's effectiveness, which is contingent on the unique demands of the situation (Boehe, 2016; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983; Schneier, 1978).

Leadership Theory

Changes and development require focus and direction, especially regarding sustainability and meeting the SDGs. Leaders must continuously evolve their approaches to assessing the environment's needs in this unstable and unpredictable global environment. No longer sufficient are the leadership skills and practices that worked well in the more predictable environment of the past (Fang & Whitelaw, 2020). Leaders need to adapt their behaviors to meet the demands of

an undulating environment (Gates et al., 1976). The results of leadership may be purposed in an approach that affects the organizational activities and the individual (Gibbs, 2021). Adapting behaviors is more complex than a mind shift in practice as humans innately have varying degrees of maturity and skills depending on the different tasks or requirements. These task behaviors are the extent to which leaders are likely to organize and define the different roles of their followers (Miller, 1983). As applied in the tourist sector, a follower is often defined as a direct report. An example of a follower can be a front desk representative at a hotel whose leader is their direct supervisor. The follower does not necessarily need to report directly to the leader. The follower could be a hotel manager following policymakers' directions or regulations. It is more appropriate for leaders to use different leadership styles depending on the specific problem or circumstances (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982; Kerr et al., 1974; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983). Complexity leadership theory is about complex environments and their emergence (Gibbs, 2021). Complexity theory is discussed in detail in a later section.

Within sustainable tourism development, the leaders and followers are loosely defined and identified due to tourism's complexity, the environment's contingency, and the situational approaches. Therefore, the leader taking a conceptual approach around the multiple leadership theories would be positioned hypothetically to view the tourism industry holistically.

Situational Leadership

Situational leadership is the style of leadership that could be best used to understand the complexities of sustainable tourism development. The situational leadership approach has the advantage of describing how leaders behave in relationship to their followers (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). It focuses on how appropriate or effective the leader is with other leadership styles based on the task or duty as it is within the appropriate maturity levels of the leader's

followers (Cote, 2017; Gates et al., 1976; Jackson & Naziri, 2020; Lynch, 2015; Miller, 1983). The leaders match their style and technique based on the follower's maturity level and change their approach based on that level (Jackson & Naziri, 2020). The situational leader focuses on motivation and influences each situation by applying the appropriate support for the follower (Cote, 2017).

Due to Greece's increasing demand for labor in the tourism industry, Greece is extending seasonal working visas to third-country citizens (i.e., individuals without a Greek or European passport; Salourou, 2023). The new workforce will have varying degrees of knowledge of Greece, the Greek language, and Greek hospitality. Moreover, the introduction of third-country citizens should meet the targets and indicators outlined in SDG 8, which refers to decent work for all.

Therefore, as the follower's capacity level increases, leaders can reduce their task behavior and focus on building their relationship behavior (Gates et al., 1976; Vecchio et al., 2006). The leader guides the follower through their development levels, assesses the outcomes, and readjusts the contact between the follower and the leader (Jackson & Naziri, 2020; Lynch, 2015). From then on, the follower could self-direct as the leader reduces involvement (Vecchio et al., 2006). It should be noted that the follower can consist of a larger group and not simply an individual (Vecchio et al., 2006). Furthermore, the leader is responsible for removing barriers and improving systems (Lynch, 2015). A current example is seen on popular Greek islands in the Cyclades, where construction for accommodating tourists has resulted in remaining inventory providing uninhabitable living conditions for staff, resulting in operators who are unable to find labor (Athens Bureau, 2022). This results in overworked staff and diminishing service standards,

thus affecting business productivity and revenue. The lack of infrastructure and suitable housing is contrary to the objective of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all (SDG 3).

Leadership training on selecting the appropriate behavior in different circumstances can help increase the effectiveness of various problems that may arise (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Training and growth have many similarities with the transformational leadership approach as this approach can help facilitate the relationship between leaders and followers in a dynamic environment such as sustainable tourism development (Gard McGehee et al., 2009). The transformational leader looks for specific motives in the follower, identifies their needs, and engages with the follower as a person (Burns, 1978). In relative terms, successful situational leaders are flexible and use multiple leadership styles (Jackson & Naziri, 2020). Additional approaches for leaders are coaching and supporting methods (Lynch, 2015), such as the use of emotional intelligence and social awareness (Jackson & Naziri, 2020).

Complementary to the situational leadership theory are complexity leadership theory and contingency theory of leadership. Both are explained in detail in the respective sections later. Complexity leadership and situational leadership share a connection as both consider the changing environment in the leader's work (Bosse et al., 2017; Lynch, 2015). The ever-changing environment is critical in sustainable tourism development. The tourism industry is loosely defined as many industries as possible that comprise tourism and business types may be included in the tourism ecosystem, so the role of a leader is also loosely defined. Therefore, leadership can be delivered by informal leaders within organizations or governments (Ordidge, 1976).

Complexity Theory

Complexity theory was selected in this research due to the intricacy of the topic—i.e., sustainable tourism development. The different private organizations operating within tourism,

the balance between conservation and development, the multiple SDGs, and the people tasked to work within this environment are entangled with complexity. Complexity impacts an adaptive change process (Fabricatore & López, 2014). Complexity theory plays a significant role in economic opportunities due to analyzing economic theory as a component of a compound revolution to the future of economics as a complex system (Colander, 2018). Complexity focuses on the interconnections among networks and actors to understand the emergence of adaptive structures in their interactions (Mason, 2008; Onyx, 2022). Complexity leadership connects the different network components, shifting the focus away and separating them from the standard leadership behavior and the managerial role (Tsai et al., 2019).

To understand the links between tourism and the broader development process, the complexity of the links must be addressed and embraced (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). These links and networks between all players are workable, interconnected, and evolving within time progressions, or as Onyx (2022) argued, "Reality is constantly unfolding" (p. 1134). A complex system is where the agents in a network are free to act in a way that is not always predictable, while their actions may have the context to affect other agents in the network (Andreu et al., 2022). Often complex systems are open and organized so that each element is ignorant of the system (Dale & Newman, 2005). Connections and networks have become more webbed over time (Mason, 2008). In addition, complexity theories and a leader's ability to maneuver within planning, within theory and practice, and different degrees of uncertainty can assist decision-making that data analysis and consensus building cannot accomplish alone (Meekes et al., 2023).

Complexity theory takes its roots in chaos theory, which follows catastrophe theory, as it shares with these two theories the sensitivity of phenomena to unexpected conditions that may result in unexpected and random behaviors (Mason, 2008). Complexity theory emerged and is

based on the view that the context will lead to new outcomes as programs cannot be seen as a static tool for intervention (Fang & Whitelaw, 2020).

Complexity theory overlaps with chaos theory concerning larger systems, environments, and relationships. Complexity theory was developed into the framework of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) with three main components: entrepreneurial leadership, operational leadership, and enabling leadership (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Leaders cannot interact with one another to resolve conflict automatically; therefore, leaders are responsible for creating clear strategies and opportunities to resolve tensions within interactions (Tsai et al., 2019). Assisted by complexity leadership approaches, leaders can understand systems their relationships (Jensen, 2021; Meeks et al., 2022; Povilanskas & Armaitienė, 2008). Leaders continuously receive, process, and analyze data as the environment in which they operate is constantly evolving (Jensen, 2021). Humans inevitably desire to find the "balance between structure and agency" (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001, p. 379). Complexity theories consider unpredictable developments without reducing uncertainty while calling for more adaptive strategies (Fabricatore & López, 2014; Meekes et al., 2023).

Contingency Model of Leadership

The balance between structure and agency, along with the chaos of complexity theory, holds an overlapping connection with the contingency model of leadership due to the ever-changing and evolving nature of tourism. Contingency theory originated in organizational studies and strategic management in the 1960s (Boehe, 2016). Boehe explains that Fielder's contingency models use the relationship between the leadership style and the leader's effectiveness, which is contingent on the unique demands of the situation (Boehe, 2016; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983; Schneier, 1978). The contingency model suggests that the performance of different interactions

depends on the leadership style and success of the situation (Ashour, 1973). Personality plays a significant role in leadership. Therefore, no individual leadership style is effective in every situation like situational leadership explained earlier.

The variability of styles and approaches is imperative in sustainable development governance since many SDGs overlap, contradict, or conflict. For example, SDG 8 (economic growth) conflicts with SDG 13 (climate action) as growth often results in more production of materials that cause higher carbon emissions. Alternatively, to meet SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy and life on land), forests in Greece may need to be cleared of trees to place wind turbines, which conflicts with SDG 15 (life on land) and the reverse of land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. The contingency theory of leadership highlights multiple contingency factors, including role uncertainty, organizational complexity, the leaders' goals, and the follower's expectations (Boehe, 2016). It allows for understanding the external influence factors have on leadership styles.

Followership

Leadership is not performed in a vacuum. “If leaders require followers, who leads whom from where to where, and why? How do leaders lead followers without being wholly led by followers” (Burns, 1978, p. 2)? Therefore, the leader-follower relationship is driven by the leader in relation to the follower (Burns, 1978; Gao & Wu, 2019; Hollander, 1992; Popper & Castelnovo, 2019; Riggio, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). The degree of involvement is increased when the follower needs more support and decreased when the need is minimized. Riggio (2020) explained that "the situation and capabilities of the followers. Leaders choose their behaviors (directing, coaching, supporting, delegating) based on what the followers require, as determined by the leader" (p. 16). Contingency theory views followers as simply one element of the situation

(i.e., leader-member relations). Transactional leadership theories view the leader as giving the follower different benefits, such as explaining the situation and providing direction with the follower's esteem increasing due to the leader (Hollander, 1992). Hollander explained that within transactional leadership, "The essential point is that the leader strives to go beyond the bounds of the usual to bring about a change in followers' thinking that will redirect their action" (p. 72).

The concept of followership is relatively new as an academic sub analysis, with most research focusing on the leadership portion of the relationship. In essence, the dynamics of the leader and follower relationship should be analyzed in further detail since healthy relationships have aspects of communication and feedback. Burns (1978) argued that the "followership approach tends to be populist or anti-elitist in ideology" (p. 3). However, in the current perspective, the position of the follower is one of criticizing other followers (Gao & Wu, 2019; Riggio, 2020). Riggio argued that followership is associated with perceived negative attributes such as lower rank, less intelligence, and low pay. The perception is also that followers are less competent, risk-averse, more comfortable receiving orders, and have a passive attitude. These stereotypes lead followers to perceive themselves as less important and as having fewer desirable positions (Riggio, 2020). Hollander (1992) found that some leaders detach themselves from their followers and are not concerned about their activities' effect on followers. Hollander also found that the qualities sought by exceptional leadership are attributes of good followers, such as dependability, competence, and honesty.

A good portion of the phenomenon of followership has been analyzed through psychological theories (Popper & Castelnovo, 2019). Implicit followership theorists claim that leaders have perceptions about followers and make decisions based on them (Gao & Wu, 2019). Wang et al. (2021) explained that leaders' implicit followership theory is the independent

variable. The leaders' behavior toward the follower is a mediating variable, and the team's, individual's, or organization's outcome is the dependent variable. Leaders' positive implicit followership theory refers to the leaders' expectations and assumptions about effective follower traits and behaviors (Wang et al., 2021). The leaders share their high expectations with the followers, resulting in higher performance (Gao & Wu, 2019; Wang et al., 2021). Expectations in tourism can consist of increased service delivery for guests, such as a tour guide expecting a warm day at the Acropolis bringing visitors bottles of water.

Views must be considered, with the relationship between leader and follower intertwined in followership success. The tourism aspects of the tourist experience are contingent on multiple aspects of the visit. Stakeholders interact as leaders and followers without a direct working relationship. An example is a yacht that is tied to a small harbor on a Greek island. This harbor has restaurants with guests dining along the water. The restaurant and harbor management must work together to ensure all visitors have an enjoyable experience. These connections between the sailors, restaurants, patrons, harbor management, and residents are the varying nodes of complexity explained in the previous section. Riggio (2020) said that another way to think about the development of followership is to focus on citizenship rather than followership. Therefore, as citizens, all involved in the yacht example are entitled to aspects of the island experience to varying degrees.

Furthermore, leaders must change their behavior based on the followers to be effective. Taking the citizenship approach calls for more collaboration between the leader and the follower. Burns (1978) said that “followers themselves can ultimately define their own true needs” (p. 36). For sustainable tourism development, information and direction are moved between all levels in the complex system. Hollander (1992) viewed the relationship between the follower and the

leader wherein the leader presents the follower with wisdom. Within this relationship, the focus should be on more than just the leader, as the understanding of leadership is complete with recognizing the unity with the follower. The leader can bring the follower deeper into the process. Followers can be seen taking on leadership functions, not resting on a single individual distributed within different levels of networks. The process of discovering "new or better leaders requires attention to their ability to engage followers in mutually productive and satisfying enterprises" (Hollander, 1992, p. 74). Additionally, finding new and effective leaders in tourism requires both the leader and the follower to have an increased literacy of sustainable practices. A key aspect of sustainability in tourism development stems from the United Nations' SDGs. The following section discusses sustainable tourism development practices.

Sustainable Tourism Development

For the tourism industry to continue to grow, an understanding of sustainably and development is pivotal. Globally recognized and accepted, the United Nations' SDGs were utilized to define sustainable tourism development and to develop the framework in this literature review. There are unprecedented challenges to reaching sustainable development at a global level (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). A significant challenge is that the interworking between growth and sustainable tourism needs to be clarified and is often contradictory (Bianchi & de Man, 2021). In contrast to the contradictions, Niavis et al. (2022) explained that frameworks should be rooted in widely accepted sustainability concepts such as the United Nations' goals. The SDGs are not limited to developing countries. The goals include relatable topics in tourism, such as overconsumption (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). The theory of sustainable development is one of change from the status quo. It looks to shift from the

philosophy of endless economic growth with little regard for risking opportunities for future generations (Ferrer-Roca et al., 2022; García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013; Macassa, 2021).

The development of frameworks is not simply something disseminated from the United Nations and then easily implemented globally.

A framework for sustainable development must be applied at global, regional, national, and local scales. Each region, each country, each city, and each rural locality will need to make its situation analysis, asking questions such as: How can we end extreme poverty in all its forms? How can we reduce youth unemployment? How can we reduce disparities across gender and socioeconomic groups? What are the locally and regionally available renewable energy resources? What are the local vulnerabilities of food production and food security? How do prevailing fertility rates and population trends affect prospects for sustainable development? (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012, p. 8)

To answer such questions, the complexity of how deliverables and solutions derived from the questions interconnect as nodes and are contingent on one another. Additionally, the establishment of nodes and the prioritization of actionable items within the multiple levels of government, businesses, and local communities as noted in the complex system. Therefore, the development of a framework for sustainable tourism development should address and answer the Network's questions within the development at all levels, not just on an international level.

Tourism is mentioned in a limited capacity within the SDGs, yet it can provide a model for sustainable development (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). Trupp and Dolezal explained that while the United Nations initially linked only three SDGs to tourism, it often bears the underused potential to contribute to the entire set of goals. García-Rosell and Mäkinen (2013) discussed that tourism, in many respects, has adopted sustainable practices and has led to the increase of

“sustainability evaluation tools” (p. 396). Moreover, sustainable tourism is “judged in terms of its capacity to produce good consequences and maximize overall welfare” (p. 400).

Investment in people may be the best approach to developing a sustainable tourism model, given that most economic development projects fail to be sustainable (Haid et al., 2021). Development presumably improves the enjoyment of life for society in a way that equitably contributes to sharing the benefits (Macassa, 2021). In the previous section, the complexity theory of leadership is explained. Furthermore, complexity theory provides a valuable perspective for tourism research as each actor and link in the system affects the others (Meeks et al., 2022). A universal measure is not possible (Stec & Grzebyk, 2022). In many instances, tourism has been known as a destabilizer for sustainability for future generations, as the links between the SDGs and tourism are often difficult to identify (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). Sustainable tourism development targets travel, hospitality, leisure, food, and beverage industries. These connections are dependent on each other as nodes within the system and interact with those without direct ties to the tourism industry. For example, changes in the food supply chain will have an effect not only on restaurants and hotels servicing tourists but also on local communities as they adjust to the changes. Sustainable tourist development strengthens the relationships between these industries to improve living standards (Pritvorova et al., 2016). There are multiple organizations designed to support the United Nations and the SDGs. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s (2021) definition of sustainable tourism is "a process by which local communities; governmental agencies, NGOs, and the tourism industry take a multi-stakeholder approach to maintain the cultural, environmental, economic, and esthetic integrity of their country, region, or town" (as cited in Bricker et al., 2022, p. 135). Supporting organizations focusing on policy, management, certifications, and other means of support include the United

Nations World Tourism Organization, UNESCO World Heritage Center, the World Bank, World Travel & Tourism Council, Pacific Asia Travel Association, and the European Network for Sustainable Development, and others (Stoddard et al., 2012).

Economic indicators are related to the profits from the tourism business, and social indicators describe the level of satisfaction of both the tourists and local people from the current tourism activities (Iliopoulou-Georgudaki et al., 2017). The traveler plays a significant role in achieving all SDGs in almost an inconspicuous dimension, yet it is often difficult to overlook the economic role they provide (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). The traveler can be trained to understand their role in sustainable tourism by increasing their "sustainability literacy," defined as "the knowledge, skills, and mindsets that allow individuals to become deeply committed to building a sustainable future and assisting in making informed and effective decisions to this end" (Macassa, 2021, para. 8). Awareness can be achieved with the assistance of technology. Information and communication technology could assist in multiple development goals by supporting education, such goals as SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). Technology can provide lifelong learning opportunities and socioeconomic development in remote tourist destinations (Nomnian et al., 2020). Educational goals discussed below demonstrate how an aspect of the SDG goals can be used in their achievement.

Technology, economic opportunities, and equality will be discussed in future sections.

Education

Situational leadership paired with contingency leadership can provide a lens that considers all the previously discussed complexity when developing policy and business strategies to meet the United Nations' SDGs. This study did not attempt to provide ultimate solutions but to view tourism research and policy through a different lens by analyzing the

theories associated with sustainable tourism (stakeholder, corporate sustainability, green economy) and associating them with a position of leadership that takes into consideration the complexity needed to achieve the SDGs in tourism. Industry leaders can make mindful decisions in their business practices to attempt organizational sustainability. They are again considering the complexity of all stakeholders and their network of relationships. SDG 4 (quality education) need not be limited to traditional education but can be designed to include multiple stakeholders in tourism. These stakeholders include but are not limited to tourism personnel, policymakers, and the youth who will one day fill roles as tourism personnel and policymakers. Investment in tourism has many benefits in education for both the tourist and the local population considering all stakeholders (Nyanjom et al., 2018) while creating social networks (Fares et al., 2021). Tourism ministries can expose stakeholders to standardized SDG-inspired objectives early to promote integrated thinking and reduce debates on sustainable development objectives (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Stakeholders learning about damaging or harmful behaviors while traveling may reconsider their behavior (Boluk et al., 2019).

Stakeholders include policymakers, tourism personnel, local communities, and visitors. To develop a sustainable tourism industry, stakeholders could share lessons learned through education to establish successful ecotourism networks (Garcia & Cater, 2020). Dale and Newman (2005) explained that sustainable development education programs should find meaningful compromises between various stakeholders. Proper planning allows them to identify goals within the tourism environment for all stakeholders and apply the knowledge gained. Tourism ministries and local governments can execute the facilitation of such programs. These programs can include community aspects of cultural heritage preservation through education connecting SDG 4 with SDG 11's target of protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Therefore, as modernization continues to evolve, communities have the resources to preserve their cultural heritage that is an economic driver—for example, regional food and cooking classes as aspects of formal education.

Students learning the SDGs can support the implementation from all levels ensuring students are developed more as generalists than specialists to reduce the risk of myopic pedagogy, which can harm SDGs' success (Singh, 1997). Students should be aware of contemporary tourism issues and view the issues with a critical thinking lens while considering multiple aspects of the topic (Boluk et al., 2019; Dale & Newman, 2005). The criticism levied towards sustainable development education is that it is value-based, ambiguous, and ineffective in solving complex problems (Dale & Newman, 2005).

SDG 4 (quality education) gives people the tools and skills to take positions in tourism and hospitality, create small and medium size enterprises, and navigate financial systems. Nevertheless, people experiencing poverty spend little on education (Banerjee & Duflo, n.d.). The lack of education may be generational, as parents living in poverty lack the knowledge and skills to access. Potentially, this could be because the parents may have limited education themselves. Generational poverty prevents individuals from breaking out of a poverty cycle. There is a connection between the objectives of multiple SDGs including SDG 1 (to end poverty), SDG 2 (end hunger), SDG 3 (well-being for all), SDG 4 (quality education), and SDG 8 (economic growth). Tourism and hospitality may directly and positively affect people's lives. One way to combat the lack of skills is by offering work experience and training in hospitality (Higgins-Desbiolles & Wijesinghe, 2019; Lyon & Hunter-Jones, 2019). Furthermore, the development of these skills is not contingent on formal education such as a university degree. The skills can be to cook in a restaurant or clean a hotel, among countless others. Developing

new skills will cost time and investment from governments and companies but will facilitate more employment and assist in chipping away at ending poverty (Patwary, 2020; Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012).

As mentioned before, SDG 4 need not be limited to traditional education but can be designed to include multiple stakeholders in tourism. Tourism ministries can expose stakeholders to standardized SDG-inspired goals early to promote integrated thinking and to reduce the stress on sustainable development objectives (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Stakeholders learning about damaging or harmful behaviors while traveling may reconsider their behavior through behavior modifications (Boluk et al., 2019). Stakeholders include policymakers, tourism operators, local communities, and visitors. To develop a sustainable tourism industry, stakeholders could share lessons learned through education to establish successful ecotourism networks (Garcia & Cater, 2020). Dale and Newman (2005) explained that sustainable development education programs should find meaningful compromises between various stakeholders. Proper planning allows them to identify goals within the tourism environment for all stakeholders and to apply the knowledge gained. Tourism ministries and local governments can facilitate such programs.

Educating tourists as a key stakeholder is another sustainability component. Tourists mostly have a moderate knowledge of sustainability in the country being visited as it does not affect their decision to travel (Stanciulescu & Molnar, 2018). Tourists can be influenced by their attitudes on sustainability topics (Nunkoo et al., 2023). Structure-based education programs on nature-based tourism are needed to produce long-lasting changes in the behavior of tourists (Togridou et al., 2006). Scholars argue that the environment's complexity must be considered (Dale & Newman, 2005; Fabricatore & López, 2014). Tourist education is not limited to the

environment. Cultural sensitivity, customs, and heritage, such as gastronomic tourism-related schools and educational centers, can influence local development and heritage preservation (Giampiccoli & Mnguni, 2022). Typically, such institutions are created and supported by the national government. The complexity of education is an opportunity to introduce openness, diversity, and the relationship between tourism networks (Mason, 2008). Introducing complexity-based education and approaches enables students to think critically about intertwined systems (Fabricatore & López, 2014) while making students more self-conscious (Mason, 2008). The educator and local municipalities should take multiple approaches and perspectives to build knowledge around the complexities of the environment (Evers & Katyal, 2007; Fabricatore & López, 2014; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983).

