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Το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό ως βασική συνιστώσα της αναπτυξιακής δυναμικής και διαφοροποίησης των περιοχών: Η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας»

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ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ:
«Εκπαίδευση και Δια Βίου Μάθηση» (Ε.Π.Ε.Δ.Β.Μ.) 2007-2013
Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων

ΑΞΟΝΑΣ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΑΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ 11:
«Ενίσχυση του ανθρώπινου κεφαλαίου για την προαγωγή της έρευνας και της καινοτομίας στις 3 Περιφέρειες Σταδιακής Εξόδου»

ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΙΑ ΠΡΑΞΗΣ:
«ΘΑΛΗΣ»

Η Πράξη συγχρηματοδοτείται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (Ε.Κ.Τ.) και από εθνικούς πόρους, μέσω του Προγράμματος Δημοσίων Επενδύσεων (Π.Δ.Ε.) του Υπουργείου Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων

Παραδοτέο

Παραδοτέο Π4.6.1: Τελική έκδοση κειμένου προς δημοσίευση σε διεθνές περιοδικό

ΥΔ4.6: Συγγραφή τελικών κειμένων – Διάχυση των αποτελεσμάτων της έρευνας

Δράση 4: Μελέτες περιπτώσεων τοπικών πρωτοβουλιών

Η παρούσα έρευνα έχει συγχρηματοδοτηθεί από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση(Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο – ΕΚΤ) και από εθνικούς πόρους μέσω του Επιχειρησιακού Προγράμματος «Εκπαίδευση και Δια Βίου Μάθηση» του Εθνικού Στρατηγικού Πλαισίου Αναφοράς (ΕΣΠΑ) – Ερευνητικό Χρηματοδοτούμενο Έργο: ΘΑΛΗΣ. Επένδυση στην κοινωνία της γνώσης μέσω του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου.

Συντάκτες : Σκορδίλη Σοφία, Λακριντής Αθανάσιος, Πάντος Παναγιώτης,

Για την εκπόνηση του παραδοτέου απασχολήθηκαν τα κάτωθι μέλη της ομάδας έργου :

ΜΕΛΗ ΚΥΡΙΑΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΗΤΙΚΗΣ ΟΜΑΔΑΣ (Κ.Ε.Ο.)

ΣΚΟΡΔΙΛΗ ΣΟΦΙΑ

ΜΕΛΗ ΟΜΑΔΑΣ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΤΩΝ (Ο.Ε.Σ.)

ΛΑΚΡΙΝΤΗΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ

ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗΣ

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ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ
ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗ
επένδυση στην κοινωνία της γνώσης
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ
ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ
Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο
ΕΣΠΑ 2007-2013
πρόγραμμα για την ανάπτυξη
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

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Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας

<u>Ερευνητικό Πρόγραμμα ΘΑΛΗΣ</u>

Το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό ως βασική συνιστώσα της αναπτυξιακής δυναμικής και διαφοροποίησης των περιοχών: Η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας.

ΟΜΑΔΑ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ 4

Χαροκόπειο Πανεπιστήμιο

Σκορδίλη Σοφία

Λακριντής Αθανάσιος

Πάντος Παναγιώτης

Δ4. Μελέτες περιπτώσεων τοπικών πρωτοβουλιών

<u>Παραδοτέο Π4.6.1: Τελική έκδοση κειμένου προς δημοσίευση σε διεθνές περιοδικό</u>

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ΤΟ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΟ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΚΟ ΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΙΣΤΩΣΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΙΑΚΗΣ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΩΝ

ΘΑΛΗΣ - ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ 'ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗ'

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΓΕΩΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ
ΧΑΡΟΚΟΠΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ

ΠΑΡΑΔΟΤΕΟ 4.6.1

Connecting tourism and the agro-food sector: the Greek Breakfast initiative and the case of Santorini

Sophia Skordili and Yorgos Melissourgos

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Connecting tourism and the agro-food sector: the Greek Breakfast initiative and the case of Santorini[*]

Sophia Skordili[†] and Yorgos Melissourgos[‡]

Abstract: Tourism and the agro-food sector are multi-facedly linked; strengthening their linkages at the local scale via a number of policies has always been pivotal for both the industry and local development. This paper examines the "Greek Breakfast" project as a concrete policy initiative in Greece that is about incorporating local produces in the breakfast menu of hotels. It does so through literature review and field work qualitative data, focusing in the case of Santorini island as an example. The empirical findings highlight the importance of contextual factors in explaining the relative success of the project.

Keywords: tourism, agro-food, local development, Greece, Santorini.

Introduction

The relationship between tourism and the agro-food sector is, undoubtedly, an important one. On the one hand, food consumption is an integral part of the tourism experience. Within recent debates on new forms of tourism, food has gained a supreme position as a means for product and destination differentiation, based on its social and cultural connotations. On the other hand, tourism and food production is directly linked to debating the backward linkages of tourism at the destination level and, in this way, is one of the most highlighted fields for analysing the way in which tourism relates to local and regional development. Despite the profound gravity of these themes in both tourism and geography debates, the connection of tourism and the agro-food sector has only recently been streamlined as an important arena of analysis and policy making. Nonetheless, both the conceptual approaches and the empirical accounts still do not pair with the challenges set either by the industry or wider policy concerns. This shortcoming is particularly evident in the case of Greece, where both tourism and the agro-food sector play a major role in economic development.

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With the objective to contribute at filling in the gap, this paper examines a specific policy initiative in the Greek context that is called the “Greek Breakfast”, which aims at motivating the incorporation of local products in the breakfast menu of hotels. The main research goal, tackled through an empirical approach that includes fieldwork data, is providing a preliminary critical assessment of the extent to which such initiatives can make an actual change on the ground vis-à-vis contextual –principally economic and institutional– rigidities. The paper commences by providing a brief reflection on the linkages between tourism and the agro-food sector. This is followed by a number of contemporary critical issues that serve as a context analysis of Greek tourism. Within this framework, a set of policy initiatives on strengthening the ties between tourism and food production and consumption is described. The “Greek Breakfast” initiative is highlighted and is further empirically analysed, focusing on the South Aegean region and the Cyclades. Santorini, a Cyclades island that is a highly dynamic and exceptional destination, is picked up as a place case study, and the analysis is further enhanced with important qualitative findings through a series of interviews with key stakeholders, before final conclusions are drawn.

