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# *Zorba the Greek's* tourism worldmaking: gendering Cretan place identity and Greek memory through film

Gendering  
Cretan place  
identity

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Drawing on the discursive properties of placemaking theory, this paper discusses the development of film tourism in Crete from the release of the award-winning *Zorba the Greek* (dir. Michael Cacoyannis, ZG) to date. The approach is “genealogical,” seeking to explain how ZG-inspired tourism on Crete ended up being more than about the film itself owing to historical contingency.

**Keywords** Hospitality, Gender, Biopolitics, Film tourism, Sex tourism, Greek identity

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Taking *Zorba the Greek* (heretofore ZG), a film that generated tourism on Crete, as an example to revisit debates on the production of place in contexts of image-based tourismification, this paper highlights the significance of the less-studied temporal aspect of the remaking of place. It does so by considering placemaking techniques used consciously by tourist institutions and organisations and less consciously by those who find themselves catering for tourists as a worldmaking process that evolves in time. We place emphasis on the style in which such conscious/unconscious processes happen by actors to foster interpretation of what needs doing often “on the go”: to respond to emerging challenges that could not be anticipated through neat planning. We use a discursive framework to examine multimodally different data that survived across six decades of tourismification or generated during our field research (second section). In the third and fourth sections, we present a phased development of Crete’s image-based tourismification to conclude on the

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significance of time lapses in the development of human agency in such contexts. This agency, we argue in the conclusion:

- is structured by ideal (s) of identity, nationality and social (gender, class, sex) belonging that
- contextually interact to produce entanglements of belonging to social and cultural worlds in flux.

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Place is the product of a network of memories suspended in competing narrative networks (Ricoeur, 2004, pp. 116–117): who says what about its qualities and histories exert influence on the basis of social status, cultural development and political contingency. In the tourist trade, placemaking is even more stringently subjected to such rules. Crete, our case study, is such an example: the release of the internationally successful film *ZG* in 1964 introduced the barren landscape and traditional culture of this Greek island to global audiences – something that would subsequently lead to an influx of especially, but not exclusively European tourist clientele in a land with no infrastructural basis to sustain mobilities of such a scale. Crete ended up standing for something different from its allegedly original character, which was as much a native fictional construct as its imported anthropomorphic *ZG* brand. After this film, Cretan land transformed into a tourist landscape (Urry, 2004), a manufactured picture postcard which assumed all the characteristics of a fictional literary-cinematic hero. This unintended by its makers effect, points to the complexity of what Hollinshead (2009c) has termed “worldmaking”: a group of “false” imaginative activities “to purposely (or otherwise unconsciously) privilege particular dominant/favoured representations of peoples/places/pasts within a given region, area, or ‘world’, over and above other actual or potential representations of those subjects” (2009, p. 643).

Zorbas-the-character is then an artificial memory token that “worldmade” Cretan tourism. Although the demotion of primary (living) to secondary (processed) memory in such worldmaking networks is often rigorously contested by those wanting to fix identity, in late capitalism it always reforms the ways place is imagined. Thematically, we can distinguish between “habit memory” or *mémoire-habitude*, and “distinct recollection” or *mémoire souvenir* (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 24), with the latter projecting an element of artificiality in the public sphere. Contextually, we can conclude that in touristified locations memory registers oscillate between customary and embodied practices of placemaking by locals on the one hand, and the personalised, recollective and impressionistic agency of tourist imaginaries produced by industries and tourist visitors on the other (Salazar, 2012). It is dangerously nostalgic to stick to notions of rooted memory of retrogressive content in the era of globalisation, which is dominated by hybridisation. Experiences that form during encounters with strangers bridge Bergsonian dichotomies between entrenched habit (what we acquire at home) and reference to an acquisition (what we collect during travel). The experiential bridge is built on the subject matter of interaction, which makes both (and/or all) parties reflect on their perspectives, producing a shared image of what is supposed to be the past of the visited land (Ricoeur, 2004, pp. 25–26).

If we follow a blended symbolic interactionist/semiotic path, we may recall MacCannell’s (1973) established thesis on “staged authenticity” in tourist settings. We use his semiotic interactionism to strengthen our argument: tourism that connects to combinations of kinaesthetic (embodied practices such as dancing and lovemaking) and audio-visual tropes and practices (moviemaking and watching as well as music-making and listening) partakes in narrative extensions, which enable the emergence of a new “place identity.” Several tourist destinations have been “put on the tourist map” by having featured in popular films (Papatheodorou and Karpalthiotaki, 2007, p. 2). However, we argue that “staging” is a

process that requires much more than thinking in terms of “front” and “back” regions of identity performance and placemaking. Especially filmmaking adheres to a tertiary revision of memory or *mémoire souvenir*, an afterimage of place that is not fake, only different from its alleged original form. This both produces and revises already existing imaginaries of place and culture in multiple *stages or phases* (Stiegler, 2011; Gravari-Barbas and Graburn, 2012).

We will not use Richard Butler's (1980, 2006, 2011) celebrated thesis on the “Tourism Area Life Cycle,” which simply maps in evolutionary terms the growth, stagnation, decline and fall of a tourism destination. Where we converge with Butler is our mapping of the causes of development, but our epistemological framework and objectives differ significantly from his: first we view with suspicion his use of evolutionism, which clashes with our critical analysis of biopolitics; second, we view tourism mobilities as the symptom of much broader (than tourism) developmental trends, which bring together what individual actors do (e.g. hospitality labour) and how this connects to the imperatives and norms of structural and systemic agents (e.g. nation states and markets). We consider how Greece and Crete in particular developed their “network capital” (Larsen and Urry, 2008, p. 93) or tourist “currency” in European domains and beyond through successive interpretations of a film, until the film itself did not dominate or featured at all in their promotional strategies. In line with MacCannell's semiotic interactionism, we intend to show how such strategies were delegated to particular hospitality actors, such as men offering sex to female tourists: they too were interpreters of the ZG phenomenon. Their need to maintain a sliver of symbolic capital in the capitalist jungle motivated them to identify with practices of engendering global social relations for Greece as a tourist destination. Their role in the accrual of “emotional, financial and practical benefit” has been significant in the first two phases of ZG tourism development, and we may even argue that they worked as mediators between the Cretan need to prosper economically and global markets. Their role was, in other words, that of a “knowing pawn” in the consolidation of the tourist market's placemaking powers, but also its aspiration to turn mobility as such (of entrenched identity) to a “government of the market” (Foucault, 1997, 2007; Bærenholdt, 2013, p. 26). Hollinshead's (2009a) thesis and the new mobilities paradigm (Bærenholdt, 2013; Korstanje, 2017; Lapointe and Coulter, 2020), which considers how capitalist networks shape the ways tourism is “done” and therefore why and how it develops and with what consequences for cultural and political life through widespread discourses are tools better suited to our analysis than Butler's model. Both approaches are also in agreement with Giddens (1999) approach to self-identity as the product of increased lifeworld structuration in globalised capitalist networks as this is played out at a personal, and in our case also interpersonal levels.

Let us apply these ideas: at first, the making of ZG was replete with the poetics of gender, which were used to articulate a Greek politics of belonging to European civilisation and its leisure opportunities, including tourism. Although never formally colonised by Western colonial powers, Greece experienced an invisible subjection to Western expectations of civility, including in our case the obligation to cater for foreign tourists and adhere to their stereotypical expectations (Herzfeld, 2002). The result in Crete's case has been the elevation of the ordinary poetics of manhood to an internationally mobile ideal of risqué identity (voluntary sexual engagement with foreign female tourists), which “orientalised” Greekness for practical purposes (Herzfeld, 1985). Such an anthropomorphic development of place identity is common in countries developing a postcolonial national identity and ubiquitously draws on the romantic potential of the border, the hinterland, which is turned into the nation's symbolic centre as tourism and identity scholars argued likewise (Hollinshead, 2003; Herzfeld, 2005). Further down the line of this worldmaking process we will notice a

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displacement of tourism as a civilising process by structures of *hospitality* which were in turn informed by frameworks of sensibility (Scribano and Sánchez Aguirre, 2018). When Cretan and other native Greek sexual encounters with foreign female tourists fed into patterns of hospitality, the “caterers” became more aware of a status inconsistency in their identity *vis-à-vis* especially that of their female guests. Even further down the line, this awareness would include the fear of personal harm by sexually transmitted disease. Nevertheless, this personal fear, which led to yet more changes in the ways a masculinised Greekness was projected in the tourist marketplace, would continue to collude with the politics of nationalism.