There is a place for leadership education and approaches in tourism education. Schools can introduce multiple leadership styles to enhance tourism education programs (Fang & Whitelaw, 2020). The situational leadership model of the leader-follower dynamic may also be used in the classroom setting (Rosen et al., 1980). Education on the leader-follower relationship early in education may help minimize the preconceived negative notions associated with the follower. Mason (2008) argues for complexity theory institutional change and education philosophy. Furthermore, complexity leadership enables higher education to shift to a more fluid and dynamic approach, resulting in scalability and sustainability (Tsai et al., 2019).

Specific offerings in tourism could also benefit from specialized education in sustainable development. Ecotourism, explained in detail in another section, is a good example of such offerings. Initially, to build ecotourism networks it is necessary to train local people in environmental conservation management (Svoronou & Holden, 2005). Educators bring to students' components of travel and tourism education (Singh, 1997) and enable local populations

to enhance their education and skill sets within the sector (Boluk et al., 2019; Lyon & Hunter-Jones, 2019). There is a need to develop more sustainable technologies as universities and research institutions play a vital role in their development (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). For example, local universities can partner with the banking industry and the tourism ministry to develop payment technology. Payment technology can promote sustainable tourism by offering greener options for aviation, encouraging travelers to take public transportation, and by educating them about their impact (Mundy, 2022).

Artificial intelligence (AI) integration has entered tourism in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the tourism industry's acceptance of AI and its benefits, including hotel robotics (Gaur et al., 2021). AI-based biometric security technologies are already used at airports and with airline providers with face recognition, fingerprint, and retinal scanning (Zhu et al., 2023). These recent technological adoptions were designated for digitalizing customer service (Altınay & Arici, 2021, as cited in Saydam et al., 2022) and increasing efficiency in customer relationship management (Kumar, 2022). Reis et al. (2020) provided the example of the Henn na Hotel in Japan and their simplification of adopting robotic-centered services in various hotel departments, including reception, housekeeping, restaurants, and room service. AI can support humans by being included in tourism education (Xing, 2022). With any integration of new technology, there is concern over costs and user acceptance. Zhu et al. (2023) suggested that operators and experts investigate factors that may influence customers' acceptance of AI devices. Furthermore, they argued that experts can use social media platforms to identify real-time customer reactions. AI can assist in e-commerce platforms, saving money and improving efficiency for travel service providers, and can be a crucial driving force for creating and

integrating smart travel systems (Yin & He, 2022). Additionally, processing big data to analyze purchase history can help predict customer behavior (Zhu et al., 2023).

Agrotourism

Agrotourism combines with, but is not limited to, farm-related tourism and connects to local communities (Karampela et al., 2016; Mylonopoulos et al., 2017; Tepnadze, 2019).

Offerings include room accommodations, farm-related work, and exposure to cultural heritage (Karampela et al., 2016; Mihajlovski et al., 2021; Mylonopoulos et al., 2017). Farmers and rural communities can invite visitors to participate in farm-related activities during their holidays as a tool for diversifying the offerings in the tourism sector (Karampela et al., 2016). Furthermore, agrotourism has a direct effect on multiple SDGs contingent on one another with multiple complex nodes.

SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) is a development goal related to agrotourism. Consumption and production (cultivation) find a direct association with the new trend of agrotourism as it looks to combine human environmental health, sustainable development, and a circular economy (Giurea et al., 2022). Transforming rural communities into agrotourism destinations can harm responsible consumption and production efforts as many agrotourism services have a mass tourism aspect with luxurious offerings that target wealthy customers (Karampela et al., 2016). The transformation of these rural areas is a common site in the Western world (Saarinen & Lenao, 2014). Rural tourism development within a model suitable for small or large stakeholders is necessary for a development strategy considering all available resources in a community (Mihajlovski et al., 2021). These offerings can provide smaller operators support in agricultural development and diversify income options. The diversification links SDG 8 (economic growth) to agrotourism as the additional income can

subsidize farmers during years of bad harvest. Small enterprises and opportunities for women would be highly beneficial (Karampela et al., 2016). Women-owned small enterprises connect agrotourism to SDG 5 (gender equality) and empower all women and girls. The increase of agrotourism has shown to be a relevant tool in addressing economic problems seen in rural communities and land use issues (Saarinen & Lenao, 2014). As alluded to earlier, agrotourism in rural communities is not universal as rural tourism cannot be developed in every remote area (Mihajlovski et al., 2021). Therefore, alternative approaches to economic development should be designed for those communities. For those with an opportunity to support agrotourism, there will be a need for systematic planning, frameworks, and roadmaps to obtain success (Zakariya et al., 2019).

Food and Tourism

Food production does not live only on the farm; many restaurants that service tourists purchase food directly from farmers. Food plays a prominent role in tourism, as many destinations promote local cuisines and fine dining supporting SDG 11 (cultural heritage). Food tourism's benefits are seen as closely connected to local tourism development (Giampiccoli & Mnguni, 2022). Gastronomic tourism should contain a framework of collaboration, sustainability, and localization of the tourist experience (Giampiccoli & Mnguni, 2022). Food's role in sustainable development stems from the gastroenterological and ethnocultural identity and the infrastructural connection to the rural environment (Mihajlovski et al., 2021). The infrastructure within the supply chain and access to these networks connects food and tourism to SDG 11 and sustainable transport systems.

Food production itself requires the implementation of sustainable frameworks. Food production is often environmentally destructive, causing disruptions in the water system by

depleting wells and groundwater (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012).

Moreover, in an adverse scenario of overproduction, topsoil is lost, and there is an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and pollution from fertilizers and pesticides. There is a loss of habitat and declining biodiversity. Often farms are located considerable distances from where tourists visit. Scheyvens and Laeis (2021) suggested including locally grown food on the menus of restaurants. These examples of negative food production are positioned away from SDG 6's target 6.1, safe and affordable drinking water; target 6.5, implement integrated water resources management; target 6.6, protect and restore water-related ecosystems; and SDG 15's target 15.1, conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.

Restaurants have a prominent role to play in consumption. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), the industry can influence consumers to participate in sustainability through food consumption choices (as cited in Higgins-Desbiolles & Wijesinghe, 2019). The consumption choices can also directly link with SDG 3 (good health and well-being) as restaurants can promote healthy choices. The current food environment finds fast and processed foods heavily promoted in the industrial food system. Restaurants can inform their customers about selections with nutritional value and health benefits. For example, the Sustainable Restaurant Association in the United Kingdom promotes sustainable practices in the restaurant sector (Higgins-Desbiolles & Wijesinghe, 2019). Food tourism can link local culture, economic opportunities, and social and environmental contexts as a unique perspective for locals and tourists—for example, on the island of Crete, where the local cuisine has not changed much in over 4,000 years of civilization and is influenced by past civilizations, such as the Byzantines, Venetians, Arabs, and Ottomans (Martinez, 2023).

Mass Tourism

A significant aspect of tourism is mass tourism, which can be associated with large, all-inclusive resorts and cruise lines. Additionally, mass tourism is when capacity levels are met in tourism. Moira et al. (2017) believed that mass tourism has become the main form of tourism for many years as it emerged as a byproduct of accessible air travel. With mass tourism, aspects of the guest experience are more fixed within the overall package and service. For example, a cruise ship will onboard from Piraeus in Greece and make multiple stops to many Aegean islands, returning to port several days later. The guests sleep on board, meals may be included, and packages are available for excursions. Stanciulescu and Molnar (2018) believed the appeal for the tourist comes from the physiological need for a safe environment provided by mass tourism such as cruise ships or all-inclusive resorts, while receiving the increased social status associated with visiting these destinations. Often mass tourism offerings are not feasible options for an SDG-minded tourism environment as they tend to promote overconsumption. Additionally, those seeking mass tourism options seek “manufactured” and “pseudo-culture” options of their host community (Terkenli & Georgoula, 2021).

According to the literature, many aspects of mass tourism are likely to support only a few goals, including SDG 12 (Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Scheyvens & Laeis, 2021). The investments into mass tourism offerings such as large resort complexes and cruise ships have led to inefficient environmental cost management. Once operational, local communities face price increases for resources, land use conflicts, energy conflicts, and cultural damage (Mylonopoulos et al., 2017; Tsilimigkas et al., 2022). Energy conflicts erode progress towards achieving SDG 7 (sustainable and modern energy for all). Local communities should be given increased input and consideration on large-scale projects as the projects rarely benefit the community directly (Saarinen & Lenao, 2014). These large-scale projects and mass tourism have adverse effects on

the guest experience. Foreign tourist spending is more weighted toward accommodation.

Tourists spend more on services such as transport, activities, and sports (Jeyacheya & Hampton, 2020), with funds rarely going to small businesses in the area.

The uncontrolled tourist growth in Greece has negatively impacted destinations, resulting in the urgency to create sustainable frameworks (Iliopoulou-Georgudaki et al., 2016). Mass tourism creates barriers between guests and the host communities (Moirá et al., 2017; Nomnian et al., 2020; Wall-Reinius et al., 2019). These barriers and the lack of funds trickling down towards small businesses does not give local communities the ability to share their culture or receive revenue to support their livelihoods and their heritage. Interactions between tourists and locals can broaden the minds of both (Lyon & Hunter-Jones, 2019). The locations they can see are often associated directly to their accommodations giving them minimal encounters with residents, limiting visitors from understanding the specifics of the culture and enjoying local foods. A substantial offering for visitors to Greece is the local customs and traditions derived from the country's rich history and diverse topography.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is the promotion of a country's cultural aspects to visitors. Cultural tourism can include language, literature, clothing, architecture, and other aspects that are unique to the destination. Although cultural tourism is not explicitly mentioned, aspects of cultural tourism are associated with SDG 11's target 11.4, to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage and its indicator 11.4.1, protecting cultural heritage. Terkenli and Georgoula (2021) noted that "culture itself represents the most basic and integrative societal parameter at any destination, encapsulating all manner of human life and thought and its derivative products, practices, meanings, symbols, representations, etc." (p. 1). The development of cultural heritage

contributes to a country's tourism development, while the improper management of cultural resources leads to its degradation (Economou, 2012).

Cultural tourism is a large segment of Greece's tourism economy. The cultural offerings for tourism can be further segmented into the tangible and intangible. For Greece, tangible offerings include but are not limited to Byzantine and classical architecture and natural landscapes. Zakariya et al. (2019) noted that landscape destinations can attract visitors and introduce them to rural local roads and routes, providing tourists with different cultural experiences with local communities. Interaction with local communities is the intangible aspect of tourism. For Greece, intangible aspects of tourism can include music, literature, and traditional folk festivals such as the Genitsaroi and Boulas carnival previously discussed.

The promotion of cultural heritage may have adverse effects on cultural sites and local communities. Economou (2012) argued for political action designed to deter any abuse or exploitation of cultural property. Italy has begun making such laws. In 2023, Italy passed a law making it illegal for tourists in specific high-traffic locations to stop for too long to take selfies, punishable by a \$300 or more fine (Zitser, 2023). Milne and Ateljevic (2001) argued that it is irresponsible to view cultural heritage as simply an economic benefit and stated that it must be managed responsibly.

Specific strategies must be developed and implemented within a sustainable tourism model per location to protect the cultural resources so they may be passed on to the next generation (Economou, 2012). Mihajlovski et al. (2021) gave specific frameworks for cultural heritage, including authenticity and product quality, regional hospitality aspects, and the cultural aspects of the local population. These frameworks can be further expanded by identifying locally produced goods. Here opportunities are presented in which tourism through complexity theory

makes the nodes in which tourism can assist in meeting multiple SDGs visible. For example, SDG 11 (cultural heritage), SDG 2 (local food production), SDG 12 (the consumption of the food), and SDG 8 (economic growth). Furthermore, if the community is near the sea SDG 14 may be included, and if by the mountain, SDG 15. Although there are many opportunities, any small, culturally rich communities need more expertise and resources to develop programs under these frameworks. Živanović (2016) argued that cultural identity research is pivotal for cultural and heritage research in tourism. Terkenli and Georgoula (2021) believed that there is a reciprocal relationship between tourism interests and local interests. Additionally, within local interests is local culture, and on the tourism side cultural tourism is a subset of those relationships.

Research can be conducted in partnership with local governments and universities to develop educational programs (SDG 4), allowing municipalities to take an active role in promoting cultural heritage (SDG 11) for tourism. The approach may create training programs for local populations and improve local infrastructure (SDG 2 and SDG 9; Montaguti & Mingotto, 2014). The programs may also target local opportunities for economic growth (SDG 8) available from unique cultural heritage (SDG 11), increasing revenues to incentivize programs for cultural protection and preservation (Terkenli & Georgoula, 2021).

Systematic Planning in Tourism

Multiple scholars have written on the importance of planning for sustainable tourism (Ferrer-Roca et al., 2022; Jurdana, 2018; Karampela et al., 2016; Meekes et al., 2023). The SDGs incorporate much of what is needed in developing a sustainable plan, yet there is a need for the SDGs to be developed into a framework and managed within the borders of each nation-state (Ferrer-Roca et al., 2022). Affective planning requires a perceived knowledge of future events,

which inevitably has challenges. Meekes et al. argued that complexity theory as a planning consideration can assist with coping with unpredictable outcomes. An example given by Kuqi and Martinoska (2018) is to expand the planning outside of the direct systems in tourism to ones that are nontourism systems because these two sectors often have unidentified boundaries and influence each other. Although this approach does not directly follow SDG 17 (global partnership for sustainable development), having SDG objectives in mind for one system will inevitably influence the other. Systemic planning can support opportunities for funding cultural programs and local communities (Jurdana, 2018; Tepnadze, 2019). Meekes et al. believed that systematic planning for tourism includes economic development (SDG 8), infrastructure development (SDG 9), and policy goals (SDGs 16 and 17).

Governments and stakeholders face challenges when planning (Torabi et al., 2022). Different stakeholders often have conflicting challenges, interests, and objectives and would approach planning based on those individual interests (Jurdana, 2018). Proper planning needs to include the specifics of multiple stakeholders. Network (2012) suggested that integrated solutions must be developed locally, nationally, and globally. In contrast, Saarinen and Lenao (2014) advocated focusing on local communities. Furthermore, within the planning and consideration stages for all stakeholders is the need to nurture a green economy.

Green Economy

The literature suggests that planning partners with tourism's role falls within the green economy (Kasim et al., 2014; Liburd et al., 2020; Stroebel, 2015). Kasim et al. (2014) explained the green economy as having multiple layers of complexity, including four critical aspects of green revolution, transformation, growth, and resilience. Environmental consciousness and ethical trade demonstrate favorable outcomes for sustainable development (Liu & Cheung,

2016). There are multiple terms associated with the green economy. Stroebe (2015) discussed the green revolution to transform the relationship between nature and the economy by removing the pattern of growth initiatives. *Green transformation* repositions current economic models with green investments and financial incentives to shift the economy towards social justice and equity (Stroebe, 2015). *Green resilience* is implementing the previous two while focusing on adapting the economy to cope with the changes (Stroebe, 2015). *Green growth* is defined as creating opportunities for growth with new products, markets, and consumption patterns (Stroebe, 2015).

Tourism plays a significant role in this green initiative. Ecologically sound investments in tourism can contribute to viable and sustainable growth, creating decent jobs, reducing poverty, and improving resource use (Stroebe, 2015). The jobs can be respectable tourism-related jobs that are stable, local, and focused on green practices (Xiao et al., 2018). Aspects of green practices for tourism can be farm-to-table restaurants or energy-sustainable regions. Jurdana (2018) discussed the need to respect ecological capacity, the environment, natural characteristics, and traditional lifestyles and cultures. Greek City Times (2023) reported that the island of Tilos has now become zero waste, with more than 85% of the island's waste recovered and composted. Additionally, the island uses wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, and a battery energy storage system to generate its power needs, replacing diesel generators and transitioning from traditional diesel-powered vehicles to electric or hybrid cars, scooters, and bicycles.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a term often synonymous with green, sustainable, and responsible tourism (Vidickienė et al., 2021). Two common aspects of ecotourism are environmental conservation and the sustainable development of local communities (Stark, 2002). Ecotourism promotes traveling to undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas (Wu et al., 2022). Therefore,

ecotourism has strong connections with SDG 11 (natural heritage), SDG 12 (sustainable tourism), SDG 14 (the seas), and SDG 15 (the forest). Tourists visit specific areas to admire and enjoy the scenery, wildlife, and cultural aspects. Ideally, ecotourism would be a way for the tourism industry to position its offerings to minimize the human impact on the environment (Kim et al., 2021). Ecotourism is designed based on human ethical thinking about preserving nature as a product-driven business model (Vidickienė et al., 2021). In coastal areas, there is a link between increased economic activities and ecosystem conservation (Dvarskas, 2017).

The term “ecotourism” was introduced and established in the Greek tourism market in the late 1980s (Svoronou & Holden, 2005). Currently, Greece has 27 national parks, along with 11 sites to protect wetlands. Public interest in these types of nature conservations is increasing in Greece, yet the Greek government’s approach towards these types of conservation projects has been mixed. A notable project was completed near the Evros River in 1995 using European Union funding secured by the WWF, which consists of two buildings, a hostel, an information center, a café, and a souvenir shop. The hostel consists of 20 rooms that can hold up to 60 guests. The Municipal Enterprise manages the complex with locally hired staff with revenues committed to supporting and conserving raptors in the area.

The European Union has accelerated new scientific research activities in the field of new forms of tourism. This approach includes transformative ecotourism, which would assist in solving socioeconomic issues in rural areas. Furthermore, ecotourism, due to its rural location, is often associated closely with agrotourism to assist with socioeconomic issues. Agrotourism, explained in detail earlier, is the model to encourage economic growth on and off agricultural activities in farming communities that may engage people with low incomes as workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers (Chatterjee, 2017; Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Wu et al., 2022).

There are negative aspects of ecotourism. Some organizations simply put the stem “eco” in front of anything nature-related to capitalize on and exploit public sensitivity about the environment (Stark, 2002). Projects are built in the name of ecotourism without considering sustainability goals or considering the negative and environmental impact of their operations (Vidickienė et al., 2021). Therefore, when planning for sustainable tourism, proper guidelines and certifications should be created for those claiming ecotourism from local municipalities.

Conservation and Prevention

Conservation should be included in the systemic planning for sustainable tourism development. SDG 12 addresses responsible consumption and production. For this goal to be met growth cannot occur as a business-as-usual trajectory. The reduction of consumption and pollution caused by the economic output also causes catastrophic environmental threats (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Furthermore, many SDGs have overlapping objectives that relate to conservation and prevention. SDG 6 (clean water, and sanitation), for example, has two components to sustainability as it can be partnered with SDG 14 (life below water). Multiple aspects of tourism rely on clean water and the sea. SDG 6 also has aspects with SDG 5 as women, due to traditional obligations at home, often bear the brunt of water scarcity when communities lose water supplies due to tourism (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). Clean water is used for drinking, crop irrigation, and waste removal. Waste management removal improves agrotourism because of the benefits of water use in food growth and drinking water (Giurea et al., 2022). The lack of investment in sewage treatment infrastructure can damage coastlines and health risks for sea tourism (Dvaskas, 2017). These are environmental concerns about cultural and natural heritage (Iliopoulou-Georgudaki et al., 2017).

Many aspects of tourism contradict the efforts to minimize conservation, including mass tourism and all-inclusive resorts. Tourism and hospitality are directly linked to high levels of water consumption (Kasim et al., 2014). Divers in the sea have given little priority to local marine knowledge in their diving instruction, often causing damage to natural habitats (Garcia & Cater, 2020). Visitors may also cause damage to areas because they were unaware of their high carbon production while traveling, even though they were aware of climate change (Groulx et al., 2019). The tourism industry can take steps to assist in developing sustainable programs, including its role in the new green economy, repositioning economic progress, and minimizing human-induced environmental damage (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Moreover, women in the local communities play a crucial role in the conservation of nature (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). Low-income people and those living in poverty are often most dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and are very susceptible to environmental change (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012).

Poverty Reduction, Small and Midsize Enterprises (SMEs)

A conscious approach to sustainable development considers all stakeholders, including human rights-based issues such as gender equality and economic disparities among people. Complexity theory is helpful in this context in the theory of identifying the nodes of a system. Therefore, stakeholders may have the ability to consider those typically marginalized or silenced (Onyx, 2022). Research shows the importance of such developmental considerations (Alarcón & Cole, 2019; Bianchi & de Man, 2021; Boluk et al., 2019; Geremewe, 2018.; Komninos & Panori, 2019; Pritvorova et al., 2016).

Multiple SDGs touch on economic disparities among people. These include SDG 1, with objectives to reduce poverty, and SDG 8, which has objectives to create equality with decent

work and economic growth. Inclusive growth and inclusive development are often used interchangeably or as complementary approaches to socioeconomic issues. However, the poor and natural environment is increasingly removed from the decision-making process for environmental sustainability (Jeyacheya & Hampton, 2020). Tourism may provide several advantages to reduce poverty over other economic stimuli (Croes, 2012; Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Tahar et al., 2021). The advantages are not shared equally, as tourism income does not necessarily provide women the same equalities and freedoms (Alarcón & Cole, 2019).

Furthermore, growth in low-income communities may benefit all households but worsen the income distribution (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020). The benefits and the growth do not distribute the benefits equally as tourism industry benefits do not trickle down to the poorest households because tourism is not a very labor-intensive sector compared to other sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). Livanos and Pouliakas (2012) discuss that Greece, as an EU country, has historically significant gender wages partially due to the less risky educational paths. They discuss the gender pay gap in Greece, roughly 20 percent in the private sector and 10 percent in the public sector (Livanos & Pouliakas, 2012). The tourism industry may develop mentorship programs to encourage women to follow higher-paying tourism career paths.

