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Pilgrimage as a Field of Tourism Development: the Case of Kavala (Northern Greece) and its Institutional and Cultural Challenges

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Developing pilgrimage tourism requires a set of unique attractors, as well as efficient destination governance structures that manage such attractors and balance stakeholder interests. This study analyses the development of pilgrimage tourism in Kavala (Northern Greece), a city with unique religious and cultural attractors connected to the Apostle Paul. By deploying a mix of literature review, on-site analysis and interviews with twelve local stakeholders, this paper first examines the general potential for pilgrimage tourism in the region and gives recommendations for its development. Subsequently, the study evaluates the progress of pilgrimage tourism development in Kavala after one year. The findings suggest that Kavala's religious and cultural attractors are optimal prerequisites for the development of pilgrimage tourism. However, our research also reveals and discusses cultural and institutional constraints within the stakeholder network that hinder the destination development. We conclude by outlining a path to developing pilgrimage tourism in Kavala which could serve as a blueprint for similar destinations. Overall, our findings illustrate a call for a critical revision to established destination management literature and highlight the need to consider the cultural ramifications of local stakeholder networks when discussing tourism development.

Key Words: Greece, Apostle Paul, Orthodox, Catholic, pilgrimage, culture, destination development

Introduction and Background of the Case

While academic discussion about the term and concept of pilgrimage is quite lively (Nickerson *et al.*, 2018), there is consensus among scholars that movement and journey are integrative parts of it. This also implies a proximity to tourism or the use of the combined term of pilgrimage tourism. According to the definition of UNWTO the term tourism is linked with

a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited (UNWTO, 2008).

Pilgrimage in a narrow sense represents religious journeys, journeys of pilgrims, especially those to sacred places or shrines (Smith, 1992). Therefore, pilgrimage in general is a part of the global tourism system which does not necessarily have an economic background. Pilgrimage tourism comprises all kinds of travelling involving a pilgrimage component within a

wide range of trips. On the one side, pilgrims might take a trip to a spiritual place where the trip itself is dedicated to absorbing and living out the truth of their beliefs. On the other side of the pilgrimage scale, tourists can be found who visit the same spiritual place just for an hour during a vacation stay or as part of an excursion from a cruise ship, nevertheless feeling something like a spiritual inspiration. Using this broad definition of pilgrimage and tourism we follow the suggestion of Collins-Kreiner (2010) to cover both religious travellers and vacationists attracted by a spiritual place when thinking about the development of modern pilgrimage tourism. In any case, around each type of pilgrimage tourism, economic effects can be observed as the travellers have a need for infrastructure and services: hiking trails, routes, accommodation, food and beverages and guiding are elementary and needed by everyone. Taking the very basic definition of a market as 'the place or system where parties engage to exchange', each type of pilgrimage tourism is, independent from its background and motivation, part of a market.

A difference can be seen in the mechanisms leading to markets. Historically, many pilgrimage destinations that are famous today have evolved around a myth linked to a certain place or related incidents which inspired people to visit these places. For example, the cult of the Mother of God in the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance spawned places that are famous for a long tradition of Marian exaltation and the corresponding historic clerical buildings (Benvenuti, 2017). The visitors' needs and their demand for support and services eventually lead to economic activities initiated either by local residents or by external actors who followed the growing numbers of pilgrims and expected business opportunities. Pilgrimage destinations developed through evolutionary processes over a long time (Olsen *et al.*, 2018). Today, only in a few cases does strategic destination management complement the organic development, to steer and control further growth.

Vice versa, during the last fifty years, technological and economic development in the so-called First World opened the door to mass tourism development. Here, the process began by creating capacities to fulfil the needs of potential visitors, based on typical touristic attractors (McKercher, 2016). Subsequently, especially during the long-lasting economic growth phase after the Second World War, demand followed the growing number of destinations, and their supply, along with general economic development, advanced faster than the enlargement of supply. To fulfil this demand and simultaneously achieve economic scaling effects, large touristic centres with highly standardised products developed (Garay & Cánoves, 2011). To the present day, however, there is no example known where the core attractor of this type of economically and supply-side driven tourism development was based on pilgrimage.

Tourism development in Greece mostly followed the mass destination pattern (Tsartas, 2003). Currently, Greece's largest share of tourists is attracted by the seaside with sun and beaches, and consequently a result of the former supply-side-driven tourism. A small share of guests come to visit ancient monuments and historic places. Of these, however, most go on a day trip from their holiday residence or visit historic sites as part of a Mediterranean cruise. Tourists who undertake individual or tour operator organised study trips account for a low share of the total number of Greek tourists. The economic crisis in Greece which started in 2010, forced the Greek tourism sector to improve competitiveness as well as to push innovations.

Similar to most cities in the country, Kavala, located in the north-eastern part of Greece on the Gulf of Thasos, was heavily struck by the national crisis. In previous years, the city of Kavala capitalised on a short summer season between June and September to offer sun and beach tourism in the domestic and European market. Furthermore, short trips were offered to visitors from Turkey, who typically travelled to Kavala by car from the metropolitan area of Istanbul, which is a mere three-hour drive away.

Kavala, historically Neapolis, is located close to the ancient Greek and Roman city of Philippi, since 2016 a UNESCO world heritage site. Philippi is frequently mentioned in the Bible in its role as historic scenery of parts of the story of Apostle Paul. As part of this story, the New Testament relates the case of the female purple trader Lydia who was the first woman to be baptised by St. Paul at a small river adjacent to the UNESCO site. The antique monuments in the UNESCO site allow visitors to follow the marks of the first Christians and their churches (Verhoef, 2005). In light of these outstanding historic and spiritual attractions a discussion about tourism innovation options in the field of pilgrimage tourism in Kavala emerged. Developing pilgrimage tourism as a future market seemed to be a feasible option for the city. At the same time, however, it was unclear whether pilgrimage tourism was a product in the sense of a supply-side-developed tourism approach.

The former success of Kavala as a summer vacation destination suggested to innovate in the tourism sector and to attract new guest groups. In general, the citizens of Kavala were open to accept more tourism as a way out of the downward trend (Stylidis & Terzidou, 2014). Encouraged by a Greek-German organisation which aims at strengthening the cooperation between Greek and German municipalities (i.e. the Greek-German Assembly, see GRDE.EU), in 2016 the mayor of Kavala started an initiative to develop pilgrimage tourism, for the purpose of attracting new international guests. With support of the GRDE, several working meetings of Greek and German tourism experts took place. Furthermore, a delegation of the Bavarian Catholic Church chaired by the auxiliary bishop of Munich-Freising visited the Metropolitan, i.e. the Bishop of Philippi, Neapolis and Thasos in Kavala. Since 1925, the diocese of Munich-Freising has been offering organised pilgrimage by their in-house tour operator *Bayerisches Pilgerbüro*. In view of this exchange, the mayor felt confirmed in the strategic approach and thus requested a feasibility analysis for pilgrimage tourism development.

At this stage, the GRDE asked the authors to join the partnership as they had previously worked with other Greek destinations within the Greek-German cooperation network. After a sequence of visits and a longer stay in Kavala, including stakeholder discussions and an in-depth analysis of all tourism-relevant attractions, the expert group commissioned a feasibility study, including a list of proposals jointly developed with local stakeholders and external experts of pilgrimage tourism. Furthermore, the study was presented to policy makers and the general public in Kavala. In the subsequent year, again by initiative of the mayor, an evaluation of the implementation of the measures proposed in the feasibility study was carried out.