Hence, after *ZG*, Crete, and synecdochally Greece, were subjected to a “progressive sense of place” (Massey, 1994), through patterned forms of action (Capra, 1997, pp. 7–8) or habits. This involved the operationalisation of an assemblage of ideas of how a place is or should be (DeLanda, 2006; Salazar and Graburn, 2016), a purposeful and strategic gathering of characteristics of “Cretanness” by different social actors including the filmmakers, people working in the tourist industry, flirting with sexual adventure and tourism-related organizations. This assemblage was also affected by representations of identities involved in the making of the film (its primary and secondary heroes and heroines) and those generally defined by their outsiderness to Greek identity (mostly foreign female tourists). The outcome has been a redefinition of Cretan uniqueness through global interactions and mobilities that brought into sharp focus the centrality of gender in Greek identity. Indeed, the fictional Zorba helped Greek and international tourism to *assemble a group of mostly transgressive habits* associated with intersectional identity (gender, class, ethnicity) and turn them into narratives of authenticity in the marketplace. Habit turned into a souvenir for international tourist clientele that wanted to use this simulacrum of Greek culture as a gateway to a personal transformation – a romantic project that Urry (1990) contrasted to “mass tourism.” Unlike Urry, we place mass and romantic tourist gazes on a continuum in the middle stages of Zorba-inspired tourism to map placemaking mechanisms.

### Epistemology and methodology

Our paper is based on a series of interviews held between 2010 and 2014. The first two interviews from 2010 were with the creators of *ZG*, i.e. the film director Michalis Cacoyannis and the film’s score composer Mikis Theodorakis. These structured interviews focused on the making of the film, the social context in which it was shot (1964) as well as its social and economic implications. The interviews helped us construct a clearer picture about the first phase of *ZG*-inspired tourism development. Both artists’ contributions to the making of the film eventually connected to the production of an invisible Cretan “mediated center” (Couldry, 2000), a bundle of core representations of the island in the form of images and aural signs, mostly revolving around the semiotic potential of the film’s central hero. Our “reading” of the film itself has not been an arbitrary exercise, but one purposely orientated towards its tourist potential, as this was defined by the growing pool of *ZG* tourists. As Rose (2014, pp. 19–20) has stressed, a critical methodology of the image involves careful consideration of three “sites”: that of the image itself (in our case, both Crete as land and landscape and the fictional “Zorba” hero), the site of its production (Crete as a tourist place) and the sites where this is interpreted by its audiences (for us, these audiences were purposely reduced to female tourists, not cinematic audiences). Of these three modalities or aspects, we selected the third, which helps us to focus on the social, political and economic relations surrounding the production of the film-image, as well as the institutions involved in it. This social reading enabled us to transition our analysis to the second and third phase of Cretan Greek mobilities. We intentionally removed “tourism” from this sentence, because

when the design of tourism on the island matured, when it “converged” behind a new paradigm of movement of culture, tradition and memory to the marketplace, it became more than about tourism. This paradigmatic shift from medium-specific content (a novel, a film) towards “content that flows across multiple media channels, towards the increased interdependence of communication systems, towards multiple ways of accessing media content, and towards ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 254) suits better our mobilities approach.

A second round of structured interviews took place in Crete between 2011 and 2014 with veteran tourism industry professionals who witnessed the very beginning of international tourism on the island during the 1960s and the early 1970s. These interviews explored, among others, how *ZG* affected Crete as a tourist destination, as the initial interviews with Cacoyannis and Theodorakis yielded limited information about the tourism impact of the film. This second round of interviews provided a better understanding of *ZG*'s contribution to establishing Crete's fame and put the film's impact into perspective with the overall tourist development of the island.

All interviewees were men owing to the dominance of male professionals in senior tourism industry roles at that time. This situation has changed quite dramatically over recent years with the increase in female tourist entrepreneurs and much more women ascending to managerial posts in the hospitality sector (ICAP, 2020). Interviewees included Zacharias and Nikos, both retired hotel managers based in Heraklion, Nikos and Manolis, both hoteliers from Rethymno, as well as Kostas, founder of one of the country's largest hotel groups (last names have been omitted for privacy reasons). Their first-hand testimonies focused on the impact of *ZG* on Cretan tourism, the profile of the island's first visitors and the advent of large-scale tourism. These interviews yielded qualitative observations that enabled a multivariate analysis of purely quantitative data on the growth of tourism. Aside from the fact that they enabled us to map a continuous growth, they inspired, together with secondary academic research on Greek and Cretan tourism over the same period our phased genealogical model. Much like multidimensional scaling's use in testing hypotheses in tourism studies (Fenton and Pearce, 1988), but unlike its focus on psychological variables, our multimodal method connected individual effects and motivations to macro-sociological questions of social conflict and communitarian violence.

Thus, far from promoting a hard positivist analysis of phased development, we use the Foucaultian notion of market governance of mobilities (Bærenholdt, 2013) as a methodological tool. We use discourse analysis to do justice to the multimodality of our data and explain how our interpretation of the content of individual sets of data contributes to our central thesis on market governance through tourism worldmaking design (Hollinshead, 1999). We attempt to present a genealogy of such worldmaking imaginaries of place identity for Crete. “Genealogy” (after Foucault, 1979) suggests exploring the causes and consequences involved in the particular ways Cretan tourism developed over the decades: a transition from *how* it was affected by *ZG* to *why* it was connected to different concerns, including those of sexist prowess and deadly viral mobilities. The phases of assemblage are mapped in distinct ways to examine not just how change followed the usual supply-demand model in film-induced tourism, but examine the implication of global sociocultural, political and biomedical changes on such modifications. We will conclude with some distressing observations on the ways tourism flows intersected with discursive flows on what is considered to be the border and the centre of identity to consolidate not always progressive repertoires of Cretan and Greek identity and nationality.

**Phase 1: script, atmosphere and tourism authority**

Two of the makers of the film were interviewed during the summer of 2010. Film director Michael Cacoyannis was interviewed in June 2010, about one year before he passed away, while the interview with Mikis Theodorakis, the film's soundtrack composer, was held one month later. When interviewed, neither Cacoyannis nor Theodorakis had any information to share about *Zorba*-induced tourism in Greece and on Crete in particular. During the period following the film's release, Theodorakis was busy with his concerts, his seat in Greek parliament for the left-wing EDA party and his presidency at the Lambrakis Youth Movement. He was also travelling to the poorest parts of the country setting up cultural centres. Two years after the release of *Zorba*, the military overthrew the Greek government with a *coup d'état* and Theodorakis, among many others, was imprisoned by the colonels' regime. He was released four years later following strong international protests. Even though he did not come across *Zorba*-inspired tourists in Greece, Theodorakis met some of them on his international concert tours. He confirmed that there are thousands of people around the world who were inspired to learn the Greek language and history, listen to Greek music, read Greek poetry and visit the country after having watched *ZG*. Cacoyannis, on the other hand, stayed away from Greece for some time, owing to threats against him by some Cretans.

It was difficult to steer interviews with Cacoyannis and Theodorakis towards themes of tourism development, as both focused their answers on the artistic and social aspects of the film. However, filmmaking itself is a form of pilgrimage to the filmed land, which is also both artists' homeland (Tzanelli, 2013). At this stage, the artists' inheritances undergo radical alterations into hybridised heritage, transforming organic knowledge of place into "synesthetic narratives": images combined with music. Cacoyannis' filmmaking and Theodorakis' music composition should be treated as tertiary revisions of place-memory that draw both on experience and perceived tourist authenticity to relay notions of place/culture (Stiegler, 2011). When examined from this perspective, these interviews can be read as a proto-tourist discourse, a form of worldmaking agency that would eventually feed into Cretan tourism (Hollinshead, 2009a).

Cacoyannis (2010 interview June) recalled how the film was co-financed by himself, Antony Quinn and initially United Artists. However the latter withdrew, and Twentieth Century Fox stepped in. The deal ensured Cacoyannis absolute artistic freedom to make the movie as he wished. Darryl F. Zanuck of Fox was ecstatic with this project as it was the first film ever to achieve profitability even before its premiere. It is worth stressing that no Greek authority or private business was involved in financing the production, and nobody had the intent of using the film for promoting tourism. The interviewed tourism industry veterans interestingly noted that before *ZG*, tourism to Crete was of a small scale and limited to affluent and well-educated visitors mostly from Germany and the USA coming to the island just for one thing: the archaeological sites of the ancient Minoan civilization. It was only after the release of *Zorba* that Crete started to attract sun worshippers and more hedonistically inclined tourists. Theodorakis (2010, interview July) recalled how Cacoyannis asked him to write the soundtrack for *Zorba*, but it turned out that he needed some music for shooting the dancing scene on the beach. Theodorakis used two existing compositions of this: the slow introduction from his songs *Strōse to Strōma sou* and the fast "Cretan Dance," which he had composed for a ballet some twelve years before, joined together by a bridge. This music was played on the beach for the shooting, but Theodorakis was supposed to replace it with a new piece on the same *tempo*. It was jointly decided in the studio in Athens, where the artists watched the scene, that the existing music fit perfectly the dance event and decided to keep it.