Poverty is caused by economic factors and various components covering broader notions of development such as health, education, and living conditions (Geremewe, 2018; Komninos & Panori, 2019). Although tourism contributes to poverty reduction, improvements often lack a deeper interrogation of the political dynamics of tourism development (Bianchi & de Man, 2021). An aspect of the economy that can reduce poverty, increase economic opportunities, and radiate gender equality is promoting and fostering small and midsize enterprises (SMEs)

(Geremewe, 2018; Patwary, 2020). SMEs are defined by the number of workers employed, recourses used, and quantity of investments (Geremewe, 2018), and they create formal, informal, temporary, and permanent jobs (Patwary, 2020). Tourism is a sector that can facilitate opportunities as the expansion of tourism development can result in economic growth that can flow to low-income urban and rural areas by increasing labor demand and rising incomes, thus decreasing poverty (Croes, 2014; Njoya & Seetaram, 2018).

SMEs and women play a large role in the creation of such enterprises. Gender rights are an aspect of tourism that are overlooked in academic research. A discipline overlooked includes “gender responsible tourism” or the gender perspective to sustainable tourism development (Alarcón & Cole, 2019, p. 904). The lack of consideration is an issue of concern as half the population is women, and they play an integral part in sustainable development (Boluk et al., 2019). Taking a feminist approach to sustainable development issues can allow decisionmakers to view development differently and understand the influence feminism may have on tourism (Alarcón & Cole, 2019; Boluk et al., 2019). Therefore, a way to achieve gender equality in tourism is by empowering women and girls by including a gender perspective in the industry that is clear and concrete (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). There are opportunities for decreasing the gender gap in Greece. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (2023), Greece ranks last in the EU on the Gender Equality Index with insignificant changes over the last decade. Employment opportunities provided in tourism could offer decent, rewarding work without gender distinction (Robinson et al., 2019), including in leadership positions and business roles.

For SMEs to be successful for people experiencing poverty, resources need to be given to facilitate their development and growth. SMEs' difficulties and challenges include the need for access to finance, capital, infrastructure, entrepreneurial and management skills training (SDG

4), skilled labor, and business opportunities (Geremewe, 2018). Skills development may cost time and investment but facilitate more employment and poverty reduction (Patwary, 2020). Governments should provide people experiencing poverty with appropriate tourism-related skills (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020). These developed skills can help create businesses and make people competitive when looking for work.

The lack of government intervention and support for SMEs leads to unchecked development. Often small enterprises are developed unplanned, which does not help policymakers know their cumulative contribution to the value chain and national and socioeconomic development (Patwary, 2020). In addition, the smaller-scale nature of SMEs leads to black market economies tending to congregate around small to medium-sized firms to avoid government surveillance with operations in the countryside away from metropolitan centers (Danopoulos & Znidaric, 2007). These often consist of small, low-capital, low-technology, and labor-intensive sectors that are economic opportunities for unskilled and often undocumented immigrant workers.

Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development is a crucial aspect of systemic planning in sustainable tourism development. A complexity perspective can help plan leisure development (Meekes et al., 2023). The development can enhance the natural aspects of tourism offerings. Multiple SDGs have some infrastructure-related components and require significant changes in industrial and service operations worldwide (Patwary, 2020). Moreover, developing strong tourism networks has an increased positive attribution to the sustainability and stability of international and cross-cultural communications (Pritvorova et al., 2016).

Infrastructure development is directly linked with SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) and SDG 11 (sustainable cities, and communities). Tourism development positively affects infrastructure improvements such as air and road networks and transportation infrastructure (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Nazneen et al., 2021). Planning resilient infrastructure promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialization while creating awareness (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). Infrastructure is also pivotal in developing ecotourism as it calls for additional research and further education (Vidickienė et al., 2021).

Investments in infrastructure can positively affect poverty reduction (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Patwary, 2020). One way infrastructure can assist people experiencing poverty is by increasing access to public transportation. It can assist rural development and agrotourism in remote areas (Zasada & Piore, 2015). Tourism infrastructure development can facilitate growth (Ramsey & Malcolm, 2018) yet runs the risk of environmental destruction (Dvaskas, 2017; Economou, 2012). However, poor infrastructure development negatively affects life on land, impacting SDG 15 (Nazneen et al., 2021). Therefore, done correctly and understanding multiple aspects of the system, investment into one area of the system infrastructure and SDG 9 and supporting agrotourism and food production will allow SDG 8 to foster economic growth and SDG 2 zero hunger.

Cities are a substantial draw for many tourists. Cities are complex systems as they have aspects of transportation, infrastructure, and water consumption, and consider the people who live in them (Ortman et al., 2020). Cities can create tourism job opportunities, increase infrastructure, improve technology, and increase foreign earnings (Phiri, 2016). Nevertheless, governments must balance overdeveloping tourism in cities and continuing local life. Overtourism is a significant issue in many cities (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). Cities often grow at

unmanageable rates exceeding infrastructure development, resulting in outdated transportation and energy technologies (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Cities that plan can invest in technological infrastructure advances to help them strive to zero greenhouse gas emissions (Zhironkin, 2022). Although tourism is not directly indicated in SDG 11 (make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable), these aspects within cities are enjoyed by tourists.

Technologies that cities can invest in can assist in building infrastructure for the power distribution grids, web, and computing infrastructure (Minto & Trincanto, 2022). The active use of the Internet can facilitate knowledge management and reduce communication costs (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001; Rama Murthy & Mani, 2012). It can increase e-commerce sites and marketing opportunities and connect smaller providers to a larger audience (Karampela et al., 2016; Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). It can bring tourists and locals closer together as technology can assist the travel experience, preserve endangered languages, and promote cultural heritage (Huang & Wang, 2022; Nomnian et al., 2020). Digital technology can reconstruct historical buildings and promote them to a broader audience (Huang & Wang, 2022). New policies and activities can take advantage of the advancements available through technology while enhancing the value and enjoyment of visitors, thus supporting economic growth (Xiao et al., 2018). It should be noted that technology can become a negative disruptor, such as Airbnb and Uber (Boluk et al., 2019). Airbnb, for example, has shown a decrease in supply for long-term rentals while increasing tourism revenue for communities that may not have seen visitation (Garha & Azevedo, 2022; Gurran & Phibbs, 2017). Therefore, disrupting technologies should be analyzed with a granular view.

Private-Public Partnerships

Public-private partnerships are a vital aspect of the process of sustainable tourism planning. Tourism sustainability may be tied to the effective alliances between the private and public sectors (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). Complexity theory considers this as networks linked together (Onyx, 2022). Network links are based on shared interest with notions of trust (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). Networks are not specific to tourism, but the connection between private stakeholders and public organizations within tourism deserves attention (Karampela et al., 2016) as a collaboration among all stakeholders must obtain the SDG's global objectives (Jurdana, 2018; Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). The connections can be made stronger with government involvement in the leisure planning sector (Meekes et al., 2023). The private sector is the main engine for economic growth and job creation. Many tourism organizations are engaged in ecotourism, heritage/cultural tourism, and agritourism. It appears that few are actively engaged in sustainable tourism from a societal perspective (Stoddard et al., 2012).

Local communities serve as a pivotal aspect of the tourism experience. Community residents provide the labor and, in many instances, the delivery of their cultural heritage. Tourism may benefit local communities regarding the standard of living and employment opportunities (Economou, 2012; Stec & Grzebyk, 2022). Furthermore, local communities should be allowed to protect their interests and remove any feelings of being threatened (Mitchell, 2017). Partnerships can be developed to benefit the local economy, employ local workers, build local businesses, and use local materials such as agricultural products and traditions (Bellato et al., 2022; Draper et al., 2011; Jurdana, 2018).

Community-focused approaches to tourism can lead to increased localized cooperation, trust, and networking to provide the right mix of successful tourism development outcomes

(Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). Local community's opinions and perspectives must be considered to ensure sustainable tourism development (Draper et al., 2011; Jurdana, 2018; Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Liu & Cheung, 2016; Nunkoo et al., 2023). Communities can decide the types of tourism they wish to host and accommodate, shaping the local tourism industry to meet their needs.

Nongovernment Organizations

NGOs are crucial to the relationship between society, the government, and causes. NGOs play a pivotal role in society as they often work towards the public good and social welfare. Greek NGOs take a more straightforward approach to their causes. They are not designed to "change the system" but to focus on "humbler" purposes, usually to provide humanitarian assistance, health, and welfare services" (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014, p. 614). An example is The Smile of the Child which focuses on fulfilling children's basic needs and Hellenic Hope which helps children who live in poverty.

One way for NGOs to gain legitimacy is to obtain publicity to create a visualization, increase validation, and frame public debates and issues to advance their causes (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014). Another way is with the strategic use of language. NGOs use specific language in their central organizational objective in positioning capacity building and advocacy efforts. Appe (2019) said, "Language is operationalized and adopted by NGO leaders to gain the legitimacy [needed] to justify their interventions" (p. 309). NGOs often operate from the grassroots level (Shava, 2021), connecting them to the communities they serve. Greece is unique in this respect. In Greece, many NGOs are organized in a top-down approach due to the large amount of EU funding (Tzifakis et al., 2017). There has been a long history of NGOs in Greece, yet their relationship to causes, funding, and approaches has led to controversy. According to Magliveras (2016), the exact number of NGOs in Greece is unknown because,

unlike many other European countries, Greece "has no central registry for NGOs and no other public country-wide method to record their creation and dissolution" (p. 40). Although there is no official central registry, there are roughly 200 officially recorded environmental NGOs in Greece to support natural resources and other social causes (Svoronou & Holden, 2005).

Before the 2010 economic crisis, NGOs were viewed very positively in Greek society (Close, 1998; Frangonikolopoulos, 2014; Roumeliotis & Jones, 2010). NGOs were once considered the least corrupt institutions in Greek society (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014). Frangonikolopoulos states that according results of research, two in three citizens believe that Greek NGOs need to be more transparent about their finances and do not trust how funds are spent. NGOs have been criticized for connections with parliamentary parties and government officials (Close, 1998). The negative perception has led to only 47.6% of Greek citizens donating to NGOs. The lack of donations is not limited to monetary giving as Greece ranks low in volunteerism compared to other European countries (Roumeliotis & Jones, 2010).

Frangonikolopoulos (2014) explained that NGOs in Greece cannot attract members, and the commitment is low when they do. One theory is that social trust is low in Greece. Donations to community activities in Greece are only around 7%, with 14% participating in voluntary activities, and 5% donating money to charities (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014). There is an increased commitment of support to NGOs working with refugees and on human rights violations in Greece (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014). Frangonikolopoulos believed there is more interest in refugees for Greece because it reminds Greeks of the times in history when they were refugees.

Globally, countless NGOs are associated with sustainable tourism due to the multiple social causes that connect with the United Nations' SDGs. Hailey and Salway (2016) defined a "sustainable NGO" as an organization "that can continue to fulfill its mission over time and in so

doing meets the needs of its key stakeholders—particularly its beneficiaries and supporters" (p. 581). Appe (2019) explained that "institutionalization of sustainable development suggests that development itself is not enough, rather it needs an adjective" (p. 310). Therefore, for sustainable tourism, NGOs in Greece must separate themselves from political influence, be transparent with finances, and identify the social causes within the SDGs.

Government and Tourism Policy

Policy is crucial to achieving sustainability initiatives in tourism while promoting development and growth opportunities. There is a need for European countries, including Greece, to urgently develop a tourism policy due to the continent's significant dependence on tourism (Pridham, 1999). Fortunately, public and policymakers of all backgrounds are showing growing interest and support in sustainable development (Howell et al., 2008). The agreement of governments to follow the United Nations' SDGs has played a significant role in developing policies to achieve sustainability (Blake et al., 2008; Croese et al., 2020; Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Pridham, 1999; Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012; Vidickienė et al., 2021). However, the goals are insufficient to direct policymakers in their efforts. It is difficult for policymakers to use the SDGs alone as a policy development framework due to the need for more critical thinking regarding power structures within government (Boluk et al., 2019). Additionally, the literature on tourism policy and innovation management is fragmented and often not covered by empirical investigation (Vidickienė et al., 2021), which leaves policymakers uncertain about evidence when making decisions.

Complexity theory's approach to systems allows policymakers to shift the political analysis from individual parts of the political system to view the elements (Cairney, 2012). The policy does not simply associate X's effect on Y under conditions but considers the interworking

of relevant variables. The theory highlights the problems that arise when policymakers do not recognize the complexity of the policy environment. Minto and Trincanto (2022) explained the Cynefin framework as a tool to assist policymakers through complexity theory:

First, complex systems show a great deal of uncertainty, and it is very difficult, if possible, to put forward any prediction about the future developments of the matter under scrutiny for policy purposes. In other words, policymakers and lawmakers are bound by the unpredictability of complex systems that, by their very nature, are never subject to full control. Second, policymaking should pay much attention to the “micro” and “macro” levels of phenomena: the trees and the forest and how every tree contributes to the entire ecosystem. (p. 30)

Policymakers must constantly reassess their desired effects within the system due to the unpredictable nature of the political system (Cairney, 2012). Furthermore, policymakers are not able to change the system by force; systems are difficult to control and appear to self-organize.

A critical component of policy development is the economic opportunities that should be developed. Historically, a neoliberal approach to business, including tourism, creates restrictions to achieve sustainability because the approach holds the idea of infinite growth of consumption and production. The conflicting ideology of infinite growth is unattainable when considering the finite earth system, where the earth is a closed system with a finite number of resources. The neoliberal, laissez-faire approach to tourism management also does not help secure long-term sustainable objectives (Boluk et al., 2019). Neoliberal policies have diminished the government in favor of corporations (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). For example, laissez-faire approaches have shown their consequences on the island of Paros, where the “Beach Towel Revolt” is the local

population's attempt to reclaim public beaches occupied illegally by operators. The lack of compliance with laws and policies has damaged protected areas and inconvenienced visitors.

Public policy must provide supportive legislation and institutional frameworks that ensure quality for all stakeholders (Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018). Additionally, the policymaking process needs clear descriptions of responsibilities, especially regarding sustainable development (Goldman, 2011). The responsibilities should take into consideration even the most vulnerable stakeholders. The repositioning of efforts can help reduce inequalities while providing equal opportunities via policies and strategic investments (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Additionally, governments can develop environmental policies that can protect the ecosystem to foster environmentally responsible behavior while simultaneously creating green jobs for local communities (Vidickienė et al., 2021).

Communities in rural locations have opportunities for incremental gains when tourism is included, as reviewed in previous sections. Policymakers can increase leisure-based regional development in a rural location and aspects of the industry (Meekes et al., 2023). They are my leverage from local resources to promote economic diversification (Karampela et al., 2016). Rural communities and tourism policy are linked to landscape management (Vukoičić et al., 2023). Policy initiatives can be used in the development of the countryside while considering any of the adverse effects development may have on the environment (Mylonopoulos et al., 2017). These efforts should be accompanied by fundamental knowledge, motivation, and community experiences (Zasada & Piore, 2015). Therefore, the government should engage all stakeholders from the local community, different government bodies, and academia (Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Laitamaki et al., 2016).

Cities are pivotal in reaching many global commitments, such as outlined in the Paris Climate Agreement and the SDGs (Croese et al., 2020). Governments can create policies based on scientific evidence to combat higher pollution and promote performance for energy consumption (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012). Athens has become increasingly popular as a destination rather than simply a place for tourists to transfer to the islands. The city has many obstacles to overcome to increase sustainability. Lialios (2022) interviewed Ricky Burdett, an architect and professor of urban studies at the London School of Economics, for the newspaper *Kathimerini*. In the interview, Burdett explained that Athens is a complicated, densely built city with the highest rate of car ownership in Europe. Athens is the second most dense city after Paris. Providing more green space and affordable housing are critical components to evolving Athens into a more livable city while continuing to be a destination for visitors. One of the significant challenges for cities is to be productive, sustainable, and resilient while creating dynamic economic and social opportunities and combating environmental effects (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012).

Academic programs provide the tools for individuals to grow skills needed in the workforce. A prerequisite to developing actionable, sustainable tourism policies is defining a satisfactory working definition of the concept and developing educational programs designed to conceptualize the definition of sustainable development (Dale & Newman, 2005). Through developing economic opportunities and educational programs, policymakers can implement policy in sectors that execute strategic sustainable development (Pridham, 1999).

Policymaking has its difficulties. Laws related to tourism and culture need to be more cohesive (Kouri, 2012). Furthermore, policymakers tend to concentrate power in the center rather than analyzing the full extent of the policymaking environment (Cairney, 2012). As the

power is centralized, it limits those closest to local communities. For example, public sector employees often need help to successfully implement an extensive range of unclear directions from policymakers (Cairney, 2012). All levels of government, from local to international, are necessary to shift policy actions toward sustainability (Pridham, 1999).

Limitations on implementation are prevalent in Greece as there is high distrust in the Greek system. The most prevalent criticism of Greek law and policy is the lack of codification in the legislation (Mylonopoulos et al., 2011). Corruption within the system increases the difficulty of executing positive desired effects (Minto & Trincanto, 2022). Additionally, corruption will interfere with efforts for governments to use tourism to decrease poverty. Moreover, Danopoulos and Znidaric (2007) explained that weak government institutions, official corruption, and inconsistent law enforcement increase the law-breaking environment. A significant law-breaking environment in a cash-heavy industry like tourism is tax evasion.

Taxation

Tax collection is a crucial component of government funds. Tourism revenue will increase government taxation (Phiri, 2016). Governments can tax the tourism sector to provide resources such as remedying gaps in essential services including education, health, water, and sanitation, which improve the productivity of people experiencing poverty (Chatterjee, 2017; Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020). Governments can use taxable revenue to subsidize necessities for those with a low income. Repositioning efforts does not mean moving funds from tourist activities towards low-income groups. When the government directs revenue from tourism expansion toward the lowest-income group, the lowest-income households are not the primary beneficiaries of tourism (Blake et al., 2008). Croes (2014) explained that impoverished households spend much of their income on food, health, and education. Subsidizing some of

these necessities can free up money so they can invest in SMEs or save. Additionally, tax revenue can be used to invest in climate change initiatives with the green economy (Corthay & Loeprick, 2010).

Tourism is difficult to be taxed as a product or commodity. Tourism is not a single commodity but a collection of many goods and services spanning various suppliers, making the definition of tourism challenging to identify (Corthay & Loeprick, 2010). Furthermore, not all operators within the system should be taxed the same. For example, the Aegean islands should receive an alternative approach to taxation and allocate those resources based on their needs as an island group (Karampela et al., 2016). Another example of different levels of taxation is between small and large operators. This difference in taxation is a current issue, with stakeholders, policymakers, and tax officials discussing the outcome of short-term rentals in Greece (Paravantes, 2023b). Short-term rentals are not taxed to the same capacity as traditional hotels. Additionally, the new European Commission VAT regulation is expected to increase short-term rental prices by as much as 20% in 2025.

Another issue with taxation in tourism is the substantial black market and tax evasion due to the cash nature of some businesses. Danopoulos and Znidaric (2007) explained that there are mixed positions on tax evasion as some argue it improves living standards by leaving more income in the hands of the people. In contrast, others argue that tax evasion contributes to poverty by depriving governments of needed funds to invest resources to help people experiencing poverty.

Chapter Summary

A framework for sustainable tourism development in the Hellenic Republic requires a holistic analysis of the literature. The research confirms the existence of multiple disjointed

frameworks while lacking vision from multiple levels. The critical levels discussed in the literature review focus on leadership approaches, systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and policy. The levels discussed lack municipal perspectives in their management. Theoretical frameworks discussed include situational leadership, complexity theory, the contingency model of leadership, and the United Nations' SDGs. The frameworks have overlapping themes to assist in sustainable tourism development. For these reasons, this research will focus on the municipal perspective on sustainable tourism development in Greece. The next chapter describes the qualitative phenomenological methods.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to identify the perspectives, strategies, leadership approaches, and policy approaches to sustainable tourism development by municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. This study particularly focused on municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic for each region of Greece to allow for diverse perspectives from the country.

Research Questions

The following research question and secondary questions were used in this study.

- RQ1: What perspectives, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic have on systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?
- SQ1: What development strategies, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use to approach systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships?
- SQ2: What, if any, leadership approaches do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships for sustainable tourism development?
- SQ3: What policy approaches, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, private-public partnership, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?

Research Design

The study used a qualitative approach to answer the research questions. Interviews have been conducted in this qualitative research to assist the researcher in understanding the world

around the participants. There are five basic steps in qualitative methods as explained by Giorgi (1997, as cited in Richards & Morse, 2012):

- (1) collection of verbal data; (2) reading of these data; (3) breaking data into some parts;
- (4) organization and expression of data from a disciplinary perspective; and (5) synthesis and summary of the data for purposes of communication to the scholarly community. (p. 200)

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that qualitative research is the interpretative view of the world in its natural setting (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). Municipal leaders were selected from multiple regions in Greece, allowing the researcher to view participants from around Greece in their natural settings. Therefore, this study used a qualitative phenomenological approach. Much phenomenological practice stems from the work of Heidegger (2010) who explained that in the original Greek root of the word “phenomenology,” *logos* means “to let something be seen,” and *phenomenon* means “that which shows itself in itself” (as cited in van Manen, 2014, p. 27). Moustakas (1994) explained that the Greek origin of the phenomenon comes from the word *phaenesthai*, which is to “flare up, to show itself, to appear” (p. 26). Where other approaches aim to explain, phenomenology aims to describe and interpret. Hagel as cited in Moustakas (1994) explains that phenomenology is “the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience” (p. 26). It describes the common meaning of individuals in their lived experience of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This research was designed to comprehend the phenomenon of sustainable tourism development for municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. It is purposed to understand the need to create sustainable tourism for their municipality and identify their policy, private-public

partnership, stakeholders, and leadership approaches. “Phenomenological approach involves a return to experience to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 12). It is concerned with the wholeness and to look at all aspects of the topic from multiple sides, angles, and perspectives. Because the working language of the Hellenic Republic is Modern Greek, the interview questions were translated into Greek first, with the respondents free to reply in their native language, allowing me to give them the key dimension that assisted with a better understanding of the issue (Butin, 2010). One participant was a native English speaker. The interviews were conducted in English for this participant.

Sources of Data

The target population for this study was municipal leaders of municipalities within the Hellenic Republic in all regions of Greece. The target population was required to be active in office following the October 2023 elections. Municipalities needed to have a population larger than 8,000. Purposeful sampling was used "in which the investigator selects participants because of their characteristics" (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 221). The participants were selected deliberately due to their municipalities' tourism potential. Tourism potential was based on their access to the sea or mountains or their capacity to facilitate agrotourism or cultural heritage. I used convenience sampling based on access to municipal leaders and their willingness to participate in the attempt to have every region represented. Access to leaders came from personal and professional contacts. I e-mailed and called over 175 municipalities to welcome participants outside of my network. From these efforts, two participants responded with the desire to participate. Creswell and Creswell (2018) acknowledged the importance of reaching saturation in the research sample and described an estimated number of participants for qualitative research.