This paper presents the results of the feasibility study as well as those of the evaluation. The case of Kavala thus, analyses both the potential and the constraints for a systematic and strategy-based development of pilgrimage tourism. Supply-side methods and tourism development techniques are applied to the pilgrimage market which traditionally develops in evolutionary ways. In addition, the paper examines processes and case-relevant governance structures within Greece's cultural context which are believed to have hindered an evolutionary progress of pilgrimage tourism in the past.

Developing Christian Pilgrimage Tourism

Before discussing the development of Christian pilgrimage tourism for Kavala the general tourism development framework shall be described. Looking at pilgrimage tourism from the perspective of tourism development means to describe the general preconditions, the development framework and especially the governance structures that are required. In the following section we discuss these aspects from a general perspective with brief references to Kavala. A comprehensive presentation of the case of Kavala will follow in a separate section below.

Preconditions for Tourism Development in General

Before tourism development can take place, several basic preconditions need to be met. Above all, a safe environment and accessibility by modern transport is required. Aside from that, two main elements at destination level are decisive for the development process and future competitiveness: the resources and the destination management (Dwyer & Kim, 2003, Crouch, 2011). Most types of destination are based on endowed resources provided by nature and culture. They attract guests whose travel motives and

expectations correlate with the destination's resource profile. Outstanding or ideally unique elements play a key role for differentiation from comparable and competing destinations and thus, contribute to the formation of destination image and later brand equity (Qu *et al.*, 2011). In more general terms, all destinations additionally need resources for accommodation, boarding, transportation and further services. These are based on created resources and supporting general infrastructure elements (Crouch, 2011). Kavala as a mature Greek destination provides all these elements and thus fulfils the preconditions.

Destination management, on the other hand, reconciles and steers the interests of guests, the tourism industry and official bodies such as the government and public administration. The destination management must stimulate tourism stakeholders as well as other tourism-linked actors to create integrated offers which meet the expectations and needs of potential guests from source markets and are easy to promote and to distribute either directly or through intermediaries. Furthermore, the destination management must cooperate with local policy makers and administration representatives to achieve high standards in tourism-related public services and create attractive public spheres (Pechlaner *et al.*, 2012). The city of Kavala has installed the local development agency *Dimophelia* which, among other tasks, is in charge of destination management. Within the municipal government, several actors are responsible for tourism development. Thus, the management structure does exist to steer future developments in tourism.

Specific Conditions for Christian Religious Tourism

Typically, a main driver of tourism development shared by stakeholders and policy makers is the hope for economic benefits. Such benefits include employment opportunities, additional income and an overall increase of the quality of life, given that tourism infrastructure and services serve the local population as well. In the case of Christian religious tourism, however, the stakeholder structure exhibits very particular traits. Religious tourism is mostly based on two pillars. The first one is a symbolic place with a specific and outstanding religious significance; in this instance Christian biblical history or the history of a Christian person of note. In this sense, the church as well as local Christian communities are key players. The second pillar frequently consists of buildings for praying, divine services or spiritual remembrance which have evolved in the vicinity of symbolic places over centuries. Additionally, in some cases,

monuments from ancient times tell stories about early periods of the faith, thus, adding not only a symbolic but also a heritage value. When it comes to preserving heritage sites, another key player enters the stage of tourism development actors: the government and the public administration who are responsible for preserving monuments of historic value. In Kavala both pillars exist: first, the historic person of Apostle Paul and the historic places linked with him as mentioned in the Bible; second, the UNESCO heritage site of Philippi as well as the place of baptism of the female purple merchant Lydia. Therefore, Kavala fulfils the conditions required for Christian religious tourism.

Destination Development Framework

Destination management approaches differ strongly between the two basic types of destinations: corporate or community-based systems. The structure and management of a purely corporate destination resembles a general tourism enterprise such as a standard American vacation resort (Gajdošík *et al.*, 2017). On the other end of the scale a purely community destination model supposes a structure in which all tourism stakeholders are independent entrepreneurs, where both the natural and cultural resources and the central tourism infrastructure are owned by the public. Consequently, all facilities that are not part of an enterprise belong to 'common land' (Lang & Roessl, 2011) and are thus, owned and shared by the community and the guests. In reality, most destinations are systems in between these two extreme alternatives.

Developing Christian religious tourism destinations requires core attractors which are always owned by the church or the state. These elements, despite their community background, can consequently not be owned and managed at destination level. Due to their historic background, however, religious tourism sites are never developed and owned by one single institution. In most cases, such sites developed slowly at a low level as did many small-scale accommodation and other facilities, to a modern but still highly fragmented supply (Margry, 2015). This development framework is characterised by

- 1) a few key actors who own or are responsible for the core attractions or spiritual elements of the religious site, mostly the church and the state,
- 2) a large number of stakeholders, typically groups or individuals who can affect or are affected by the development of tourism and the destination, and

- 3) the political and administrative framework primarily at destination level but also above - for those cases where tourism and destination-relevant legislation is made at higher levels through directives and regulations, e.g. the national or European level.

Within this general framework, three components control and run the destination development process in a cycle: leadership, governance and management (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014, Hristov & Zehrer, 2015). To stimulate a development, one or several stakeholders, representatives of key institutions as well as the policy makers, must assume leadership and provide the cornerstones of a development vision or provoke a debate about the status quo and future. A participatory process is then required to transfer the ideas and positions of the leaders to the community and to a broader stakeholder level. Public involvement and in-depth discussion of the ideas should finally lead to a common shared vision of the destination development strategy. Moreover, discussing potential strategies at stakeholder level enables these stakeholders to take ownership of the destination steering process (Beritelli *et al.*, 2007) which is the most important part of general destination governance (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014). Joint agreement on a common development vision and its subsequent implementation creates the basis for mandating an institution or a person to put the vision into action. The governance process itself leads to installing and mandating an authorised management that reconciles the development process, the leadership activities and the stakeholders' governance. Furthermore, the management can leverage its official mandate to negotiate the interests of the destination at administrative and governmental levels, which is often required for accessing financial resources or permits during the strategy implementation. Looking at the starting point of Kavala, the mayor took the leadership role by initiating the discussion about pilgrimage tourism development. With *Dimophelia*, the city has a management structure that theoretically would be able to steer the development process. As regards the participation of stakeholders, a structured process remains to be initiated.

Challenges to Destination Development

In their description of the leadership, governance and management framework for destination development, Hristov and Zehrer (2015) admit that further investigations are required to determine the applicability of this model across diverse contexts. Research suggests that the possibility of implementing a destination governance process may be limited by

several factors, one of them being the above-mentioned structure of local stakeholder networks in religious or heritage tourism destinations. Such destinations tend to show a mix of public and private stakeholders who may have competing interests in their approach towards tourism. Moreover, the distribution of responsibilities in religious or heritage tourism destinations may be complex, with different local and national institutions holding partial control over the same monuments (Petrova & Hristov, 2016).

A second challenge to initiating a destination governance process can be local culture. Culture is defined as a set of practices and values shared by people who live in the same society (House, 2004) or, in this case, in the same destination. The cultural setting of a destination not only influences the attitudes and beliefs of the people, but also the local institutional framework. Designing a governance structure in the sense of Hristov and Zehrer, requires that the stakeholders involved are willing to communicate and cooperate between different institutions and traverse hierarchies with the objective of creating a joint long-term vision for development. Moreover, participants need to assume individual responsibility but also be ready to delegate operative tasks to those responsible for destination management.