Tourism and the agro-food sector

There are many aspects in tackling the relationship between tourism and the agro-food sector. Paradoxically enough, food, despite being a sine qua non part of the tourism experience, has only recently been considered as subject of study in its own right (Hall and Sharples, 2003). Yet, belatedly mainstreaming of such an inquiry can be explained within both wider settings of research or policy agendas and the particularities and divisions of labour within the evolving tourism studies (Hall *etal*, 2004; Hall and Page, 2009).

From a demand point of view, the significance of food is mainly investigated in the context of new forms of tourism and its multiple conceptualisations. In this way, one may speak of a renowned recognition of particular consumption aspects within the Special Interest Tourism (SIT) (Prentice, 2004) or tackle the specifics of individual inventive-driven practices, in the likes of food tourism (Hall *etal*, 2003), culinary tourism (Wolf, 2002) or even rural tourism (Roberts and Hall, 2001) and agri-tourism (Anthopoulou and Melissourgos, 2013). Although the SIT debate provides a framework for exploring shifts in tourism consumption, it unavoidably blurs the lines in relation to a more generic analysis of the value of the food component within the tourist experience. In other words, the importance of food within diverse practices of tourism consumption cannot only be accounted for by specific, “special” interests, just because it does not reflect important practices in the mainstream “mass tourism” market.

As far as production and local development is concerned, tourism and food production are functionally linked via the backward linkages of tourism activities at the destination level. But this is much more than simply a supply chain, due to a wide set of features. First, tourism and agriculture may compete for land, labour and capital, creating various sorts of challenges at the local scale; needless to say that these modes of connection are highly –and historically– dependent on local institutions and development dynamics. A number of studies, the majority of which focus on Less Developed Countries, have highlighted a number of factors that weaken the impact of tourism on local prosperity like external ownership or seasonal labour migration (Telfer and Wall, 1996; Milne, 1987; Oppermann and Chon, 1997; Torres, 2003). More specifically, and as far as food is concerned, these studies have demonstrated that food consumption is not just driven by consumer preferences but is mainly driven by the very characteristics of the tourism product. First, generic cultural attributes in wider-than-tourism food consumption may exclude the incorporation of the "local" in demand-driven practices. But, perhaps more importantly, the homogenisation of tourism products and price competition at a macro-regional or even global scale favours cost efficiency in food supply on behalf of tourism firms vis-à-vis exploration of alternative strategies, which is in turn translated into imports and reliance on mass food markets.

The importance and development potential of tourism in Greece

Tourism is considered as an important sector of the Greek economy. According to SETE's (2013) estimations, the contribution of tourism to GDP and employment in 2012 was set at 16,4% and 18,3 respectively. Nevertheless, diminishing trends in main figures like international arrivals and receipts have been a general alarming fact from the early 2000s onwards, despite annual fluctuations. But what is actually reflecting the alarming international orientation of Greek tourism is the latter's position in indexes of tourism destination competition. In WTTC's rankings, Greece holds a mean position, lacking behind from its traditional competitors (like Spain and Portugal) or its new competitors (Cyprus) but still in a better position than, say, Egypt or Turkey. SETE (2005) draws attention in interpreting these rankings due to the general approach that WTTC follows which may ignore more hard and traditional factors like number of arrivals (Turkey, for example, performs much better). But the explanations and suggestions that follow these rankings are unquestionable. The uniform specialization of Greece as a holiday destination, its prolonged state of maturity as a destination, its inability to be price competitive, the rise of new competitors in the Mediterranean and also the inability for exploiting an array of resources that would lead to the diversification of the tourism product and thus to sustaining demand pinpoint to the fact that there is an urgent need for repositioning and even reinventing the competitive angles of the Greek tourism product (Tsartas, 2010).

This urgent need is further reinforced by the fact that the current crisis has led to a severe cut off in domestic demand for tourism services and at the same time the weakening of the bank market is restricting new investments. This has resulted in firm closures in various subsectors, employment shrinkage and immense pressure on profitability and sustainability of tourism enterprises. Other reports that stem mainly from the media highlight other “flexible” strategies like atypical employment, augmented family employment and pluri-activity as a means to overcome the effects of the crisis. Needless to say that, due to the price-quality balance that characterizes tourism and services in general, the tourism product is further deteriorated due to the negative impact that all the above factors have on quality.

On the other hand, Greek tourism has certain features that were both strengths and weaknesses and which were an inherent part of the local system of tourism production and certainly not an impact of the crisis. As far as location and regional specialization is concerned, tourism supply is heavily concentrated (>50% of total hotel bed supply) in just a handful of regions and, at the local scale, in just 6 prefectures (Attica, Dodecanese, Heraclio, Corfu, Cyclades and Halkidiki). This location pattern can be explained by the availability of the sea and sun resources favouring coastal and island destinations, and also by the availability of transport resources and development policies, which during the take-off decades of 1950s to 1980 resulted in reinforcing areas that had already begun to develop tourism activities (Spilanis, 2000).

The role of the Tour Operators has been catalytic in initially picking up places that were to become tourism destinations. These agents controlled not only the flows to specific localities but also helped shape the actual supply of services, either directly (eg through financing) or indirectly. Tour Operators, in assembling the “holiday package” and creating the “mass tourism” market, were the key players in Greece taking off in the 1970s as a European destination and thus in the internationalization of Greek tourism. They are also responsible for the spatial polarization of demand, as well as for the homogenization of the tourism product. Their gatekeeping position in the supply chain also implies that, due to maturity of a destination, oversupply, uniformity of product and oligopolistic power in the source country, they exert high negotiation power over the suppliers of tourism services. Therefore they set a high pressure on local suppliers to drop down prices, which limits the multiplier effects in the local economy; in addition, they raise competition among homogenous destinations and, in conjunction with the inefficiency of local hoteliers to upgrade and raise quality levels, they lead to the degradation of the tourism product quality by boostering products with low quality demand (e.g. all-inclusive stays) (Tsartas, 2010).