Creswell and Creswell recommended a sample size between three and 10 for phenomenological research. For this specific study, the ideal sample size is 13, with one municipal leader for each of the 13 regions within Greece. In practice, the research size was 12 leaders from 9 regions in Greece. However, each region was approached with or without a personal contact. To have a larger sample size, some regions are represented with two leaders. The monastic community of the peninsula of Mount Athos (Άγιον Όρος) was excluded due to its religious significance and classification as an autonomous region within Greece.

Data Collection Strategies and Procedures

Leaders representing municipalities within the 13 regions were targeted as participants in this study. Participants were individuals who all shared the phenomenon of being municipal leaders and who could articulate their lived experiences (van Manen, 2014). Moustakas (1994) explained that the research participants need to feel comfortable responding honestly.

“Phenomenological research begins with wonder at what gives itself and how something gives itself. It can only be pursued while surrendering to a state of wonder” (van Manen, 2014, p. 26).

Therefore, I approached the research with a sense of wonder and curiosity. Participants were identified by facilitating personal and professional networks, e-mails, and cold calling municipalities to request participation in this study. The interview questions were translated into modern Greek to increase comfort and understanding.

Although 13 leaders from 13 regions were the target sample, the sample is 12 leaders from 9 regions. All regions were contacted and invited. Some leaders scheduled interviews in the missing regions and canceled before the interview without wanting to reschedule. Central Greece and Central Macedonia leaders were approached by personal contacts and e-mailing every municipality. Two leaders from these regions who were introduced by personal contacts agreed

verbally on the phone to participate. These leaders instructed me to call back another day to schedule an appointment. When the day came, they instructed me to call another day. When the day came, I was instructed to call a fourth day. As it was delaying the completion of the project, I decided to move my efforts to find other, more willing participants. I had the same experience in Western Macedonia, but this leader was approached by calling the municipal office without personal contact to introduce us. The Northern Aegean municipalities did not respond to e-mails or calls. Many of those municipalities had new administrations following the October 2023 election.

Interview Process

The interviews were structured with specific questions directly related to the research questions. Before starting the interviews, I provided the participants with copies of the consent form in Greek. I provided the participants with the protocol for the interview and informed them they were free to stop the interview at any time. Aspects of the interview protocol were taken from Creswell and Creswell (2018). Interviews questions were semi-structured with open-ended questions that allows participants to share their perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Richards & Morse, 2012). The open-ended approach allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions for clarification. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom and were recorded. Happy Scribe software was used to support the transcriptions. I received informed consent before conducting the interviews. Additionally, I wrote notes and memos detailing body language, tone, and other information during the interview to assist when creating codes for analyzing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018), the interview began with warm-up questions to ensure the participants were comfortable. I asked the participants to explain their municipality

and provide basic demographic information. I asked clarifying questions when needed, yet took the approach detailed by Richards and Morse (2012) of being attentive to the interviewee by not interrupting. Next, I continued the interview process by asking specific questions (see Table 1).

Table 1

Research Questions, Secondary Questions, and Interview Questions

Research Question		
RQ1 What perspectives, if at all, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic have on systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?		
Secondary Question		
SQ1 What development strategies, if at all, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use to best approach systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships?	SQ2 What, if at all, leadership approaches do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships for sustainable tourism development?	SQ3 What policy approaches, if at all, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic believe is the best for systematic planning, private-public partnership, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?
Interview Questions English		
IQ1) Who do you work with to develop strategies to best approach systematic planning in sustainable tourism?	IQ4) When systematically planning sustainable tourism, how would you describe your leadership approaches?	IQ7) Are there policy examples you can share that you have found successful when systematic planning in sustainable tourism development?
IQ2) How do you develop a strategy to best approach policy in sustainable tourism?	IQ5) Who are the different stakeholders involved when creating and executing policy for sustainable tourism?	IQ8) What are your limitations when developing policy for planning private-public partnerships in sustainable tourism development?
IQ3) Do you have many public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism? If so, how did those partnerships develop?	IQ6) How involved, if at all, are you with the leadership of the public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism?	IQ9) Does your policy approach change depending on who you are leading? If so, please explain.
Interview Questions Greek		
IQ1) Με ποιον συνεργάζεστε για το σχεδιασμό στρατηγικής με στόχο την ανάπτυξη του αειφόρου τουρισμού;	IQ4) Πώς περιγράφεται τον ηγετικό ρόλο σας κατά τη διαδικασία σχεδιασμού πολιτικής για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;	IQ7) Υπάρχουν παραδείγματα επιτυχούς στρατηγικού σχεδιασμού για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό; Χρησιμοποιήσατε στο δικό σας σχεδιασμό;
IQ2) Πώς σχεδιάζετε τη στρατηγική σας με στόχο τη βέλτιστη προσέγγιση του αειφόρου τουρισμού;	IQ5) Ποιοι είναι οι διάφοροι εμπλεκόμενοι φορείς κατά τη δημιουργία και την εφαρμογή πολιτικής για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;	IQ8) Ποιους περιορισμούς συναντήσατε κατά το σχεδιασμό της πολιτικής με στόχο τη σύμπραξη με φορείς του ιδιωτικού και δημοσίου τομέα για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;
IQ3) Έχετε συνάνει συμπράξεις με φορείς του δημοσίου ή ιδιωτικού τομέα για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό; Εάν ναι, πώς προσεγγίσατε τους φορείς και πώς εδραιώθηκε η συνεργασία;	IQ6) Πόσο έχετε εμπλακεί στο ηγετικό κομμάτι της σύμπραξης με φορείς του ιδιωτικού και δημοσίου τομέα για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;	IQ9) Αλλάζετε την πολιτική προσέγγιση που χρησιμοποιείτε ανάλογα με το φορέα ή την ομάδα δράσης στην οποία ηγείστε;

Translation in Qualitative Research

Many risks are associated with translating between English and Greek and then back to English. Furthermore, there is no systematic guidance for qualitative research that addresses any

challenges in the beginning stages of research (Abfalter et al., 2021). Nor are researchers required to disclose any due diligence in the translation process. Therefore, for transparency, this research follows Abfalter et al.'s framework for translation decisions in qualitative research to ensure rigor, relevance, and validity in cross-language qualitative research. The framework is as follows:

Why? The reason for translating. When? The time for translating. What? The data or content for translating. Who? The person(s) translating. How? The mode of translating. Where? The location for translating. By what means? The means and tools for translating. (Abfalter et al., 2021, p. 471)

Why. The translation allows the interviewees to discuss sustainable development in their native language. The translation may increase the degree of comfort for the participants and result in higher-quality results (Abfalter et al., 2021). Participants can provide more authentic statements with subtle nuances (Welch & Piekkari, 2006, as cited in Abfalter et al., 2021).

When. There are multiple points of translation opportunities. The translation process can take place prior to collecting the data, when data are collected, during the data preparation, during the data analysis, or during the reporting of the findings (Santos et al., 2015, as cited by Abfalter et al., 2021). Translation before the analysis increases the rigor of the research process, where transcribing and translating key themes or quotes would lead to errors or inadvertently manipulate key messages (Regmi et al., 2010, as cited in Abfalter et al., 2021). In this research, the interview questions were translated into Greek from English for the purposes of the interview. The interviews were conducted in Greek and coded in the original language. One participant was a native English speaker and was interviewed in English. For the interviews translated, specific quotes or themes were directly translated from their original meaning.

What. The interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded and first transcribed in Greek. Happy Scribe software was used to support the transcriptions.

Who. Who is permitted to translate the concepts and statements must be defined (Abfalter et al., 2021). After the interviews, I utilized the assistance of translation technology such as Google Translate and DeepL Translator to initially translate. Then as a Greek and English speaker, I revised the translations to not lose context.

How. The objective of the translation was to convey an identical meaning between Greek and English (Abfalter et al., 2021). There are multiple approaches to how the translation could be facilitated. The hermeneutic approach was taken, where I, as a native English and Greek speaker, attempted to create an understanding through the languages (Steiner, 1998, as cited in Abfalter et al., 2021).

Where. Athens, Greece.

By What Means. I will take the option of a contextualized translation instead of a word-for-word translation as meaning may be lost in the direct translation (Abfalter et al., 2021). Additionally, I took the approach of translating the interview questions over the direct word-for-word translation to give the interviewee a local context to answer. One interview was conducted in English as the participant was a native English speaker.

Data Analysis

All interview transcripts were inputted into the NVivo data analysis software, enabling me to conduct qualitative coding for each interview. Collaborating with a qualitative researcher, I acquired the necessary skills for coding using NVivo. Leveraging the capabilities of NVivo, I meticulously coded each interview, initiated the identification of broader categories, and subsequently recognized emergent themes. Additionally, Excel was used to create tables, charts,

and graphs of the themes. Following the coding process, I engaged in discussions with the qualitative researcher to verify the accuracy of the coding procedures. This process was conducted iteratively to ensure that each participant's response was adequately represented.

Personal Bias Statement

In qualitative research, a researcher must identify their own biases based on their background (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Richards & Morse, 2012). In the study context, I noted that I have dual nationality with the United States and the Hellenic Republic. My lived experience is of a Greek American, with much of my cultural identity of Hellenism stemming from the influence of my parents as immigrants to the United States in the early 1970s. I have extensive experience in Greece as a visitor, resident, and educator. Many aspects of my opinions on policy and governing are based on my lived experience and education in the United States and Greece.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the researcher's training and experiences will influence their approach. Creswell and Creswell noted that it is easy to take sides or embrace specific perspectives; they call this "going native" (p. 94). I have extensive knowledge and experience in multiple aspects of this study. I have worked for multiple hospitality and tourism organizations in my career. Furthermore, I have worked in higher education in the Hellenic Republic. I have no direct political ties in the Hellenic Republic, either in tourism or government. I understand that there may be unknown biases and to the best of my knowledge have avoided going native.

Human Subject Considerations

To perform an ethical study, researchers should anticipate any ethical concerns and issues that may arise during the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell and Creswell gave

multiple guidelines to ensure the safety of the participants. I received IRB approval from Pepperdine University before the study began. I also disclosed the purpose of the study to the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018), informing them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any moment. I informed the participants that due to their position in office, their anonymity was ensured.

To ensure there were no language barriers the consent forms were delivered both in Greek and English. Abfalter et al. (2021) explained that to enable participants to fully understand concepts and phenomena for international research, translation into their native language supports cultural sensitivity. Therefore, the interview questions were provided in Greek. The risk to the participants for this qualitative phenomenological study was minimal. Due to the participants' role as public servants, their identities were kept confidential with the use of pseudonyms. A random number is assigned to each municipality and participant. No specific identifying information was used or reported in any part of the study. Furthermore, participants had the right to not answer specific questions or to stop the interview at any time. The results of the study are held on a personal password-protected computer and will be stored for 3 years. The findings will be reported both as anonymized and aggregated data.

Proposed Analysis

The first step in the multistep process of analyzing the data begins with the preparation of the data by transcribing the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By taking a phenomenological research approach I am rooted in the first-hand perspective of the lived experience. Moustakas (1994) stated that “when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience”

(p. 84). Furthermore, the process for the translation and analysis is outlined in the previous section (Abfalter et al., 2021).

Means to Ensure Study Validity

The study was designed to ensure all participants had the same ability to confidently answer the questions. Ten interviews were conducted online with the use of Zoom. Two interviews were conducted in person and recorded with Zoom. Additionally, the codes and segmentations were designed to remove any personal bias from the data. In an attempt to reduce my personal biases from the study I avoid sharing my private feelings towards hospitality, tourism, and my personal beliefs on the direction of tourism in the Hellenic Republic. van Manen (2014) said that “in the reduction, one needs to overcome one’s subjective or private feelings, preferences, inclinations, or expectations that may seduce or tempt one to come to premature, wishful, or one-sided understandings of an experience” (p. 224). van Manen noted that the validity of qualitative research is derived from the literature within the study. Therefore, codes and other levels are created based on the literature.

To increase the validity of this qualitative study, I performed triangulation. Triangulation is “the gaining of multiple perspectives through completed studies that have been conducted on the same topic and directly address one another’s findings” (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 103). A study is triangulated when results converge with previous studies to illuminate, challenge, or verify the other’s findings. Creswell and Poth (2018) established “the triangulation of data sources, methods, and investigators to establish credibility” (p. 256) and suggested the use of thick descriptions. van Manen (2014) explained that the study’s roots in literature can support validity. Therefore, the study has been supported by the literature review and the exploration of sustainable tourism development the United Nations’ SDGs, systemic planning in tourism,

public-private partnerships, and tourism policy through the theoretical framework of leadership theory, complexity theory, and contingency theory. The suspension of bias strengthens phenomenological studies, the new insight gleaned, and its scholarship (van Manen, 2014). Although many methodologies use external sources of validation, phenomenological studies may not benefit from such approaches. Moustakas (1994) noted that textural descriptions and attentive coding support validation.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study focused on understanding the perspectives, strategies, leadership approaches, and policy approaches related to sustainable tourism development among municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. The research questions aimed to explore how these leaders perceive systematic planning, policy development, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches in the context of sustainable tourism development. Phenomenology helps to describe and interpret individuals' lived experiences with and perspectives on a specific phenomenon. In this case, the phenomenon is sustainable tourism development among municipal leaders in Greece elected to a new term after the October 2023 elections. Data for the study were collected through semi-structured interviews with leaders representing municipalities in 9 of the 13 regions of Greece. The participants were chosen purposefully based on their municipality's tourism offerings. The interviews were conducted in Greek, and participants were given the questions in Greek to ensure their comfort and understanding. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, with additional translations when necessary to maintain the authenticity of participants' responses. Triangulation was used to increase this qualitative study's validity and create credibility. (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

emphasize the importance of triangulation in qualitative research to establish “the triangulation of data sources, methods, and investigators to establish credibility” (p. 256).

Chapter 4: Findings

This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to identify the systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development by municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. Within each question, participants mentioned examples that related to specific SDGs. This chapter presents the results of the participant interviews. Interviews were synthesized to uncover the predominant themes that emerged in response to the questions. The research consisted of interviewing 12 municipal leaders from regions around Greece. To be eligible to participate in the study, participants needed to be in office and reelected in the October 2023 mayoral election.

Data Collection

Participants were recruited for this phenomenological study through personal contacts and direct recruitment with qualifying municipalities. Municipalities in regions in which I did not have direct contact were sent a recruitment e-mail and a follow-up phone call. A total of 175 municipalities were contacted. Six qualifying municipalities were not contacted due to my virus protection software warning of malware on the municipal websites. Two municipalities had e-mail addresses that were not in service, and three did not provide phone numbers. Candidates who agreed to participate either scheduled an interview through the link in the recruitment e-mail or directly with me via phone. Many participants preferred a brief, informal discussion to understand the research's purpose and to create rapport. To build trust, I provided participants with the questions before the interview.

The interviews took place via Zoom, and Happy Scribe software was used to transcribe them. Interviews took place from early February 2024 until early March 2024. The interview period was scheduled to run for 2 weeks but was extended due to the busy schedules of the

municipal leaders. During the interviews, participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities and municipalities as much as possible. To confirm that the transcriptions were accurate, I read them while listening to the recordings multiple times. The recordings were deleted once the interviews were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy. Transcriptions were supported using Happy Scribe software (happyscribe.com). The transcriptions were translated from Greek to English by contextualizing the translation instead of a word-for-word translation to avoid losing the meaning of direct translation. Google Translate and DeepL Translate were used to support the translations. Participant 4 was a native English speaker; therefore, his interview was conducted in English.

Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews were uploaded into NVivo data analysis software to allow for qualitative coding of the interviews. The coding was done in English. The original Greek was located on the same document as a reference to ensure context was not lost in the coding process. I scheduled two training sessions Adam Kaney, a certified Nvivo expert to ensure proper NVivo software and coding use. As the coding process began, I could identify themes and significant categories present in the literature review. Excel was used to create tables, charts, and figures. The process was reviewed and checked often to ensure accuracy and that each participant's experiences were represented.

Municipal Leaders and Demographics

This study included municipal leaders from a variety of regions in Greece. Leaders held the title of mayor or, in some instances, deputy mayor of tourism. The years in office, age, region, and duration were excluded to maintain confidentiality. Regions were randomly assigned

a number. Participants are then numbered in the order of their participation within the region.

The demographics and numbers are found in Table 2.

Table 2

Participants

Participant Number	Role	Gender	Tourism Offerings 1	Tourism Offerings 2
1A	Deputy Mayor	Female	Mountains	Cultural Heritage
1B	Deputy Mayor	Male	Sea	Offseason
2	Mayor	Male	Sea	Offseason
3	Mayor	Male	Sea	Offseason
4	Deputy Mayor	Male	Sea	Sports
5	Deputy Mayor	Male	Sea	Offseason
6A	Mayor	Male	Cultural Heritage	Sea
6B	Deputy Mayor	Male	Sea	Offseason
7	Deputy Mayor	Male	Urban	Mountains
9	Mayor	Female	Sea	Offseason
13.A	Mayor	Male	Sea	Mountains
13.B	Deputy Mayor	Male	Urban	Cultural Heritage

Tourism offerings were assigned in the subject consideration phase of the research. Six participants specifically mentioned the need for offseason promotion in their municipality; therefore, for them, tourism offerings 2 was updated to reflect that. Although every region was invited to participate, multiple municipalities resisted participating in the study. Additionally, some regions had candidates who verbally confirmed but then did not commit to a meeting time later and thus are missing. Therefore, some regions are represented by multiple municipalities. The participating regions are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Participating Regions

Regions	Participation
Attica / Αττική	Yes
Central Greece / Στερεά Ελλάδα	No
Central Macedonia / Κεντρική Μακεδονία	No
Crete / Κρήτη	Yes
Eastern Macedonia and Thrace / Ανατολική Μακεδονία και Θράκη	Yes
Epirus / Ήπειρος	Yes
Ionian Islands / Ιόνια νησιά	Yes
North Aegean / Βόρειο Αιγαίο	No
Peloponnese / Πελοπόννησος	Yes
South Aegean / Νότιο Αιγαίο	Yes
Thessaly / Θεσσαλία	Yes
Western Greece / Δυτική Ελλάδα	Yes
Western Macedonia / Δυτική Μακεδονία	No

Study Findings

The study addressed one research question and three secondary questions. RQ1 was, what perspectives, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic have on systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development? There was an open time limit for the participants to answer the interview questions, which allowed them to fully explain the intricacies of sustainable tourism development at the Hellenic Republic's municipal level.

Direct Findings to Research Question and Secondary Questions

Participants were asked questions directly related to the research question and secondary questions. Questions were related to leadership approaches, policy, public-private partnerships, stakeholders, and systematic planning. Codes were created for the specific terms mentioned in the questions. Codes were also created to reference specific SDGs. Themes were created based on the participant's responses. Each participant had a varying depth of detail provided for each topic. The participants who focused on each topic are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Topic Mentions Per Participant

Participant 1A	Mentions	Participant 1B	Mentions	Participant 2	Mentions	Participant 3	Count of Mentation
Leadership	9	Leadership	8	Leadership	8	Leadership	6
Policy	7	Policy	8	Policy	3	Policy	13
Public-Private Partnerships	4	Public-Private Partnerships	10	Public-Private Partnerships	12	Public-Private Partnerships	16
Stakeholders	10	Stakeholders	14	Stakeholders	8	Stakeholders	11
Systematic Planning	9	Systematic Planning	7	Systematic Planning	10	Systematic Planning	27
Participant 4	Mentions	Participant 5	Count of Mentation	Participant 6A	Mentions	Participant 6B	Count of Mentation
Leadership	7	Leadership	3	Leadership	3	Leadership	3
Policy	21	Policy	3	Policy	8	Policy	5
Public-Private Partnerships	12	Public-Private Partnerships	6	Public-Private Partnerships	9	Public-Private Partnerships	15
Stakeholders	11	Stakeholders	8	Stakeholders	3	Stakeholders	6
Systematic Planning	29	Systematic Planning	9	Systematic Planning	12	Systematic Planning	27
Participant 7	Mentions	Participant 9	Count of Mentation	Participant 13.A	Count of Mentation	Participant 13.B	Count of Mentation
Leadership	7	Leadership	4	Leadership	5	Leadership	14
Policy	10	Policy	4	Policy	7	Policy	29
Public-Private Partnerships	11	Public-Private Partnerships	6	Public-Private Partnerships	9	Public-Private Partnerships	14
Stakeholders	13	Stakeholders	9	Stakeholders	3	Stakeholders	13
Systematic Planning	13	Systematic Planning	11	Systematic Planning	3	Systematic Planning	36

Most of the information provided by the municipal leaders revolved around systematic planning, with leadership approaches receiving the least amount of direct attention. Table 5 shows the depth of each topic given by all participants.

Table 5

Depth of Topic

Topic	Mention	Percentage of Conversation
Leadership	77	12%
Policy	118	19%
Public-Private Partnerships	124	20%
Stakeholders	109	18%
Systematic Planning	193	31%
Summary	621	

Leadership

Three interview questions were related to leadership. These questions were derived from SQ2, which was, what, if any, leadership approaches do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships for sustainable tourism development? Within the coding process, leaders took two approaches to answering the questions about their leadership. A theme that emerged was whether the leader expressed themselves within the municipality or expressed the municipality and how it leads. Figure 2 shows the response to leadership questions as a municipality or themselves as a leader.

Figure 2*Leadership Viewpoint**Leadership as a Municipality*

When answering leadership questions, municipal leaders responded by representing the municipality as an organization. Participant 13B said:

Ο δήμος είναι αυτός ή εκεί είναι η αρχή, η κρατική, ας το πούμε έτσι, αρχή, η οποία βρίσκεται πιο κοντά στον πολίτη. Και μπορεί να εφαρμόσει την πολιτική του ο δήμος, γιατί ακριβώς υπάρχει αυτή η αρχή της εγγύτητας και της αμεσότητας, όπως λέμε εμείς εδώ πέρα.

The municipality is that or there is the authority, the state authority, so to speak, which is closer to the citizen. And the municipality can implement its policy precisely because there is this principle of proximity and immediacy, as we say here.