Intercultural research indicates two aspects of culture that affect both institutional design and the behaviour of individuals working for these institutions: a) the way a society addresses hierarchies as well as status differences ('power distance') and b) the extent to which a society tries to minimise uncertainty by relying on formalised rules and structures ('uncertainty avoidance') (Daniel *et al.*, 2012; Hofstede, 2010). Societies of high power distance are characterised by large status differences between individuals and strong hierarchies that must be respected. Power tends to be concentrated at the very top of an organisation, whereas lower levels have limited power. Consequently, subordinates are typically not involved in decision-making processes, and instead expect superiors to make all decisions. Bottom-up initiatives from lower hierarchy levels are uncommon (Hofstede, 2010). In societies of high uncertainty avoidance, organisations tend to be very bureaucratic. Jobs and processes are subject to many and sometimes complex rules and regulations. Additionally, employees may be hesitant to take decisions and assume responsibility, since such behaviour can have unforeseeable consequences (Hofstede, 2010). The mindsets that are required for successfully implementing a destination

governance process may not be present in cultures of high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. When analysing the case of Kavala, this paper will take Greece's specific cultural framework into account and discuss its consequences for implementing a destination governance process.

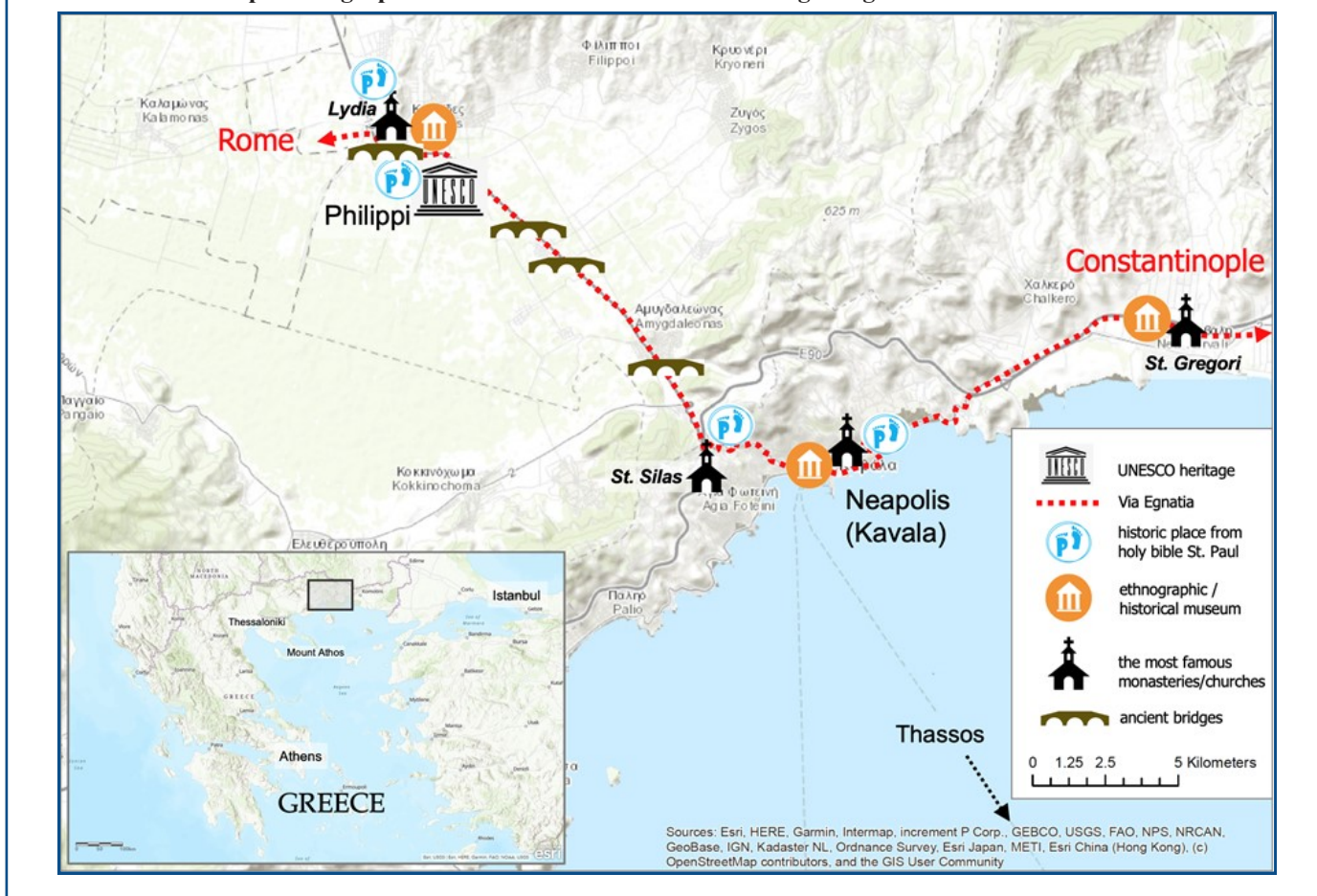
Research Design and Methodology

As outlined above, the case described here includes a feasibility study for developing pilgrimage tourism in Kavala and subsequently an evaluation. The feasibility study, as requested by the mayor, was carried out through alternating phases of background research and field trips to Kavala. During an initial phase, relevant information on the case was gathered by reviewing research literature on destination development in the context of pilgrimage tourism. Additionally, information was collected from historical, geographical and theological sources to understand Kavala's potential as a destination for pilgrimage tourism. This was followed by a first site visit to Kavala in February 2017, which afforded the authors an opportunity to understand the local tourism framework and meet the stakeholders. A second and longer visit to Kavala was scheduled for May 2017, with the objective of analysing the feasibility of developing pilgrimage tourism in Kavala in detail. Moreover, the authors aimed to identify deficits and areas for future action and development. To this end, in-depth interviews on site with local stakeholders, representatives of pilgrimage tour operators and pilgrimage tourists who had previously visited Kavala were carried out, as well as analysis of the local tourism points of interest.

By initiative of the mayor, a follow-up trip to Kavala was conducted in May 2018, for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of the measures proposed in the previous year's feasibility study. Additionally, the evaluation process was designed to uncover possible constraints in tourism development within the stakeholder network. During the May 2018 visit, a series of 18 interviews with 12 stakeholders representing six institutions was conducted.^[1] All interview partners hold key positions in their respective organisations. Several statements obtained during the interviews exhibit personal reservations or conflicts between stakeholders. Interview partners have thus been rendered anonymous in this paper to protect their professional integrity. The results were subsequently post-processed and analysed, and

1. See table 2 for an overview of all interviews conducted with regard to this case

Map 1: Geographical Location and Distribution of Pilgrimage-Relevant Attractions



converted into recommendations for initiating a destination development process in Kavala with the components of leadership, governance and management (Hristov & Zehrer, 2015). A final review, synthesis and evaluation of the case was carried out in preparation for the present publication.

The Case of Kavala, Greece

Kavala/Philippi as Potential Pilgrimage Site

The city of Kavala is located in northern Greece in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, on the coast of the gulf of Thasos which is part of the Thracian Sea (Map 1). In its territory three historic elements from antiquity with an outstanding and universal value can be found. First, the ancient city of Philippi which played an important strategic and historic role during the Roman Empire. The Battle of Philippi between Mark Antony and Octavian against the leaders of Julius Caesar's assassination, Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus in 42 BC is well known due to historic research and from William Shakespeare's tragedy *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare, n.d.). Excavations of a large plot have revealed the structure of the core of

the city with buildings (Figure 1(a)) from the early Christian period whose fragments can be visited (Sakellariadi, 2010). The plot was inscribed on the UNESCO world heritage list in 2016. A museum inside the UNESCO site offers additional information and exhibits. Of particular interest for pilgrimage and cultural tourists are the relicts of one of the earliest Christian churches, the Octagon (Figure 1(b)), as well as three more churches which have been reconstructed step by step. They convey a vivid image of the emergence of one of the first Christian communities on the European continent.

