

IMPACT OF TOURISM ON LOCAL RESIDENTS: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECTS

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Abstract

An increasing number of countries, among them many within the Mediterranean, have turned to tourism as a way of providing employment, increasing national income, and avoiding current account deficits. As resorts developed, a realization began to grow in some of the more developed areas that tourism was a mixed blessing, and that, for some people at least, the benefits of tourism might be outweighed by the costs.

Results from a larger comparative study of the impacts of tourism on two communities: Ayia Napa/Paralimni in the southern part of Cyprus (among Greek Cypriot residents), and Kyrenia in the northern part (among Turkish Cypriots).

Evidence suggests that the prevailing attitude is that socio-economic and environmental costs of development must be accepted for the greater overall wealth of both local residents and of Cyprus as a whole.

In view of the economic advantages of tourism, and the lack of awareness of the less-evident environmental costs, it is not surprising that there is little concern over any negative effects of tourism development, even if these may jeopardize the long-term viability of the economic development of the island. Given that the possibilities for sustainable, alternative tourism have yet largely to be explored, the need to change attitudes is paramount, if Cyprus is not to end up as yet another over-developed Mediterranean island.

Introduction: Tourism in Cyprus

Tourism in Cyprus developed rapidly in the 1960's, as reliable and cheap air transport became available. With the increase in disposable income in Western Europe in the post-war period, plus the desire for a sun-tanned body and the exploration of other lands and cultures, holidaymakers from North-West Europe sought

to leave traditional resorts in their own countries, and spend their vacations in warmer climates. Cyprus being endowed with a good climate, a rich cultural history, virgin beaches and unspoiled landscape, rapidly became a favourite choice.

Development of hotels and other tourist facilities was rapid in the late 1960's and early 1970's, particularly in the suburb of Varosha, to the south of Famagusta.

Although the Greek Cypriot economy suffered a severe blow immediately after 1974, its recovery soon after was equally dramatic. The lost hotels of Varosha were replaced by new ones further south, and the resorts of Ayia Napa (in the south-east corner of the island) and later the Protaras area of Paralimni (a little further north), underwent fast paced development. In addition, expansion in the other towns of the south continued, so that today there are few beaches between Protaras and Polis (on the west coast) which do not have hotels. It is only in the last few years that there has been any concern expressed about the negative social and environmental effects of such development, and there has been little effective action taken to curb the growth of an industry which now caters for over 2,000,000 visitors per annum, and which contributes well over a billion dollars annually. Concern about the volume of visitors, if it is expressed at all, is usually over the "low quality" of the package tourists, who spend comparatively little, and over the relative increase in the cost of Cyprus as a holiday destination, as most major currencies have fallen relative to the Cyprus pound over the past few years. (For more details on the development of tourism in the south, see, *inter alia*, Kammas, 1993.)

By contrast, the economy in the northern part of the island stagnated after 1974, although this part of Cyprus had accounted for 65% of the island's tourism capacity. Many of the more isolated hotels were deserted, and the whole of the Varosha area was left to decay. The success of the Greek Cypriot campaign for non-recognition of the administration in the north resulted in an international embargo, one feature of which is a lack of direct air flights to the north. Allied to this, the inexperience of the new Turkish Cypriot operators and the reluctance of established tour operators to offer holidays in the north, all contributed to the stagnation of the holiday industry. Only visitors from mainland Turkey came in any numbers. The 1983 unilateral declaration of independence of the north of Cyprus brought little improvement, although the administration's tax incentives to investors in the tourism sector from 1987 onwards has seen steady modest growth in the tourism infrastructure and the number of holidaymakers coming to the north, to around 250,000 contributing over \$150 million to the Turkish Cypriot administration's finances. As a result of these relatively-small numbers and slow growth, it has only been in the past few years that environmental pressures, in the form of increased pollution and degradation of land, have become apparent.