In an international system of tourist services, blends between Greek Cretan habit and tourist or artistic recollection assembled a grand script of gendered, class and ethnic hierarchy to valorise and exoticize Cretan Greek identity. When we talk about a “script,” we draw on the ways *ZG*’s script promoted Greece’s exoticisation in the West, and an entrenched Greek habit of generating gendered and ethnic hierarchies of value at home. On the latter, we draw on Judith [Butler’s \(1990\)](#) argument that globally, there is a silent but pervasive agreement on what comprises a sanctioned “heterosexual matrix.” This matrix is based on what she also calls a “script,” which dictates what passes as acceptable sexual and gendered performance and what is demonised or excluded from society as “abject” (e.g. *ladettes*, gay men or lesbians). We are inculcated in the script: we perform it unconsciously, classifying ourselves as male or female. The movie’s valorisation of Cretan Greek identity through the development of *Zorba* as a character drew on contemporaneous (to its release) debates on masculinity and sexual freedom. Thereafter, the growing *ZG*-inspired tourism in Crete further revised this script to produce a marketable romantic image of gendered Cretan exoticism. This complex alignment between societal norms and values, and national and international tourist markets consolidated what [Hollinshead \(2009c\)](#) named “tourism authority.” We should not confuse this with the creative actions of the movie’s screenwriter and director, although, admittedly, they were products of their time and projected various social stereotypes in their work unconsciously. Also, movie scripts have to harmonise individual creativity with market demands.

Let us examine the cinematic script and its music, as these informed the first phase of tourism worldmaking. The film is based on the novel of the same title by the Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957). Sadly, there is no space to discuss the intricacies of cinematic adaptation here, but it is important to make two observations: the first concerns the eventual orchestration of Hollywood and tourist industries in selling an exotic version of Greekness to international audiences ([Basea, 2015](#)). Thus, in terms of tourism design ([Busby and O’Neill, 2006](#)), the film’s literary inspiration was demoted to a tool in a process of concerted Orientalisation of place and culture that cannot be attributed to its makers. The second, to which we return to the first phase of *ZG*-inspired tourism connects to Kazantzakis’ interest in relaying in his work Bergsonian notions of “vital style,” the development of an attitude towards life that is as spontaneous as it is hardly inculcated through experience.

The cinematic plot centres around two men: Basil, a soft-spoken intellectual from Britain, who travels to a coal mine on Crete that he inherited, hires *Zorba*, a man of all trades, to run the coal mine. Being constantly challenged by the harsh reality of life and one disaster after another, Basil turns to *Zorba* for guidance. It is this uneducated man who will show Basil how to overcome his fears and inhibitions to live his life to the fullest ([Römhild, 2003](#)). The story culminates in the famous liberating dance to the tunes of *santouri* (zither or hammered dulcimer) and *bouzouki* (long necked lute) filmed on the beach of Stavros, one of the most memorable moments in cinematic history. The Greek-Cypriot director Michael Cacoyannis (1922–2011) turned this simple story into a Greek, rather than Cretan-style philosophical exercise, replete with notions of well-being that we associate with tourism. Both lead actors, Mexican-born Anthony Quinn (1915–2001) as Alexis *Zorba* and the Briton Alan Bates (1934–2003) as Basil performed their careers’ most memorable roles, and the film won three Oscars, including one for Lila Kedrova (1918–2000) in the role of Madame Hortense as Best Supporting Actress. Millions have seen the film, however, even more know its soundtrack and especially “*Zorba’s Dance*.” Written by the celebrated composer Mikis Theodorakis (born 1925), this emblematic tune became an instant hit and is to this day the most recognisable piece of Greek music.

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In an attempt to captivate this Greek-style celebration of life, the film and the music did more than what was intended. As a synesthetic project that combined music with moving image (i.e. listening and watching to produce a particular appreciation of Cretan Greek character), *ZG*'s "script" brought to life a "gendered script." This script was entrenched in everyday Greek socialisation long before the making of the film. The film also invited Western audiences to assume the foreign protagonist's gaze and to exoticise Greece (Basa, 2015). Let us unpack this: the idea of "well-being" in tourism has been associated with notions of individual fulfilment and collective growth alike (Fennell, 2006). However, its Greek variation, which favours an individualist variation of such philosophies, acquired its own trajectory in the 20th century, when the country's doors were opened to international tourists. Originally, Greek notions of the good life were mediated through *kéfi* from Turkish *keyf*, literally "state, disposition." *Keyf/kéfi* is an *atmosphere* of joy, a phenomenological occurrence, the materialist manifestations of which are communicated through embodied rituals. Here we can return to Kazantzakis' literary interpretation of the work of his academic mentor at Sorbonne, Henri Bergson. Bergson's (1941) thesis in *Creative Evolution* posited *élan vital* or the spontaneous creative force in living organisms, as the main drive for creative growth that leads to higher levels of organisation (Kim, 2017, pp. 181–182). Bergson's focus on laughter translates in Kazantzakis' characterisation of Zorba into *kéfi*, which is relayed in the film to Basil, the alleged "civilised" recipient, in embodied styles (through dancing). There is a clearer sociological analysis to provide on the significance of such successive forms of "education" in well-being that connect to our previous observations on place and memory: Ricoeur associates such repertoires with *mémoire-habitude* and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984) talks about *habitué/shexis*, a semi-conscious expression of social identity in linguistic and embodied styles. The term, which cannot be translated accurately in other languages, refers to affects (high spirits, individually experienced eudemonia) externalised in embodied repertoires. Its non-representational/affective qualities can only be communicated through rituals, such as dance, which are nevertheless not identical to this disposition.

In discussing the role of emotions in tourism, Robinson (2012, pp. 33–34) draws on Solomon's (1993, p. 100) observation that emotions structure one's world, while often revealing collective dispositions from an individual perspective. Significantly, Loizos and Papataxiarchis (1991b) note that *kéfi* is part of the practice of male heterosexual self-presentation, "a state of pleasure wherein men transcend the pettiness of a life of calculation" (Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991a, p. 17); "the spirit of desire that derives from the heart" (Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991b, p. 226). But who was actually authorised to express desire in the 1960s Greek society, which was yet to experience a culture shock with international tourist mobilities? *Kéfi*, which acknowledged the agency of male desire but punished its female public expressions as "prostitution" (Lazaridis, 2001, p. 76), had a very ambiguous place in the 1960s Greek society. On the one hand, it was in line with Orthodox sexist nationalism, which thrived under the colonel's junta (1967–1974). On the other, its borderline transgressive ethos opposed the junta's neoconservative agenda, which saw many young men arrested, publicly humiliated and imprisoned by authorities. Many critical artists self-exiled to make art that stayed true to their beliefs, moving with them both entrenched stereotypes and criticism of Greek parochialism (Tzanelli, 2011, chapter 6).