The second historic element as a regional but also general Mediterranean attraction is the Via Egnatia (Figure 2(a)). This ancient route connected the outer eastern and the south eastern parts of the Roman Empire including Judea and Jerusalem with Rome and was an incubator for the economic prosperity and strategic importance of Neapolis and Philippi. At a regional level it connected Philippi to the coastline and the harbour of Neapolis where goods and people arrived by sea from Asia Minor. Along the Via Egnatia several ancient bridges and landmarks show the level

Figure 1(a) : Ruins of Early Christian Basilica in Philippi**Figure 1(b) : Baptistry from Octagon Complex in Philippi**

Photos : T. Bausch

of architecture and topographical survey knowledge of the Romans. Subsequently, during the Ottoman Empire the route was maintained and improved to ensure the connection between Constantinople and Thessaloniki. Over the past twenty years ancient cultural routes such as this have evolved as touristic attractions all over Europe and their development and management was funded by diverse programs of the European Union (Institut européen des itinéraires culturels, 2015).

These two core elements set the historic scenery for the third and most important element for pilgrimage tourism: the arrival of St. Paul to Neapolis and his stay in Philippi during his second missionary journey, where he was accompanied by his Christian follower St. Silas (see Acts of the Apostles, 16:21). Two important incidents which took place at these historic places are related in the Bible. First, the encounter between St. Paul and the female purple merchant Lydia. St. Paul was looking for places where the Jewish locals prayed during the sabbath. When he found a place of prayer next to a small river, he only found some women whom he started a conversation with. Among these women was Lydia who listened to St. Paul, became a believer and let him baptise her. Afterwards, she offered him to stay at her house which led to the founding of the first Christian church in Europe. Later during his stay, St. Paul relieved an enslaved woman from a spirit, after which her master dragged Paul and Silas to the market square and

accused them of introducing unlawful customs for Romans. Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned. When an earthquake caused the prison doors to open at night, Paul and Silas nonetheless remained in prison and trusted in a good and positive outcome (Bailey, 1909). Further scriptures in the Acts of the Apostles, but especially the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians mention the special relationship between Paul and the Christian community of Philippi. Today, two symbolic places linked to these stories still exist. Adjacent to the small river, and only a few hundred metres away from the UNESCO museum, the Orthodox Church built a site for remembering Lydia and St. Paul, including a church and a place for services and traditional river baptisms (Figure 2(b)). The second symbolic place is located inside the UNESCO plot where a man-made cavern is labelled as the prison of St. Paul. Even though it was most likely an ancient cistern, both the local population and visitors connect this cavern with the biblical story.

In addition to these three unique and outstanding elements, Kavala offers numerous historic and modern sites that refer to the story of St. Paul and St. Silas: the so-called St. Paul's step, the symbolic place of the arrival of St. Paul from the seaside at Neapolis, the monasteries of St. Silas and St. Gregory along the Via Egnatia or the archaeological museum of Kavala. Finally, and aside from Christian history, the region offers attractions from the Ottoman period that are of

Figure 2(a) : Segment of the Via Egnatia in Ruins of Phillippi



Figure 2(b) : Site at Zigaktis River where Lydia was baptized



Photos : T.Bausch

interest for cultural tourists, such as the Imaret as a masterpiece of late Ottoman architecture or the house of Muhammed Ali as an example of Macedonian architecture. In conclusion, both the ancient heritage and the symbolic elements linked with St. Paul as one of the most celebrated Christian apostles afford Kavala an extraordinary opportunity for developing pilgrimage and cultural tourism. Map 1 shows the geographical setting of the elements described above.

Aside from its outstanding attractors for pilgrimage tourism, Kavala also has an advantageous geographical position. Its main factors are:

1. Location in a region saturated with historical objects and events. Map 1 illustrates the geographical distribution of the sites related to the activities of the Apostle Paul, and it also exhibits the location of the famous monasteries of the Apostle Silas and St. Gregory (where his relics are located), the elements of the old Roman road - the Via Egnatia - and the historical and ethnographic museums in the region;
2. Favourable location on water and land routes from Northern Europe to the South, from Asia Minor (Turkey) to Europe;
3. Rich recreational resources (beaches, mud baths, natural landscapes, local cultural features of winemaking and gastronomy, etc.).

In addition, the region is close to popular tourist and pilgrimage destinations: the island of Thasos is a favourite place for beach holidays and the peninsula of Athos, an autonomous monastic republic where 20 ancient monasteries are concentrated, attracts more and more pilgrims from Russia and other Orthodox countries of Eastern Europe every year. Access to Athos is limited. The *Avaton*, as the Ban on Women on the Holy Athos Mountain is called, goes back to the year 1060. To visit Athos a special pilgrim card (adult males only) is required and the maximum number of pilgrims cannot exceed 120 people a day. Pilgrims who travel to Athos with their families leave their wives and children in Ouranoupolis (the nearest city to Mount Athos) or in the adjacent areas. In this respect, Kavala is well suited for such a family holiday; husbands visit Athos while wives and children have the opportunity to visit pilgrim shrines and cultural sites in Kavala, Lydia and Philippi.

To demonstrate the general development potential for pilgrimage tourism in Kavala, this paper uses the Russian source market as a meaningful example (Mylonopoulos *et al.*, 2012). Northern Greece is a favourite recreation area for Russian citizens. There are several daily flights to Thessaloniki from Moscow (Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo) and St. Petersburg. In summer, regular flights (from June to early October)

are available from Moscow to Kavala, twice per week, and once per week from Minsk to Kavala. The municipality of Kavala has partner relations with St. Petersburg, in the summer season there are direct charter flights St. Petersburg - Kavala (from June 4 to October 8), mainly for tourists who are vacationing on the beaches of Thasos. For tourists arriving from Russia to Greece and from other Orthodox countries of Eastern Europe, Kavala was long in the 'shadow' of Athos. However, as knowledge of the Christian history of the region grows, primarily about St. Paul's apostolic activity, Kavala increasingly attracts tourists from Russia. At this time most of them combine beach holidays on the island of Thasos with short-term visits to places associated with the Apostle Paul.

For the Russian pilgrims, the worship of places associated with the life of saints and the relics that are in Western Europe is just beginning (Rouhier-Willoughby & Filosofova, 2015). Only pilgrimage places in Greece and Italy (Rome, Bari) are well known. Fatima, Santiago de Compostela and other places, on the contrary, are only known to a small circle of pilgrims from Russia. The worship of places associated with the life of the Apostles is also a relatively new page in the history of Orthodox pilgrimage. In Russia, the most famous Apostle is Andrew, who, it is believed, was the first to visit Russia.

The Apostle Paul, however, is also known in Orthodoxy from his Epistles, and plays an important role. These Epistles are widely known, as they are often read in Orthodox worship before the reading of the gospel. Paul's name is fairly widespread among Russians. It is often given at baptism to boys who were born before the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul on July 12 (in the Julian calendar). The glorification of Paul the Apostle in Orthodoxy is often performed together with the glorification of the Apostle Peter. Many places in Russia and even cities and rural settlements are named after the Apostles Peter and Paul (for example, Petropavlovsk). To learn more about the life of the Apostles is an important motive for an Orthodox pilgrim. Unfortunately, there is very little information about the activities of the Apostle Paul and about the places he visited. Therefore, the development of ties between the Orthodox from Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe and the places visited by the Apostle Paul is very important.

The authors believe that the concepts discussed with regards to the Orthodox Church and Russian pilgrims can be transferred and adapted to the Catholic Church

and Christian pilgrims from Western and Southern Europe, as well as from overseas countries such as South Korea.