Residents' Attitudes to Tourism

The research reported in this section, on residents' attitudes towards tourism, was conducted during the summer of 1994 at two locations: among Greek Cypriots in Ayia Napa/Paralimni in the southern part of Cyprus, and among Turkish Cypriots in Kyrenia. Two hundred (200) questionnaires were distributed to local residents in Paralimni and Kyrenia, and a further one hundred and twenty one (121) in Ayia Napa, a village with a smaller number of local permanent residents. This was the first time since the division of Cyprus in 1974 that a comparative study of Greek and Turkish Cypriot attitudes was undertaken.

Owing to the political situation in Cyprus, it was not possible for the same interview team to conduct the research in both Paralimni/Ayia Napa and Kyrenia. Consequently, the second author conducted the work in Kyrenia, while the third organised the collection of the Paralimni/Ayia Napa data.

Before 1974, Ayia Napa was an obscure sea-side village, whose inhabitants survived on fishing and agriculture. After 1974, the area developed rapidly, from 126 beds in 1972, through 3,305 (13% of the south's total) in 1982, to 15,982 (21%) in 1994. The once small village now appears to be a large town, and is Cyprus' most important tourist destination. Most village houses, especially those in the old village centre, have been converted into tourist restaurants, public houses and shops. Numerous new hotels, hotel apartments and other tourist amenities have encircled the old village, to a radius of several miles. The resident population is just under 1500 - still the size of a village; thus during the winter the "town" seems empty and almost dead. Perhaps surprisingly, the people living in Ayia Napa ("the neon-lit topless sex capital of Cyprus", as one newspaper memorably put it), tended to be more in favour of development than those in the other two places surveyed.

Unlike Ayia Napa, Paralimni village is not dominated by tourism. A stretch of intense tourism development, with its hotels, apartments, public houses and restaurants, has sprung up outside the village, in an area known as Protaras, which stretches eastwards from Paralimni to the sea. Thus, the village itself is not infiltrated by visitors to the extent that Ayia Napa is: indeed, that example is something the 6,000 residents of Paralimni, say they wish to avoid at all costs.

In the north, Kyrenia is the most developed centre of the nascent Turkish Cypriot tourist industry. The town is of ancient foundation, and boasts a castle which was already old at the time of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1570-71. Traditionally, Kyrenia depended on its port for trade, but the agricultural potential of its hinterland was considerable. Kyrenia was first developed during the 1960's as a relatively upmarket holiday destination, but lagged behind the Famagusta area in growth. Following the division of the island, tourist numbers in the Turkish-controlled area plummeted, and it is only in the last ten years that a significant number of non-Turkish holiday-makers have found their way back again. The resident population

of the town is 7,600; hotels in Kyrenia district (which includes the ribbon development along the coast both east and west of the town proper) provide 4643 beds, and, during the 1994 season, had an average occupancy rate of 38%. Tourism tends to be highly seasonal, which partially explains this low figure. However, even in the best month for 1994 (August), the occupancy rate was only 66%; hotels are full only at the Turkish religious holidays (bayrams), when special charter flights from Istanbul bring many visitors. Most holiday-makers at other seasons are British or German. The overall impression is of a regional centre, much of this is locally generated, and does not vary much with the seasons.

Results

The questionnaire completed by our respondents comprised four sections. The first consisted of 15 attitudinal statements concerning the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism, five in each of the three categories. A final statement sought to provide information on the overall assessment of tourism by the respondent. Each question gave a choice of five answers, ranging from "strongly agree", through "neither agree nor disagree" to "strongly disagree". The full results are found in Akis, Peristianis and Warner (1996); we are concerned here primarily with the answers concerning environmental / socioeconomic effects included in the questionnaire. The relevant questions are included in an appendix to this paper.

Questions related to the environmental impact of tourism sought perceptions of the effect of tourism on preservation of antiquities, public facilities and roads, and the overall quality of the local environment. A further question asked the respondent for his or her overall assessment of the impact of tourism, in order to see if, in the opinion of residents, the perceived environmental problems outweighed the economic benefits.

Table 1 below demonstrates no significant differences between the three places in their residents' perceptions of the economic effects of tourism. The differences in the social and environmental impact measures between Kyrenia and the Ayia Napa/Protaras are statistically significant at a 5% confidence level. The Turkish Cypriots see the social and environmental impacts of tourism as less negative than the Greek Cypriots, with the biggest difference between the two apparent in the median scores for environmental effects. The relative underdevelopment of the north is the most simple explanation of this.