Leadership as an Individual

When answering leadership questions, municipal leaders responded with their perspectives on leadership. Participant 6A said:

Ο ρόλος που έχω εγώ προσωπικά είναι θεσμικός. Είμαι ο δήμαρχος μιας περιοχής η οποία έχει έντονο πολιτιστικό αποτύπωμα και ζει αρκετά από τον τουρισμό, οπότε θα

πρέπει αυτά να τα συνδυάσουμε. Και βέβαια πρέπει να συνδυαστούν σε τέτοιο βαθμό ώστε να μην υπάρχει η αλλοίωση των πόρων και της μορφής που έχει ο Δήμος μόνο και μόνο για να υπάρχει το τουριστικό προϊόν. Άρα λοιπόν, η αειφορία είναι κάτι το οποίο είμαστε υποχρεωμένοι να ακολουθήσουμε. Είμαι σίγουρος ότι και άλλοι οι οποίοι είναι θεσμικοί παράγοντες, όπως είναι άλλοι δήμαρχοι, κάποιοι αντιδήμαρχοι που απασχολούνται τον τουρισμό, πρώτιστο μέλημα έχουν αυτό, η περιοχή τους να μην αλλοιωθεί αλλά να προχωρήσουν και στο τουριστικό κομμάτι όσο μπορούν για να μπορέσουν να αναβαθμίσουν έτσι και το προϊόν τους αλλά και να προσελκύσουν περισσότερο κόσμο.

The role I personally have is institutional. I am the mayor of a region with a solid cultural footprint and live in much tourism, so we should combine these. And, of course, they must be combined to such an extent that there is no alteration of the resources and the form that the Municipality has only to have the tourist product. So, we are obliged to follow sustainability. I am sure that others who are institutional factors, such as other mayors and some mayors who are employed in tourism, have this as their primary concern. Their area should not be altered but should proceed to the tourist part as much as possible to upgrade their product and attract more people.

Leadership questions were accompanied by the themes of collaboration, stakeholders, and tourism offerings. IQ5 was, who are the stakeholders involved when creating and executing policy for sustainable tourism? Figure 3 depicts the breakdown between leadership and the themes.

Figure 3*Leadership Approach*

Participant 2 explained that his leadership style revolves around teamwork, and he specified stakeholders with whom he collaborates.

Εγώ δεν πιστεύω πολύ σε αυτό το μοντέλο, το ηγετικό. Δηλαδή εμένα μου αρέσει πιο πολύ, ξέρετε το team working, η συνεργασία. Δεν πιστεύω ότι χρειάζεσαι κάποιον ηγέτη που να ξεχωρίσει κάτι. Θέλεις team working, να βρεις ανθρώπους με το ίδιο όραμα, να πιστεύουν τα ίδια πράγματα, να είναι έντιμοι κυρίως αυτό είναι βασικό, να τους νοιάζει ο τόπος. Γιατί από τον τόπο μετά όλοι θα ωφεληθούμε και οι επιχειρηματίες και οι ξενοδόχοι. Είναι πρώτα ο προορισμός και ο τόπος και μετά όλα τα άλλα. Και αυτό όπως είπαμε και πριν, για να το πετύχεις θέλεις συνεργασία. Συνεργασία είναι team working, δεν είναι leader ας πούμε και.

I do not believe much in this model of leadership. I like it more, you know, the teamwork, the collaboration. I do not think you need a leader who can stand out. You want teamwork, to find people with the same vision, to believe the same things, to be honest, mainly this is basic, to care about the place. Because from the place after all we will benefit both businessmen and hoteliers. It is first the destination and the place and

then everything else. Furthermore, as we said before, to achieve this, you want cooperation. Collaboration is teamwork, and it is not a leader.

Participant 1A mentioned culture as a critical aspect of their tourism offerings when leading.

Για μένα πρέπει να είναι αυτό: πρέπει να υπάρχει μια κεντρική πολιτική άποψη. Και γύρω απ' αυτό κινούμαστε. Για το περιβάλλον είμαι εδώ και τηρώ αυτούς τους όρους. Για την άυλη πολιτιστική κληρονομιά είμαι εδώ. Για τον πολιτισμό γενικά είμαι εδώ. Για την καθημερινότητά είμαι εδώ. Πρέπει να έχεις συγκεκριμένες και σταθερές. Να υπάρχουνε δηλαδή οι σταθερές.

For me, it must be this: a central political viewpoint must be. Moreover, around that, we move. For the environment, I am here, and I abide by these conditions. I am here for the intangible cultural heritage. For culture in general, I am here. I am here for everyday life. You have to have specifics and constants. In other words, the constants must exist.

A common theme was the SDGs, which are discussed in a later section. Participant 13B described the balance of resource consumption between stakeholders within the leadership approach.

Από μια μεριά, η διοίκηση δια του παραδείγματος και από την άλλη μεριά ο συντονισμός με τις άλλες υπηρεσίες, ούτως ώστε να υπάρξει όσο γίνεται μικρότερη ανάλωση πόρων από όλους μαζί για ένα συγκεκριμένο έργο.

On the one hand, the administration by example and, on the other hand, the coordination with the other services so that there is as little resource consumption as possible by all of them together for a specific project.

IQ9 was, does your policy approach change depending on who you are leading? If so, please explain. Results were mixed as to what exactly is changed. Some participants responded that the policy should not change regardless of who is being led. Other participants provided more details, although the policy approaches do not change due to the policy being associated with the overall goals and objectives of the municipality. The approach to the individual stakeholders does change. Participant 3 shared this for his political approach towards those he leads:

Ναι. Θεωρώ ότι η σύμπραξη του γραφείου και με outsourcing βοήθεια από ανθρώπους που να έχουν την εμπειρία, θα ήταν πολύ σημαντικό και θα έδινε πραγματικά τον οδικό άξονα ώστε να κινηθούμε προς συγκεκριμένους στόχους, θέτοντας στόχους, και να βλέπουμε και ν' αξιολογούμε τ' αποτελέσματα. Άρα, το ιδανικό σενάριο θα ήταν να υπήρχε τέτοιο γραφείο που να λειτουργεί στο δήμο με υποστήριξη outsourcing, με ανθρώπους που να έχουν την εμπειρία και τον τρόπο ώστε να μπορέσουμε να εφαρμόσουμε αυτές τις πολιτικές.

Yes. I think the collaboration of the office and outsourcing help from people with experience would be essential and give the road axis to move towards specific goals, setting goals, and seeing and evaluating the results. So, the ideal scenario would be to have such an office operating in the municipality with outsourcing support and people with the experience and the means to implement these policies.

Policy

Five interview questions directly mentioned policy. These questions were designed from SQ3, which was, what policy approaches, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic

believe are the best for systematic planning, private-public partnership, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?

Municipal leaders took political approaches. Participant 7 took a more situational approach stating:

Σίγουρα αλλάζει η πολιτική προσέγγιση, σίγουρα. Έχει διαφορά να μιλάς μ' έναν επαγγελματία, είτε είναι έμπορος, είτε είναι ξενοδόχος είτε είναι οτιδήποτε. Διαφορετικά να μιλάς με το Επιμελητήριο που είναι ένας φορέας συμβουλευτικός, κρατικός. Και διαφορετικά να μιλάς με τον ΕΟΤ ή να μιλάς με την Περιφέρεια ή με το Υπουργείο Τουρισμού.

The political approach is definitely changing. It makes a difference to talk to a professional, be it a trader, hotelier, or whatever. Otherwise, talk to the chamber, an advisory state body. Otherwise, talk to the EOT, the region, or the Ministry of Tourism.

Other leaders do not change their policy approach, such as Participant 13B who stated:

Εντάξει, σας είπα ότι εγώ δεν άλλαξα απόψεις, αλλά δε θυμάμαι και κάποιον άλλον άνθρωπο της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης να άλλαξε απόψεις όσον αφορά το ζήτημα αυτό, επειδή για δικούς του λόγους μεταπήδησε σε άλλο πολιτικό φορέα ή έχει άλλη ομάδα δράσης στην οποία να ηγείται. Θεωρώ ότι αυτά τα ζητήματα είναι ζητήματα στα οποία δίνουν όλοι πολύ μεγάλη σημασία, πολύ μεγάλη προσοχή, ανεξάρτητα από την ιδεολογική τους ή την κομματική τους προέλευση.

I told you that I did not change my mind, but I do not remember any other person in the local government changing their mind on this issue either because, for their reasons, they moved to another political body or had another action group to lead. I think these issues

are issues that everyone pays very close attention to, regardless of their ideological or party background.

It should be noted that 13B is the only participant who mentioned his political party affiliation in this study specifically.

Εντάξει, εγώ να σας πω ότι δεν έχω αλλάξει πολιτικό φορέα στον οποίον συμμετέχω.

Είμαι μέλος του ΠΑΣΟΚ, είμαι μέλος του Σοσιαλδημοκρατικού λοιπόν Κόμματος της Ελλάδος. Βεβαίως, εάν άλλαζε τις αρχές του ή τις αντιλήψεις του το κόμμα, φυσικά διατηρώ το δικαίωμα της ανεξαρτησίας της γνώμης, ακόμα και να φύγω από τον φορέα αυτόν, αν αισθανθώ ότι δε με καλύπτει, όπως εξάλλου κάποιοι, καλώς η κακώς.

Yes. Okay, let me tell you that I have not changed the political body I am participating in.

I am a member of PASOK and the Social Democratic Party of Greece. Of course, if the party were to change its principles or perceptions, I retain the right of independence of opinion, even to leave this body if I feel that it does not cover me, as some, for better or worse.

IQ7 was, are there policy examples you can share that you have found successful when systematically planning sustainable tourism development? Participant 1B mentioned an instance in which waste management was outsourced to a private company:

Η λειτουργία και η συνεχώς αυξανόμενη και growing λειτουργία της επιχείρησης διαχείρισης των αποβλήτων, που σας ανέφερα. Είναι μια εταιρεία που μεγαλώνει συνέχεια το έργο της και είναι εξαιρετικό παράδειγμα διαχείρισης του περιβάλλοντος στην κατεύθυνση της αειφορίας.

I have mentioned the example of the operation and the continuously growing operation of the waste management company. It is a company that is constantly growing its work and is an excellent example of environmental management in the direction of sustainability.

IQ8 was, what are your limitations when developing policy for planning private-public partnerships in sustainable tourism development? Participant 7 noted financing as a critical limit to their municipality's operations.

Τα κονδύλια είναι μικρά, είναι μαζεμένα. Προσπαθούμε όλοι από την πλευρά μας, αλλά αυτό το κάνουν παράλληλα και όλοι οι δήμοι, είναι 332 δήμοι σε όλη την Ελλάδα, και το κάνουν όλοι. Οπότε καταλαβαίνετε, είναι περιορισμένα τα κονδύλια. Εκεί έχουν εντοπίσει το πρόβλημα. Είναι 332 δήμοι σε όλη την Ελλάδα. Όλοι κάτι θέλουν, όλοι προφανώς θέλουν για το καλό του Δήμου τους και καλά κάνουν. Τα χρήματα όμως είναι περιορισμένα.

Funds are small, and they are collected. We are all trying from our side, but all the municipalities are doing this simultaneously. There are 332 municipalities throughout Greece, and they are all doing it. So, you see, funds are limited. There, we identified the problem. There are 332 municipalities throughout Greece. Everyone wants something; everyone wants it for the good of their municipality, and they do it well. Nevertheless, money is limited.

Participant 9 also mentioned finances as a limitation explaining:

Το πρόβλημα που νιώθω ότι θα υπάρξει είναι αν υπάρχουν πράγματα τα οποία πρέπει να γίνουν με χρήματα, δηλαδή πρέπει να εξασφαλίσουμε πόρους. Αυτός θα είναι ένας αντικειμενικός περιορισμός. Δεν υπάρχουν άλλοι περιορισμοί. Από τη στιγμή που θέλεις να προχωρήσεις σε συμπράξεις και συνεργασίες, άλλοι περιορισμοί δεν υπάρχουν.

Θέλεις και πας, προχωράς. Όμως σίγουρα νιώθω ότι θα πρέπει να εξασφαλιστούν πόροι. Αυτό είναι πιθανόν ένα πρόβλημα.

The problem, I feel, will be if there are things that need to be done with money. That is, we need to secure resources. This will be an objective limitation. There are no other restrictions. Once you want to engage in partnerships and partnerships, other restrictions do not exist. You want and go, you go. However, I certainly feel that resources should be secured. This is probably a problem.

Participants 4, 13A, and 13B noted that bureaucracy contributes to the limitations.

Participant 13A shared:

Δυστυχώς υπάρχουνε κάποιες αγκυλώσεις, κάποια προβλήματα εδώ και πάρα πολύ καιρό, και κυρίως το μεγαλύτερο πρόβλημα που έχουμε αντιμετωπίσει είναι οι αδειοδοτήσεις και η γραφειοκρατία. Βήμα-βήμα καταφέρνει η πολιτεία, μπαίνει σ' αυτή τη λογική ώστε να μπορούν να υπάρχουν συμπράξεις ιδιωτικού και δημοσίου και δημοτικών φορέων, και θεωρώ ότι προσπερνούνται αυτά τα προβλήματα της γραφειοκρατίας κι έτσι δίνονται λύσεις.

Unfortunately, there have been some hiccups and problems for a very long time, and above all, the biggest problems we have faced are licensing and bureaucracy. Step by step, the state succeeds. It enters this logic so that there can be partnerships between private and public and municipal bodies, and I think these bureaucratic problems are overcome, and thus solutions are given.

Public-Private Partnerships

Two interview questions were related to public-private partnerships. IQ3 was, do you have many public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism? If so, how did those partnerships

develop? Every mayor mentioned the businesses within their jurisdiction as their private partners. These include restaurants and hotels with their respective local trade organizations. Naturally, local citizens were mentioned as critical partners and their interests. Interests for local citizens ranged from preservation of cultural heritage to waste management services.

Participant 13B mentioned the development of a cruise entering their port as a critical partnership for tourism growth. Participants 2, 5, and 7 mentioned their partnerships with their respective regional airports and the airlines that service them. IQ6 was, how involved, if at all, are you with the leadership of the public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism? Participant 2 discussed his efforts to build relationships with the foreign airlines servicing his municipality. This was done without direct support from the national government. Participant 2 explained:

Το Υπουργείο Τουρισμού δεν ασχολείται με τόπους, ασχολείται με τη χώρα. Εμείς θέλαμε και τι κάναμε; Από το '19 ήρθαμε σε επαφή με το γραφείο του ΕΟΤ στο Παρίσι, με τη διευθύντρια εκεί, και είπαμε: «Θέλουμε τη βοήθειά σας για να κάνουμε το άνοιγμα στη γαλλική αγορά». Μας έφεραν σε επαφή με την Transavia. Είναι αεροπορική εταιρεία, είναι η low cost της Air France που θα μπορούσε να βάλει μία πτήση. Το συνηθίζει αυτό στο πρόγραμμά της. Έχει κι άλλες πτήσεις σε ελληνικά νησιά για την τουριστική περίοδο. Ήρθαμε σε επαφή μαζί τους, κάναμε συζητήσεις.

The Ministry of Tourism does not deal with places; it deals with the country. What did we want, and what did we do? Since '19, we have contacted the EOT office in Paris with the director there, and we said: “We want your help to make the opening in the French market.” They brought us in contact with Transavia. It is an airline, and it is the low cost of Air France that could put on a flight. They entered us into their program. It has other

flights to Greek islands for the tourist season. We got in touch with them, and we had discussions.

Only one municipal leader explicitly mentioned an NGO as a strategic partnership. The NGO Blue Flag was mentioned as a critical partner for the cleanliness of the beaches and promotional purposes. Participant 1B said:

Η εταιρεία Blue Flag, η οποία είναι παγκόσμιος Μη Κυβερνητικός Οργανισμός. Είναι πολύ σημαντική η συμμετοχή μας σε αυτό το πρόγραμμα, γιατί τα κριτήρια που βάζει το Blue Flag για να πάρει τη σημαία μία παραλία είναι πάρα πολύ αυστηρά και εργαζόμαστε πάνω σε αυτό, τα καλύπτουμε κι έτσι έχουμε παραλίες εξαιρετικής απόδοσης όσον αφορά το περιβαλλοντικό αποτύπωμα που αφήνουν οι επισκέπτες τους.

We have partnered with the Blue Flag, a global nongovernmental organization. Our participation in this program is significant because the criteria set by Blue Flag for a beach to receive the flag are rigorous, and we are working on it. We cover them, and thus, we have beaches of excellent performance in terms of the environmental footprint that they leave their visitors.

Participant 4 mentioned the active approach to obtaining land from the national government into their management to be offered as public tenders:

Most municipalities do not have the land because they never ask for it. They do not want the headache. The headache. We want the opposite. We want the headache because that is how we ensure that things in our town will operate according to our agenda.

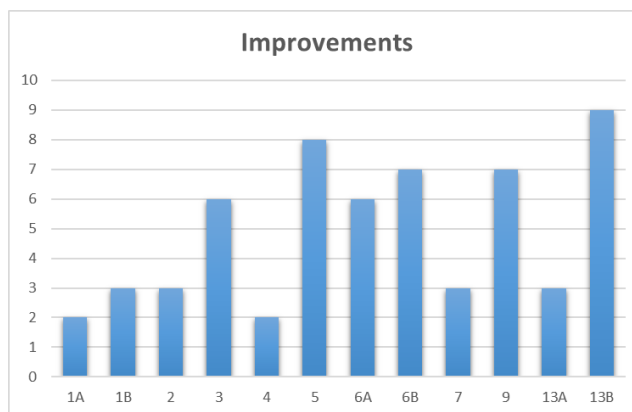
Systems Improvements

A theme that emerged in the data was the desire for systems improvement. Topics under this theme included the desire to improve the bureaucratic system in Greece as well as improving

the offerings available for tourism. The frequencies each participant gave to speaking about improvements are represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Improvements



The theme of improvements relates to the limitations previously mentioned. Participant 7 spoke of available funds and the difficulties in acquiring the finances:

Εκεί, όποιος προλάβει, τα δει πρώτος και κάνει τις αιτήσεις, θα πάρει και τα χρήματα. Κι αυτό είναι κάτι το οποίο έχει συζητηθεί.

Whoever sees them first and makes the applications will also get the money. Moreover, this is something that has been discussed.

Participant 9 explained a need to change the mentality of the local population to understand the benefits of sustainable development.

Το πιο βασικό ζήτημα όμως έγκειται στην αλλαγή της νοοτροπίας. Γιατί έχω την αίσθηση ότι τα τελευταία χρόνια έχει δημιουργηθεί σε όλους η εντύπωση ότι με τα χρήματα υπάρχει δυνατότητα να αγοράσεις τα πάντα, ενώ δεν είναι ακριβώς έτσι. Αυτή η αίσθηση είναι εντελώς λανθασμένη.

The most crucial issue, however, is the change of mentality. I have the feeling that in recent years, it has created the impression that with money, there is a possibility to buy everything, but it is not precisely so. This feeling is entirely wrong.

Participant 4 mentioned that the layers of laws and bureaucracy limit many attempts to improve. He gave multiple examples of where these layers limit their ability to service their communities and tourists. One example is a natural disaster. The mayor, against the national government's direction, took matters into his own hands and developed a solution to defend his municipality from the disaster in direct contradiction with national municipalities and laws. Although this information is known in the community and local news, I have elected not to provide direct quotes to maintain confidentiality. Another confidential example concerns local infrastructure that needs repair, yet the municipality is not allowed to address it because it is under the national government's jurisdiction. What can be shared is what the leader said about the stairs that lead to a beach in the municipality.

We have beaches that have little stairs down to the beaches that are crumbling. They are falling apart. Somebody is going to get killed. We are not allowed to go and repair them or rebuild them.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders play a crucial role in sustainable tourism development. The relationship with stakeholders was indirectly asked in IQ1. IQ1 was, whom do you work with to develop strategies to approach systematic planning in sustainable tourism best? Stakeholders were then specifically asked in IQ5. IQ5 was, who are the stakeholders involved when creating and executing policy for sustainable tourism? Stakeholders from many of the participants were similar. There are local trade organizations that represent different private operators. Hoteliers or

restaurant associations are examples of such organizations. As elected officials, naturally, the local community is a key stakeholder. Ministries within the national government were often mentioned. Some municipalities had sister cities through a European Union program. As mentioned before, some municipalities view universities as critical stakeholders. Some municipalities specifically mention the use of outside advisors and consultants to assist in the creation of programs. Participant 13B said:

Κοιτάζτε, όταν λέω σύμβουλοι, εννοώ οι ειδικοί σύμβουλοι, οι επιστημονικοί συνεργάτες τους οποίους προσλαμβάνει, έχει το δικαίωμα να προσλάβει κάθε δήμαρχος, πέρα από τα στελέχη τα μόνιμα της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης και πέρα από τους αιρετούς, αυτούς που εκλέγονται δηλαδή, δημοτικοί σύμβουλοι... Και κυρίως συνήθως οι συνεργάτες αυτοί, που προσλαμβάνονται ελεύθερα από το δήμαρχο, είναι τεχνικοί, είναι μηχανικοί, είναι άνθρωποι δηλαδή, οι οποίοι έχουν τέτοιου είδους εξειδικευμένες γνώσεις.

Look, when I say consultants, I mean the special consultants, the scientific collaborators he hires; every mayor has the right to hire beyond the permanent executives of the local government and the elected, that is, those elected municipal councilors...Above all, these partners, who are usually freely hired by the mayor, are technicians, they are engineers, that is, they are people who have this kind of specialized knowledge.

Participant 4 elaborated on their approach to the roles of the municipality and the consultants:

We create the policy; the municipality creates the policy. Then, we will either sit down with the private sector or, like I said, an educational institution to elaborate and define the terms. As I said, we are making the DMO [Destination Management Organization]. The DMO is not something that we can prepare in-house. We do not have the know-how; we

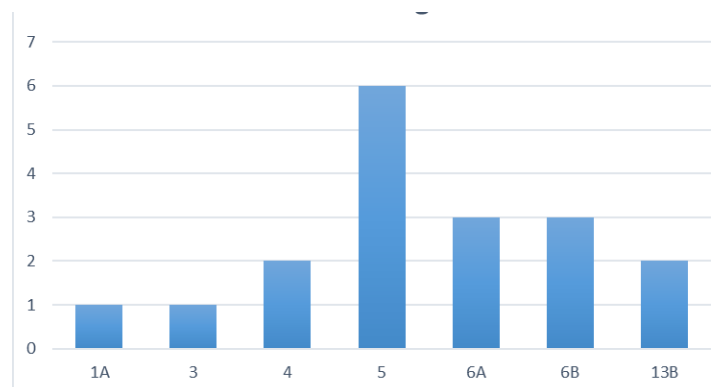
do not have the resources. We have to sit down with whoever is the expert, with a private consultant to do this.