Kavala/Philippi Tourism Development Potential Analysis

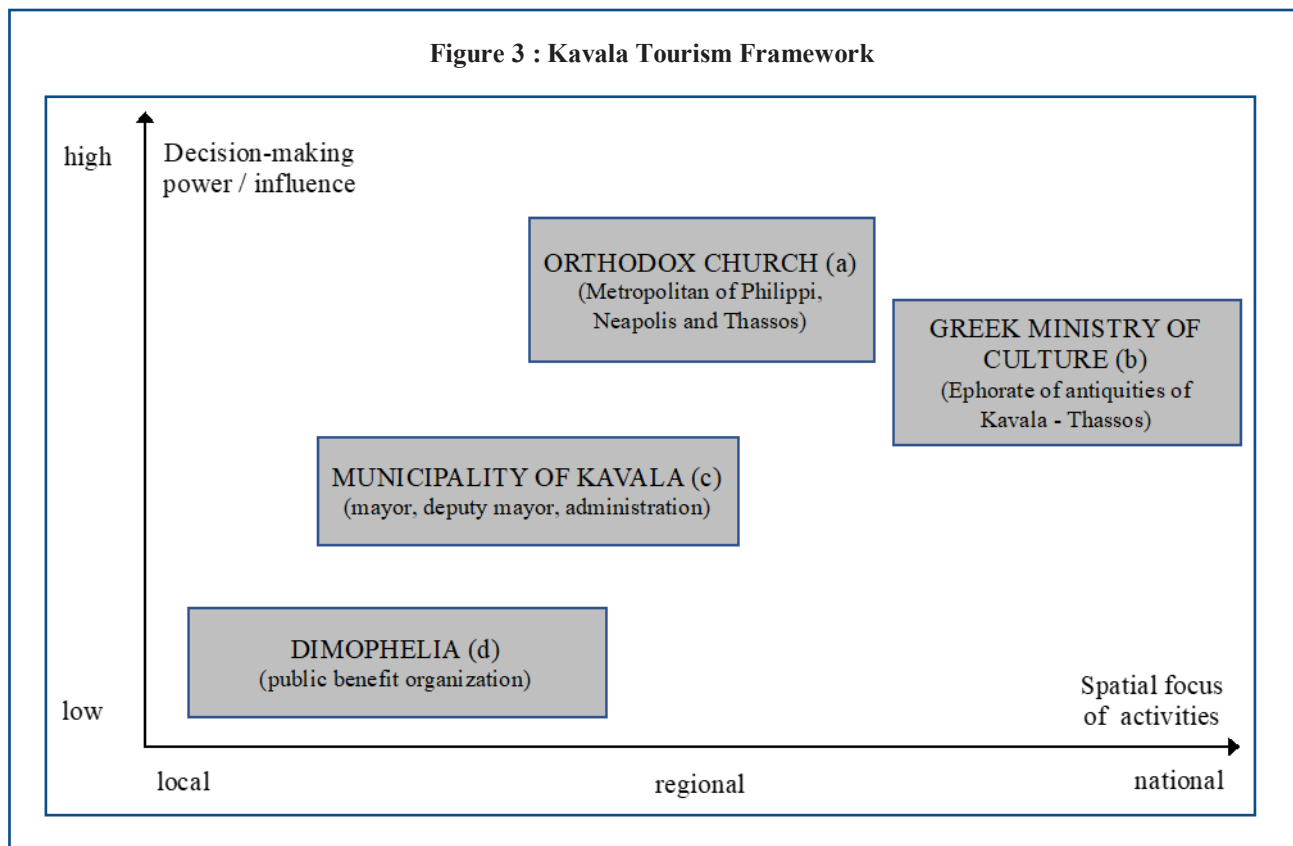
Based on the model of Crouch (2011) a destination assessment of Kavala was carried out (see Table 1). Compared to the original model of Crouch, some categories are partially bundled or simplified for a more compact presentation adapted to pilgrimage tourism. In the evaluation of overall development potential for future pilgrimage tourism, the assessment shows that in the categories 'Supporting Factors & Resources', 'Core Resources and Attractors' and 'Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants' the ratings are all good to very good and no general constraints surface. The factors that may have hindered the development of pilgrimage tourism in Kavala must thus be situated in the categories of 'Destination Management' and 'Destination Policy, Planning and Development'. Therefore, a further in-depth analysis of the tourism framework is needed.

Analysis of Kavala Tourism Framework

The tourism framework of Kavala compares to the stakeholder networks of other pilgrimage tourism destinations in terms of structure and complexity. It involves several public and private stakeholders across different hierarchies and with diverging interests and priorities. For the process of developing pilgrimage tourism, four stakeholders within the network are particularly important. Sorted from high to low in terms of decision-making power and influence, these are a) the Orthodox Church, b) the Greek Ministry of Culture, c) the Municipality of Kavala and d) the public benefit organisation, Dimophelia (Figure 3).

a) **The Greek Orthodox Church** plays a prominent and influential role in Greek society. Moreover, being a member of the Orthodox Church is an inseparable part of Greek national identity (Roudometof, 2010). The Orthodox Church in Kavala is represented by the Holy Metropolis of Philippi, Neapolis and Thasos whose chair is the Metropolitan, i.e. the Bishop of Philippi, Neapolis and Thasos. The Metropolitan's office manages the site of Lydia's baptism, pursuing mostly clerical and theological but no economic or tourism-related interests. In his function as local head of the Orthodox Church, and in view of the church's strong position in society, the Metropolitan is assumed to rank higher than any stakeholder within the

Table 1: Qualitative Assessment of Tourism Development Potential and Competitiveness Elements		
Element	Qualitative Rating	Rationale
<i>Supporting Factors & Resources</i>		
Infrastructure & Accessibility	mainly good	Kavala Airport (currently only summer), highway to Thessaloniki (1½ hours), cruise-ship adapted harbour, hospital, road system, supply and disposal system up to date
Facilitating Resources	good	All kinds of services / infrastructure available
Hospitality and Enterprises	good	Accommodation of all types and quality categories available, majority up-to-date, broad offer of taverns and restaurants, pool of well-educated tourist guides, car-rental, ferries
Political Will	high	The development of pilgrimage tourism is the explicit aim of the mayor and municipal council
<i>Core Resources and Attractors</i>		
Physiography and Climate	very good	Mediterranean coast and climate, sandy beaches, island of Thasos (1-hour ferry trip), mountains with forests in the back country
Culture and History	outstanding	See description 'Kavala/Philippi as potential Pilgrimage Site'
Further Activities	very good	Many cultural and orthodox Christian attractions can be visited as day trips in the region including Thessaloniki, Athos or Thasos
<i>Destination Management</i>		
Organisation	medium	Local development agency (<i>Dimophelia</i>) with a tourism promotion department. Policy mandate to act as DMO is not clear
Marketing and Research	weak	As mandate is not clear the agency acts on demand by local policy makers and members from organisations. No research
Further DMO tasks	not developed	No mandate for development or selling of services. Not adopting an active role as distribution intermediary
<i>Destination Policy, Planning and Development</i>		
System Definition	weak	Because of reforms of the administrative structure in Greece, tasks and duties for destination development and marketing are not finally restructured
Philosophy, Values and Vision	not defined	A development strategy based on a joint philosophy and values and agreed by the stakeholders as a common vision does not exist
Positioning, Branding	unclear	Sun and beach in summer, short trips for guests from Turkey are traditional but in relation to competition area is not differentiating its position. Which role pilgrimage shall take in the future and how this can be build a unique general positioning and branding has never been discussed
Development, Research, Evaluation	weak	Destination development is not a matter of continuous strategy updating and implementation. Research and evaluation currently do not take place
<i>Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants</i>		
Location	very good	Kavala can be reached very easily from major source markets: domestic Greece, Western and central Europe but also from Russia with high potential for pilgrimage tourism
Safety / Security	very good	European standard
Cost / Value	very good	Because of economic crisis relatively low prices
Awareness / Image	low	In the field of pilgrimage / cultural tourism not yet well known (inscription into UNESCO list still quite recent: 2016)
Carrying Capacity	still high	Currently, hotels are only fully booked for a few weeks in high season. Most parts of the year no indication of overcrowding



framework. This assumption was confirmed by interview partner 5 during the on-site research.