As part of a Mediterranean normative system at the time (Herzfeld, 1980), the dualism of male honour/female shame is negotiated in the film's script in the famous dance scene. The two protagonists' dance performance on an idyllic beach – a quintessential tourist sign – articulates a "bromance," side-lining female agency: Zorba and Basil become friends of the heart, perhaps a bit too close for the taste of someone who knows nothing about the abrasive



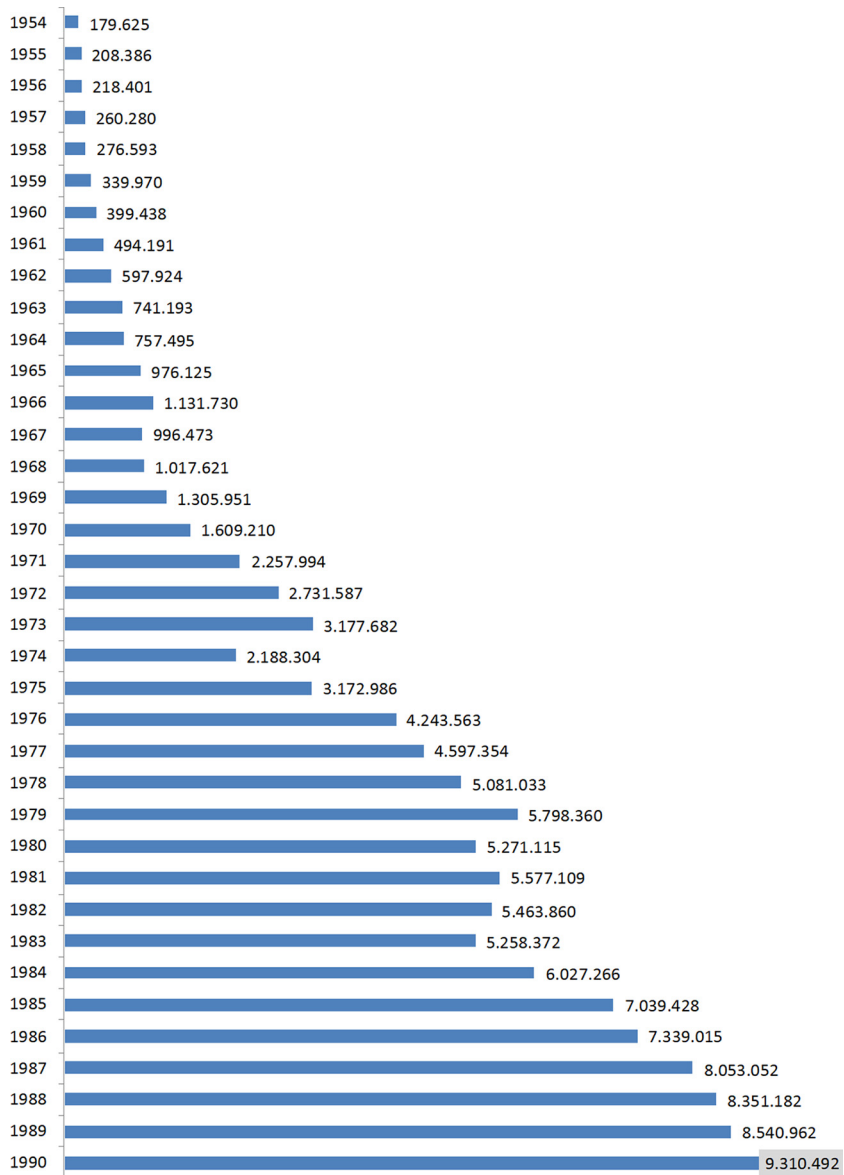
mannerisms of Greek machismo friendships. Indeed, Cacoyannis and his peers treaded a fine line between offense and critical representation, by exposing a very real misogynistic attitude in Cretan culture. In contrast to the triumphant reception of *ZG* in the USA and across the globe in 1964 and the following years (a reaction conforming to a more general pattern in film-induced tourism development – Beeton, 2006, p. 183), things were different back home. During the shooting, critic Freddie Germanos stressed that “all Cretans [. . .] wanted the film to be shot in their home village because it ‘will make Crete famous all over the world’” (Germanos quoted in Basea, 2015, p. 72). After its release, Greeks, and especially Cretans and the Church, were furious about the way Cretan culture was depicted, particularly in the scenes of the widow’s killing and the looting of the dying Madame Hortense (Herzfeld, 2005).

Such reactions, which reiterate the stereotypical script of the hot-blooded native Cretan, match the atmospheric content of the dance routine, making both central to enunciations of romantic travel. Ousby (1990) discussed how the romantic sublime originally involved the development of a highly stylised vocabulary to describe objects of nature and human reactions to them (also Trauer and Ryan, 2005, pp. 484–485). The stylisation of the dance routine is structurally homologous to representations of acts of violence allegedly describing Cretan temper; the two together, help to sublimate the cinematic travel into Greece’s Cretan hinterland. The dance routine *is* the environmental sublime staged in an interactive style. Including the tourist in it as a subject who experiences Cretan-ness, the dance routine conceals the ambivalence of falling in love with a masculinised landscape. The ambivalence of bromance is constitutive of the difficulty to articulate embodied emotions in interpretative styles that neatly differentiate between classificatory playfulness and seriousness in sexual identity – a constant theme in tourism analysis across different cultures (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994; Bruner, 2001; Simoni, 2012).

Transitioning from such representations to embodied travel was not as straightforward. First, the lack of relevant statistics from the 1960s makes it quite difficult to quantify the impact of the film on Greek tourism. Data for several years were missing, but we attempted to measure key tourism indicators both before and after the premiere of *ZG*. The number of international visitors to Greece has been growing constantly since the 1950s (Figure 1). In 1954, there were less than 200,000 tourists coming from abroad, growing by a few tens of thousands each year. In the following years – and after the large international success of several movies that were shot in Greece, mainly *Never on Sunday* (1960, starring Melina Mercouri) and to a lesser extent *Boy on a Dolphin* (1957, starring Sophia Loren) – the pace started to pick up. The largest increase came in 1965 amidst the global Zorba fever. One year later, the international tourist arrivals exceeded for the first time the one-million mark. 1967 was the first year with a decrease in visitors, caused by the military’s violent *coup d’état* to overthrow the Greek government. However, tourist numbers quickly recovered the following years (with the exception of 1974, a year of political turmoil in Greece and a war in Cyprus) and kept growing throughout the 1980s.

These growing visitor numbers exceeded the average growth rate of international tourism, explaining the rapid rise of the country’s market share. Greece amounted to just 0.58% of all international tourist arrivals in 1960 (Figure 2). Its market share rose to a record high of 2.2% in 1985. As other countries gained momentum in developing their inbound tourist traffic during the 1990s, Greece’s market share started to slip. Evidence portrays Crete as an undeveloped tourist destination, amounting to just 1,392 hotel beds in 1964, the year *ZG* was shot (Table 1). As pointed out during the interviews with tourism industry veterans, only a small number of Cretan hotels were of Western standards with en-suite

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**Figure 1.**  
International tourist arrivals in Greece during the period 1954–1990

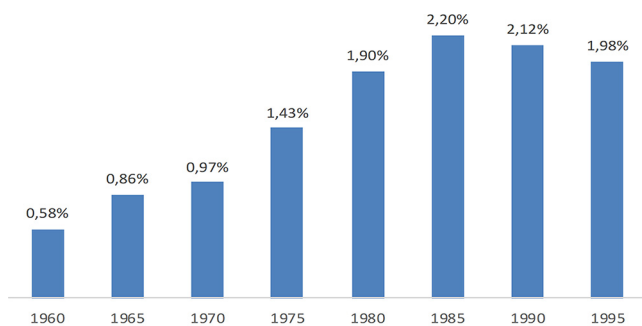
**Source:** National Statistics Service of Greece; Greek National Tourism Organisation

bathrooms. Rhodes, the leading Greek island destination at the time, had a hotel capacity thrice as large as Crete's, yet only 5.8% of the country's total, as most hotels were operating on the Greek mainland. That the two films – *Never on Sunday* and *ZG* – were released over this period is not coincidental, but the first major *contingency* we map in our analysis.

To further elaborate on socio-cultural transformation, we need to ascertain what these internationally acclaimed films shared, given their contribution to tourism growth (Tzanelli, 2011). Again, this can be traced back to the embodiment of Greek land-as-landscape for cinematic aficionados, who would soon turn into actual tourists to the country. *Never on Sunday's* narrative arc reversed ZG's lesson of spiritual and embodied emancipation. Where Basil is educated in *kéfi* by Zorba, Ilya, a self-employed, free-spirited sex worker, who lives in the port of Piraeus, is subjected by Homer, an American tourist and classical scholar to a compulsory education into restraint and literacy in all things ancient, including the Apollonian habitus of philosophical contemplation. The fact that Ilya is a woman, who celebrates her sexuality, matches the global script of gendered-as-civilisational hierarchy: whereas it is OK for an illiterate working-class man to instruct an English tourist, a female working-class woman can only be "put in her place" by them (Skeggs, 2004). A gender order (women are inferior to men – Connell, 1987, 1995) was superimposed on the heterosexual matrix of Greek society (women are supposed to behave in particular ways to be accepted as "decent").

Again, we notice how place assumes anthropomorphic gendered qualities that feed into its network capital in rather complicated patterns. Equally important is the fact that Ilya represents a lateral connection to Greece's disreputable cultural heritage: an embodied habitual narrative of music-dance directly descending from Asia Minor refugee lowlifes that populated the Athenian centre after the massive population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s. Ilya's *zeibékiko* habitus, drinking and chain-smoking were associated with Greece's crypto-Islamic habitus, as this was acquired during centuries of contact between Ottoman Turks and Greek Asia Minor communities (Tzanelli, 2011). Ilya's whole being is nothing short of a fall from the grace of Europe, a symbolic return to ethnic nature in need of sculpting by an educated English tourist.