At the same time, tourism supply is dominated by SMEs. In 2004, firms with 1-100 beds size accounted for 64% of total room supply and for 93% of total firm number. SMEs, due to size, capital sufficiency and low human capital, they exhibit low productivity, they exert no economies of scale (limited ability to diversify) and are thus susceptible to international competition and ineffective development (Pavlopoulos, 2007). On the other hand, ease of entry, flexibility in both demand adjustments and destination trends, are reported as the advantages of SMEs at the destination. Atypical forms of employment contribute positively to the flexibility of the firm, but may hinder local development, as well as social justice.

Strengthening the ties: public policy and private initiatives in Greece

One of the key strategic themes that penetrate most of the strategies for repositioning Greek tourism in the global markets is strengthening the ties between tourism and agro-food production (see for example the themes and actions proposed by SETE, 2014). Despite the fact that tourism strategic planning is not a comprehensive, uniform and followed-through practice in Greece, in recent years there have been a number of policies that espouse the goal of bringing tourism and the primary sector more close togenether. Although mainly dealing with the local culinary heritage, these policies vary in scope, organizational structure, membership and scale. Some follow a top-down approach where leadership belongs to the regional authorities or to the central state rather than to the entrepreneurs themselves. Others provide public funding to lure entrepreneurs in creating tourism clusters that may not prove sustainable once public sources of finance come to an end. For the most the initiative lies on the part of the central or regional authorities. More recently, however, private labels have been created to certify the commitment of tourism businesses to locality. No matter what their differences are, quality schemes are part of a strategy to diversify the tourism product offered at regional or business level and upgrade its position in the global value chain. Gastronomy is to be linked with specific places and provide a powerful tourism marketing tool.

The pioneering policy has been *The Aegean Cuisine project*. Launched as early as 2008 by the Commercial Chambers of Cyclades and Dodecanese, it was based on the vision that local cuisine would become an integral part of the experience of tourists travelling to the Aegean archipelago. Local cuisine and local products were meant to differentiate and enhance the region's brand and, at the same time, gain in recognition so as to penetrate foreign markets and become export oriented. The goal was to create a certified network of restaurants, hotels, local producers and shops that offer visitors a taste of the Aegean cuisine. So far however priority has been given to restaurants, where visitors are first acquainted with the culinary heritage of the Aegean. In its initial phase, the project adopted a grassroots approach by organising a series of consultation events in a number of islands engaging entrepreneurs, chefs and food writers in a dialogue about the Aegean Cuisine. As a result, recipes and local dishes were collected and published in a special edition, whereas a committee of prominent chefs and food writers was established to assist the Chambers in the process of certification. The first businesses officially entered the network in 2011. Meanwhile, businesses were promoted by an active and up to date portal offering a wealth of information about the Aegean culinary tradition and the activities of the project. A second round of certification started in 2014, making use of ERDF money (Regional Operational Programme for Crete and the Aegean Islands, 2007-2013). It was then acknowledged that a private independent authority should assume certification and new standards for restaurants were established in association with TÜV Hellas. Products must come from the Aegean islands, meat and fish are preferably fresh, dishes must be freshly cooked, and traditional recipes must form a distinctive part of the menu (Commercial Chamber of Cyclades, 2014). At present the network counts 100 restaurants, 47 producers, 9 shops and 6 museums and wineries to visit (data from http://www.aegeancuisine.org/, last accessed on August 25th, 2015). Members benefit from a wide range of publicity activities (brochures, press releases, participation in expositions, promotion to opinion leaders and collaboration with well-known international wine and food portals) and have access to seminars and workshops. The next step is to include businesses in the North Aegean region and expand the network in Athens and abroad. Support to the project is a priority for the region of South Aegean for the next programming period 2014-2020 (Region of South Aegean, 2015).

Similar in scope –though less successful– is the *Cretan Cuisine* quality label, formed in 2012 by unifying existing local labels. The label is managed by the Agro nutritional Cooperation of the Region of Crete, a not for profit organisation aiming at developing the agro food sector on the island, whose main partner are the region's local authorities. Private companies in the agro food sector, associations of producers, local chambers and cooperatives participate as well. The Cooperation promotes the local agro food sector by supporting, inter alia, three quality labels, namely Crete Land of Values for agro food products, Open Wineries and Cretan Cuisine. Standards refer to food safety, the quality of service and food origin (Agro nutritional Cooperation of the Region of Crete, n.d.). A total of 70% of the products used have to be produced or processed on the island whereas 70% of the dishes offered must represent local cuisine and be easily distinguished from the rest on the menu. 23 restaurants have been certified so far. The cost of inspection is assumed by the business itself. Members benefit from training seminars for their staff and lower prices when buying from producers of the Crete Land of Values network.

Another initiative is “we do local”, a private certification scheme that rewards the local embeddedness of its members. Tourism businesses adhere to the place where they are located by supporting local producers, recruiting their employees from the local community, promoting local cuisine and local culture. It is a label about locality, authenticity and sustainability targeting tourists that wish to experience the “true” taste and culture of the place they visit and are sensitive to local community issues. The label was created in 2014 by the newly established Local Production and Hospitality Corporation whose founding members are some of the most prominent tourism entrepreneurs in Crete. At presents it certifies tourism accommodation establishments in Crete and ships, with the aim to expand to other regions of Greece (Papadimopoulos, 2015). The project already counts 22 members, all upper class tourism resorts and 1 ship.

The Greek breakfast initiative

Perhaps the most prominent among Greek policies relating tourism to the agro food industry is the Greek breakfast initiative. The project was launched in 2010, as the Greek Chamber of Hotels felt the need to enrich breakfast offered by Greek hotels with local products and dishes. The project was ambitious from the very start, aiming at what seems even today a major shift in the mentality of Greek hoteliers from mass tourism to the experience of locality. Hotel guests were to be acquainted with the local Greek gastronomy and the local landscape was to come alive through the products of the land and its people, all in the need to enhance and differentiate the Greek tourism product, strengthen the linkages to the other branches of the local economy and boost employment in the agro food sector (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, n.d.: 7).