Collaboration with Higher Education

Relationships with higher education is a theme in multiple participant's responses. The interview questions asked about the relationship between public-private partnerships. At the time of the interviews, only state-run universities were legal in Greece according to the Greek constitution. In early March 2024, the Greek government passed a bill allowing private non-profit universities that meet specific criteria. Therefore, it should be understood that the relationships with higher education are technically public-public partnerships at the time of this research. However, a unique theme in the data was the relationships multiple municipalities had with universities. Within these relationships, the target was to benefit tourism, leading to the betterment of residents and their interests. Seven of the 12 participants mentioned relationships with higher education as critical partners to their planning. The mentions each participant gave to relationships with higher education are represented in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Collaboration with Higher Education



Higher Education supports the relationship between the municipalities for their regional and expertise in sustainability practices. Participant 4 said:

For every major project, especially about sustainability, we like to talk with educational institutions, universities, and that we want the professor at the table.

Participant 5 had a similar approach:

Όχι, είναι καθηγητές οι οποίοι έχουν σχέση με τον τουρισμό, δηλαδή με το να στήσουν ουσιαστικά... πολιτικές τουρισμού, μάνατζμεντ τουρισμού.

No, they are teachers related to tourism, that is, to set up essentially...tourism policies and management.

Participant 3 and the municipality are located near a large forest and are a few hours' drive from large urban areas. He identified the unique tourism offering of the forest and mountains in the region and spoke about the relationship with higher education in terms of preserving and facilitating the forest. He stated:

Έχουμε κάνει μια συνεργασία, ένα μνημόνιο συνεργασίας με το Γεωπονικό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών και στην ατζέντα μας μέσα είναι και το δάσος βελανιδιού. Στο κομμάτι του οικοτουρισμού πώς μπορεί να γίνει επισκέψιμο... Διαδρομές. Πώς μπορούμε τα προϊόντα του δάσους αυτά να τα αξιοποιήσει η τοπική κοινωνία; Να είναι και οικονομική δραστηριότητα, αλλά και τουριστική ατραξιόν για την περιοχή.

We have made a memorandum of cooperation with the Agricultural University of Athens, and the oak forest is also on our agenda. How can ecotourism be visited? Routes. How can we use these forest products for the local community? To be both an economic activity and a tourist attraction for the region.

Participant 5 represents a relatively new municipality compared to other entities, as it was once a part of a larger municipality that has now begun governing on its own. They have

identified the need to work with universities to build their strategy within this early stage.

Participant 5 explained:

Άρα, στόχος δικός μας είναι για την επόμενη πενταετία μια συνεργασία Πανεπιστημίου, δήμων και Περιφέρειας και συνεισφορά ιδιωτών οι οποίοι έχουν εξειδικευμένη γνώση σε κάποια αντικείμενα τα οποία δεν μπορούμε να πλησιάσουμε και να προσεγγίσουμε.

So, our goal for the next five years is a collaboration between the University, municipalities, and the Region and the contribution of individuals with specialized knowledge in some subjects that we cannot approach and approach.

Systematic Planning

I asked about systematic planning in two questions. IQ2 was, how do you develop a strategy to approach policy in sustainable tourism best? Each municipality took similar approaches to meeting with stakeholders and planning with the local community in mind. Others find the advice of academic and professional experts, as previously discussed. Participant 3 actively looked for models that work elsewhere in Greece and worldwide. He stated:

Εμείς προσπαθούμε να δούμε αυτά που λέμε «good practice», καλές πρακτικές.

Προσπαθώ δηλαδή σαν δήμαρχος να βρω αυτά τα μοντέλα τα οποία σε περιοχές που έχουν αντίστοιχα χαρακτηριστικά με τη δική μας, στο παρελθόν ή στο παρόν έχουνε δουλέψει ή δουλεύουνε. Τέτοια παραδείγματα για μένα καλής πρακτικής, παραδείγματος χάρη ανέφερα τον αναρριχητικό τουρισμό, είναι το Λεωνίδιο. Ο δήμος Λεωνιδίου που έχει κάνει περίπου 1.000 διαδρομές αναρριχητικές και αυτή τη στιγμή παρ' όλο που είναι offseason, έχει τουρίστες που πάνε για ακριβώς να κάνουν αναρρίχηση στα πλαίσια του βιώσιμου τουρισμού και αειφόρου τουρισμού. Όπως είναι η Κάλυμνος με τα αναρριχητικά πεδία.

We try to see what we call "good practices." In other words, as a mayor, I try to find those models that have worked or are working in areas with similar characteristics to ours, in the past or the present. One example of good practice, for example, I mentioned climbing tourism, is Leonidio. The municipality of Leonidio has made about 1,000 climbing routes, and now, even though it is offseason, it has tourists who go climbing precisely in the context of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development, like Kalymnos with its climbing fields.

Participant 6B shared agricultural resources as a unique offering and a point of interest in his systematic planning. The region has villages that have different agricultural products. One has nuts, another has cherries, and a third has apples. The village producing apples has an annual harvest celebration. He discussed his ideas for agrotourism.

Αλλά αυτές οι γιορτές είναι στα όρια που ένας ξενοδόχος θα μπορούσε να προτείνει στους επισκέπτες του να βάλουμε ένα λεωφορείο και να κάνετε μια μονοήμερη εκδρομή εκεί, που το βράδυ θα δείτε και το πανηγύρι και θα σας φιλέψουνε μήλο, γλυκό, ξέρω 'γω, κλπ. Σου είπα την ιδέα, αλλά είναι στα όρια να γίνει, δηλαδή είναι από τα όρια αυτά και κάτω.

But these holidays are at the limit that a hotelier could suggest to his guests to take a bus and make a one-day trip there, where in the evening you will see the festival and they will kiss you apple, sweet, I know, etc..I told you the idea, but it is on the verge of being done, that is, it is from these limits and below.

IQ4 was, when systematically planning sustainable tourism, how would you describe your leadership approaches? As mentioned in the leadership section, leaders took a one-size-fits-all approach when planning, as their approach did not change depending on with whom they

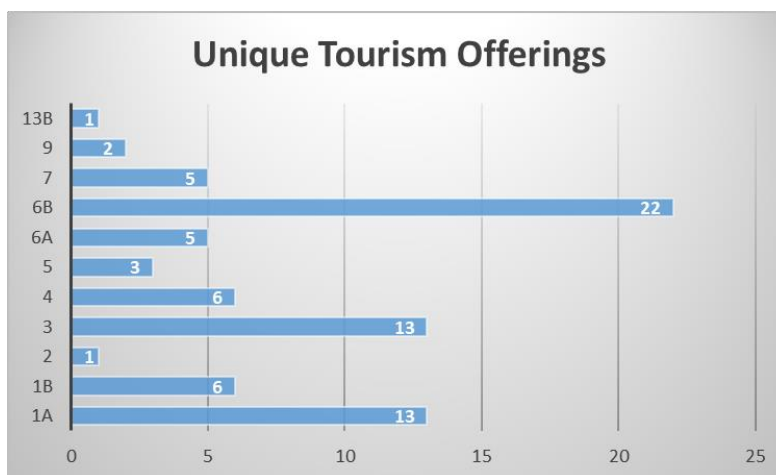
were working. Others altered their approach depending on with whom they were working. One constant was that municipal representatives whose success in office depended on elections would have the local community as the key shaper of their approaches to planning. Participant 1A said:

Κοιτάζετε, η προσπάθεια που γίνεται γενικά είναι ο δήμος να έχει όχι το πάνω χέρι, αλλά να έχει μια εικόνα και μια αντίληψη του τι συμβαίνει και τι σχεδιασμός μπορεί να γίνει για να προωθήσει και ανάλογα τους κατοίκους. Αυτό βέβαια λειτουργεί αμφίδρομα, γιατί και οι κάτοικοι θα έρθουν και θα μας πούνε ότι «Χρειαζόμαστε καταλύματα, ότι κάτι λείπει από το τουριστικό προϊόν, ότι χρειαζόμαστε πινακίδες σήμανσης» για παράδειγμα, τέτοια πράγματα. Οπότε είναι μια σχέση πιο πολύ αμφίδρομη. Αλλά ο δήμος είναι αυτός που θα κινήσει τις διαδικασίες πιο πολύ.

Look, the effort generally made is for the municipality not to have the upper hand but to have an image and a perception of what is happening and what planning can be done to promote the residents accordingly. Of course, this works both ways because the residents will also come and tell us, "We need accommodation, that something is missing from the tourist product, that we need signage" for example. So, it is more of a two-way relationship. Nevertheless, the municipality will move on with the procedures.

Unique Tourism Offerings

A theme presented during the coding process was the need and development of unique tourism offerings. All but one leader mentioned an aspect of their tourism that is unique from the standard Greek sun and sand tourism. Participant 3, for example, mentioned using virtual reality in a recent museum exhibition. Participant 6B provided a presentation and outline of his municipality's unique tourism offerings. Figure 6 shows the mentions of unique tourism offerings by each participant.

Figure 6*Unique Tourism Offerings*

Participants mentioned Greece's natural resources that are not directly associated with the sea. Ecotourism was mentioned by participants 3, 1A, and 6A, who discussed agrotourism.

Hiking was mentioned by participants 1B, 2, 3, 5, and 9. The prevalent topic was natural features for athletic use. Participant 4 said, "Sports tourism is a gold mine. It is great."

History plays a prominent role in unique tourism offerings. Participants 1A, 1B, 6A, 7, 9, and 13B mentioned cultural and UNESCO heritage sites in their municipalities. Municipal leader 1A shared a modern historical account that connects cities around Greece with recent European History. This history is about the burning of their town by the Nazis in World War 2 and the collaboration other municipalities with such tragic histories share with one another.

Συμμετέχουμε πχ. στο Δίκτυο Μαρτυρικών Πόλεων. Το χωριό μας το 1944 καταστράφηκε εξ ολοκλήρου από τους Γερμανούς, δεν υπάρχει σήμερα. Κάηκε δηλαδή, ολοκαυτώθηκε. Οπότε, όλα τα χωριά ανά την Ελλάδα που ολοκαυτώθηκαν στο Β' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, έχουνε κάνει ένα Δίκτυο Μαρτυρικών Πόλεων.

We participate, for example, in the Network of Martyrial Cities. The Germans destroyed our village in 1944. It does not exist today. It was burned to the ground. So, all the

villages throughout Greece that were burned in the Second World War have made a Network of Martyr Cities.

Mass Tourism Prevention

To support the local communities and work towards a better quality of life, participants 1A, 4, 7, and 13B mentioned the avoidance of mass tourism. Participant 1A mentioned Barcelona Spain and not wanting to have the characteristics of her municipality change with mass tourism. Participant 7 mentioned the festivals in his region. These festivals are sometimes at capacity with the local communities that visit neighboring festivals and may be unable to support an influx of cultural visitors. However, he did mention that as his municipality is in an urban setting, visitors could stay and lodge in the city and attend a village festival in the evening. Participant 13B, while discussing building regulations designed to preserve the character of neighborhoods, mentioned the damage mass tourism has done in other regions:

Βλέπουμε για παράδειγμα τι έχει συμβεί στη Σαντορίνη τα τελευταία χρόνια που έχουν χτιστεί τα πάντα και έχει αλλοιωθεί το κυκλαδικό τοπίο. Αυτό λοιπόν το προλαβαίνουμε.

We see, for example, what has happened in Santorini in recent years when everything has been built and the Cycladic landscape has been altered. We want to get ahead of it.

Offseason Expansion

The theme of planning to expand the season or target the offseason was mentioned by participants 1A, 1B, 2, 5, and 9. A unique limitation to the season's expansion is the local population's perceptions. Participant 9 said:

Πιστεύω ότι είναι και θέμα νοοτροπίας πάλι των κατοίκων να δούνε... Πώς να το πω τώρα; Την ανεπάρκεια που υπάρχει το χειμώνα σε σχέση με τις υποδομές. Δηλαδή υπάρχει μήνας, μήνες 2–3 μήνες, που οι πιθανοί εν δυνάμει επισκέπτες δεν έχουν τη δυνατότητα να φάνε κάπου. Δηλαδή κλείνουν το χειμώνα κάποια καταστήματα, κάποιες

επιχειρήσεις, οπότε πάλι και αυτό, αλλά νομίζω ότι η ανάγκη θα δημιουργήσει...ότι η ανάγκη που θα δημιουργηθεί θα ανοίξει- -και οι επισκέψεις στους ανθρώπους να λειτουργήσουν διαφορετικά.

I think it is also a matter of mentality of the residents to see it again...How can I say it now? An infrastructure concern exists during the winter months. That is, there is a month, 2–3 months when potential visitors cannot eat somewhere. That is, some shops, some businesses close in winter, so again this, but I think the need will create...that the need that will be created will open-and visits to people work differently.

Participant 5 shared the same concerns. He provided more detail on the tourism offerings, such as lodging and dining establishments:

Είναι λίγο πολύ η ανάγκη κι όλων γιατί, μπορεί να πλατειάζω λίγο, αλλά υπάρχει αυτό που σου έλεγα ότι είναι η εκπαίδευση των επιχειρηματιών. Υπάρχει μια φιλοσοφία ότι εργάζομαι έξι μήνες και βγάζω τα έσοδα όλου του χρόνου. Αλλά μ' αυτό τον τρόπο κοιτάζεις κυρίως το πώς να στραγγαλίσεις τον επισκέπτη και να πάρεις περισσότερα χρήματα, χωρίς όμως να προσφέρεις ποιότητα υπηρεσιών. Το να λειτουργεί κάτι 365 μέρες το χρόνο δίνει τη δυνατότητα στον επισκέπτη να γνωρίσει κι άλλες εκφάνσεις του τόπου, αλλά κι άλλες εκφάνσεις των κατοίκων της περιοχής. Δηλαδή, διαφορετικοί είναι ο τρόπος και οι συνήθειές μας το χειμώνα σε σχέση με το καλοκαίρι κι έτσι γνωρίζεις καλύτερα έναν τόπο και τον αγαπάς περισσότερο.

It is everyone's need because I may be exaggerating a bit, but that is what I was telling you about the training of entrepreneurs. There is a philosophy that I work 6 months and make the income the whole year. However, in this way, you mainly look at how to strangle the visitor and get more money without providing quality service. The fact that

something operates 365 days a year allows visitors to get to know other aspects of the place and other aspects of the residents of the area. In other words, our ways and habits are different in the winter compared to the summer, so you get to know a place better and love it more.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

As the overarching design of this research was based around the United Nations' SDGs, multiple opening questions were designed to gauge the leader's knowledge of the SDGs. The first opening question was, how familiar are you with the United Nations' SDGs? No further SDG-related questions were asked since every participant shared familiarity with the SDGs. An interesting theme is that within their answers, all but two SDGs were indirectly mentioned in some way. The breakdown of answers is represented in Table 6.

Table 6

Topic Related to SDGs

SDGs	Mentions	SDGs	Mentions
UN SDG 1	N/A	UN SDG 10	N/A
UN SDG 2	30	UN SDG 11	50
UN SDG 3	3	UN SDG 12	31
UN SDG 4	17	UN SDG 13	22
UN SDG 5	6	UN SDG 14	12
UN SDG 6	16	UN SDG 15	25
UN SDG 7	9	UN SDG 16	14
UN SDG 8	49	UN SDG 17	28
UN SDG 9	39		

Table 7 breaks down which SDG was mentioned by which participant. It should be noted that no leader mentioned any item relevant to SDG 1 (i.e., end poverty in all its forms everywhere) or SDG 10 (i.e., reduce inequality within and among countries).

Table 7*Topic Related to SDGs*

Participant	UN SDG 1	UN SDG 2	UN SDG 3	UN SDG 4	UN SDG 5	UN SDG 6	UN SDG 7	UN SDG 8	UN SDG 9
2								6	
3		2						7	6
4				2	1		1	4	2
5			3	8			1	2	3
7								6	3
9		2			1	4		7	4
13A		1				1	1	2	1
13B		1		3		6	2	8	5
1A		16		1	4		1	2	9
1B		1				2		1	
6A		3		3		3	3	1	2
6B		4						3	4
Participant	UN SDG 10	UN SDG 11	UN SDG 12	UN SDG 13	UN SDG 14	UN SDG 15	UN SDG 16	UN SDG 17	
2		1							
3		2			3	2	1	1	
4		1	1	7			2	5	
5		1	2		2	2			
7		2		1			6	8	
9		4	5			1		2	
13A		1	2	1		2			
13B		7	15	3	3	6	3	3	
1A		10	1	1		4	2	2	
1B		9	2	8	3	4		3	
6A		5	3						
6B		7		1	1	4		4	

Participant 6B emphasized how climate change is impacting his municipality's ability to adequately provide tourism offerings and affects systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships.

Το μεγαλύτερο πρόβλημα στην περιοχή είναι οι υποδομές. Οι ξενοδοχειακές από μια άποψη είναι σε επαρκή κατάσταση διότι έχουν ανακαινιστεί πρόσφατα. Το θέμα των υποδομών όμως, όσο αφορά το δημόσιο δίκτυο, δηλαδή ο παραλιακός δρόμος, με τις συνθήκες έτσι όπως έχουν διαμορφωθεί τώρα με την κλιματική αλλαγή, δημιουργούνται προβλήματα ανά διετία, δηλαδή επισκευάζεται ο δρόμος και στα δύο χρόνια θα έχει χαλάσει. Αυτό δημιουργεί μεγάλα προβλήματα και στους κατοίκους αλλά και στους επισκέπτες. Για να μπορέσουμε να πούμε κάτι, ότι μια περιοχή είναι βιώσιμη γενικά, όχι μόνο το τουριστικό κομμάτι, πρέπει αυτά να λειτουργούν σε συνέχεια. Αν κάθε δύο χρόνια έχουμε ένα πρόβλημα...

The biggest problem in the region is infrastructure. The hotel rooms in one respect are in adequate condition because they have been recently renovated. The issue of

infrastructure, however, as far as the public network, i.e. the coastal road, is concerned, with the conditions as they are now with climate change, problems are created every two years, that is, the road is being repaired and in two years it will have broken down. This creates big problems for both residents and visitors. To be able to say something, that an area is sustainable in general, not only the tourist part, but these must also be working continuously. If every two years we have a problem...

Summary of Key Findings

In completing the research, the participant's responses were consolidated to present the essence of their perspectives and lived experiences as municipal leaders developing sustainable tourism programs. The data were gathered from interviews of 12 municipal leaders spanning nine regions of Greece. This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore the perspectives and approaches for sustainable tourism development by municipal leaders in Greece. The following research questions and secondary questions were used in this study.

- RQ1: What perspectives, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic have on systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?
- SQ1: What development strategies, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use to approach systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships?
- SQ2: What, if any, leadership approaches do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships for sustainable tourism development?

- SQ3: What policy approaches, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, private-public partnership, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development?

Participants gave different details and approaches to leadership, policy, public-private partnership, stakeholders, and systematic planning. Within these responses, participants gave examples that directly related to different UN SDGs.

Conclusions

The research findings and leadership approaches of municipal leaders are fully described in Chapter 4. The chapter presented municipal leaders' perspectives and approaches to policy, public-private partnerships, stakeholders, and systematic planning. The data underwent multiple rounds of review and analysis to ensure that the perspectives and approaches by municipal leaders were fully captured and that the research question and secondary questions were answered. Chapter 5 explores the research and provides conclusions and themes that emerged from the research. Significant findings are connected to the literature.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to identify the systematic planning, policy, private-public partnerships, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development by municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. This study focused on municipal leaders reelected in the October 2023 election. This chapter reviews the format of the study and provides recommendations for future research, recommendations for municipalities, and recommendations to develop sustainable tourism at the municipal level. Findings from this study can support the development of a framework for sustainable tourism development leading from the municipal level to the regional level and create a national framework.

Organization of the Findings

This chapter discusses the key findings of the research question and secondary questions and connects the findings with the existing literature. The following sections either confirm, disconfirm, or extend the existing body of literature. The sections include an analysis of the data findings, interpretation, and conclusions. The limitations of the research are also discussed. This chapter includes suggestions for future academic researchers, recommendations for municipalities, and recommendations to meet the SDGs with tourism support.

Key Leadership Findings

Three questions about leadership were asked by the participants. These questions were derived from SQ2. SQ2 was, what, if any, leadership approaches do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic use for systematic planning, policy, and private-public partnerships for sustainable tourism development? A theme in the leadership findings was the leaders' choice to either reply with their personal leadership approaches or the approaches the municipality takes

when leading. Most leaders replied as a municipality leading a community. Leadership as a municipality responded more significantly, even among those who replied as individuals.

Situational leadership theory determines that the leader's relationship with the follower depends on the follower's knowledge and abilities (Cote, 2017; Gates et al., 1976; Jackson & Naziri, 2020; Lynch, 2015; Miller, 1983). Municipal leaders show signs of taking situational approaches with those they lead, meaning the leaders change their leadership approach based on their situation. It is more appropriate for leaders to use different leadership styles depending on the specific problem or circumstances (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982; Kerr et al., 1974; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983). The circumstantial situational leadership is evident in the active approach to identifying opportunities for extending the tourism season or identifying alternative offerings away from the sea and sun model. Multiple scholars explained that followership theory means that the follower's relationship with the leader is driven by the leader (Burns, 1978; Gao & Wu, 2019; Hollander, 1992; Popper & Castelnovo, 2019; Riggio, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Municipal leaders are dependent on the vote of their electorate. Therefore, it is natural to see that the leaders' focus was primarily on the residents they led, and other aspects were secondary.

Complexity theory considers leadership and the outcome of interdependent interactions in complex networks (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2003). Leaders can understand systems and their relationships (Jensen, 2021; Meeks et al., 2022; Povilanskas & Armaitienė, 2008). The statement is confirmed as leaders shared multiple examples of the system and environment they lead. The leaders shared multiple layers of complexity and inner workings with stakeholders, including the national government, international entities, tourism providers, and local populations.

IQ9 was, does your policy approach change depending on who you are leading? If so, please explain. Leaders expressed that their policy approach does not change based on who they

are leading, as their policy is based on the objectives and goals created when taking office.

Lynch (2015) explained that the leader is responsible for removing barriers and improving systems. The leaders interviewed shared that the most significant barriers that need removal are the bureaucracy in Greece, limited resources, and centralized authority in many situations. Although the participants are leaders, they talked about how their needs are not met as followers in the more extensive system.

Key Policy Findings

SQ3 was, what policy approaches, if any, do municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic believe are the best for systematic planning, private-public partnership, and leadership approaches for sustainable tourism development? Responses varied among all participants. It is confirmed that there are no universal best practices. Cairney (2012) explained that complexity theory's approach to systems allows policymakers to shift the political analysis from individual parts of the political system to view the elements. The findings confirm that leaders shift their political analysis based on the system's individual parts. Leaders did not change their policy approach based on who they were leading.

