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Threats and Obstacles to Resilience: Insights from Greece's Wine Tourism

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Abstract

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the intertwined challenges that, on the one hand, pose a threat to the resilience of wine tourism, whilst on the other hand, prevent the sector's further development. The study, conducted in the Greek context, is based on personal, in-depth interviews with 39 key stakeholders and national experts. Thematic Analysis was used to interpret the qualitative data and identify prominent themes in participants' responses. Specific stress factors were grouped into three main categories (i.e., economic, social and environmental), laying the basis for the development of an integrative resilience framework for wine tourism.

Keywords: Wine Tourism, Greece, Resilience, Threats, Challenges, Thematic Analysis.

Introduction

Having emerged from the existing symbiotic relationship between agriculture, manufacturing and the tertiary sector, wine tourism represents a socio-ecological system that is particularly exposed to multiple stressors (Gilinsky, Newton, & Vega, 2016; Gossling & Hall, 2013). Operators of wineries open to public are constantly challenged by a wide range of pressures, including *inter alia*: increasingly unpredictable weather fluctuations associated with climate change; competition for natural resources; marketing issues; bureaucracy; and changes in consumption patterns (Alonso, Bressan, O'Shea, & Krajsic, 2013). As Alonso & Bressan (2015) recommend:

“...Identifying the most serious challenges wineries face can be of practical usefulness for the sector. The availability of this knowledge could provide hints and clues to other wine regions...that either experience challenges, or that may be interested in learning how other regions may cope with such challenges.” (p. 41)

The ongoing crisis in the Eurozone has been especially tough for the Greek economy and people. Concurrently, a number of pressures at various levels threaten Greece's relatively young wine tourism sector. Against this background of insecurity and the risks it entails, the objective of this chapter is to generate new knowledge on the complexity of issues associated with the resilience of wine tourism. In particular, the present study seeks to explore the constellation of factors that constitute major or potential sources of perturbations, and therefore could affect the performance or prevent the sector's further development.

Following this initial introductory part, this chapter is divided into a further five sections. We begin by reviewing the interconnections of resilience theory to tourism studies. Within this next section, we discuss how wine tourism is embedded in socio-ecological systems. We then move on to a brief overview of the Greek wine tourism sector before providing a description of our method. Empirical results and the conclusions can be found in sections four and five.

Review of Literature

Resilience theory and tourism research

Gradually, the scientific interest in human-environment relationships has broadened to include the concept of resilience, calling for a more integrated understanding of complex socio-ecological systems (Fiksel, 2006; Folke, 2006; Larsen, Calgaro, & Thomalla, 2011). While initially embraced in the mathematical and natural sciences, the term has been continuously expanded to encompass sociological aspects (Lew, 2014). In this context, resilience is inextricably linked to the capacity of social entities (individuals, organizations or communities)

(Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013) to respond, together and effectively to external shocks (Walker & Salt, 2006), caused “as a result of social, political and environmental change” (Adger, 2000, p. 347).

The notion of resilience has also attracted tourism academics’ attention, serving as a framework that sheds light on the community’s ability either “to cope with crises, systemic shocks and change” (Biggs, Hall, & Stoeckl, 2012, p. 646) or “to develop a tourism industry in a sustainable manner” (Holladay & Powel, 2013, p. 5). Several tourism-related studies have focused on resilience as a mechanism of disaster risk reduction and recovery (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Calgaro, 2010; Lamanna, Williams, & Childers, 2012; Sydnor-Bouso, Stafford, Tews, & Adler, 2011). Another stream of research is concerned with the application of resilience theory to tourism destination management and, particularly, on developing models that extend Butler’s (1980) evolutionary approach of Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) (Cochrane, 2010; Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004; Hamzah & Hampton, 2013; Petrosillo, Zurlini, Grato, & Zaccarelli, 2006).

Obrist, Pfeiffer, & Henley (2010) suggest the following questions as a point of departure for empirical research: “Resilience of what to what? What is the threat or risk we examine?” (p. 290). In this context, Hall (2010) concludes that the tourism industry “is clearly associated with different forms of crisis”, stressing the need for a deeper understanding of “the way in which various crises interact with each other” (p. 406). Similarly, Becken (2013) argues that tourism destinations suffer from a wide range of simultaneously occurring stress factors. Nevertheless, regardless of these assertions, most academic efforts thus far have overwhelmingly concentrated on the area of tourism resilience with respect to climatic effects (Jopp, DeLacy, Mair, & Fluker, 2013; Kaján & Saarinen, 2013; Lambert, Hunter, Pierce, & MacLeod, 2010), paying scarce attention to vulnerabilities arising from other sorts of threats.