According to the Chamber idle components of culture and tradition were to become valuable resources to the local economies (*Agrenda*, 2012). To do this the Chamber assumed a holistic approach. A major study was undertaken to explore the type of breakfast currently offered by Greek hotels (mainly continental and buffet style breakfast which provided hotel guests with familiar flavours and typical mass tourism services) and the experience of hotels already offering local Greek products for breakfast. Part of the study also aimed at understanding recent international trends in food consumption, so as to adapt the local breakfast accordingly. Most important, local portfolios were created for every region of the country, in which tangible and intangible goods related to food (products, recipes, stories about food, production techniques etc) as well as the experts working in fields related to the local gastronomy were listed (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, n.d.). These portfolios have since been used to create model breakfasts for each place and also to inform and train hotel owners.

Model breakfasts are intended to be the outcome of extended discussion. Being a policy about locality and local development designed at the national level, if the project is to succeed it is crucial that local actors get involved. It is therefore upon the local association of hotel owners to take the initiative and invite the Chamber over to present its proposal for the particular region. The proposal is widely discussed with representatives of the local community (local authorities, tourism businesses, producers, chefs, the local press, local cultural institutions) and an agreement is reached upon as to which products and recipes should be included in the model breakfast of the region. This Local Quality Pact is signed by local stakeholders. Qualification procedures are therefore used to stimulate new community networks and a new professional culture.

Products and recipes included in the local breakfast are expected to comply with recent international trends in food consumption and with the principles of the Mediterranean diet. They must first and foremost be part of the local gastronomic heritage. Food heritage is constructed for each particular destination and can then be used as a marketing tool. An emphasis is put on products registered under any of the EU quality schemes, namely the Protected Destinations of Origin scheme (PDO), the Protected Geographical Indications scheme (PGI) and the Traditional Specialty Guaranteed scheme (TSG). Traditional homemade local products not listed in any national or EU registry can also be included (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, n.d.: 18-19). Local breakfasts comprise products from fourteen different categories: bread, drinks and refreshments, dairy products, oil and olives, fruit, pies, honey, marmalade, desserts, soups, cured meats, cereals, eggs, Greek coffee. Each hotel must choose products from at least six of the categories above and these must cover at least 50% of the total products offered for breakfast (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, n.d.: 22). Greek breakfast products must be properly labelled on the menu or in the buffet or offered in a special corner of the room to be distinguished from other types of products offered for breakfast. Acknowledging the higher cost of local products, the Chamber points out that upper class large hotels can afford offering local products in a buffet style breakfast, whereas introducing Greek products in an à la carte type of breakfast is more suitable for small, family businesses (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, *Report on establishing and promoting the Greek breakfast project. A short presentation*: 30).

A review of the national and local press unveils both the obstacles and the opportunities as perceived by different stakeholders during the implementation of the project. Potential benefits were quickly acknowledged by the first communities and businesses involved. For major exporting agro food companies the main advantage was that tourists would take the taste for Greek products back to their country and thus become a new niche market for Greek exports (Karayiorgos, 2013), while small producers found a new local market for selling their products (*Agrenda*, 2012). Hotel owners put forward the competitive advantage stemming from the use of authentic and quality local products, as a means to move away from cost competitiveness, add value to the services offered, create loyal customers and upgrade to a higher income tourist market (Karayiorgos, 2013; *Kathimerini*, 7/7/2013; *Agrenda*, 2012).

However the project moved on slowly. Part of this delay is readily explained by the fact that the project was launched at a time of economic crisis, when hotel bookings were at a very low price and reducing cost was of prime importance to Greek hotel owners. Cost is a recurrent issue with hotel owners and national authorities persistently arguing that local producers shouldn't treat hotels as retail customers, but instead acknowledge the fact that hotels can become an additional steady source of income (Karayiorgos, 2013). Another issue is path dependence, namely the feeling that hotels should continue to cater for their foreign visitors as they did because a continental or an English breakfast is what tourists are already familiar with and what they expect, especially in a mass tourism sea and sun destination (Mandrakou, 2013; Georgiopoulou*, 2013*). All parts acknowledge the fact that the Greek breakfast didn't even exist as a concept before and the Greek Chamber of Hotels had to build a new brand name from scratch. Furthermore, hotel owners feel local producers aren't always to be trusted to deliver their products on schedule *(*Mandrakou, 2013).

So, in June 2013 120 hotels had entered the project (Karayiorgos, 2013), quite a small number compared to a total of 9.677 hotels in Greece at the time. At present the project is taken up by 501 hotels, whereas 26 model breakfasts for different places in Greece have been formed. Table 1 depicts hotel participation rates in the Greek breakfast project for the 13 regions of Greece (NUTS 2) and for Greece as a whole. Data has been retrieved from the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels database and presents hotel capacity in Greece in June 2015 (last available data on June 24th, 2015) and from the Greek Breakfast project site. Data is analysed per region and per hotel class. Results show an overall limited participation in the project and reveal niches of good participation rates with specific traits concerning either destination branding or the type of hotels.

Table 1 The Greek Breakfast project: hotel participation rates, NUTS 2 regions, 2015