Vidickienė et al. (2021) explained that governments can develop environmental policies to protect the ecosystem to foster environmentally responsible behavior while simultaneously creating green jobs for local communities. Although there was no confirmation of the creation of green jobs, there is confirmation that many municipalities created policies to convert municipal buildings and schools to be energy efficient, such as using solar energy. Meekes et al. (2023) discussed the ability of policymakers to increase leisure-based regional development in a rural location and as aspects of the industry. Some leaders did take this approach with the support of agrotourism or ecotourism in their regions. The development needs improvement when the

offerings are extended past the tourism season and when their operators are closed outside of the summer season.

Cairney (2012) explained that policymakers tend to concentrate power in the center rather than analyze the policymaking environment's full extent. IQ8 was, what are your limitations when developing policy for planning private-public partnerships in sustainable tourism development? Leaders confirmed that their limitations are the concentrated power in the central government. Limitations for leaders are the bureaucracy in Greece, limited resources, and centralized authority, which prevents them from making decisions that will better their communities. One leader mentioned going against the national government's direction to support their community better after an oil spill in the sea.

Key Public-Private Partnership Findings

IQ3 was, do you have many public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism? If so, how did those partnerships develop? A vast majority of these partnerships are standard between municipalities. They consist of local trade organizations and local businesses. IQ6 was, how involved, if at all, are you with the leadership of the public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism? Contingency theory within leadership means that the relationship between the leadership style and the leader's effectiveness is contingent on the unique demands of the situation (Boehe, 2016; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983; Schneier, 1978). The data confirms that the situations drive the relationship. Situations include increasing the tourism season and designing unique tourism offerings.

Systems Improvements

A theme that developed in the research was the need for improvements or identifying limitations in the system. There is an apparent gap between the public and private systems. The

private system and development are often restricted by bureaucracy, and progress is delayed. Laws are complex. Licenses may be challenging to obtain, and the process is lengthy. There are no official best practices for sustainable tourism development in Greece, and municipalities are tasked to develop their own but only if there is interest or the administration sees value. There is a communication gap between multiple entities with whom they work. Some infrastructure may be within their jurisdiction, but they may not be able to replace it as it falls under the national government regardless of whether the infrastructure defects can lead to personal damage. The findings confirm Psycharis et al. (2015), who stated that Greece is a centralized state that gives limited autonomy to local governments.

Furthermore, there is a desire among participants to improve. One way to improve is to actively pursue relationships with international organizations, such as cruise lines and airlines, to drive traffic to their markets. Participants understood the need for collaboration with higher education to develop sustainable programs from experts and to value the relationship higher educational research can bring to the discussion. They see a need to expand the tourism season but are limited by the desire of local populations to find value in extending the tourism season. Additionally, there is a need to improve local communities' knowledge of understanding sustainability. Participants had taken measures to make municipal assets more energy efficient. Programs have been developed to preserve cultural heritage in some municipalities. The participants saw value in sustainable tourism development to service their local communities, with the communities' interests being the priority.

Key Stakeholder Findings

IQ5 asked about the different stakeholders involved in creating and executing policy for sustainable tourism. Participants shared and defined stakeholders as they saw appropriate.

Complexity theory defines the interworking of systems (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2003; Meekes et al., 2023; Richards & Morse, 2012). Sustainable tourism development is a complex system with multiple interworking networks. The stakeholders can be segmented in countless ways.

Stakeholders include the local communities, local trade associations, the local hotel trade association, the local women's association, the Ministry of Tourism, the Greek National Tourism Organization, local restaurants, local hotels, the local Tourism Development and Promotion Committee, neighboring municipalities, the regional government, neighboring regional governments, consultants, higher education, sister cities, the World Tourism Organization, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, Central Union of Municipalities, UNESCO, the European Union, travel agencies, cruise operators, airlines, neighboring countries, the Ministry of Culture, the Network of Martyrial Cities (German Occupation), NGOs, contracted companies, the Ministry of Interior, and agricultural producers.

In the complexity theory for sustainability, the whole is not equal to the sum of all its parts (Meekes et al., 2023). This is confirmed as some stakeholders were mentioned more thoroughly and consistently than others. It should be noted that these frequencies of mention do not confirm the importance each leader places on these stakeholders.

Collaboration with Higher Education

Higher education plays a significant role in sustainable tourism development, as half the participants mentioned one or more institutions as critical stakeholders and collaborators in developing sustainable tourism programs and objectives. Higher education institutions focus on the environment, policy, tourism, and agriculture. At the time of the interview, all institutions designated as universities in Greece were public institutions per the Greek constitution. As

previously mentioned, the Greek government approved a bill in March 2024 to recognize private non-profit universities.

Key Systematic Planning Findings

IQ1 was, who do you work with to develop strategies to approach systematic planning in sustainable tourism best? Jensen (2021) explained that complexity theory views leadership as an approach that relates to the environment; it does not take a linear approach like other leadership theories because it considers unpredictability. This is evident as leaders provided multiple timelines for sustainable tourism development within the interview since their time in office. Jurdana (2018) stated that different stakeholders often have conflicting challenges, interests, and objectives and would approach planning based on those individual interests. This holds on a micro level as the more minor regional differences appear in the findings. On a macro level, challenges, interests, and objectives appear to have many similarities.

Kasim et al. (2014) explained the green economy as having multiple layers of complexity, including the critical aspects of the green revolution: transformation, growth, and resilience. Stroebel (2015) defined *green resilience* as adapting the economy to cope with the changes. There is evidence of municipalities moving in the direction of green resilience with the conversion of municipal buildings. Given the low response rate to participate in this study, it is not confirmed whether the desire and interest in the green economy is evident collectively in Greece.

IQ4 was, when systematically planning sustainable tourism, how would you describe your leadership approaches? Leaders had varying approaches to their planning, with some showing signs of more organized systems and structures and others not providing evidence for tangible approaches.

Mass Tourism Prevention

Moira et al. (2017) stated that mass tourism has become the main form of tourism for many years, emerging as a byproduct of accessible air travel. Leaders are including forms of travel such as air travel and cruise ships to drive traffic towards their regions, but they were cautious to not fall into a mass tourism situation to not disrupt the local community.

Offseason Expansion

As previously mentioned, extending the tourism season is a crucial objective of many stakeholders in the Hellenic Republic. Often mentioned as a critical objective, extending the tourism season to year-round supports the small, low-quality, inefficient, and family-owned and operated facilities that dominate Greece (Danopoulos & Znidaric, 2007; Tsilimigkas et al., 2022). The findings show that the desire is evident, but the will may not exist.

Key SDG Findings

To ensure the participants had an awareness of the UN SDGs, questions related to the knowledge of the SDGs were asked. The first question was, how familiar are you with the United Nations SDGs? All participants gave knowledgeable answers about how their municipality related to the SDGs in various ways. Due to their knowledge of the SDGs, no further SDG-related questions were asked. While coding, a unique theme appeared in the data. All leaders had reference items that were directly related to a goal, target, or indicator.

IQ2 asked, how do you develop a strategy to approach policy in sustainable tourism best? Complexity theory defines the interworking of systems (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2003; Meekes et al., 2023; Richards & Morse, 2012). Dale and Newman (2005) believed that complex systems are often open and organized so that each element is ignorant of the system (Dale & Newman, 2005). Participants gave answers that directly or indirectly match one or more goals in the

SDGs. The following section shares the specific goals, when evident, the interworking among the goals in the complex system.

SDG 1 and 10

SDG 1 is to end poverty in all its forms. There was no direct mention of anything poverty related. Arapoglou (2004) explained that the Greek authorities do not recognize the data on homelessness or poverty. This research does not confirm Arapoglou's statement but does provide an interesting topic of interest given the abundance of literature on the tourist industry's support for poverty reduction. Additionally, the participants did not mention SDG 10, which is to reduce inequality within and among countries.

SDG 2

SDG 2 is to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. Gastronomic heritage and agriculture are prominent in tourism offerings for multiple municipalities. Zakariya et al. (2019) stated that to support agrotourism, there will be a need for systematic planning, frameworks, and roadmaps to achieve success. Mylonopoulos et al. (2017) explained that enterprises developed and characterized as agrotourism were created without guidelines or institutional frameworks, inevitably allowing operators to do without surveillance or certifications. The regulatory frameworks are confusing in terms of who can develop agrotourism activities in Greece, which is evident by the findings in the participants responses.

Agriculture plays a significant role in multiple municipalities. Points of concern are (a) not having a monocultural agricultural environment for economic diversity and (b) biodiversity in the region connecting SDG 2 with SDGs 8 and 15. SDG 8 is also connected as agrotourism can play a prominent economic role. Local products can drive visits to the regions, and product

sales are exported to drive international travel. SDGs 8 and 9 are also connected. One participant explained that abandoned buildings used for agriculture and animal husbandry can be converted into short-term rentals for agrotourism or ecotourism. SDG 11 is connected as gastronomy has a cultural aspect (e.g., local summer festivals that drive more economic value [SDG 8] with food and drink exhibitions).

SDG 3

SDG 3 is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. Topics that fell under this category were related to local communities' standard of living and well-being and the avoidance of mass tourism. Cultural heritage preservation was also categorized here, connecting SDG 3 with SDG 11.

SDG 4

SDG 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education in sustainability and tourism has a broad spectrum. Newman (2005) explained that sustainable development education programs should find meaningful compromises between various stakeholders. The statement is evident as multiple municipalities have developed partnerships with higher education institutions. Giampiccoli and Mnguni (2022) explained that cultural sensitivity, customs, and heritage, such as gastronomic tourism-related schools and educational centers, can influence local development and heritage preservation. These educational institutions are present in one municipality that mentioned creating a music school. However, only one participant mentioned a school. Others did not mention any educational programs based on cultural heritage or gastronomy. Macassa (2021) discussed sustainable literacy, while a participant mentioned the need to shift local populations' mentality towards sustainable practices.

Participants mentioned the need for local populations to change their perspectives and mentality. One leader said her residents need to change their mentality and see the benefits of sustainable practices. Three island leaders said their residents must change their perspective on extending the tourism season. To find value in having guests visit the whole year. These training programs connect SDG 4 with SDGs 8 and 12.

SDG 5

SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Only one participant mentioned the presence of a women's trade association. Traditional women's weaving to make household items such as carpets and blankets was mentioned by a participant as an economic opportunity for women and a form of cultural preservation. Local women using traditional techniques for economic opportunity connect SDG 5 with SDGs 8 and 11.

SDG 6

SDG 6 is to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Giurea et al. (2022) stated that waste management removal improves agrotourism because of the benefits of water use in food growth and drinking water. A participant had mentioned the recycling of water to be repurposed for watering municipal irrigation. A lack of investment in sewage treatment infrastructure can damage coastlines and health risks for sea tourism (Dvarsikas, 2017). Based on the interviews, multiple leaders emphasized the importance of waste and sewage treatment. Leaders in regions with a higher risk of water scarcity mentioned the importance of water in their responses multiple times. One participant stated that small islands in Greece have limited water supplies, which often depend on salinization plants.

SDG 7

SDG 7 is to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. Leaders from multiple municipalities mentioned the upgrading of municipal buildings to use more energy-efficient lightbulbs, creating energy-efficient measures for municipal buildings, and having an indoor municipal pool that is almost energy-autonomous. During the economic crisis, a mayor reported that residents burned more materials to heat their homes, which increased the pollution. Deforestation has happened because families cannot afford other measures to warm their homes. Unmet energy needs in forested regions can negatively affect SDGs 13 and 15.

SDG 8

SDG 8 is to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. The participants' primary focus was the importance of economic growth in their region. They confirmed tourism's importance as an economic driver (Bricker et al., 2022; Kuqi & Martinoska, 2018; Tahar et al., 2021). Participants directly impact their region's economic growth by increasing visitation by having cruises visit their harbor or directing international flights to their island. Terkenli and Georgoula (2021) discussed that increasing revenues may incentivize cultural protection and preservation programs. Preservation is seen in one region with the creation of a school to teach local instruments and music. Additionally, the marketability of pottery and the weaved goods are examples of the economic value of cultural heritage.

Exporting local agricultural products may provide inverse advertising for a region. Additionally, a leader had mentioned how the film may do the same. Alternative forms of tourism were mentioned as well. Multiple participants mentioned athletic activities. Religious tourism, agrotourism, and ecotourism are also important. Greece's internal mountainous

landscape provides trails and hiking. Multiple participants stated hiking as a means of driving visitation during the offseason. The limitation for increasing visitation into the offseason is some residents' lack of desire to host guests during the slow period. The growth of the offseason is a chicken-and-egg situation where guests are not visiting because there are no offerings, and there are no offerings because guests are not visiting. Additionally, seasonality has inefficiencies in the retention and development of labor.

The collaboration with higher education was shown by multiple participants, connecting SDG 8 with SDG 4. The importance of higher education and academic expertise was evident in developing economic opportunities. Additionally, the relationship can develop approaches that are sensitive to local needs. One participant mentioned the desire to approach the national government to acquire properties and make them available to private enterprises. According to them, other municipalities do not want the hassle of acquiring such properties.

SDG 9

SDG 9 is to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation. The use of infrastructure was evident in the data. Roads that provide services for tourism, locals, and agriculture are key in rural regions. Infrastructure development provides easier access to destinations for foreigners and connects SDG 9 with SDG 17. Updated infrastructure can provide access to remote cultural heritage sites, thus increasing visitation. Upgrading building infrastructure to be more energy efficient connects SDG 9 with SDG 7. Municipalities shared multiple innovative services such as virtual reality to connect with tourism offerings. Other examples include bicycles and electric cars on a sharing platform for a region. Roof gardens to assist with insulating buildings. Converting old and abandoned buildings to short-term rentals.

SDG 11

SDG 11 is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Target 11.4 is to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. Economou (2012) discussed that cultural heritage is a significant factor in Greece's national tourism policy. The statement is evident at the municipal level as many participants mentioned some aspects of cultural heritage as key tourism offerings. Economou believed that specific strategies must be developed and implemented within a sustainable tourism model per location to protect the cultural resources so that they may be passed on to the next generation.

Aspects related to SDG 11 in this study connect multiple SDGs. Using cultural heritage for economic growth in women's weaving of traditional products that they sell connects SDG 11 with SDGs 5 and 8. Updating buildings to be more energy efficient connects SDG 11 with SDG 7. Regional food festivals and local products in communities link SDG 11 with SDGs 2 and 8.

SDG 12

SDG 12 is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Multiple participants mentioned waste management and cleanliness of the communities. According to a participant, removing waste and oils is easier to manage with businesses than individual homes. One participant gave statistics on his status and objective to improve. He explained that his municipality differs in 40% of waste from landfills, with a national average being 14%. This statistic then shows the large opportunity missed by the low-performing municipalities. Theoretically, removing the municipality previously mentioned the national average would decrease.

SDG 13

SDG 13 is to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Although a sense of urgency was not identified in the participants' responses, some items related to climate change were mentioned. One municipality is in a network of European cities working towards climate neutrality, connecting SDG 13 with SDGs 11 and 17. Items previously mentioned support growth but negatively impact the achievement of SDG 13. The negative impacts come from high vehicle carbon use on new roads, air travelers with new flights, and cruise travelers with new ports added to routes, resulting in a negative connection between SDGs 13 and 9.

SDG 14

SDG 14 is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. All participants mentioned the sea multiple times, as every municipality was within reasonable reach of a coastline. The marine zones were mentioned as a means of connecting multiple communities. The only NGO mentioned by the participants was the Blue Flag program, which awards beaches a blue flag when it meets specific standards. Interestingly, with numerous international NGOs focusing on sea life and protected animals, only one NGO was mentioned.

SDG 15

SDG 15 is to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss. Folarin and Adeniyi (2020) claimed that tourism can positively affect the local area's economic development with positive outlooks for biodiversity conservation and cultural, natural, and historical resources. One municipality takes this approach by creating a regional biodiversity zone. Although biodiversity was mentioned, it was directed towards economic diversity and not tourism. There is a tone of respect for the natural environment. For example, the increase in

forest fires is a concern, but there were no discussions on how to prevent forest fires. There are also concerns about the local forests as a municipality works with a higher education to discuss its preservation and opportunities for tourism. Trails and hikes were often mentioned as a means of offseason visitation, showing the importance of the mountains. What was missing from the participants were NGOs or the preservation of animals and life on land.

SDG 16

SDG 16 is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. These institutions were mentioned in detail and included international organizations such as the World Tourism Organization and the European Union, as well as the central government and government ministries.

SDG 17

SDG 17 is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. International organizations such as the European Union, United Nations, and UNESCO often was shared by participants. Aspects of the national government such as the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Tourism play a role locally and internationally. Intercity relationships such as sister cities programs and the Network of Martyr Cities (Holocaust Museums) connect communities worldwide. Tourism connects neighboring countries by increasing infrastructure and travel between those countries, connecting SDG 17 with SDG 9. One leader discussed how he actively pursues educational collaboration by inviting a school from Albania to their municipality for cultural exchange. He also discussed connecting with stakeholders in India who preconceived the current Greek government's efforts to create stronger ties with India.

Revisiting Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks supporting this research study are revisited in this section. The research findings are connected to situational leadership theory (Cote, 2017; Gates et al., 1976; Jackson & Naziri, 2020; Lynch, 2015; Miller, 1983), complexity leadership theory (Mason, 2008; Onyx, 2022), the contingency model of leadership (Boehe, 2016; Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983; Schneier, 1978), and followership (Burns, 1978; Gao & Wu, 2019; Hollander, 1992; Popper & Castelnovo, 2019; Riggio, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). The theoretical frameworks are also supported by the United Nation's SDGs, their targets, and their indicators, as well as the framework developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2012) for systematic planning, private-public partnerships, and policy for sustainable development. The conclusions and findings in this study either support, negate, or extend the previous theoretical frameworks.

Trustworthiness of the Data

The interviews were held online and recorded using Zoom. One participant was interviewed in person and recorded using Zoom. To reduce my biases, I refrained from sharing my personal work history and private thoughts on hospitality, tourism, and the direction of tourism in the Hellenic Republic. I made every effort to design the codes and segments from the data without any personal bias. To do this, I needed to overcome my private and subjective feelings, preferences, and expectations that could have led me to premature, wishful, and one-sided understandings of the participants' experiences (van Manen, 2014). Following van Manen's direction, the codes and other levels were created based on the literature, as the validity of qualitative research is derived from the literature within the study.

I performed triangulation to support the validity of this qualitative study. Triangulation is gaining insights from various perspectives via a comprehensive study on a shared topic that directly engages with each other's discovery (Richards & Morse, 2012). Triangulated studies are supported when a study's results converge with previous studies to illuminate, challenge, or verify other researchers' findings. Triangulating data sources, methods, and investigators establishes the research's credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study's roots within the literature can support the study's validity (van Manen, 2014). This study has been supported by exploring the literature review and the review of the United Nation's SDGs through the theoretical framework of leadership, complexity, and contingency theories.

Role of the Researcher

Interpretation is a crucial aspect of qualitative research. To remove my influence from the research, I identified the biases and background that influence how I interpret the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Richards & Morse, 2012). Protecting the human subjects of this research is a crucial component of conducting ethical research (Moustakas, 1994). I know which interview relates to each region and municipality. Although the participants were indifferent to the confidentiality of this study, I made every effort to remove any identifying information.

Implication

The findings of the research have several implications for municipal leaders. The findings were consistent with the research on sustainable tourism development. Themes that emerged are leadership as the individual leader or leadership as the municipality. Leadership approaches varied, including a desire to collaborate, the importance of stakeholders, and expanding tourism offerings. Leaders unanimously mentioned the need to make improvements internally. Improvements internally with the expansion of tourism offerings. Improvements in their

autonomy with support from the national government. For example, the limitations leaders face due to bureaucracy and limited resources.

Unexpectedly, higher education played a vital role in developing sustainable tourism for over half of the participants. The higher education involvement varied among the participants depending on their needs and access to the higher education and professors. Participants discussed the need to deter or limit the threat of mass tourism. There is a need to develop programs and increase offseason visitation. There is also a need to develop unique tourism offerings to drive incremental visits in addition to the sea and sun offerings. Furthermore, they want to preserve their cultural heritage for future generations. An interesting finding in the data was the direct mention of specific SDGs and their connections.

Recommendations for Future Scholarly Research

This research project has identified that municipal leaders knowingly or unknowingly connected multiple SDGs with their current approaches. I suggest that future research have a complete analysis of SDGs in Greece. The research may consist of a complete SDG analysis of a municipality and its regional government to identify gaps and provide a regional framework for other municipalities. Trupp and Dolezal (2020) explained that tourism is mentioned in a limited capacity within the SDGs, yet it can provide a model for sustainable development. Any SDGs not identified are to be further analyzed. For example, SDG 1 poverty reduction is not mentioned in this research. Further research is needed to identify opportunities to reduce poverty through tourism.

Karampela et al. (2016) explained that historically Greece has shown poor structures at the local and regional levels. The statement cannot be confirmed as the research does not focus on these specifically. It can be confirmed that there are structures at these levels, and they work

collectively. The degree to which each level of local, regional, and national government works together is not researched. The lack of NGOs is a point of additional research. There is research in Greece on NGOs and the natural environment, but NGOs' perspectives on working with local, regional, and national governments are missing.

Higher education plays a significant role in the development of sustainable tourism. One participant shared that these relationships come from past relationships. It is suggested that these relationships be researched to identify any gaps. If relationships for research are based on personal relationships, one should identify steps to assist in creating these relationships and municipalities. Many municipalities could benefit from a relationship with academics and experts but lack the resources or personal connections. Creating a system of connection may support municipalities with fewer resources.

There is an increasing desire to promote unique tourism offerings and offseason expansion. Further research is needed to support these efforts. Research is needed to identify support for mountains, and hiking is an essential offering in Greece. Research is needed on the safety, signage, and access to trails and the importance of forestry and fire prevention.

A limitation of offseason expansion is based on local populations' perspectives. Local communities do not find value in keeping businesses open longer than the tourism season. I see this as a chicken-and-egg scenario. Visitors will not visit because nothing is open, and things do not stay open because there are no visitors. I suggest a test location or island as a test group where establishments are subsidized to stay open during the offseason. They may partner these efforts with marketing and advertising promotions nationally and internationally regarding the activities and benefits of visiting this location during the offseason. If successful, this model can be implemented in other locations until they are self-sustainable. The success may be judged by

comparing the investment in the subsidies and marketing expenses with the incremental tax gain earned for the test region.