b) Greece has a highly centralised public administration, with the majority of important decisions being made by the governmental institutions in Athens (Ioannides and Petrakos, 2000). The **Greek Ministry of Culture** in Athens is responsible for preserving all historic monuments and archaeological sites in Greece. The actual management of the monuments and sites is delegated to a network of local sub-entities, the so-called Ephorates, which act directly on behalf of the Ministry and thus rank higher than local administrative units in terms of decision-making power. Both the UNESCO site of Philippi and parts of the historic remains of the Via Egnatia fall within the responsibility of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Kavala-Thasos. The Ephorate's office in Kavala is run by a small team of archaeologists whose work aims to preserve the local historic sites and to facilitate archaeological research. Modification of any of the historic sites can only be initiated by the local Ephorate which, in turn, exclusively reports to the Ministry of Culture in Athens and is not affiliated with any other institution in Kavala. Consequently, the local authorities have very limited influence over the historic sites. It should be noted, however, that the local Ephorate's financial means and authority to enhance or modify the UNESCO site of Philippi are also limited.

For any modification of a historic monument, the Ephorate needs to request approval and subsequent funding from the Ministry of Culture. Additionally, the Ministry and the local Ephorates aim to control the information published on historic sites. Any third-party materials referencing a monument pertaining to an Ephorate's area of responsibility have to be submitted to the Ephorate for approval before publication. This applies to both verbal and visual content in either analogue or digital media.

c) Within Greece's centralised administrative structure, the power of regional administrative units is strongly limited. Regional institutions tend to depend on the central government and cannot be considered as autonomous layers of government. Moreover, the division of responsibilities between national and local institutions tends to be unclear, which can lead to conflict between the different bodies (Ioannides & Petrakos, 2000). The regional administrative unit in Kavala is the local **Municipality**. Being the city's central governing body, the Municipality is responsible for all tourism-related planning and management. Within the Municipality, however, there is no specific tourism unit. Responsibility for tourism-related issues is spread between the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor for City Development and Planning and the Deputy Mayor for City Finances and Administration. Additionally, the Mayor's strategic advisor is involved in tourism

planning. As outlined above, the Municipality has very limited decision-making authority over the main attractors for pilgrimage tourism in the area, i.e. the UNESCO site of Philippi, the remains of the historic Via Egnatia and the site of Lydia's baptism. The situation thus, resembles what has been described as typical for pilgrimage tourism destinations (Raj & Griffin, 2017).

d) **Dimophelia** acts as a public benefit organisation and is owned by the Municipality of Kavala. Therefore, in terms of decision-making power, it ranks lowest among the four stakeholders. Dimophelia engages in a variety of development activities related to the city and the surrounding area such as tourism, culture, sports, social welfare and environmental issues. The tourism department within Dimophelia is charged with managing Kavala as a destination. It mainly creates promotional materials for marketing Kavala as a destination and runs the city's promotional website. Even though the organisation regularly brings forward suggestions for developing tourism in Kavala, it has little to no competence or authority for autonomous strategic planning or decision-making. Most of Dimophelia's work is directed by the Municipality.

Figure 3 illustrates the position of these four main actors of the tourism framework concerning their decision-making power and influence (vertical axis) and the spatial focus of their activities and mandate (horizontal axis).

Leadership – Governance – Management Cycle: General Analysis for Greece

As previously discussed, the feasibility of initiating a destination development process depends, at least in part, on the cultural setting of a destination. Cross-national studies on societal and organisational culture have found Greece to be an area of high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2010). Organisations in such settings tend to centralise all decision-making authority at the top, and higher levels hesitate to delegate power to lower levels. Likewise, subordinates tend to expect directives from higher levels and follow established rules rather than making independent decisions or trying to change structures (Hofstede, 2010).

As the ideal destination development process requires cross-institutional and cross-hierarchical collaboration, individual responsibility and delegating authority, we believe the cultural context described above can pose challenges to destination development. The strong focus on power and hierarchy among Greek organisations may hinder efficient cooperation and distribution of authority between institutions across different levels. Instead of participating in a joint governance process, organisations may engage in conflicts over assuming the leadership role in destination development. Moreover, higher-ranked institutions will hesitate to cooperate with lower-ranked institutions. In the event that an organisation assumes leadership, it will most likely not appreciate governance initiatives from lower levels and will also

Table 2: List of Interviews Conducted With Local Stakeholders

<i>Date/s</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Interview Partner</i>
04 Apr 2018	Church of Greece / Holy Metropolis of Philippi, Neapolis and Thasos	IP 1
04 Apr 2018 / 16 May 2018	Greek Ministry of Culture / Ephorate of Antiquities of Kavala-Thasos	IP 2
03 Apr 2018 / 14 May 2018	Municipality of Kavala	IP 3
03 Apr 2018 / 14 May 2018	Municipality of Kavala	IP 4
04 Apr 2018 / 14 May 2018	Municipality of Kavala	IP 5
18 May 2018	Municipality of Kavala	IP 6
04 Apr 2018 / 16 May 2018	Dimophelia	IP 7
04 Apr 2018 / 15 May 2018	Dimophelia	IP 8
15 May 2018	Dimophelia	IP 9
15 May 2018	Dimophelia	IP 10
16 May 2018	Kavala Hoteliers Association	IP 11
14 May 2018	Opsometha / Local Citizens' Group	IP 12

hesitate to delegate operative tasks to lower levels. Under the given circumstances, setting up a destination development cycle of leadership, governance and management may be difficult. Along the same lines, research has shown that in institutional frameworks characterised by high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance, any attempt to distribute power across different levels will face strong resistance by both superiors and subordinates. In the end, only political leadership can force such distribution of power (Hofstede, 2010; Joiner, 2001).

Results of the Feasibility Study

As requested by the mayor of Kavala, a feasibility study was conducted in 2017 to determine Kavala's potential as a destination for pilgrimage tourism. The previous chapters have demonstrated that the UNESCO site of Philippi, the baptism site of Lydia, the historic Via Egnatia and the story of St. Paul form outstanding and unique attractors. In combination with the existing tourism infrastructure and related services, the feasibility study concluded that Kavala could easily capitalise by developing the city into a destination for pilgrimage tourism. In terms of destination development research, the city has excellent core resources and attractors for developing pilgrimage tourism. The feasibility study suggested pilgrimage tourism as a way to brand Kavala as a year-round destination that attracts religious tourists, but also multi-optional guests who are interested in experiences beyond sun and beach. It was recommended to use Kavala's cultural assets as an important component to form a strong and unique destination image. According to the study, pilgrimage tourism could help increase the region's overall development potential. Specifically, the study gave the following recommendations for future action:

With regard to the UNESCO site of Philippi and the baptism site of Lydia, the study recommended to improve the overall accessibility from downtown Kavala by offering easy-to-use public transportation options. Additionally, the study suggested to connect the two sites by creating walking itineraries that allow for joint visits of both attractions. Entrance and information portals should be installed to provide helpful orientation for tourists. It was also recommended to improve the overall information and signage within the sites, and to add storytelling elements allowing for memorable experiences among visitors.