region	5*			4*			3*			2*			1*			total		
	hotels total	hotels in the project	participation rate	hotels total	hotels in the project	participation rate	hotels total	hotels in the project	participation rate	hotels total	hotels in the project	participation rate	hotels total	hotels in the project	participation rate	hotels total	hotels in the project	participation rate
Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	10	3	30,00%	27	5	18,52%	91	7	7,69%	180	3	1,67%	75	1	1,33%	383	19	4,96%
Attiki	30	8	26,67%	98	19	19,39%	139	15	10,79%	266	4	1,50%	112	1	0,89%	645	47	7,29%
Dytiki Ellada	4	2	50,00%	37	5	13,51%	87	4	4,60%	110	2	1,82%	29	0	0,00%	267	13	4,87%
Dytiki Makedonia	3	1	33,33%	17	1	5,88%	64	6	9,38%	37	0	0,00%	4	0	0,00%	125	8	6,40%
Ipeiros	9	5	55,56%	75	13	17,33%	145	11	7,59%	135	5	3,70%	29	0	0,00%	393	34	8,65%
Ionia Nisia	25	4	16,00%	101	11	10,89%	213	9	4,23%	512	6	1,17%	75	0	0,00%	926	30	3,24%
Kentriki Makedonia	41	12	29,27%	90	15	16,67%	262	20	7,63%	373	10	2,68%	422	1	0,24%	1188	58	4,88%
Kriti	88	32	36,36%	236	34	14,41%	345	6	1,74%	673	6	0,89%	207	2	0,97%	1549	80	5,16%
North Aegean	6	1	16,67%	32	4	12,50%	126	9	7,14%	179	4	2,23%	48	0	0,00%	391	18	4,60%
Peloponnisos	20	2	10,00%	105	16	15,24%	205	16	7,80%	244	4	1,64%	77	2	2,60%	651	40	6,14%
South Aegean	121	14	11,57%	353	42	11,90%	473	18	3,81%	913	20	2,19%	227	0	0,00%	2087	94	4,50%
Sterea Ellada	10	1	10,00%	37	4	10,81%	124	14	11,29%	293	3	1,02%	67	2	2,99%	531	24	4,52%
Thessaly	28	7	25,00%	106	11	10,38%	131	12	9,16%	228	6	2,63%	77	0	0,00%	570	36	6,32%
Greece	**395**	**92**	**23,29%**	**1314**	**180**	**13,70%**	**2405**	**147**	**6,11%**	**4143**	**73**	**1,76%**	**1449**	**9**	**0,62%**	**9706**	**501**	**5,16%**

Source: Own elaboration based on: (1) Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, hotel capacity per region, June 2015, (2) The Greek breakfast project, http://www.greekbreakfast.gr/el/, last accessed on 10th August, 2015.

At first glance it appears that mainland regions such as Thessaly and Ipeiros are doing better than the insular and coastal touristic areas of the Ionian Islands (Ionia nisia), Crete (Kriti), Cyclades and the Dodecanese (Notio Aigaio). By focusing on statistics at the local scale, higher participation rates in mainland regions are found in specific clusters of tourism activity, namely winter and all year round resorts attracting domestic tourism and branded as traditional and authentic. Thus, out of a total of 34 hotels participating in the region of Ipeiros, 25 are situated in the mountainous touristic areas of Metsovo, Zagori and Tzoumerka. Half of these are officially classified as traditional guesthouses. The same holds for the region of Thessaly where 17 out of 36 hotels are located in the area of Pelion and 47% are traditional guesthouses. Although all hotels in traditional settlements respect local architecture and style, hotels that fall into this category are usually traditional preserved establishments that have been restored and turned to hotels. The space of the buildings is limited so that hotels' capacity is small (on average 11 rooms per hotel). However this doesn't mean that they are lower class hotels. In fact 60% of traditional guesthouses are luxury establishments, rated five and four stars and therefore enjoy the benefits of an upper class hotel price policy (Research Institute for Tourism, 2014: 62-63). Similar trends can be observed in the region of Peloponnisos. Out of the forty hotels participating in the project, 19 operate in Laconia, most of them in the traditional areas of Mani and Monemvasia. The small number of hotels participating in Arcadia and Corinthia can also be linked to mountainous traditional resorts. It may be worth noting that other touristic areas of the region appealing to domestic tourism for sea and sun family vacations like the coastal areas of Argos, Ermionida and Corinthia are practically absent from the project. Participation in Messinia is in large part due to upper class hotels operating in Pylos and Kalamata.

Particularly marked is the distribution of participation per hotel class (table 1). At country level participation is diminishing dramatically as we descend to the lower hotel categories. While 23,04% and 13,70% of the total number of five star and four star hotels respectively offer Greek breakfast, rates plummet to 1,74% and 0,62% for two and one star hotels, despite the urge of the Chamber to include all hotel categories in the initiative. This is particularly pronounced in the region of Crete, where 36,36% of five star hotels participate in the project as opposed to 1,74% of three star and 0,89% of two star hotels. Together with the wider area of Athens (Attiki) Crete presents the larger rate of five star hotels in Greece (Research Institute for Tourism, 2014: 73, data for the year 2013). Upper class hotels in Crete are luxury summer resorts targeting the demanding up market tourism segment. They offer a wide range of activities and amenities. Most of them are already active in the field of culinary tourism, featuring a variety of restaurants, offering local cuisine on their menus, organising Greek cooking lessons or keeping their own farm and growing their own food, so that participation in the Greek breakfast project seems just one among a variety of high quality services offered to make their clients stay memorable. Five and four star hotels in

Crete are also top ranked in terms of their size (table 2). Five star hotels include on average 202 rooms which is the second best result in Greece after hotels in the region of Athens, while four star hotels come first with an average size of 104 rooms[§].

Table 2 Average size of hotels in Greece per region, 2015 (number of rooms)

region (NUTS 2)	areas	5*	4*	3*	2*	1*
Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki		95	69	32	22	15
Attiki		209	80	50	30	19
	Athens	*226*	*100*	*62*	*34*	*22*
Dytiki Ellada		361	54	34	26	13
Dytiki Makedonia		20	23	26	18	14
Ipeiros		79	18	21	18	17
Ionia Nisia		161	101	67	34	20
Kentriki Makedonia		165	90	41	27	21
	Thessaloniki	*144*	*80*	*60*	*36*	*22*
	Chalkidiki	*179*	*118*	*55*	*27*	*21*
Kriti		202	104	47	36	27
North Aegean		131	49	35	24	15
Peloponnisos		140	36	29	24	12
South Aegean		144	97	42	28	16
Sterea Ellada		67	71	30	24	17
Thessaly		47	27	29	23	19
Greece		**146**	**74**	**40**	**29**	**18**

Source: Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, hotel capacity per region, June 2015.

