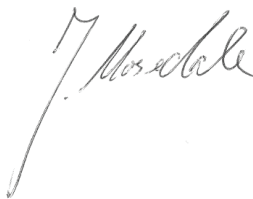


Corporate Geographies Of Transnational Tourism Companies

Submitted by Jan Mosedale, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography, July 2007.

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Abstract

The central aim of this thesis is to contribute to the knowledge of restructuring processes in the tourism production system and to analyse the implications of socio-spatial practices and strategies of transnational, integrated tourism corporations in light of the 'new' economic geography. It is based on the cultural turn in the discipline of geography and thus recognises that cultural and social processes are an integral part of economic systems and contribute to shaping the economic landscape. The thesis specifically investigates the corporate geographies of tourism corporations and their relationship with territorial spaces. Restructuring processes are examined demonstrating that the European tourism production system has experienced significant structural changes during a wave of large- and small-scale mergers and acquisitions resulting in the emergence of tourism corporations with a wide and uneven geographical expansion. An analysis of shareholdings of individual tourism corporations also highlights significant variation in the level of internationalisation and expansion.

Socio-economic approaches to the firm form the theoretical foundations for analysing the relationship between tourism corporations and place via the concept of embeddedness within networks of social relations using examples from Mallorca, Spain. A combination of questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews was employed in order to map the structural and qualitative attributes of intra-, inter- and extra-firm networks. Encountered difficulties, however, resulted in a more exploratory approach to the application of theoretical concepts and required added reliance on secondary sources and informal discussion with experts. Historical connection between tour operators and Mallorcan hotel companies has provided a firm basis for close cooperation with mutual benefit and has allowed Mallorcan hotel companies to internationalise in conjunction with the internationalisation of tourist flows. The examination of regulatory networks has revealed a complex and dynamic mosaic of scales at subnational, national and supranational levels, which govern and shape the activities of tourism corporations.

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Acknowledgements

As usual, this research has benefited from financial, academic as well as social support from institutions and many colleagues, friends and family. Without them, this thesis would either not have materialised or in very limited form and all merit my thanks. As usual, I am solely responsible for the views and interpretations expressed in this piece of work and for any mistakes committed. I wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Economic and Social Research Council (Award number: PTA-030-2002-00677) and the School of Geography, Archaeology and Earth Resources. Without this support I would not have been able to undertake this PhD research.

The following individuals deserve my appreciation and gratitude:

Gareth Shaw and Allan Williams have supported this research from its inception until the final stages and have been a constant source of advice and guidance throughout. I am also indebted to them for a speedy turnaround of comments by patiently proofreading half finished chapters. Tim Coles for introducing me to the conference circuit and the world of publishing. Friends at the Universitat de les Illes Balears: Pere Salvà, Macia Blasquez and Joan Amer for accepting me into their network, informal discussions and for doing their best to help me gain access to research respondents. Paul Wilkinson for introducing me to the fascinating subject that is tourism. Friends and fellow postgraduates for sharing the experience, listening to my rants while silently indulging in the odd alcoholic beverage or two: the experience just wouldn't have been the same without them. And finally my parents for instilling in me an inquisitive mind, for their encouragement throughout my life and for supporting me financially through some of my earlier steps in tertiary education. **Thank you!**