The study also highlighted the specific needs of Christian pilgrims as the future target group. Pilgrimage tourists depending on their personal motivation to visit a sacred place, are interested in appreciating cultural beauty, visiting religious sites with opportunities for spiritual reflection and enjoying additional leisure activities (Nyaupane *et al.*, 2015). The study suggested to design a touristic product for Christian pilgrims that would cater to all of these expectations and needs. More specifically, the study recommended to capitalise on the story of Paul the Apostle by setting up a one-week itinerary to trace his path in the area. This would require improving the condition of the historic Via Egnatia to allow for spiritual walks. Installing proper signage, orientation boards and rest stations in the shade were considered necessary. Additionally, visitors should be able to participate in excursions to nearby attractions, such as the mud baths or the island of Thasos.

The study concluded that, as a means to increase Kavala's overall visibility, the city should organise international theatre or music festivals which use the stages in Philippi's amphitheatre and Kavala's historic castle as venues. Such events would generate an influx of culturally-interested visitors and help revive the historic sites. Moreover, festivals could help Kavala stand out from comparable destinations in Greece. The results of the study were publicly presented to all relevant stakeholders in Kavala, who agreed to implement the suggestions with the objective of establishing pilgrimage tourism in the area.

Evaluating the Implementation

In 2018, the mayor of Kavala requested the authors to evaluate to what extent the measures suggested in the previous year had been implemented. A visit to the city in April 2018 revealed that, in fact, no action had been taken. As outlined above, another series of interviews with local stakeholders was then conducted in May 2018. In addition to the four main stakeholders described in the previous section, representatives from two more local stakeholders were interviewed. These are, on the one hand, Kavala's Hoteliers Association and, on the other hand, the local citizens' group, Opsometha, which contributes to developing the cultural and natural heritage in the area, especially the Via Egnatia. The second series of interviews aimed to clarify why Kavala had not yet initiated a process of destination development to valorise its historic and cultural assets, despite their unique competitive advantages.

During meetings with local stakeholders, we observed that the institutions in Kavala's tourism framework struggled to define a precise leadership structure, to jointly elaborate a strategic development plan and to adopt a continuous and comprehensive management approach for implementing the strategy. Our analysis suggests that this is due to different institutional priorities and different hierarchies within the tourism framework. Moreover, we argue that the specific characteristics of organisational culture in Greece contribute to the deficiencies present in Kavala. The following paragraphs discuss our findings in detail, following the three components of the destination development cycle: leadership, governance and management.

The Leadership Component

To initiate the destination development process, one actor or a team of actors need to assume leadership, i.e. gather the stakeholders and initiate a bottom-up process to jointly develop long-term strategic goals for the destination (Hristov & Zehrer, 2015). Interview partners (IP) 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 & 12 agreed that the Municipality should assume leadership in the process of pilgrimage tourism development. Within the Municipality, however, responsibility for tourism development is split between three persons with different areas of authority. Consequently, the interviews revealed a need for increased coordination and stronger strategic coherence regarding the Municipality's leadership function in tourism development. While the mayor has in fact opened a discussion about developing pilgrimage tourism, a participatory governance process remains to be initiated in Kavala. In conclusion, the Municipality does not comprehensively execute a leadership function for tourism development, despite other stakeholder's expectations.

The interviews confirmed that the Orthodox Church ranks higher than any other institution in Kavala in terms of status and could, in theory, take leadership in a development process.

Nobody can say 'no' to the church (IP 5).

In our in-person interviews, a representative of the local Orthodox Metropolis (IP 1) stated that they would be glad to welcome more Christian pilgrims at Lydia's baptism site. At the same time, however, IP 1 expressed their view that leading the tourism development process in Kavala was not considered part of their mission, and also, that the church had little

expertise in this field. The Metropolis would, however, have to be involved in a governance process, given the central role Lydia's baptism site plays for pilgrimage tourists coming to Kavala.

We are open to supporting any event or activity that strengthens the Christian community as a whole (IP 1).

The Ephorate of Antiquities of Kavala-Thasos, being the local representation of the Ministry of Culture, ranks higher than the Municipality of Kavala. During an interview, IP 2 from the Ephorate reported that the main focus of the Ephorate is to preserve existing heritage sites and to carry out archaeological research. While developing the UNESCO site of Philippi according to modern tourism market requirements is not a priority for the Ephorate, IP 2 stated that the Ephorate was not generally opposed to this process.

Philippi must be preserved to facilitate archaeological research. We are happy to hear suggestions for improving the site; however, the Ministry in Athens has already approved a five-year development plan which we must follow (IP 2).

The Ephorate, however, appears to be detached from decision making and participation within the local institutional framework. Cooperation between the Ephorate in their role of archaeological surveyor and other stakeholders was reported to be limited and, at times, conflictive (IP 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 & 12). IP 4, 5, 6, 8 & 9 expressed their discontent at the close control the Ephorate and the Ministry exercise over the UNESCO site, while failing to revitalise the site, relative to comparable locations. As reported by IP 4, 8, 9, 10 & 12, suggestions for improvement of the UNESCO site brought forward by other local stakeholders were disregarded, ignored or delayed by the Ephorate. Conversely, IP 2 from the Ephorate expressed their disappointment about other stakeholders' attitudes and pointed out a lack of cooperation and communication.

Even for the smallest things, such as promoting the UNESCO site on Kavala's destination website, we need permits from the Ephorate or from Athens, and we never know for sure if and when we get them (IP 8 & 9).

We feel that we're not involved in their decision-making. First something is decided, and then we are asked for approval (IP 2).

In our visit, the conflict between archaeological and touristic priorities was clearly present, but also juxtaposed was a conflict between national and local

authorities, potentially rooted in hierarchical thought patterns that are typical of high power distance. Despite its higher rank among institutions, the Ephorate would neither have a genuine interest nor sufficient acceptance for assuming leadership in a tourism development process. With the UNESCO site as one of the main attractors in the area, the Ephorate and the Ministry must, however, be part of a governance process. Overall, we believe that the different priorities between institutions, the diluted distribution of responsibilities within the Municipality and the absence of regular communication between stakeholders are responsible for the lack of leadership in Kavala.

The Governance Component

Governance in this context is understood as a set of norms, structures and processes to steer the destination development (Ruhanen, 2013; Hristov & Zehrer, 2015). The interviews exhibited that Kavala's tourism framework lacks a formalised governance structure. Several interview partners (IP 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 & 12) reported an incongruent set of cross-institutional collaboration. Additionally, the interviews revealed that no formalised structures or opportunities exist for the stakeholders to gather and exchange ideas.

Our cooperation and communication between stakeholders could be better (IP 5).

To develop pilgrimage and cultural tourism, we need a common ground for discussion (IP 8).

Cooperation problems were reported between the Municipality and the church (IP 4 & 5), between the Municipality and the Ephorate (IP 4, 5 & 6) and between Dimophelia and the Ephorate (IP 2, 8, 9 & 10). We assume that these problems are, at least in part, caused by hierarchical differences between institutions in an overall context of high power distance. Additionally, a multitude of strategic concepts and ideas for tourism development had already been elaborated for the city; yet none of the concepts have been implemented (IP 3, 4, 8 & 9). Our view is that the largest contributing factor is the absence of a clear leadership role and governance structure within the tourism framework.

We dream things faster than we can manage them in the end. There is no lack of strategies, but a lack of implementation (IP 3).

Moreover, according to the interview partners, the same lack of strategy and coordinated action currently leads to a purely reactive handling of incoming

tourism. The city tries to fulfil the needs of the touristic demand, yet it fails to proactively steer the demand and thus shape the future of tourism in the area.

We only react to the most pressing challenges in tourism instead of following a coherent strategy for its development (IP 5).