Table 1 Median values calculated from the responses given to the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism

Impact Areas	Economic	Social	Environmental
Paralimni	11	10	9
Ayia Napa	11	9	9
Kyrenia	11	13	13

Residents of both areas are to some extent aware that mass tourism has negative environmental impacts, as is evidenced by the responses to the last three of the five statements. Their overall positive assessment of the sort of tourism they have, (see below), however, suggests that they are prepared to pay the environmental price. The higher proportions of neutral responses to the last three questions in Kyrenia probably reflects the relatively low level of development there. People are less aware of the possible drawbacks of hotel construction and large numbers of visitors.

A large majority (92%) of the Turkish Cypriots interviewed believe that tourism provides an incentive for the restoration of historical buildings and the conservation of natural resources. Many, however, qualified their agreement by pointing out that, in practice, very little restoration work had taken place. The proportions for Paralimni and Ayia Napa are around 83%. Greek Cypriot respondents often referred to old churches, town squares and houses that had been restored to become showpieces for the visitors. More of the Greek Cypriot respondents (87%) agreed that tourism meant that roads and other public facilities were maintained to a higher standard. The figure for the Turkish Cypriots was 66.5%. Ayia Napa, and, to a lesser extent Paralimni, were underdeveloped or neglected areas prior to the advent of mass tourism. Possibly the higher degree of skepticism about the positive effect of tourism on infrastructure from the Turkish Cypriots can be explained by the generally poorer quality of public facilities in the north of Cyprus.

Ayia Napa/Paralimni residents were twice as likely to agree than those in Kyrenia with statements which indicate the existence of negative environmental impacts of tourism (such as overcrowding of beaches, traffic congestion and pollution).

Surprisingly, Ayia Napa residents agree to a lesser extent than those in Paralimni, perhaps because they have become immune to the problem, or because they reason that, as their life is so inextricably bound up with tourism, they must accept any difficulties as but a small price to pay. The large group of "neutral" Turkish Cypriot responses to these questions is most likely indicative of the lower level of development in Kyrenia, so that the environmental stresses are less. (See tables 2, 3 and 4 below for details of responses.)

Table 2 Environmental impacts of tourism development in Kyrenia

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Tourism provides an incentive for the restoration of historical buildings and for the conservation of natural resources	184 (92%)	16 (8%)	- -	200
Roads and other public facilities are kept at a higher standard	133 (65%)	66 (33%)	1 (0.5%)	200
Tourism results in unpleasantly crowded beaches, parks, picnic places, etc.	66 (33%)	128 (77%)	6 (1%)	200
Tourists greatly add to the traffic congestion, noise, and pollution	95 (47.5%)	98 (49%)	7 (3.5%)	200
Construction of hotels and other tourist facilities has destroyed the natural environment	95 (47.5%)	98 (49%)	7 (3.5%)	200

Table 3 Environmental impacts of tourism development in Paralimni

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Tourism provides in incentive for the restoration of historical buildings and for the conservation of natural resources	162 (81%)	27 (13.5%)	11 (5.5%)	200
Roads and other public facilities are kept at a higher standard	167 (83.5%)	27 (13.5%)	6 (3%)	200
Tourism results in unpleasantly crowded beaches, parks, picnic places, etc.	165 (82.5%)	22 (11%)	13 (6.5%)	200
Tourists greatly add to the traffic congestion, noise, and pollution	170 (85%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	200
Construction of hotels and other tourist facilities has destroyed the natural environment	170 (85%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	200

Table 4 Environmental impacts of tourism development in Ayia Napa

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Tourism provides in incentive for the restoration of historical buildings and for the conservation of natural resources	103 (85%)	12 (10%)	6 (5%)	121
Roads and other public facilities are kept at a higher standard	113 (93%)	5 (4%)	3 (3%)	121
Tourism results in unpleasantly crowded beaches, parks, picnic places, etc.	90 (74%)	19 (16%)	12 (10%)	121
Tourists greatly add to the traffic congestion, noise, and pollution	85 (70%)	17 (14%)	19 (16%)	121
Construction of hotels and other tourist facilities has destroyed the natural environment	112 (93%)	4 (3%)	5 (4%)	121

Taking account of the sizeable economic benefits of tourism, most respondents agreed that the benefits of mass tourism outweigh the costs.