Importantly, given that particular forms of tourism are highly dependent on natural resources they can be explicitly vulnerable to multiple stressors (Biggs et al., 2012). Not surprisingly, therefore, several studies have applied the idea of resilience to specific types of Special Interest Tourism. Such examples include dive tourism (Klint 2013); reef tourism (Coghlan & Prideaux, 2009); island tourism (Hamzah & Hampton, 2013); and rural tourism (Amir, Ghapar, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2015). To broaden this discussion, the present chapter focuses on wine tourism.

Wine Tourism as a Complex Socio-Ecological System

Wine tourism covers a wide set of activities, including “visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine shows, where grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a

grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors” (Hall et al., 2000, p. 3). Since the 1990s, this tourism form has rapidly emerged in many parts of the world, offering a rich set of opportunities at both an individual/business and a community/destination level (Carlsen, 2004). From an academic point of view, wine tourism can be approached from three different angles: a form of consumer/ tourist behavior; an opportunity for promotion and direct sales; and a destination strategy (Getz, 2000).

It is upon the third of these perspectives that the present chapter focuses, adopting a systems approach. The latter emphasizes the importance of interconnectedness (Taylor, 2016) and mutual interdependence between the various components (Király, 2015), as well as the fact that “processes are linked at multiple temporal and spatial scales” (Boone & Fragkias, 2013, p. 51). In this sense, wine tourism incorporates both tangible and intangible components of supply and demand, with its core being ‘the wine tourism experience’ (Hall et al., 2000, p. 7). In fact, the wine tourism system comprises resources from the wine industry (wineries, vineyards, festivals and shows); the tourism industry (accommodation, restaurants and other facilities); human resources (winemakers, employees, tour operators); elements of the surrounding environment (infrastructure, scenery, local cuisine, etc.); institutional arrangements (i.e., levels of government and legislation); and demand particulars (i.e., visitors’ perceptions; motivations; culture; and destination image) (Hall et al., 2000, p. 6-10).

To date, research on wine tourism has been mainly conducted in the New World. By contrast, very few studies have focused on Europe (Charters & Menival, 2011). Amongst the eight issues that are identified as ‘emerging’ in present and future literature, Thach (2016) highlights ‘Environmental Impact’ and ‘Increased Saturation and Competition/ Sustainability’. Albeit from a variety of directions, a number of scholars have attempted to explore wine tourism with respect to sustainability (Alonso & Liu, 2012a; Flores & Medeiros, 2016; Grimstad, 2011; Poitras & Getz, 2006). Yet, no published evidence to date incorporates the resilience viewpoint into the existing theoretical framework of wine tourism¹. This leads to the following research questions addressed in this chapter:

- In which ways does wine tourism respond to current crises and to what extent is the sector capable of confronting future shocks?
- How resilient is the wine tourism system to external stresses?
- Which are the most prominent challenges to the sector’s performance and transformation?

In the next section we turn our focus specifically to the case of Greece, providing an overview of the country’s wine tourism sector.

¹ The studies of Alonso & Bressan (2015) and Flint, Golicic, & Signori (2011) have focused the resilience of the wine sector in general.

Case Description: Wine Tourism in Greece

Winemaking in Greece spans over 4000 years (Lissarrague, 2015). Despite this long history, the development of the country's wine tourism industry is still very much in its infancy, compared to what exists in several other parts of the world. Prior to the 1990s, a handful of wineries attracted visitors primarily given their location in popular mass tourism destinations (i.e., Rhodes and Santorini). Meanwhile, a few individual wineries on the mainland drew visits due to a particularly interesting architectural feature or because of an outstanding historical detail (Velissariou, Galagala, & Karathanos, 2009).

Concentrated actions aiming at developing wine tourism were mainly expressed via regional, collective initiatives (Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2010). The first and best organized venture was set up in 1993 in the north of the country. Spearheaded largely through EU funding programs, the establishment of the 'Wine Producers' Association of the Macedonian Vineyard' marked the beginning of a coordinated effort to improve the quality of tourism infrastructure both at wineries and across the wine regions. In 2002, the network grew to incorporate winemakers from the regions of Epirus and Thrace, leading to an expansion of activities and a name change ('Wine Producers Association of the Northern Greece Vineyard'). In 2008, the Association was extended even further to include other than wineries 'cooperating' members (i.e., restaurants and hotels) (Alebaki & Koutsouris, 2015).

The experience of Northern Greece has encouraged bottom-up initiatives in several other regions throughout the country. The following decades have seen similar initiatives in the regions of Peloponnese; Attica; Central Greece; Crete; and the Aegean islands. Beyond the five regional associations that followed suit, a number of joint actions targeting wine tourism development at the local (prefectural) level have also occurred². Alebaki and Iakovidou (2010) argue that wine tourism development in the Greek case had a two-pronged aim: first, to build supplemental income for wine producers; and second, to open up the potential for city dwellers who seek escape in a rural context.