The Management Component

Within the destination development framework, the governance process leads to mandating a management process which acts on behalf of all stakeholders and puts the common strategic vision into practice (Pechlaner *et al.*, 2012; Hristov & Zehrer, 2015). At present, the only institution among the tourism stakeholders in Kavala that could theoretically fulfil management tasks is Dimophelia, the Municipality's regional development organisation, as confirmed during the interviews.

Among Kavala's tourism stakeholders, Dimophelia is the only organisation who could act like a DMO. Their work, however, is hindered by bureaucratic constraints and by overlapping responsibilities with the Municipality (IP 11).

During interviews with Dimophelia's representatives, it became evident that the organisation has a strong interest in acting as a DMO (IP 7, 8 & 9). It struggles, however, to do so and to adopt a comprehensive and long-term management approach. This is due to three factors. First, without a strategic vision, elaborated through a governance process and supported by all stakeholders in the network, there is no consented agenda that a destination management organisation could put into practice. Second, due to the absence of a formal governance structure, Dimophelia has no official mandate to manage the destination on behalf of the other parties involved. Additionally, with Dimophelia being a subsidiary of the Municipality, its decision-making power is very limited. Our on-site interviews revealed a lack of acceptance by the other stakeholders (IP 2, 5, 8, 9 & 10). Third, Dimophelia's current financial and human resources do not allow for the organisation to assume the role of a DMO which would include the design, promotion and distribution of market-ready pilgrimage tourism products.

We waste many hours by applying for third-party project funding instead of doing strategic planning and management. Many initiatives and projects have to be abandoned once the funding ends. Sustainable and continuous work on the same project is very difficult (IP 8, 9 & 10).

Due to funding constraints, employment contracts are frequently project-based and of short-term duration. The organisation consequently dedicates significant resources to writing grant proposals to secure future funding. At the conclusion of a project, staff is often augmented from project work to work towards the next grant. The cycle works contrary to a comprehensive and long-term strategic approach. Instead, IP 7, 8, 9 & 10 reported that many projects and initiatives had to be abandoned half-finished because the funding expired, with no follow-up funding being available. Under the given circumstances, Dimophelia would not be able to exercise comprehensive management functions within a destination development process.

It is worth mentioning that most of the stakeholders in Kavala were cognisant of the constraints to destination development which surfaced during the interviews. Parallely, no visible efforts were made to change the existing structures by crossing hierarchies or openly discussing the leadership question. While we do not aim to support or reinforce cultural stereotypes, we do notice that our findings reflect what has been described as typical behaviour in cultures of high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2010; Joiner, 2001).

A Possible Solution

The evaluation revealed several institutional and possibly cultural constraints that are assumed to have hindered the development of pilgrimage tourism in Kavala in the past. As part of the evaluation, the authors attempted to suggest a solution to overcome these constraints. The case of Kavala is believed to be indicative of other destinations in Greece which seek to develop cultural or pilgrimage tourism and face complex institutional networks with national institutions holding control over local monuments. A suggestion for overcoming development constraints might thus serve as a blueprint for similar destinations.

The solution recommended for Kavala is for the local Mayor to form a joint working group with the Ministry of Culture and the local Metropolitan to initiate a pilot project. The charter of this pilot project would use Kavala to exemplify how Greece's cultural heritage can be valorised through the development of cultural and pilgrimage tourism. The results would be transferable with minor adjustments to similarly situated destinations.

For this pilot project, our proposals are as follows:

- a) The project should be funded by the Ministry of Culture for a minimum of five years. With moneys derived from the Ministry of Culture, the project team would have the authority and responsibility of subordinate contributors. A period of five years allows for sufficient time to survey needs, develop a concept, allow for phased implementation, and monitor results.
- b) The project should begin the destination development cycle with a participatory governance process involving all local stakeholders, with the objective of elaborating a joint strategic vision.
- c) The management component should not be conducted by the Ministry, but rather an external management consultancy to provide objective long-term goals.

Within this solution, the joint top-down initiative from the Municipality, the Ministry and the church would force local stakeholders to transgress hierarchy-based barriers and cooperate in developing a joint vision. In the light of Kavala's particular situation which is likely to be mirrored in other Greek locations, we believe that a top-down initiative to start a pilot project will help to start a governance process leading to sustainable destination development.

Conclusions

The case of Kavala documents that a mix of outstanding cultural, religious and historic assets can act as catalysts for destinations seeking to develop pilgrimage tourism. While we found such assets to be present in Kavala, we observed the absence of destination management structures allowing for a sustainable development of pilgrimage tourism in the area. These management structures require leadership that creates a joint vision for valorising the local assets, a governance structure that guides and monitors the development process and a management organisation endowed with responsibility to put the development vision into practice by creating suitable tourism products.

We argue that the lack of destination management structures in Kavala relates to strong hierarchical differences between stakeholders and the inability to overcome them, a complex distribution of responsibilities and a resistance to delegating some of

Figure 4: Harbour of Kavala with Medieval Fortress

Photo : T. Bausch

them, an immense list of seemingly insurmountable bureaucratic regulations and, finally, a reluctance towards changing the current institutional or organisational structures. The solution suggested for initiating a destination development process under the given circumstances involves a joint top-down initiative for leadership by the actors who are most influential within the institutional framework. Whether or not this solution is a feasible one for developing pilgrimage tourism in Kavala has yet to be proven.

The case of Kavala presented in this paper shows that inclusive management approaches are not a boilerplate solution to destination development. In Kavala, social and cultural constraints clearly limit the role of public participation in destination governance. Developing pilgrimage tourism in institutional settings characterised by a mix of public, religious and private stakeholders, a complex distribution of responsibilities and strong hierarchical differences between the different actors requires specific strategies. Under such circumstances, inclusive bottom-up approaches as recommended by destination management literature (Vernon *et al.*, 2005) are bound to fail. Successful destination development, instead, requires that the highest-ranked stakeholders are convinced that tourism development directly benefits their institutions' specific interests, and consequently proactively engage in shaping tourism development by leveraging their societal rank. We believe that the status differences we

noticed between the stakeholders in Kavala are typical of any destination whose institutional framework include stakeholders of higher hierarchical levels, e.g. national government authorities or religious institutions. Both stakeholders require a system of strong hierarchies to secure their societal status and will therefore jeopardise participatory approaches when it comes to tourism development on a local level. Top-down initiatives from high-ranked institutions are therefore paramount to developing pilgrimage tourism within the complex institutional frameworks that are typical of pilgrimage and heritage destinations.

Our findings from the case of Kavala are in strong contrast with the recommendations provided by current research literature on destination management. Researchers tend to argue that a participatory bottom-up approach is required to initiate a process of destination development and governance (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014). Inclusive management concepts are believed to be the best way to successfully develop destinations worldwide (Hristov & Zehrer, 2015). In view of our results, the overall applicability of these concepts needs to be reconsidered. We agree with Bramwell who argues that tourism governance must be approached from a social theory perspective (Bramwell, 2011). Local social and cultural frameworks do not only influence the governance process itself, but also shape people's beliefs about desirable governance structures. We thus argue that

current destination management concepts which tend to originate in Western Europe or North America cannot be universally applied to random destinations worldwide. A critical review and modification of existing destination management literature and a stronger consideration of cultural and social frameworks is strongly required.

In this study a further general lack of research became visible. Destination development theory puts its focus on the creation of a unique destination image and related destination brand equity (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007, Qu *et al.*, 2011, Tasci & Gartner, 2007) using outstanding destination attractions relevant for target groups. Current literature in this field supposes the general availability and accessibility of such attractions and a joint interest of tourism stakeholders to valorise them. In particular, attractions based on nature and culture are assumed to be commons and open to everyone. However, in the field of pilgrimage tourism, even though the attractions are religious or cultural commons, they are in general not automatically available for tourism development. This shows the need for a refinement of attractor-based destination development theory.

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