Again, it is surprising that Ayia Napa residents are more positive than Paralimni people, and more positive than those in Kyrenia about tourism's net benefit for the country. The best explanation is, presumably, that they see their lives as completely dependent on tourism, with no viable alternative available. Understandably, a return to the poverty and hardship of the past is not an attractive proposition. In Paralimni and Kyrenia, other activities (notably agriculture in the case of the former) are still an important source of income and employment, and dependency on tourism is less (see table 5).

Table 5 Overall evaluation of tourism: the benefits of tourism are greater than the costs to the people of the area

Attitudes \ Areas	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Kyrenia	186 (93%)	9 (4.5%)	5 (2.5%)	200
Paralimni	152 (76%)	26 (13%)	22 (11%)	200
Ayia Napa	98 (81%)	11 (9%)	12 (10%)	121

The residents of all three places are even more positive in their evaluation of the impact of tourism for Cyprus. In their own case, they may be witnesses to some minor problems, but for the island as a whole they assume that such problems are a price well worth paying. Put differently, they feel that, even though they are the primary beneficiaries from tourism, they are also the ones who suffer most from its effects. In this sense, their gain cannot be seen as entirely a selfish one (see table 6).

Table 6 Overall evaluation of tourism: the benefits of tourism are greater than the costs to the people of the country

Areas \ Attitudes	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Kyrenia	190 (95%)	7 (3.5%)	3 (1.5%)	200
Paralimni	166 (83%)	13 (6.5%)	21 (10.5%)	200
Ayia Napa	117 (97%)	2 (1.5%)	2 (1.5%)	121

The data described above tend to confirm Butler's hypothesis (Butler, 1980), which predicts that Kyrenia residents, who have comparatively little exposure to tourism, are more "pro-tourism" than people in Ayia Napa and Paralimni, where experience of tourism (and tourists) is more extensive. It is interesting to note, though, that the neutral, "don't know" response is higher for the Kyrenia residents, probably indicative of a "wait-and-see" attitude. That is, as their experience of tourism is less, they are unwilling to express an opinion until the effects become clearer to them.

Cypriot Attitudes to the Environment

If tourism has brought overall economic gain to the island, residents do not seem to relate the influx of tourists to the environmental problems of Cyprus. In fact, environmental awareness seems to be largely confined to global issues, with relatively little significance or importance attached to local problems. However, concern about the effects of tourism in Cyprus has been expressed by some. Indicatively, a book by the ex-Director General of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, Antonios Andronikou, on tourism development was subtitled: "harmonisation of tourism with the environment" (Andronikou, 1987). The major English-language newspapers (Cyprus Weekly in the south, Cyprus Today in the north) frequently report on cases of environmental degradation in Cyprus, and the major local Greek and Turkish language dailies have columns on environmental topics. The pressures on the Akamas peninsula in western Cyprus, where there has been an increase in vehicles driving on to the beaches, threatening the turtles which nest in the area, are

typical of the sort of problem that the expansion of tourism has brought.

Visitors to both sides of the island frequently complain about the amount of litter to be seen, particularly discarded bags and cans. While some of the plastic waste on beaches, particularly on the east and north coasts, is due to illegal dumping by ships, and waste washed in from Lebanon (together contributing approximately sixteen tonnes a day to the beaches of Famagusta Bay, according to one estimate), the large volume of cans, paper and plastic in piles away from the shore is mute witness to the habits of the local people.

One would expect that, as criticism of mass tourism from an environmental viewpoint, and criticism of the quantity of litter by visitors both increased, local residents in tourist destinations would be seeking to put their own house in order. It might be expected that this would manifest itself in increased awareness of environmental problems, and membership of environmental organisations, as well as greater coverage of environmental issues in the newspapers. Interestingly, though, it would appear that it is possible to be a supporter of environmental organisations while acting in an environmentally-unfriendly fashion.