Although, inversely, in *Boy on a Dolphin*, the *feminine mystique* is romanticised as the eventual guardian of ancient Greek culture, its association with prostitution persists. The heroine of the movie, Phaedra (Sophia Loren), a poor Greek sponge diver on the island of Hydra, and her boyfriend, Rhif (Jorge Mistral), an immigrant from Albania, on whose boat she works, are still representative of Greek identity's abject margins: female, ethnic, migrant and working class. Phaedra's initial decision to flog to the antiquities market an ancient statue she fishes out of the deep sea suggests vulgarity and lack of loyalty to the



**Notes:** Calculation based on data by UNWTO; National Statistics Service of Greece; Greek National Tourism Organisation

**Figure 2.**  
International tourist arrivals in Greece as a percentage of all international tourist arrivals worldwide during the period 1960–1995

TRC

	Total Greece	Crete	Rhodes	Share of Crete (%)	Share of Rhodes (%)
1964	71.741	1.392	4.174	1.9	5.8
1971	135.377	6.440	12.882	4.8	9.5
1972	151.420	8.092	15.977	5.3	10.6
1973	166.552	9.332	17.233	5.6	10.3
1974	175.161	10.079	17.393	5.8	9.9
1975	185.275	11.456	18.100	6.2	9.8
1976	213.431	15.887	19.595	7.4	9.2
1977	231.979	19.574	21.852	8.4	9.4
1978	247.040	22.831	23.344	9.2	9.4
1979	265.552	26.817	25.661	10.1	9.7
1980	278.045	30.509	27.192	11.0	9.8
1981	285.988	33.913	30.137	11.9	10.5
1982	311.089	38.370	31.243	12.3	10.0
1983	318.515	40.068	31.249	12.6	9.8
1984	333.816	44.822	32.055	13.4	9.6
1985	348.394	48.331	33.594	13.9	9.6
1986	359.377	50.543	37.188	14.1	10.3
1987	375.367	53.625	39.661	14.3	10.6
1988	395.812	63.293	40.334	16.0	10.2
1989	423.790	71.634	42.875	16.9	10.1
1990	438.355	77.678	45.059	17.7	10.3

**Table 1.**  
Hotel bed capacity in  
Greece, on Crete and  
on Rhodes

**Source:** National Statistics Service of Greece; Greek National Tourism Organisation; Logothetis, 1992

Greek spirit – something resolved by the eventual homecoming of the finding to the island community at the end of the film. The arc suggests that an unscrupulous outsider, who tours the Greek island interior (Victor Parmalee [Clifton Webb], who is an aesthete dealing in historic artefacts) is ready to plunder Greek heritage à la Elgin. Significantly, this heritage involves not only antiquities, but also sponge-diving (an embodied craft destined to join the tourist souvenir trade mostly associated with men, rather than women), the atmospheric background of the sea (that would transform into a symbol of bodily freedom, unrestrained sociality and sexual experimentation for foreigners) and an artistic parable of nature-as-culture (a boy and a dolphin) (Tzanelli, 2018). Where Mercouri sang the high-impact *Ta Paidiá tou Peiraiá* (“The Children of Piraeus”) that tourists loved, Loren dubbed *Ti-nai Aftó pou to Léne Agápi* (“What is this Thing they Call Love”) in an underwater sequence as an ode to her love for an ancient Greek treasure to the same end.

The shared arcplot across the three films is more evident now: it involves the atmospheric element of Greek identity, which is phenomenologically associated with its marine environments and allegedly unmediated relationship between them and their human inhabitants. The latter feature as the embodiment of this heritage – or we may say instead that they are the carriers of an axiological form of inheritance of Greekness (Tzanelli, 2013). The subplot of its somatic spoliation by deceitful foreigners in tourism was yet to take shape in the following stage of film-tourism development on Crete. That these three films would change the place of Greece in international civilisational recognition, transforming it into an essentialised agent in tourism business, is the least controversial part of the development. The phantom of embodied heritage would insert an emotional element of gendered adventure/risk in this political complexity, with far-reaching consequences.

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## Phase 2: lovemaking as placemaking

Heritage, inheritance and property would go hand-in-hand in the second phase of Cretan tourism development. Their complicity with capitalist expansion is well-documented in sociologically informed economic theory, which suggests that those with access to land always secure a head start in development and a cushion in difficult times (Piketty, 2014). Thus, cinematically recorded elements of Cretan-Greek memory entered a complex web of capitalist transactions that translated them into landscape, and then *land-as-property*: literally, a plot to buy or rent. Regardless of their hostility towards the film, the Cretans were the main beneficiaries of the film's tourism impact. What used to be land unsuitable for agriculture became very expensive and highly sought-after plots for building seaside hotels and restaurants. Many farmers became workers in the tourism sector or opened their own businesses such as souvenir shops, holiday apartments, bars and tavernas. The money spent by millions of tourists on Crete each year brought prosperity to the island, making it one of the country's wealthiest regions. *ZG* remained popular for many years, establishing Crete as a fashionable destination for generation after generation of tourists.

It may be argued that the film did not really succeed in selling topographic particularity to tourists, in that even its famous dance routine was never *physically* placed on the map by tourist industries. Usually, filmed locations (Stavros in Akrotiri in *ZG*'s case) are widely advertised by the tourist industry to attract film fans (Croy, 2010). Nobody in the industry expected from *ZG* to project anything accurate about Cretan culture and people; what mattered was that it succeeded in authorising tourist agencies to treat the island more like an empty supramodern entity: a non-place. "Non-places" are vestiges of capitalism, because their normative and semiotic core remains pliable to the needs of customer demand (Augé, 2008). It can be argued that non-places develop a life parallel to real places, and often become parasitic upon them, because they borrow from, and shuffle their more durable characteristics and inheritances (Hollinshead, 1998). This observation connects to our original reference to placemaking as an exercise in assemblage, but focuses on the problematic aspects of such development, if it prioritises capitalist accumulation instead of local well-being.

Because the first phase of tourism development was anchored on the development of the film's central character, location was superseded by the atmospheric characteristics that the film represented. Otherwise put, when Zorba's character became the primary atmospheric *locus* for tourist industries, location (*tópos*) was replaced with the ways human nature moves in particular directions: it transformed into *trópos* (attitude and intentional movement) (Tzanelli, 2018). Where topological analysis adheres to a spatial logic, tropological considerations adopt a temporal one, which vies to assert how the arrow of time (progression toward Western European modernity) affects the practice of heritage-based tourism (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1997). This deviation exposes the alleged ethnic style of experience a visitor can have as a potentially marketable product in consumption domains, such as those of film and tourism ("selling native style off to the higher bidder" while hiding the ignominy the native seller experiences – Tzanelli, 2018, p. 11). Marx would have approached this as the stripping of the aura from the subject's being in the world: the seller stands naked in front of bidders that appropriate his/her existence (Berman, 2010, pp. 105–107, 115–116). We abstain from such normative observations, because when they inform protest, the protest is not necessarily devoid of problems or laudable.

The dancing Zorba offered an alternative route to affective atmospheres through what Malbon (1999) calls "ecstasy," an *extension* of land to the human subject's embodied externality and psychic internality. Malbon's study attributed to the dancing body that listens to music the qualities of association: listening to music and performing rhythmical

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movement reproduces a special sensation that is unconsciously shared while experienced. Down the line of reflective engagement, rhythmical movement's extensive qualities usually act as community-building mechanisms (Malbon, 1999, pp. 73–74). The idea of studying embodied capital so as to incorporate the other's exotic "essence" is a quintessential component of atmospheric consumption when sexual attributes and ethnic characteristics can cater for the same experience. Not only is embodied sensuality valuable as an oriental fantasy, it endows the Western tourist/apprentice's unlimited desire with "deep generative energies" (Said, 1978, p. 188). Enter tourist modernity, thanks to the depiction of a local "Jack of all trades" by a Mexican actor: Quinn's entirely fictional cinematic interpretation of a generic *Greek* lust for life would just enable the stylisation of Cretan memory in souvenir ways over several decades (Eisner, 1991). Especially female tourists started visiting the unexplored Greek islands in search of this "commodity," hoping for a spiritual escape or just a brief affair with a Zorbaesque character. Unsurprisingly, many Greek men willing to engage in paid or unpaid casual sex were quick to respond to this trend by offering what these women were looking for (Swarbrooke *et al.*, 2003).