In general, good participation rates occur in areas with the highest score in upper class big hotels. Athens is a similar case in point. Attica (Attiki), including the wider region of Athens and the islands of Argosaronikos, ranks second among all Greek regions in the amount of five star hotels (Research Institute for Tourism, 2014: 73, data for the year 2013). The region ranks first when the relative size of the five star hotels is considered, the average size being 209 rooms (table 2). Most of the hotels in Attica participating in the project operate in Athens, where five and four star hotels have an even more impressive average size of 226 and 100 rooms respectively and three star hotels have 62 rooms on average, well above the country average. Participation rates are considerable in all three upper classes and lodgings are either city hotels located in the urban centre or summer resorts located at the beachfront. Likewise high participation rates in upper class hotels in Central Macedonia (Kentriki Makedonia) are coupled with the big average size of hotels in Thessaloniki and Chalkidiki, where 45 out of the 58 hotels participating in the project are located. This is all the most evident when the average size of hotels actually participating in the project is

[§] Results for the region of Dytiki Ellada (Western Greece) are misleading because they concern a very small number of hotels operating in the area of Olympia.

compared to the average at country level: hotels in Thessaloniki and Chalikidki have an average size of 169 and 126 rooms respectively (five stars) and 126 and 124 rooms (four stars). Hotel size is related to hotel annual income. Data for 2012 available from the annual survey conducted by the Chamber, show that hotels with more than 100 rooms do better in terms of the average annual income per room. The top three regions in the list are the wider area of Athens (30.250,84 € annual income per room), Macedonia and Thrace (21.372,25 €) and Crete (16.419,19 €) (Research Institute for Tourism, 2014: 82).

The project therefore appeals to upper class big hotels in a country where small to medium sized hotels prevail. It is also attractive to small but luxury traditional guesthouses and to hotels in traditional settlements in general targeting domestic tourism. The trends observed cannot however account for the limited participation in the Ionian islands or in Rhodes (2,64% participation rate) and Kos (6,84% participation rate) in the region of South Aegean, where hotels share a common profile with the ones in Crete and Chalkidiki. A more in depth analysis is needed to reveal crucial issues of social and human capital involved in a project which in the end is about stakeholders' collaboration.

Focusing on the Cyclades islands

Cyclades are a group of small islands that belong to the insular region of South Aegean (Notio Aigaio) together with the twelve islands of the Dodecanese. Endowed with a rich natural and cultural environment, the region prides some of the most renowned sea and sun destinations worldwide, like Mykonos, Santorini and Rhodes. It is composed of 79 islands (31 inhabited) and covers an area of 5.286km^2 with a population of 308.975 (2011 census). Tourism is the most important sector followed by trade, transportation services and real estate activities (Region of South Aegean, 2015; Alasdair et al., 2012).

Although the pattern of tourism development differs among the islands, overall the region is a conventional mass tourism destination for foreign tourists arriving by charter flights and for domestic tourists travelling individually (Spilanis and Vayanni, 2003). Various indicators outline the tourism profile of the region and prove its importance for the country's tourism economy. The region comprises 24,8% of the total hotel capacity in Greece (counted in rooms) ranking first among the Greek regions. According to the results of the Chamber's monthly survey on the distribution of inbound tourism expenditure per region (Research Institute for Tourism, 2014) in 2013 the region of South Aegean received 4.137.050 foreign tourists, that is 23,1% of the total, ranking second behind the region of Central Macedonia, and recorded 24,7% of total overnight stays in Greece. Foreign tourists spent on average 842,9€ per trip and 88,2€ per night (Greece average 653,3 and 73,1€). A total of 2.058.338.682€ was actually spent during their stay on the islands, of which 28,48% in accommodation, 23,42% in restaurants and bars, 10,01% in transport, 18,18% in shopping and only 5,82% in cultural and other recreational activities. Most of the expenses therefore are for lodging and food, a point that enhances the argument that the region remains a mass tourism destination, despite efforts to develop alternative and special interest tourism activities that overwhelm the internet. Seasonality is also an outcome of the dominant sea and sun mass tourism model: 78,8% of stays and 80,3% of expenses took place between June and September.

So, mass tourism is at the same time a source of strength and weakness for the region. The effect of size has contributed to the economic growth of the region with a GDP per capita (in PPS) of 26.500€ in 2008, which due to the crisis has fallen to 22.300€ in 2011 (last available data, data from Eurostat), ranking second behind Attica. Conventional tourism has helped to halt previous economic problems, increase domestic income and restrain migration through the creation of new jobs (Spilanis & Vayanni, 2003). However despite the strength of tourism, employment in hotels has fallen by 8,2% in August 2012 compared to the same month the previous year, a reduction that has been retained to 3,6% in 2013 (August 2013 compared to August 2012) (Research Institute for Tourism, 2014: 97). The region also suffers from a low educational level: in 2013 only 17,2% of the population aged 25-64 had successfully completed tertiary studies, the second lowest rate in the country after the Ionian islands (data from Eurostat). In 2011 21,2% of the workforce (age group 15-74) had either successfully completed tertiary education or were employed in an occupation where such an education was required (Greece, 2011: 32,4%) (Alasdair et al., 2012). Conventional tourism offers few opportunities to innovate and upgrade the skills of human resources, reduces the value added of the destination, weakens its position in the global value chain and at the same time discourages the development of a cluster culture among firms (Alasdair et al., 2012; Spilanis & Vayanni, 2003).

With this in mind regional authorities are called to implement a strategy for sustainable growth within the framework of the EU policy for smart specialization. All stakeholders, entrepreneurs, local policy makers, researchers and EU officials alike, acknowledge the primacy of the tourism sector and the extensive spillover effects it can produce over other important economic activities. The task is to explore the linkages between sectors in the regional economy and encourage cross-sector fertilization, starting with tourism and funding innovative attempts of collaboration with the agro food sector, ICT and the culture industry. Tourism will move away from the conventional pattern towards a more creative approach focused on staging experiences suitable to the cultural heritage and the hospitality tradition of each island. To this end and following the principles of smart specialization strategy, funding will be provided to encourage a process of entrepreneurial discovery where businessemen will collaborate with consultants and policy makers to set priorities for SIT tourism activities on the islands. Funding will also be available to implement local quality schemes necessary to upgrade hotel services and promote the local narrative on hospitality and culture. Culinary tourism is part of this strategy and funding is available for tourism food clusters and for steady collaboration schemes among hotels and local producers to better coordinate production and demand (Region of South Aegean, 2015).

As far as the Cyclades islands are concerned, Table 3 shows some poor results of the project. Although two of the initial model breakfasts were established on Naxos and Santorini, in 2012 and 2013 respectively, the data show an impressively low participation percentage. Low participation is moreover at odds with the existence of an active agro-food sector on both islands: a number of PDOs and traditional food products are produced there that are listed in the Greek breakfast registry.