Recommendations for Municipalities

Municipal leaders had mentioned the need for best practices and frameworks for sustainable tourism development. Many leaders are tasked to develop tourism programs and are underprepared as this is a secondary role in supporting their local community. I suggest either the regional government or tourism ministry develop best practices and programs to support leaders in building their knowledge in tourism. Additionally, it assists in connecting leaders with academics or experts who have experience in solving unique challenges. When asked a follow-up question about higher education connections, one participant replied that in Greece, management is all connections. He referred to management success as dependent on the network one has or builds. Therefore, creating programs to connect leaders with experts on a personal level may assist in expediting the achievement of a sustainable tourism industry. These best practices and support should be extended to municipalities that do not consider themselves tourism locations.

Multiple leaders declined when inviting leaders to participate, stating they were not a touristic municipality. One had a coastline advertised on their website, and another had vineyards on their website. One had a multimillion-dollar sports arena that hosted international sporting events. The inclusion of these municipalities in these discussions is not to pressure but to inform that there may be economic opportunities for their municipalities. Ideally, passing some control from the central government to the local governments would benefit municipalities, allowing for more autonomy to support their communities and develop programs.

SDG Achievement Recommendations

This research project shows that aspects of achieving the SDGs are happening naturally. Leaders shared their desire to create improvements. Shifting some control from national governments to local governments while having the central government in more of a supporting role will allow local governments to identify their needs and make changes to achieve them. Greece is already separated into regions and municipalities. The logical approach is to build sustainable benchmarks locally, allowing local communities to identify system gaps and take concrete steps to achieve them.

Conclusions

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore the perspective and approaches to sustainable tourism development of municipal leaders in the Hellenic Republic. Leaders approached leading as a municipality leading a community. The research findings show that municipal leaders knowingly or unknowingly have created programs and approaches for sustainable tourism development. There is a collective desire to extend the tourism season and improve the situation. Higher education play a crucial role for many of the municipalities. With no collective best practices or direction, there are varying degrees of progress among municipalities. Future research is suggested to identify the offerings needed to extend the tourism season, such as onto the trails and the mountains, as well as the desire of residents to have a more extended season. It is suggested that best practices be created to assist municipalities in building relationships with experts to expand their offerings, increase tourism to their region, and preserve their cultural heritage.

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APPENDIX A

Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs	Goal
1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Notice

eProtocol
 24255 Pacific Coast Highway
 Malibu, CA 90263
 TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: January 17, 2024

Protocol Investigator Name: Panagiotis Tsolis

Protocol #: 23-11-2317

Project Title: FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE. A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS.

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Panagiotis Tsolis:

Thank you for submitting your application for full board review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Based upon review, your IRB application has been approved.

The IRB approval begins today January 17, 2024, and expires on January 16, 2025.

The consent form included in this protocol is considered final and has been approved by the IRB. You can only use copies of the consent that have been approved by the IRB to obtain consent from your participants.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for expedited review and will require a submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB. If contact with subjects will extend beyond January 16, 2025, a continuing review must be submitted at least one month prior to the expiration date of study approval to avoid a lapse in approval.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX C

English Recruitment E-mail



Dear [name],

My name is Panagiotis Tsolis, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study to understand mayors' perspectives in sustainable tourism development, and I need your help! I am seeking volunteer study participants for interviews via Zoom. Your participation in the study will be audio-recorded and is expected to take no more than one hour.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and your identity as a participant will be protected before, during, and after the time that study data is collected. Strict confidentiality procedures will be in place. During and after the study.

If you are willing to be interviewed for this study within the next week or two, please go to <https://calendar.app.google/4Kk1xDYX2k9wgC4Q9> to schedule an appointment on my Google calendar. I have multiple times available each day and am flexible all day on Saturday and Sunday. I am more than willing to accommodate whatever time zone you may live in, so please email me at panagiotis.tsolis@pepperdine.edu if you do not see a time that works for you or if you would prefer to interview over the weekend.

Thank you for your consideration,

Panagiotis G. Tsolis, M.B.A
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change Candidate

APPENDIX D

Greek Recruitment Email



Αγαπητέ [name],

Ονομάζομαι Παναγιώτης Τσόλης και είμαι υποψήφιος διδάκτωρ του Πανεπιστημίου Pepperdine στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες Αμερικής. Στο πλαίσιο της ερευνητικής μελέτης που διεξάγω προκειμένου να κατανοήσω και προκειμένου να κατανοήσω την οπτική των δημάρχων στον κλάδο της αιφόρου τουριστικής ανάπτυξης, θα χρειαστώ την πολύτιμη βοήθεια σας! Για τη μελέτη αυτή, αναζητώ συμμετέχοντες, οι οποίοι θα λάβουν μέρος σε μια συνέντευξη μέσω της πλατφόρμας Zoom. Πρέπει να τονιστεί ότι η συμμετοχή του κάθε συνεντευξιζόμενου/ης θα είναι εθελοντική, θα ηχογραφηθεί και θα διαρκέσει όχι περισσότερο από μία ώρα.

Θα τηρηθούν διαδικασίες άκρως εμπιστευτικές και με προστατευτικό χαρακτήρα, όσον αφορά στην ταυτότητα του κάθε συμμετέχοντα πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια και μετά τη διαδικασία συλλογής των απαραίτητων δεδομένων.

Εάν επιθυμείτε να συμμετέχετε Στη μελέτη αυτή, θα πρέπει να μεταβείτε στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση εντός δυο εβδομάδων: εντός μίας ή δύο εβδομάδων θα πρέπει να μεταβείτε στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση <https://calendar.app.google/4Kk1xDYX2k9wgC4Q9> προκειμένου να προγραμματίσετε το ραντεβού σας στο ημερολόγιό μου στη Google. Οι συνεντεύξεις θα μπορούσαν να γίνουν οποιαδήποτε ημέρα μέσα στην εβδομάδα ακόμη και εντός Σαββάτου και Κυριακής. Εάν δεν είναι διαθέσιμη η ώρα που σας διευκολύνει ή αν θα θέλατε να σας γίνει συνέντευξη το σαββατοκύριακο, παρακαλώ όπως με ενημερώσετε..

Σας ευχαριστώ για την προσοχή σας,

Παναγιώτης Γ. Τσόλης, M.B.A
 Pepperdine University
 Graduate School of Education and Psychology
 Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change Candidate

APPENDIX E

English Participation Agreement



IRB #: 23-11-2317

Participant Study Title: FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE. A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS.

Formal Study Title: FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE. A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS.

Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator: Panagiotis G Tsolis, M.B.A.

Secondary Investigator: H. Eric Schockman, Ph.D.

Invitation: You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a mayor of Greece. You must be reelected during the October 2023 elections to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

Tourism is Greece's largest economic driver. This research is designed to (1) understand the perspectives of mayors in sustainable tourism development, (2) identify strategies developed, (3) leadership approaches used, and (4) understand any policy approaches taken.

What will be done during this research study?

You will be asked to complete 1 interview with the researcher using Zoom. The interview will take approximately 1 hour to complete and will be scheduled in advance at a date and time that are convenient for the participant and the researcher. There are 9 questions in total.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

This research presents no greater than minimal risk to the participant. The probability and magnitude of harms or discomforts anticipated in the research protocol are not greater, in and of themselves, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Political risk for the participants is reduced with the use of pseudonyms. Although pseudonyms will be used in the reporting there is always a risk of confidentiality. Therefore, all data is stored on a password-protected computer.

Risk to employment, professional, and financial standing: There is no information being collected that would pose a risk to any personal employee outcomes at work. Participant's responses to these questions should not pose any risks to the participant's reputation, employability, financial standing, and educational advancement.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not expected to get any direct benefit from being in this study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The benefits to science and/or society may include a better understanding of how to develop sustainable tourism practices in municipal offices in Greece and abroad.

What will being in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you for being a participant in this research study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data will be stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by the research team during the study and for 3 years after the study is complete. The only people who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Pepperdine University, and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as a group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305

Email: gspirb@pepperdine.edu

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can decide to stop being in this research study (“withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University.

You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily making a decision about whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant Feedback Survey

To meet Pepperdine University’s ongoing accreditation efforts and to meet the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) standards, an online feedback survey is included below:

<https://forms.gle/nnRgRwLgajYzBq5t7>

Participant Name:

Name of Participant: Please Print

Participant Signature:

Investigator certification:

My signature certifies that all elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the subject. In my judgment, the participant possesses the capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX F

Greek Participation Agreement



IRB #: 23-11-2317

Τίτλος μελέτης για τους συμμετέχοντες: ΜΕΛΕΤΗ ΠΛΑΙΣΙΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΤΗ ΒΙΩΣΙΜΗ ΤΟΥΡΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ: ΜΙΑ ΠΟΙΟΤΙΚΗ ΦΑΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΩΝ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΕΩΝ.

Επίσημος τίτλος σπουδών: ΠΛΑΙΣΙΟ ΒΙΩΣΙΜΗΣ ΤΟΥΡΙΣΤΙΚΗΣ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ: ΜΙΑ ΠΟΙΟΤΙΚΗ ΦΑΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΩΝ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΕΩΝ.

Εξουσιοδοτημένο Προσωπικό Μελέτης Κύριος ερευνητής: Παναγιώτης Γ. Τσόλης, M.B.A. Δευτερεύων ή δεύτερος Ερευνητής: H. Eric Schockman, Ph.D.

Πρόσκληση: Σας προσκαλούμε να λάβετε μέρος σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη. Οι πληροφορίες σε αυτή τη φόρμα έχουν σκοπό να σας βοηθήσουν να αποφασίσετε εάν θα συμμετάσχετε ή όχι. Εάν έχετε οποιεσδήποτε ερωτήσεις, παρακαλώ ρωτήστε.

Γιατί σας ζητείται να συμμετάσχετε σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη; Σας καλούμε να συμμετάσχετε σε αυτή τη μελέτη ως επανεκλεγείς δήμαρχος στην Ελλάδα. Η συμμετοχή σας προϋποθέτει την ολοκλήρωση της προηγούμενης θητείας σας και την επανεκλογή σας στις δημοτικές εκλογές του Οκτωβρίου 2023.

Ποιος είναι ο λόγος για την πραγματοποίηση αυτής της ερευνητικής μελέτης; Ο τουρισμός είναι ο μεγαλύτερος οικονομικός μοχλός της Ελλάδας. Αυτή η έρευνα έχει σχεδιαστεί για να (1) διερευνήσει την οπτική των δημάρχων ως προς τη βιώσιμη τουριστική ανάπτυξη, (2) να εντοπίσει τις στρατηγικές που έχουν αναπτυχθεί (3) να μελετήσει τους διάφορους τύπους ηγεσίας που έχουν χρησιμοποιηθεί και (4) να κατανοηθούν οι πολιτικές προσεγγίσεις που έχουν εφαρμοστεί.

Τι θα γίνει κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της ερευνητικής μελέτης; Θα σας ζητηθεί να ολοκληρώσετε μια συνέντευξη με τον ερευνητή μέσω της πλατφόρμας Zoom. Η συνέντευξη θα διαρκέσει

περίπου μία ώρα και θα προγραμματιστεί εκ των προτέρων σε ημερομηνία και ώρα βολική των συμμετέχοντα και τον ερευνητή. Η συνέντευξη αποτελείται συνολικά από εννέα ερωτήσεις.

Ποιοι είναι οι πιθανοί κίνδυνοι από τη συμμετοχή σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη; Η έρευνα έχει σχεδιαστεί ώστε να ελαχιστοποιηθεί η πιθανότητα εμφάνισης οποιουδήποτε κινδύνου. Η πιθανότητα να προκύψει ζημία ή δυσφορία για τον συμμετέχοντα, από το εν λόγω ερευνητικό πρωτόκολλο, δεν είναι μεγαλύτερη από την πιθανότητα εμφάνισής τους σε οποιαδήποτε καθημερινή κατάσταση. Το πολιτικό ρίσκο για τους συμμετέχοντες ελαχιστοποιείται με τη χρήση ψευδώνυμων. Παρά τη χρήση ψευδώνυμων κατά τη δημιουργία της αναφοράς, ο κίνδυνος εμπιστευτικότητας είναι υπαρκτός. Για την ελαχιστοποίηση του κινδύνου αυτού, όλα τα δεδομένα αποθηκεύονται σε ηλεκτρονικό υπολογιστή με προστασία κωδικού πρόσβασης.

Ποια είναι τα πιθανά οφέλη για εσάς; Δεν αναμένεται να έχετε κάποιο άμεσο όφελος από τη συμμετοχή σας στη μελέτη.

Ποια είναι τα πιθανά οφέλη για τους άλλους ανθρώπους; Τα πιθανά οφέλη για την επιστήμη ή/και την κοινωνία μπορεί να περιλαμβάνουν την καλύτερη κατανόηση του τρόπου ανάπτυξης βιώσιμων τουριστικών πρακτικών σε δήμους, τόσο στην Ελλάδα όσο και στο εξωτερικό.

Τι θα σας κοστίσει η συμμετοχή σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη; Δεν υπάρχει κόστος για τη συμμετοχή σας σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη.

Τι πρέπει να κάνετε εάν έχετε πρόβλημα κατά τη διάρκεια της ερευνητικής μελέτης; Κύριο μέλημα κάθε μέλους της ερευνητικής μας ομάδας είναι οι συμμετέχοντες να νιώθουν ευχάριστα και άνετα κατά τη διεξαγωγή της συνέντευξης. Στην περίπτωση οποιουδήποτε προβλήματος, το οποίο απορρέει από τη συμμετοχή σας στη μελέτη, παρακαλούμε όπως επικοινωνήσετε άμεσα με κάποιο από τα άτομα που αναφέρονται στην αρχή του εντύπου συγκατάθεσης.

Πώς θα προστατεύονται οι πληροφορίες που σας αφορούν; Η ερευνητική ομάδα έχει φροντίσει να λάβει όλα τα απαραίτητα μέτρα για τη διασφάλιση της ιδιωτικότητάς σας και του απορρήτου των δεδομένων σας. Τα δεδομένα θα αποθηκευτούν ηλεκτρονικά, μέσω ασφαλούς διακομιστή και θα είναι ορατά μόνο στα μέλη της ερευνητικής ομάδας κατά τη διάρκεια της μελέτης και για τρία χρόνια μετά την ολοκλήρωσή της. Πρόσβαση στα ερευνητικά αρχεία θα έχει μόνο το προσωπικό της μελέτης, το Συμβούλιο Ελέγχου Ιδρύματος του Πανεπιστημίου Pepperdine και οποιοδήποτε άλλο άτομο, οργανισμός ή χορηγός, όπως καθορίζεται από το σχετικό νομοθετικό πλαίσιο. Οι πληροφορίες που θα προκύψουν από τη μελέτη ενδέχεται να δημοσιευθούν σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά ή να παρουσιαστούν σε επιστημονικές συναντήσεις. Παρ' όλα αυτά, τα δεδομένα θα αναφέρονται είτε ως ομαδικά είτε ως συνοπτικά και η ταυτότητά σας θα διατηρηθεί αυστηρά εμπιστευτική.

Ποια είναι τα δικαιώματά σας ως ερευνητικού υποκειμένου; Μπορείτε να κάνετε οποιεσδήποτε ερωτήσεις σχετικά με αυτήν την έρευνα και να απαντηθούν πριν= ή και κατά τη διάρκειά της. Για ερωτήσεις σχετικά με τη μελέτη, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με τον/τους ερευνητή/ές που αναφέρονται στην αρχή της φόρμας.

Για ερωτήσεις σχετικά με τα δικαιώματά σας ή παράπονα σχετικά με την έρευνα, επικοινωνήστε με την Συμβούλιο Ελέγχου Ιδρύματος (IRB): Τηλέφωνο: +01(310)568-2305 Ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: gspirb@pepperdine.edu

Τι θα συμβεί εάν αποφασίσετε να μην συμμετάσχετε σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη ή αποφασίσετε να σταματήσετε να συμμετέχετε μόλις ξεκινήσετε; Μπορείτε να αποφασίσετε να μην συμμετάσχετε σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη, όπως επίσης μπορείτε να αποφασίσετε να διακόψετε τη συμμετοχή σας («απόσυρση») οποιαδήποτε στιγμή πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια ή μετά την έναρξη της έρευνας και για οποιονδήποτε λόγο. Η απόφαση να μην συμμετάσχετε στη μελέτη ή να αποσυρθείτε από αυτή δεν θα επηρεάσει τη σχέση σας με τον ερευνητή ή με το Πανεπιστήμιο Pepperdine.

Δεν θα χάσετε κανένα όφελος που δικαιούστε.

Τεκμηρίωση συγκατάθεσης μετά από ενημέρωση Η απόφαση για τη συμμετοχή σας ή όχι στην παρούσα έρευνα είναι εθελοντική. Η υπογραφή αυτής της φόρμας σημαίνει ότι (1) έχετε διαβάσει και κατανοήσει αυτό το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης, (2) σας έχει εξηγηθεί το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης, (3) έχετε λάβει απαντήσεις στις ερωτήσεις σας και (4) έχετε αποφασίσει να συμμετάσχετε στην ερευνητική μελέτη. Θα σας δοθεί ένα αντίγραφο αυτού του εντύπου συγκατάθεσης για το αρχείο σας.

Τεκμηρίωση συγκατάθεσης μετά από ενημέρωση. Αποφασίζετε οικειοθελώς εάν θα συμμετάσχετε ή όχι σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη. Κάνοντας κλικ στο κουμπί Συμφωνώ παρακάτω, υπονοείται η συγκατάθεσή σας για συμμετοχή. Θα πρέπει να εκτυπώσετε ένα αντίγραφο αυτής της σελίδας για τα αρχεία σας. Μπορείτε να εκτυπώσετε ένα αντίγραφο αυτής της σελίδας για το αρχείο σας.

Όνομα Συμμετέχοντα:

Συμφωνώ

Διαφωνώ

APPENDIX G

English Interview Protocol

(Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

Information About the Interview

- Interviewer records basic information about the interview (including date and time and names of interviewer and participant)
- Interview checks to see all documents have been completed before interviewing.

Introduction

- Interviewer introduces self.
- Discussion of the purpose of the interview
- Explicit conversation with the participant about informed consent to ensure informed consent has been signed by the participant and received by the researcher.
- Overview of the interview structure (length of time, number of questions).
- Ask the participant if there are questions before beginning the interview.

Opening Question

- Icebreaker or general question about their day or how the winter was in the municipality.
- How familiar are you with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
 - (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)?
- What is your definition of sustainable tourism?
- What is your definition of sustainable tourism development?

Content Questions

- IQ1) Who do you work with to develop strategies to best approach systematic planning in sustainable tourism?
- IQ2) How do you develop a strategy to best approach policy in sustainable tourism?
- IQ3) Do you have many public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism? If so, how did those partnerships develop?
- IQ4) When systematically planning sustainable tourism, how would you describe your leadership approaches?
- IQ5) Who are the different stakeholders involved when creating and executing policy for sustainable tourism?

- IQ6) How involved, if at all, are you with the leadership of the public-private partnerships in sustainable tourism?
- IQ7) Are there policy examples you can share that you have found successful when systematic planning in sustainable tourism development?
- IQ8) What are your limitations when developing policy for planning private-public partnerships in sustainable tourism development?
- IQ9) Does your policy approach change depending on who you are leading? If so, please explain.

Using Probes as Needed

- Tell me more...
- Would you explain your response more?
- Would you share more details?
- What does _____ mean?

Closing Instructions

- Thank the participants for their time.
- Reassure participants about confidentiality.
- Offer to send participants an abstract of final study.

APPENDIX H

Greek Interview Protocol

(Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

Information About the Interview

- Interviewer records basic information about the interview (including date and time and names of interviewer and participant)
- Interview checks to see all documents have been completed before interviewing.

Introduction

- Interviewer introduces self.
- Discussion of the purpose of the interview
- Explicit conversation with the participant about informed consent to ensure informed consent has been signed by the participant and received by the researcher.
- Overview of the interview structure (length of time, number of questions).
- Ask the participant if there are questions before beginning the interview.

Opening Question

- Icebreaker or general question about their day or how the winter was in the municipality.
 - Πόσο εξοικειωμένοι είστε με τους στόχους βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης των Ηνωμένων Εθνών;
 - (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)?
- Ποιος είναι ο ορισμός σας για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;
- Ποιος είναι ο ορισμός σας για την αειφόρο τουριστική ανάπτυξη;

Content Questions

- IQ1) Με ποιον συνεργάζεστε για το σχεδιασμό στρατηγικής με στόχο την ανάπτυξη του αειφόρου τουρισμού;
- IQ2) Πώς σχεδιάζετε τη στρατηγική σας με στόχο τη βέλτιστη προσέγγιση του αειφόρου τουρισμού;
- IQ3) Έχετε συνάψει συμπράξεις με φορείς του δημοσίου ή ιδιωτικού τομέα για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό; Εάν ναι, πώς προσεγγίσατε τους φορείς και πώς εδραιώθηκε η συνεργασία;
- IQ4) Πώς περιγράφεται τον ηγετικό ρόλο σας κατά τη διαδικασία σχεδιασμού πολιτικής για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;
- IQ5) Ποιοι είναι οι διάφοροι εμπλεκόμενοι φορείς κατά τη δημιουργία και την εφαρμογή πολιτικής για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;
- IQ6) Πόσο έχετε εμπλακεί στο ηγετικό κομμάτι της σύμπραξης με φορείς του ιδιωτικού και δημοσίου τομέα για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;
- IQ7) Υπάρχουν παραδείγματα επιτυχούς στρατηγικού σχεδιασμού για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό; Χρησιμοποιήσατε στο δικό σας σχεδιασμό;

- IQ8) Ποιους περιορισμούς συναντήσατε κατά το σχεδιασμό της πολιτικής με στόχο τη σύμπραξη με φορείς του ιδιωτικού και δημοσίου τομέα για τον αειφόρο τουρισμό;
- IQ9) Αλλάζετε την πολιτική προσέγγιση που χρησιμοποιείτε ανάλογα με το φορέα ή την ομάδα δράσης στην οποία ηγείστε;

Using Probes as Needed

- Πες μου περιστέρα...
- Θα εξηγούσατε περισσότερο την απάντησή σας;
- Θα μοιραστείτε περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες.
- Τι εννοείτε;

Closing Instructions

- Ευχαριστήστε τους συμμετέχοντες για τον χρόνο τους.
- Καθησυχάστε τους συμμετέχοντες σχετικά με την εμπιστευτικότητα.
- Προσφέρετε να στείλετε στους συμμετέχοντες μια περίληψη της τελικής μελέτης.