The Zorbaesque character's transgressive attitude would shape and be shaped by the female tourist's desire to experience the "edge" in emotional (*Kéfi*) and physical styles (picking an ideal lover for her holiday – Ryan and Hall, 2001, p. 60). As the era of sexual liberation, the 1960s saw women stepping out of the household and being *authorised* (by the tourist industry and the hosting nation state) to access roles previously monopolised by men. In Greek tourist settings this newly acquired female agency generated new contexts of hospitality supply involving the emergence of a particular type of sexualised host known as *kamáki* (literally "harpoon"). It has been well documented (Zinovieff, 1991) that female European travellers started visiting Greece for enjoying brief sexual encounters during their summer holidays by liaising with these *kamáki*. These "Greek lovers" have been a mainstay of Greek tourism for most of the 1970s and 1980s, also leading to a significant number of mixed marriages and the settling of European women in Greek tourist areas. Gendered hierarchies were replaced with ethnic and class inequalities, which would eventually feed back to global social hierarchies. In the case of *Zorba*-led consumption, notions of Greek landscape as a tourist commodity became tightly intertwined with the Greek male body that was available for sexual objectification (Veijola and Valtonen, 2007). The 3-min dance scene at the end of the film is still perceived by millions of people around the world as the quintessence of Greece, embodying the wild beauty of the Greek islands, the spirit of the people living on them and their zest for life.

Known as *sirtáki* (diminutive of *sirtós*, or "dragged"), the Zorba dance evolved into an odourless "staged authenticity" for tourists, which would be performed in the tavernas that began to mushroom in Crete and elsewhere, as well as during Greek nights in hotels organised for tourists. Though this decade marks the turning point in the image-based atmospheric genesis of touristified Greece (Papadimitriou, 2000), the ritual has survived to the date this paper was written (Dawe, 2008, p. 231; Banio and Malchrowicz-Moško, 2019, p. 18). Zorba's instantly recognisable earworm tune triggered these stereotypical perceptions – even in the minds of people who haven't seen the film – wherever and whenever the melody would be played. With an estimated 50 million record sales and innumerable recordings by artists from around the world, "Zorba's Dance" has itself become a tourism ambassador for Greece (Koutoulas, 1998).

As a traditional form of Greek dance associated with Greek island heritage stretching back to antiquity, *sirtós* originally featured a spatial segregation of gendered performance, with men and women dancing in rows. The Zorba-inspired variant produced a different form of community-bonding, suitable for participants in the tourist *communitas*, who looked

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for “peak experiences” (Graburn, 1983, pp. 13–14). Dancing the *Zorba* supported fewer rigid flows of movement, which both referred to Cretan habit-memory and transformed it into a souvenir accessible to women. Indeed, in tourist settings, the *Zorba sirtaki* would often be performed under conditions of alcohol-induced stupor that countered traditional spatialised gender orders, encouraging the mingling of sexes and flirting. Foreign female tourists were visiting Greece to experience a sensual and emotional edge, involving sexual collaboration with a selected partner for as long as they pleased (Newmahr, 2011). What had first led in the context of ZG tourismification to a topological eradication (Crete would be replaced by Greece) would further devolve into a *tropological* “undoing” of Greek unwritten laws in gender performance – a change to which the *kamákia* willingly contributed.

Refracting this nexus of tourism/hospitality through sexual agency placed *kamákia* in a very ambivalent space: if fully employed as sex workers, it threatened their share in masculinity, which continued to define tropes of Greek identity. This ambivalence has been observed in other national contexts of sexualised hospitality provision, in which men, customarily regarded as superior to women, were placed in the position of carers for female strangers looking for sexual gratification (Cohen, 1986, p. 126; Bowman, 1996, p. 3; Simoni, 2016). If *kamákia* were just men engaging in casual sex, the reality of women’s sexual liberation in more developed countries still challenged their position in the gender order: they could claim sexual prowess but were still part of a “backward society” willingly objectifying itself for tourists. In such interstitial spaces, citizenship claims cannot be made on the basis of disempowerment: to admit subordination is equivalent to public humiliation. The traditional role of women in these host societies, which are structured on overlaps between sexist and nationalist values, is supposed to be inferior to men.

It is significant that Greek *kamákia* were men of low social standing: their already low prestige in Greek society matched their internationally recognised role as paid or unpaid sex “providers” (Tzanelli, 2011, pp. 134–135). Quite often, these men would express their frustration towards the superiority of European civilisation, as this was reflected in female tourism mobilities, by deceiving their casual lovers or treating them roughly (Zinovieff, 1991; Moore, 1995), thus extracting symbolic vengeance “as members both of an underprivileged social and economic class and a subordinate European country” (Tsartas and Galani-Moutafi, 2009, p. 309). The demand for *Zorba*’s rough and direct style helped local men negotiate a sliver of empowerment in the 1970s context of tourist mobilities at home. Hence, we may conclude that as informal “hosts,” the Greek *kamákia* freely drew on ZG’s script to craft their own performances of intimacy, which simultaneously protected their experience of place and allowed its self-serving commodification through their embodied acts of sex-making (Trauer and Ryan, 2005, p. 482). The 1980s would remove this cushion, positing new challenges for Greek tourism and the Greek *kamákia*.

### Phase 3: small worldmaking and the (bio)politics of care

Tourist consumptions of place as memory are often assembled around conceptions of care (Bærenholdt *et al.*, 2017, pp. 32–35). In humanist geography, Tuan (1996, p. 455) discussed the tourist’s emotional investment in experiencing destinations by stressing the importance of time. Hollinshead and Suleman’s (2018) “worldmaking instillations” suggest that such investment is achieved in tourism with the development of nets of human relations but also the instillation – and phantasmagoric installation by tourist industries – of symbols generating emotional fields. Such investments bring to the fore the importance of temporal stretches: seldom do we invest in shallow experience for long, if at all. We will reverse Tuan’s thesis to examine how the *host’s* investment in Crete’s *Zorba*-inspired place image ended up producing a more reflexive discourse on self-care. Drawing on tropes of risk

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aversion that actually masked nationalist tropes of moral pollution and danger (Canguilhem, 1991), Greek *kamàkia* began to set their own physical welfare against the sexual demands and desires of international female guests. The third phase of Zorba-inspired tourism in Crete and elsewhere in Greece saw significant overlaps between the affective dimensions of hospitality and biomedical risks stemming from the emergence of a new global threat to sexual liberation: AIDS.

For decades, sex and love have been booming sectors in tourism, with all sexes and genders looking for suitable destinations to enjoy erotic adventures (Dicken and Laustsen, 2004). Where Thailand for example catered for middle aged male tourists by providing young female brides, countries such as Cuba and Greece developed a thriving business for men selling romance and sex to female tourists. Drawing a line between these two affective domains is a minefield, mainly because ludic and romantic motivations in tourism mobilities can on occasion overlap, depending on the sociocultural profile of the traveller and other circumstances that we cannot measure or know. Importantly in our case, love does not just connect to a bundle of romantic experiences during one's travel, it defines travel: making love in novel environments, free from the inhibitions of familiar contexts, writes Fussell (1980, p. 113), acts as a motivation to travel. Generally speaking, romance and excess are a privilege for tourists in tourist destinations, not locals and workers, as labour needs to put up a good act and be watchful hosts for all eventualities (Singh, 2019, pp. 93–94).

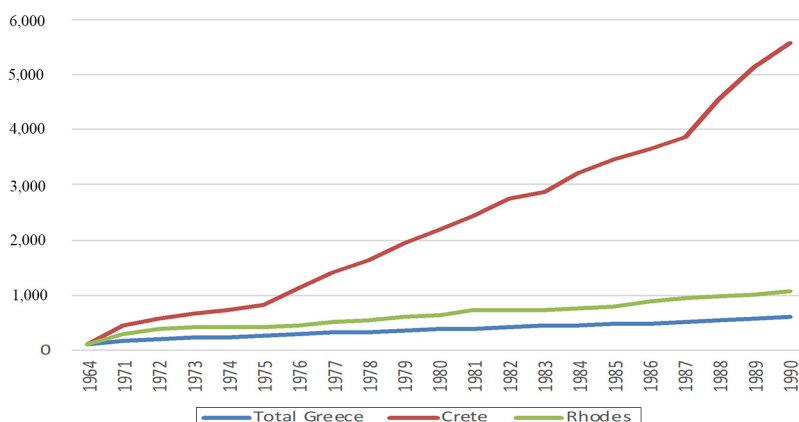
Greece was a very conservative society in the 1960s so to accept that it is fine for Greek men to have brief affairs with female tourists as long as they marry and create families with Greek women later in their life was not uncommon. If this marriage involved the female guest, it socially normalized their strangerhood, by turning them into wives and mothers. At the same time, there was money to be made from female tourists with sexual appetites. During this period, Crete and other Greek islands established themselves as places of tolerance and sexual liberation for holidaymakers, a development frequently depicted in popular culture as in the case of the American film *Summer Lovers* from 1982 and the British production of *Shirley Valentine* from 1989 (Wickens, 2002). Nudism and topless bathing were a widespread – and mostly non-sexualized – practice throughout the Greek islands, whereas Mykonos became a haven for gay holidaymakers at a time when homosexuality was still widely considered a deviating lifestyle in Europe and the USA.