Table 3: Hotels participating in the Greek breakfast project in the islands of Cyclades, August 2015

Region of South Aegean (Notio Aigaio) - Cyclades			
island	total number of hotels	hotels in the project	hotels in the project/ total hotels per island (%)
Amorgos	12	2	16,67%
Anafi	1	0	0,00%
Andros	29	1	3,45%
Antiparos	9	0	0,00%
Folegandros	30	3	10,00%
Ios	45	1	2,22%
Kea	7	2	28,57%
Kimolos	1	0	0,00%
Kythnos	4	0	0,00%
Milos	36	1	2,78%
Mykonos	174	9	5,17%
Naxos	145	4	2,76%
Paros	139	9	6,47%
Santorini	284	13	4,58%
Seriphos	12	0	0,00%
Sikinos	1	0	0,00%
Siphnos	31	4	12,90%
Syros	45	1	2,22%
Tinos	41	2	4,88%
Cyclades	**1046**	**52**	**5,01%**

Source: Own elaboration based on: (1) Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, hotel capacity per region, June 2015, (2) The Greek breakfast project, http://www.greekbreakfast.gr/el/, last accessed on 10th August, 2015.

Part of the results can be explained by the type of tourism product of the Cyclades. A survey conducted in 2007 and 2009 on behalf of the Commercial Chamber of Cyclades on Naxos, Paros, Milos, Andros, Syros and Tinos (Commercial Chamber of Cyclades, 2009) confirms that the islands are a typical sea and sun destination, with beaches and the beautiful landscape being the top reasons for coming and where tourists' activities were for the most restricted to going to the beach and enjoying a drink at the bar. It is worth noting that food and breakfast offered by all types of lodgings was a source of complaint: in all six of the islands surveyed, 32% of the visitors were satisfied from breakfast and 22% from food in general, the rate being much lower for the island of Milos (18% and 5% respectively).

Similar surveys on the islands of Ios (Stylidis et al., 2007) and Mykonos (Kamenidou et al., 2009) that try to capture the destination image of the islands, show that albeit targeting a different tourism market than the islands mentioned before, they are both poorly branded as culturally interesting destinations. Ios seems to be perceived as a place for adults, not for families, with a very pleasant weather, nice beaches and exciting nightlife. Bars were considered its main attraction. The majority of the tourists surveyed believed that Ios didn't have interesting historical sites or events and were indifferent to its culture and customs. Likewise, Mykonos stands out as a cosmopolitan destination with luxury and exciting nightlife, where "everything can happen" (Kamenidou et al. 2009: 77).

It seems therefore that the project remains indifferent to the largest part of hotel owners in the Cyclades, and this could be in part because they consider it indifferent to their clientele. Hotel owners won't bear the extra cost of buying local since tourists seem to be coming after all for quite different reasons. This is by no means to say that the upgrading of the Cyclades as a destination for cultural tourism and special interest tourism in general is not desired. In a survey conducted by the Commercial Chamber of Cyclades in 2008, with the aim to outline the projects that businessmen in the Cyclades consider a priority for local development, entrepreneurs put forward the need to take advantage and mark out local culture and history (Commercial Chamber of Cyclades, 2008). They also acknowledge the need to upgrade the quality of services in hotels and restaurants and develop special interest tourism services on the islands, the latter being a recurrent issue in their answers. It maybe then that food isn't associated to local culture and that food consumption isn't thought of as a cultural experience, contrary to the beliefs of regional policy makers who consider culinary tourism as part of the cultural and creative economy. In this case they may not appreciate the value of developing the region into a culinary tourism place. It should also be noted that for local entrepreneurs, top priorities had to do with transport and the accessibility of the islands from the mainland and abroad, an issue that clearly has to do with facilitating incoming mass tourism flows.

Another obvious reason for poor participation is cost. As in all Greek regions, participation is stronger in the upper hotel classes where hotels target the up market tourist segment and can therefore afford the extra cost of buying local products (Table 4). However recently there has been a revival of interest on the part of local hoteliers so that in September 2014 and in the first semester of 2015 three more model breakfasts have been agreed upon, on Sifnos, Folegandros and Tinos.

Table 4: Hotels participating in the Greek Breakfast project in the Cyclades, August 2015 - data presented per hotel class

Region of South Aegean - Cyclades			
class	number of hotels	hotels participating in the project	hotels participating / total hotels per class
5*	56	4	7,14%
4*	186	27	14,52%
3*	217	8	3,69%
2*	430	13	3,02%
1*	157	0	0,00%

Sources: (1) Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, hotel capacity per region, June 2015 (2) The Greek breakfast project, http://www.greekbreakfast.gr/el/, last accessed on 10th August, 2015 (data processed by the authors)

Empirical evidence from Santorini

Santorini is an exceptional and dynamic destination at the local scale. Building on the volcano geomorphology and its unique dramatic scenery, the island has become a world famous spot. But it's not only about the landscape; Santorini is also rich in a series of tourism resources, apart from the 3s. Its archaeological tradition includes one of the finest and well-preserved Minoan settlements (Akrotiri), while there are also a number of remnants from other historic periods. The traditional settlements are not only confined to the caldera cliffs of Thira or Oia but are spread in other parts of the island as well. Santorini as a brand combines typical Aegean features with romanticism, while its unparalleled sunset sceneries have also contributed to the island becoming one of the world's top wedding destinations.

The island is also considered a "culinary paradise", due to the specificity of its local products. The volcanic soil has served as a powerful imperative throughout the centuries and has formulated a series of local, traditional products like cherry tomatoes, white egg plants, fava and caper. But, unquestionably, the most famous product is the wine; the varieties of Assyrtiko, Athyri or Aidani, again due to the soil particularity, produce a distinctive series of wines. Perhaps strangely enough, the limited and exceptional agricultural production that historically has shaped the local culinary tradition is now considered as the cutting edge of promoting the destination. This is evident in the initiative to celebrate 2013 as “year of gastronomy”, where marketing activities and events aimed at expanding the island’s competitive advantage. In addition, this is one of the main reasons for Santorini being a leader in formulating a model breakfast and joining the Greek Breakfast in 2013.

