

Tourism Development in the Dutch Wadden Area: Spatial-Temporal Characteristics and Monitoring Needs

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Abstract :

The paper presents a spatial and temporal analysis of tourism in the Dutch Wadden area and identifies policy dilemmas and monitoring needs. The analysis is temporal because historical, current and future aspects of tourism development are addressed; it is spatial because the spatial differentiation of tourism within the Wadden area is examined. For the assessment of the historical and current situation focus is on visitor and employment data and especially the relative degree of specialization of the local economy on tourism. For the future direction of tourism and possible investment options, the paper draws on surveyed views of 91 tourism entrepreneurs in the Wadden area. On the basis of this spatial and temporal analysis, the paper identifies policy dilemmas that differ substantially among the Wadden islands, the Waddensea, and the mainland Wadden coast. Drawing on this in depth empirical analysis the paper theoretically aims to enrich the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) concept and the monitoring it implies. In response to the needs of monitoring sustainability, the paper argues for a broader yet still minimal extension of TALC. It argues for a four quadrant TALC – named TALC-4q – in which four perspectives on tourism development are combined: market, ecology and nature, regional labor market and policy. The combination of monitoring visitor flows and market share, together with ecological quality, employment size and share, and the consensus on policy, is expected to refine the accuracy of the TALC concept and fuel its wider use in the search for sustainable tourism.

Key Word :

Tourism development, Dutch Wadden area, Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), Visitors, Employment, World Heritage, Monitoring sustainability

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