Regardless, catering for love on Crete necessitated infrastructural support: airy suites, comfortable beds, swimming pools and bars to serve as flirting venues and so forth. All interviewed tourism industry veterans stressed that besides *Zorba's* tourism-inducing impact, the European tour operators facilitated Crete's tourist boom of the 1970s and 1980s. Tour operators provided the required airlift capacity on their charter flights with millions of seats for connecting the island with numerous European cities. They even financed the construction of hotels on the island due to an acute shortage in room capacity especially in the early 1970s. However, they soon gained enormous market influence and forced an oligopsony on Cretan tourist businesses (Koutoulas, 2006), with one interviewee (Zacharias) commenting that tour operators had a “colonial attitude” towards Cretan businesses that enforced low prices on accommodation and other tourist services. This intervention of European tour operators starting during the early 1970s launched a period of rapid growth for the Cretan hotel sector, with hotel room capacity doubling every five years. The island's tourist accommodations developed at a much faster pace than on Rhodes and in the rest of the country, also thanks to the boost provided by ZG. From controlling only 1.9% of the total Greek hotel room capacity back in 1964, Cretan hotels came to command 17.7% of the country's capacity with a room count of 77,678 in 1990, thus dramatically outperforming both the Greek mainland and Rhodes (Table 1 and Figure 3).



Once the increased hotel bed capacity was in place, tourism traffic to Crete took off, also in conjunction with the introduction of direct charter flights from European cities. Thousands of sun-seeking North and West Europeans swarmed the island in search of Zorba, golden beaches and Crete's fascinating history. In 1970, 732,646 overnight stays were registered at the island's hotels, and by the early 1990s, these would surpass the ten-million mark (Table 2 and Figure 4). Crete overtook Rhodes in 1982 and established itself as the country's most frequented destination, accounting for one in five hotel stays made in Greece since 1990. These figures can be considered as evidence of how ZG contributed to catapult Crete to the top of Greek tourist destinations. The high consumer awareness of Crete globally and the desire of many people to follow in the footsteps of *Zorba* made the film a catalyst for the island's success. Unfortunately, no further secondary data is available from these decades. However, it would be quite safe to assume that several millions among the holidaymakers visiting Greece during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were inspired to make this trip after watching the movie.

The previously mentioned interviews conducted between 2011 and 2014 with veteran hotel owners and managers in Crete show a rising trend in family and couple visits after the late 1980s and the AIDS scare. The island's hedonistically oriented tourist clientele – mostly female visitors from Nordic countries – was gradually substituted by more mainstream “sea ‘n’ sun” travellers from the same origin countries. To use a well-worn cliché, Crete, once known as a popular 4S destination (with the 4S standing for “sun, sand, sea and sex” – Marques, 2016) has mostly dropped the last “S” since the 1990s. This qualitative change in visitor profile merits explanation: in the second phase of Zorba-inspired tourism development we examined how the projection of Greek *kamákia*'s resentful agency ensured that, what was lost on the macro-social level (lack of symbolic power over their more civilised sexual partner leading to symbolic “loss” of masculinity) would be gained on the micro-social level. Often, *kamákia* could exchange spicy stories about their sexual exploits and belittle their lovers to peers. The onset of incurable viral mobilities associated with sexually transmitted diseases in tourist settings would replace such patterns of imaginary revenge with solid political action. The growing number of infections by the HIV virus and several AIDS-related deaths of Greek celebrities in 1987 quickly created awareness of this threat in Greek society. The sudden realization that casual sex can kill resulted in the withdrawal of the *kamákia* from the “game” and brought this phenomenon to an abrupt end. Another development limiting nudism and especially topless bathing during the early 1990s



**Figure 3.**  
Growth of hotel bed capacity on Crete and Rhodes and in Greece over the period 1970–1990 compared to the base year of 1964 (base year value = 100)

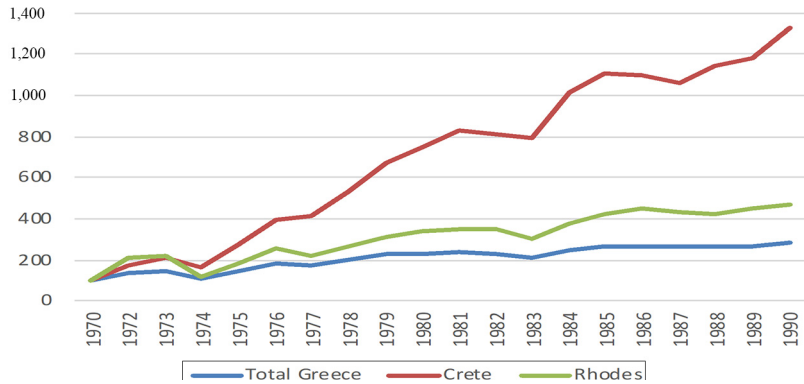
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	Total Greece	Crete	Rhodes	Share of Crete (%)	Share of Rhodes (%)
1970	17.514.450	732.646	1.725.189	4.18	9.85
1972	23.962.800	1.267.700	3.535.086	5.29	14.75
1973	25.351.740	1.551.565	3.727.427	6.12	14.70
1974	19.013.326	1.209.647	1.965.399	6.36	10.34
1975	25.016.580	1.982.119	3.114.542	7.92	12.45
1976	31.306.502	2.878.791	4.432.228	9.20	14.16
1977	30.929.881	3.041.768	3.769.884	9.83	12.19
1978	34.923.050	3.873.201	4.586.943	11.09	13.13
1979	39.802.114	4.915.827	5.420.712	12.35	13.62
1980	40.354.154	5.453.785	5.775.221	13.51	14.31
1981	41.032.029	6.042.583	6.059.690	14.73	14.77
1982	40.522.036	5.947.654	5.931.387	14.68	14.64
1983	37.438.013	5.806.713	5.198.739	15.51	13.89
1984	43.838.880	7.421.691	6.535.660	16.93	14.91
1985	47.017.186	8.092.260	7.333.099	17.21	15.60
1986	46.067.822	7.996.592	7.694.150	17.36	16.70
1987	46.102.747	7.724.520	7.380.878	16.76	16.01
1988	46.034.045	8.355.950	7.334.164	18.15	15.93
1989	46.477.627	8.637.111	7.691.073	18.58	16.55
1990	48.887.583	9.709.937	8.083.794	19.86	16.54
1991	42.639.811	8.320.031	7.385.042	19.51	17.32
1992	49.973.111	9.954.904	8.952.234	19.92	17.91
1993	49.592.246	10.096.172	8.550.124	20.36	17.24
1994	53.435.111	10.771.918	9.646.298	20.16	18.05
1995	50.636.292	10.110.597	8.937.691	19.97	17.65
1996	48.662.379	10.096.819	8.018.603	20.75	16.48

**Table 2.**  
Hotel overnight stays  
in Greece, on Crete  
and on Rhodes

Source: National Statistics Service of Greece; Greek National Tourism Organisation; Logothetis, 1992

**Figure 4.**  
Growth of overnight  
hotel stays on Crete  
and Rhodes and in  
Greece over the  
period 1970–1990  
compared to the base  
year of 1970 (base  
year value = 100)



was the health scare associated with skin cancer caused by long exposure to the sun (Hobson and Dietrich, 1995).