In an effort to assess attitudes of Turkish Cypriots to the environment, the second author organised a questionnaire in spring 1994, of a representative selection of 409 subjects. The full results are reported in Girdner and Akis (1996). While 40% of respondents saw economic problems as the most important for the world today, 26% named environmental problems first (see table 7).

Opinions were divided as to what the biggest environmental problem was, with the most popular answers being air pollution (22%), water pollution (19%), the destruction of the ozone layer (18%) and overpopulation (14%). Table 8 gives the details.

Table 7 The basic problems of today's world, in the opinion of Turkish Cypriots

Problem	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Economic Problems	161	40
Environmental Problems	106	26
Wars	53	13
Political Problems	26	6
Other Problems	38	9
No answer	25	6
Total	409	100

Table 8 The biggest environmental problem facing us today, in the opinion of Turkish Cypriots

Problem	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Air pollution	90	22
Water pollution	78	19
Ozone layer depletion	74	18
Overpopulation	61	15
Rain forest destruction	48	12
No answer	35	
No idea	17	
Other	2	0
Total	409	100

Interestingly, all the problems reported are global ones: there was no mention of the local environmental problems. Indeed, when the Market Research organisation COMAR conducted a survey in March 1995 the environment did not feature as a major issue. Perhaps predictably, at a time just before a Turkish Cypriot election, the Cyprus problem (57%) and economic problems (28%) were the most mentioned.

Returning to the earlier survey, a large majority, 80%, predictably believed that industrial development would lead inevitably to environmental problems, while 54% thought that increased tourism would be responsible for increases in noise, traffic congestion and pollution, a figure somewhat at variance with the 22% figure for Kyrenia residents reported in table 2. Possibly a survey which concentrates solely on environmental factors in itself raises awareness of potential environmental problems.

Not surprisingly, a huge majority (over 90%) wanted environmental education in schools, and that the forest areas of north Cyprus should be expanded. 92% considered themselves to be environmentally aware, although only 57% were aware that the Turkish Cypriot administration does have an environmental department, and only 28% could correctly name its head at the time.

The traditional Turkish perspective of the state as the provider of all (Devlet Baba - Father State) is demonstrated by the fact that 42% felt that it was the governing authorities' responsibility to deal with environmental problems, compared with 29% opting for individuals' responsibility and 18% for NGO's (see table 9). However, only 26% believed that the authorities were sensitive to environmental problems.

Table 9 Who has the most power to solve environmental problems, in the opinion of Turkish Cypriots

Agency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Government	174	42
Individuals	118	29
Environmental NGO's	73	18
Scientists	33	8
Other	4	1
No answer	7	2
Total	409	100

Individual behaviour, also belied claims to being environmentally concerned. 58% failed to take a canvas shopping bag with them when they went shopping, preferring always to use the plastic bags given out by shops. Despite concern about the ozone layer, only 29% always made the effort to find CFC-free aerosols. 53% threw away their empty bottles, without reusing them.

Unfortunately, the sample did not discriminate between tourist and non-tourist areas. Age, education level, rural/urban residency, or sex did not appear to be significant factors affecting behaviour.

To the best of our knowledge, no similar survey has been carried out in the south of the island. However, a 1988 consultancy report for the Cyprus Tourist Organisation (Vakis and Peristianis, 1988) asked people in the tourist areas of Paralimni, Ayia Napa, Yermasoyia (Limassol) and Paphos (as well as Tseri, a non-tourist area which served as control, for comparison purposes), what they felt were the most negative effects of tourism. As the question was open-ended, respondents had the opportunity to stress environmental and non-environmental problems. Interestingly, and possibly as a result of the topicality of the subject at that time, the health threat from AIDS and other diseases emerged as the greatest concern. The environment specifically was mentioned by only just over 2% of those surveyed. (See table 10 for details).

When questioned specifically about the environmental effects of tourism, almost two-fifths thought that tourism led to environmental improvements (see table 11).