But, as already stated, the response of hotels has been rather limited, with only 13 out of 284 establishments joining the project. This is a rather contradictory finding, not just because of the great magnitude of the actual resources that provide competitive opportunities or even the descaling of the initial start-up efforts. If cost issues are taken into account and can actually explain poor performance elsewhere, then one would not expect to find these issues here, just because the premium prices that hotels command –especially in the caldera area– allow for such a profit margin that juxtapose supply cost constraints. In order to further investigate this line of questioning, a series of interviews was conducted with hotel owners and managers, farmers, chefs, and other key local stakeholders, based on thematic interview guides. In total, 13 interviews were held in October 2015.

A key finding is that there are important structural explanations for the limited local response to the Greek Breakfast project and, more generally, the constrained connection between tourism and local production. First, the limited range of local products and the small size of production in relation to total consumption needs means that supplies have to be made from elsewhere, which are about the bulk of total supplies for hotels and, mainly, restaurants. But even if one focuses on specific products, then again there is a trend for substituting imports for local production. Apart from the limited total size of agricultural production that does not meet demand levels, the reason is that prices for local agro-food products are high, due to high production costs that relate to both the specificities of anhydrous cultivation and the small size of farms. This is paired with an inflationary increase in tourism local consumption, where high prices reflect the success of the destination and are driven by the up market segment of the tourism market. In other words, the rich clientele of the island, those that can afford paying sky-rocket prices for a hotel stay, are upwardly distorting the general level of prices. This has both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, high prices for agro-food products help sustain local production vis-à-vis other work opportunities and, particularly, land uses. On the other hand, augmented prices do not allow hotels of restaurants that are price competitive (a different market segment) to exploit the incorporation of local products in their services.

An additional major finding is that the limited local response to the Greek Breakfast project is largely explained by entrepreneurship factors that entail strong social and cultural elements. One aspect, as revealed by the majority of key informants, is that the hoteliers that joined the project would have incorporated local products anyway, even without this particular project. As a matter of fact, all of them had been doing so before the project started. When asked why, they replied that it is their firm belief that serving cherry tomatoes or caper is about offering an integrated experience of the place. In parallel, there are indeed higher costs involved in this, but they are of limited importance, due to small size of total supplies and the fact that local products only complement the menu.

It was also stressed in the interviews that product differentiation at the firm level as a result of incorporating local specificities in the tourist experience is clearly paying, and this becomes obvious in the reviews that are made in e-platforms like trip advisor. In this way, the internet may be reaffirming its role as the primary direct driver for change, but again this kind of data presupposes an open perception on behalf of the entrepreneur.

As it was also mentioned, the incorporation of local products in the breakfast menu is also limited due to lack of information, which has to do with both the limited promotional activities of the project itself and, more importantly, the complacency of the firm owner to the "success" of his/her firm and of the destination. "Why bother with experiments since the firm is performing better than expected?" clearly states the argument. This attribute is also highlighting the fact that local efforts to promote gastronomy and culinary tourism are undertaken by informative, innovative and visionary people in their private businesses and in collective endeavours that, in turn, add value to the destination as a system, even though the cumulative impacts are limited due to inadequate follow up and investment in consequent phases.

Conclusions

The empirical analysis aimed at providing a critical assessment of the extent to which policy initiatives that tackle the problem of weak linkages between tourism and the agro-food sector can make an actual change on the ground vis-à-vis contextual rigidities. In the case of the Greek Breakfast project, statistics revealed rather limited outcomes, mainly indicated in the small number of hotel firms that joined the project. In trying to explain this, it was found that there are important structural imperatives that unavoidably limit the success of such projects. High supply costs for tourism firms is probably the most important one, but this has in turn to be put in context, as there are different market segments with highly differentiated firm strategies. Entrepreneurship and culture may play a much more significant role. The conventional way of running the business, in addition to the "success" of the destination, has impeded a great number of actors from making innovative shifts.

Clearly these actors are free-riders in relation to cumulative shifts and/or collective efforts to specialise and diversify local services.

In any case, path dependency has been demonstrated to be deeply rooted in social norms and practices; besides being an important aspect that sets local strategies, it is also a factor that seriously needs to be taken into account when formulating policies. The Greek Breakfast has taken into consideration a number of features at the level of the firm and at the level of the destination (SME-based economy, non-integration of local production chains, lack of knowledge and introvert entrepreneurship) and aimed at creating an initial critical mass before being developed in a full and comprehensive set of tools and guidelines. It is in this respect that there the project is a successful one, despite indicators runoffs, exactly because it was based on the SWOTs of contextual factors. Even though in an informal way –precisely because it had to deal with limited own resources and informality as a key way of performing business– the project addressed major entrepreneurship issues like economic, institutional, social and historical context, which dictates how and why entrepreneurial activities happens and who gets involved (Welter, 2011; Dana et al., 2014). Contextual factors can become an asset or a liability to entrepreneurship. In order to put entrepreneurial activity in context, issues of "where" and "when" are important (Welter, 2011). "Where" refers to business environment (industry and market structure), social context (social networks, family), institutional context (formal laws, organizations and culture) and spatial context. "When" is about history, the path dependence of place bound economic activity. It is also about the time frame of entrepreneurial activity (short or long lasting). Context is then multi-faceted, but it also cuts across higher and lower levels of analysis (national, regional and local). In turn entrepreneurship can bring change to places and communities.

As far as cluster culture is concerned, it seems particularly important if a network between tourism and the agro-food sector is to be established. Not only is tourism a fragmented activity, but cross-sectoral collaboration is an attempt to bring together individuals with different backgrounds who sometimes don't seem to speak the same language (Lee et al., 2015). However, establishing local networks with formal and informal attributes offers a way forward, taken into account a number of practical impediments like those recorded in the case of culinary tourism such as coordinating production and demand and diminishing cost (Sharples,2003; Smith and Hall, 2003; Telfer and Hashimoto, 2003). Unarguably, these are issues that need to be taken seriously into account when debating the connection between tourism and the agro-food sector; otherwise, as argued by Melissourgos and Tsakopoulou (forthcoming), much of this debate will only tackle marketing issues, leaving critical questions of industry performance and local development unanswered.

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