The shift to couple and family-centred tourism overlaid sex-orientated consumption of Cretan/Greek place identity with a different form of intimacy based on consanguinity or kinship. The Cretan backdrop was now used to reinforce personal inter-relationships,

side-lining the otherness of the host, in favour of memories which were family-made or produced by more enduring couple relationships during holiday time (Trauer and Ryan, 2005, p. 483). Therefore, the third phase of Zorba tourism development was dominated by a double interpretation of biopolitical progress, which steered the arrow of time in ways compatible with established Greek *habitude/sheritage*. On the one hand, by “biopolitics” we refer to the management of human life and social identity by centres of power, which, in the case of tourism splits between the nation-state (Hollinshead’s (2009a) conception of “tourism authority”) and market networks that operate in non-centrally controlled ways (Bærenholdt’s (2013) “governmobilities” and Lapointe and Coulter’s (2020) “labour (im) mobilities”). This sort of biopolitics did disservice to *kamákia*, by ignoring their welfare needs, where the provision of sex services was their livelihood rather than a “sport.” The second version of “biopolitics” sought to rectify this inconsistency in problematic ways, because it did not eliminate the gendered script from its strategic development. The intrinsic knowledge of class-based injustice was suppressed in these demands, even though professional and casual *kamákia* were aware of the fact that in an increasingly bourgeoisified society catering for international tourists was what affected their social opportunities (see Sheller, 2009 on a similar case of tourismification versus human rights).

The withdrawal of hospitableness in the form of romantic love or sex made space for the development of fields of sex care. Tropes and practices of self-identity (Giddens, 1999) introduced a new dynamic in placemaking, which fostered new conflicts between the ZG-inspired travelling partnerships between *kamákia* and their prospective lovers as outsiders to Greek national decency on the one hand, and the overarching discourse of family travel networks and the symbolic Greek nation-family on the other (Trauer and Ryan, 2005, p. 490). However, the response never challenged the national centre’s policies: instead, it directed the hatred to female tourists. By blending physical biomedical risks (AIDS infection) with the “parasitological” discourse of national purity (on guests as parasites, and hence outsiders, see Veijola *et al.*, 2014, p. 43), the *kamákia* did not challenge the post-Fordist ethos that dominates contexts of tourismification around the world – something that enhances status and labour insecurity. Instead, they obstructed the development of tourism into a tool of cross-cultural communication and peace-building. Directing affective action against the tourist reinforced the sexist ethos of Greek national identity, which uses tropes of masculine empowerment to achieve recognition in international spheres of political engagement.

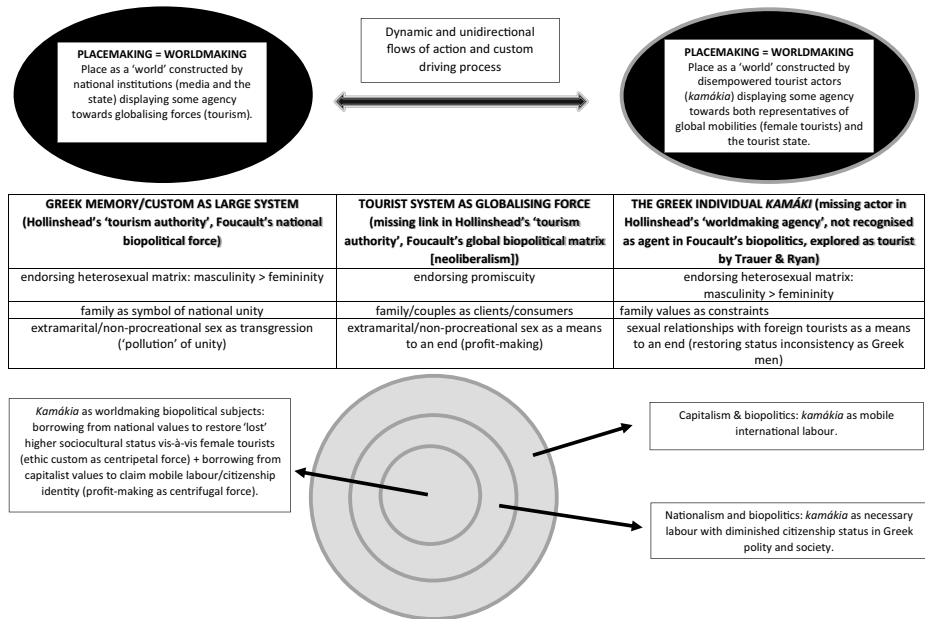
## Conclusion

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) reminds us that a “genealogy of morals” helps us to uncover the mundane but complex genesis of social phenomena. He places particular emphasis on the role of contingency in the genesis and development of social, political and economic structures with a view to unearthing causality in transitions from one way of thinking, behaviour or mode of policymaking, to another. Although causality certainly features in our analysis, because such transitions could not have been foreseen or pre-empted, we are more interested here in the “how,” rather than the “why” as such: the ways contingencies modified human behaviour or strengthened reaction to social change. In our examination of particular Greek and Cretan human actors and institutions as drivers of tourism development after the release of ZG we highlight the endurance of particular gendered discourses of belonging. Existing independently from these actors and institutions, such discourses masked the consolidation of new social inequalities in modern tourism mobilities, which were based on class (labour identities in the Zorba hospitality) and race/ethnicity (being Greek, civilised and European). The extent to which different players in

this field of development aligned with dominant patterns of belonging was affected by their relative personal power in it. We are still in the domain of the “why” (Figure 5).

The “how” begins to feature when we consider that the *kamákia*'s limited power in the social field ensured that their agency was more directed towards practical action and self-preservation. To attribute the impediment of tourism's peace-building potentialities to a group of frustrated men provides a poor conclusion to the causes, consequences and constrictions involved in the development of Cretan tourism. Far more accurate would be to consider the increasingly less regulated capitalist expansion in the tourist trade and its satellite mobilities (such as sex tourism) across Europe and beyond. We attempted to examine such macropolitical and macroeconomic developments through first-hand testimonies of hoteliers, who experienced such developments, as well as hard data on tourism expansion and infrastructural development in Crete and secondary research. This allowed us to bridge the micropolitics of affect with the macropolitics of mobilities and globalisation. Macropolitically, we note that *Zorba*-related tourism had less to do with the moving image and more with the politics of representation – an observation we unpack below as part and parcel of the “how.” Tourism expansion's primary discursive drivers involved a strategic admission of “foreign” identities in understandings of modern Greekness, so that it becomes a property that “moves” in global markets.

Practically, this involved the incorporation of marginal and “uncouth” versions of the Greek margin as an object that responds to tourism demand (the *Zorba*-like Cretan type of masculinity, which enabled tourism mobilities) and the “outside” that enunciates such demands (female tourists/guests, who, from the 1980s, would also become carriers of a real threat to native life due to the global spread of HIV and AIDS mobilities). Micropolitically the objectified host (men often flirting with foreigners to accrue symbolic capital at home) saw their status inconsistency (turning into pleasure caterers) even more threatened, when viral death entered this game. Where originally their investment in ethnonationalist sexism



**Figure 5.**  
A map of conceptual connections and process-driven placemaking as worldmaking

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accommodated their symbolic domination over their casual female foreign partners, now it necessitated complete withdrawal from the game. It is significant that, as the *kamákia* began to disappear from the mechanisms of hospitality supply, family tourism became more prevalent on the island. This change aligned the pragmatic “why” of discursive change (viral threat) with the symbolic “how” of Greek ethnonationalism (the nation as a family not to be penetrated or polluted from the “outside,” unless this willingly becomes acculturated into its principles). Ultimately, disempowered actors, international and local tourism business agents and the state came to a silent agreement on how to “worldmake” tourism through *ZG* (on such paradoxes of mobility see [Korstanje, 2018](#)).

To conclude then, we should stress that the design of tourism through the moving image is never bound exclusively to a film, or a network of media. When one examines the phases of development, “film-induced tourism” or “film tourism” tends to be reduced to the causal structures of one or two phases of the overall tourism development of a destination. A mobilities approach highlights this limitation of the model while also stressing that the “worldmaking” thesis needs to be extended so as to consider the ways capitalism works in the development of new tourism. Our “phased development” model, which amends the objectives and structure of [Butler’s \(2006, 2011\)](#) “life-cycle” thesis, better exposes how the contingent workings of capitalist expansion in tourism interfere in the biopolitical organisation of the host country, its labour force and identity. In a global system of tourism services, the *kamákia* featured as even more disempowered actors, and the same applied to the Greek nation state, which was demoted to one of the many partners/agents in the management of *Zorba*-inspired tourism mobilities. The onset of neoliberal structuration in world economies in the last three decades shrank *ZG*’s Crete to a spot in a vast traffic of services. The result of this downgrading has been the development of a reactionary “how”: an identity narrative drawing on habit memory that stressed integration in an increasingly fragmented world. In this theatre of political violence, a fictional character, who had started his life as a gendered ode to the Greek good life and cinematically represented an internal ethnic working-class margin, ended up being a symbolic means to command the respect of foreign guests and international tourist markets likewise.

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