Table 10 Most important negative effects of tourism on Cyprus, in the opinion of Greek Cypriots

Place Problem	Paralimni	Ayia Napa	Yermasoyia	Paphos	Tseri	Total
Increase in Cost of Living	3	-	6	15	2	26 2.4%
Improper or Immoral Dress	5	1	4	-	14	24 2.2%
Immorality	82	54	65	103	31	33 31.3%
"Bad habits" "Dirtyness"	19	12	11	44	21	107 10.0%
Noise and Drunkenness	3	6	7	2	6	24 2.2%
AIDS and other diseases	51	18	58	47	90	264 24.6%
Environmental Problems	4	1	-	11	33	24 2.2%
Drugs	2	2	11	13	7	3 3.3%
Improper Behaviour	-	-	4	-	-	4 0.4%
Others	9	7	17	20	14	67 6.3%
No negative effects	25	13	10	33	16	97 9.1%
No opinion	3	19	14	20	7	63 5.9%
Totals	206	133	208	30€	216	1071

Table 11 Impact of tourism on the environment, in the opinion of Greek Cypriots

Places Impact	Paralimni	Ayia Napa	Yermasoyeia	Paphos	Tseri	TOTAL
Improvement	158	53	75	79	57	422 39.4%
Damage	36	73	128	197	150	584 54.5%
No Opinion	12	7	5	32	9	65 6.1%
TOTAL	206	13	208	308	216	1071

Residents' environmental concerns, however small, are certainly worth noting. In both parts of the island, a number of environmental groups have been formed, reflecting both local and global concerns. In the south, just under twenty such non-governmental organisations (NGO's) are active in environmental matters, ranging from local branches of international organisations such as Green Peace, to groups with more local aims. Membership varies from a mere handful to several hundreds. In the north, only 3% of those surveyed claimed membership of any of north Cyprus' twelve environmental NGO's. However, this does not compare too unfavourably with other countries, where membership is at similar low levels. The biggest NGO's are Kuskor, the bird society, and Yesil Baris (Green Peace; although the organisation has no connection with the internationally-known Green Peace), with over a thousand members apiece. However, the number of active members is much smaller: the Chairman of Green Peace estimates that only 5% of the organisation's membership do anything more than just pay their subscriptions.

Unlike in the south, where most of the initiative for the formation and operation of environmental NGO's comes from Greek Cypriot locals, the expatriate community in the north is more active than the local Turkish Cypriots in forming and supporting them. The turtle society, the National Trust, and the sustainable development groups ProAction and the north Nicosia Chapter of the Society for International Development were all instigated by foreign residents. As such, the NGO's run the risk of being dismissed by both the Turkish Cypriot administration and the local people as merely the invention of interfering foreigners with ulterior motives. Certainly it is easy for the NGO's to come across as anti-development, as they seek, at the very least, to place constraints on the growth of mass tourism.

(For details of the work of the NGO's see the articles by Peter Cant, Lorna Swindells and Ersan Uluchan in Warner, 1992).

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that in other countries environmental NGO's aided by media interest and support, have been able to place issues of sustainable development and the need for environmentally-friendly policies on the political agenda: as the membership of the NGO's in north Cyprus includes members of the ruling elite, their influence on government is potentially significant, even if, in general, they lack grassroots support. The idea of ecologically-sensitive alternatives to mass tourism is a new one to many people, despite the evidence that it can form a successful tourism strategy. However, given that the "government leads" is the prevailing mentality, convincing politicians that alternative tourism is a viable option may be the best way of ensuring environmentally-friendly development.

ALTERNATIVE TOURISM AND THE FUTURE

It emerged from the first *suNey* reported above that there were some significant differences between north and south in the attitudes of residents to tourism development, and in how residents viewed the effects of that development. Both communities, though, saw tourism as a positive thing.

In general, Cyprus has been slow to recognise the problems of environmental degradation as a result of the growth of tourism, and slow to take action in order to combat them. Pressure for the growth of mass tourism facilities continues in the south, despite almost annual conferences urging restraint, and an increase in alternatives to mass tourism, stressing quality and sustainability (see, for example, Efthyvoulos, 1997).

Genuine alternative tourism, village-based and seeking to minimise visitors' environmental impact, is as yet rare in Cyprus. Only one project, in the west of the island, is up and running. Involving five (Greek Cypriot) villages - Kathikas, Pano and Kato Akourdalia, Miliou and Kritou Terra, it is located in the area of Laona just south-east of the environmentally-sensitive (and threatened) Akamas Peninsula. The villages of the area have suffered from severe economic difficulties for a number of years, exemplified by the problem of rural depopulation. The aim of the project is to inject a new economic vitality into the area, while retaining the villages' charm and rich cultural heritage. The project's versatility allows it to include both local industry and agriculture, to help the villagers improve and modify their environment by means of grants and loans.

Even before the project started, Sunvil Tour Operators in Britain were bringing visitors to selected villages in the south-western part of Cyprus, and has found a growing demand from a certain sector of the market.

In the north of the island, the smaller number of tourists means that there is less of a threat. However, the demand for government help to extend mass tourism (by subsidising flights to reduce cost levels and prices to those of competing destinations) continues to grow, and may prove to be irresistible.

It is interesting to note that, at a 1995 conference in Kyrenia on the future of tourism, local Turkish Cypriot participants were arguing for the need to expand mass tourism, while the foreign participants noted the potential for alternative tourism in the relatively-unspoiled regions of the north.

The most important area, environmentally, in the north is the Karpas peninsula, an area of almost untouched natural beauty, important as a nesting-site for turtles, and renowned for its isolation and wilderness qualities.

Development is creeping into the area, however, which threatens its integrity. For instance, a number of basic hotels have opened up; small cafes which appeared on the Golden Sands beach have the potential to cause damage by disrupting the activities of the turtles which nest there.

The Turkish Cypriots' plan of establishing a Karpas National Park here would aim at preserving it from inappropriate development, while at the same time creating an attraction for visitors. It should be noted that some have expressed concern that the declaration of a National Park would be bad for the economy of Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) village. Environmentalists countered that this would probably not be so, as the long-term benefits of a sustainable village tourism policy could exceed the short-term benefits of either mass tourism or the current creeping development. Rizokarpaso, they point out, has the necessary prerequisites (e.g. traditional architecture, local fauna and flora) to be developed in a way similar to the Laona villages.

The growth of illegal guest houses and cafeterias in the Karpas area show that there is a demand for tourist accommodation in the area and, environmentalists argue, it would be better if this were controlled by the encouragement of alternatives, instead of merely trying to control undesirable development by legislation. Alternative tourism would have the potential to spread the benefits of tourism more widely, and at the same time decrease the environmental pressures that large numbers of visitors cause.

So, what is the way forward for tourism in small island states such as Cyprus? To abolish mass tourism is impossible: too much is at stake in the industry. Decoupling visitor numbers from the need for ever more facilities are possible, but may lead to social pressures. The prospects of success of a search after quality are limited, as Cyprus would be competing in a fiercely competitive market: the rich can choose their own destinations. The growth potential of eco-tourism, as the number of older people with the time, money and inclination to travel increases, is probably more likely to prove a sustainable long-term solution to the problem.

Notes

1. For more details on the development of tourism in the north, see Lockhart, 1994 and Martin, 1993.
2. As reported in the newspaper Kibris 25/3/95.
3. To be fair, however, it should be pointed out that in an economy where most retailing is still through small shops, a choice of aerosols may well not be available, and, in the absence of commercial recycling of bottles, it is creditable that 45% did claim to reuse them.
4. The British forces in Cyprus newspaper, Lion, 6/8/94 p.10 has an interesting article on the scheme. The Laona Project office in Limassol also provides useful leaflets on the scheme and its progress. Other sources used here include the Cyprus Mail (24/11/91) and Sunvil's holiday brochure, 1995.
5. Calculations by the first author indicate that the use value of the area for foreign visitors is around \$300,000 per annum by the Travel Cost method (TCM) of valuation. Total use value to visitors and local people is probably between \$627,000 and \$1,275,000 in 1994. Warner, 1995 details the methodology of this calculations, and also details some of the flora and fauna of the peninsula.

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