Today, more than 240 of the approximately 1000³ active wineries throughout Greece, are open to the public (Alebaki, 2016). Despite the substantial progress made so far, the country's 'wine tourism terroir' (Hall & Mitchell, 2002) has not yet reached its full potential. Without a doubt, inter-sectoral collaboration presupposes overcoming numerous hurdles, given that both the wine sector and the tourism industry are today requested to reestablish their position in a highly complex and uncertain environment.

² Examples include the Association of Winemakers of Nemea in Peloponnese (2011); of Naoussa (2014) and Drama (2015) in Macedonia; and the Wines of Athens (in 2014).

³ Greek Ministry of Agriculture, personal communication, September 17, 2016.

Method

Informed by previous research on the resilience of tourism systems (Becken, 2013; Espiner & Becken, 2014); the wine sector (Alonso & Bressan, 2015), but also the sustainability of wine tourism (Alonso & Liu, 2012a), we designed this exploratory study with a two-fold purpose:

- to identify key risks and perturbations to the wine tourism system, within the Greek context
- to develop an integrative framework for the resilience of wine tourism, by classifying specific stress factors/threats (as identified in research) into three main categories that represent economic, social and environmental challenges.

In doing so, we conducted 39 in-depth interviews with a diverse group of key stakeholders and national experts of wine tourism throughout Greece, including: winemakers⁴; enologists; wine distributors and exporters; representatives of wine tourism associations and wine clubs; wine writers and wine tourism bloggers; wine restaurant owners and tourism entrepreneurs; viticulture/ wine/ tourism academics; wine/tourism officials; and policy makers. We gathered qualitative data during the five-month period between December 2014 and April 2015. Interviews were semi-structured and carried out mostly face-to-face, in Athens and Thessaloniki. In three cases, we had to contact the respondents via telephone or SKYPE and in one instance, an interviewee communicated via email.

With the consent of participants, we used a digital device to record their viewpoints regarding: (a) the future potential evolutionary trajectory of the Greek wine tourism; and (b) the various threats that cumulatively affect the system as a whole. From an ethical standpoint, in order to maintain the scientific integrity of the study and to protect the identities of the respondents we guaranteed everyone full anonymity.

We recruited the 39 respondents through Snowball Sampling, which enables the use of referrals made from respondents already involved in the study (A.L., Rodrigues, A.L., Rodrigues, & Peroff, 2015). During the first research phase, we contacted each participant via either phone or face-to-face discussions, explaining the project's objectives. Once each stakeholder or expert accepted the invitation to take part in the research, an interview date and place were set. This procedure was followed by a confirmation email during which the interview guide (semi-structured) was sent to each study respondent, together with a cover letter. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 2.5 hours.

⁴ Following Flint et al.'s (2011) approach, the wine producers selected for this study were key decision makers. All interviews were conducted in Greek.

The digital recordings of the interviews, which were carried out through the use of Windows audio files were transcribed after each interview. Because of the nature of the interview that was semi-structured we allowed each respondent considerable leeway to provide additional comments that in many occasions went well beyond the answer to the question that had been posed, in line with previous similar studies (Alonso & Liu, 2012a; b). To indicate their comments, individuals were labelled as ‘Respondents’ (i.e., R1, R2, R3..., R39).

We utilized Thematic Analysis in order to code and interpret the qualitative data. This method allows the search for repeated topics and enables identification of prominent themes and categories in the participants’ responses, through a series of iterative readings (Liu and Tsaur, 2014). Table 1 presents the questions that were posed during the interviews.

Table 1. Questions related to the objectives of the current study (extracted from the initial six-item questionnaire)

1.	How would you define wine tourism?
2.	Which are the most important threats/fundamental issues that wine tourism faces today and those that you expect the sector to face in the future?
3.	Current economic crisis. Who has it affected most? To what degree and in what manner do you expect it to influence the future of wine tourism?

It is important to note that the present study is part of larger project⁵ aimed at exploring the resilience of the Greek wine tourism sector, with a mixed methods research design and a twofold approach (i.e., Macro/Micro perspective or General/Specified Resilience). Upon completion of the interviews, several key findings were identified, which are discussed in the following section.

Major challenges to the resilience of the Greek wine tourism sector

Despite Greece’s long tradition in viticulture, the professionalization of the wine sector is a much more recent phenomenon. It was only in 1969, that the country revised its legislative framework for wines, in an effort to join the European Union (Alebaiki & Iakovidou 2010). Given the Greek wine sector’s relative immaturity compared to that of other regions, the developmental delay of wine tourism has not been surprising. This argument was also expressed by the study’s participants, who viewed winery visitation as being at an early stage.

⁵ This project was funded under the Action ‘Research & Technology Development Innovation Projects’ - AgroETAK, MIS453350, in the framework of the Operational Program ‘Human Resources Development’. It was co-funded by the European Social Fund through the National Strategic Reference Framework (Research Funding Program 2007-2013), coordinated by the Hellenic Agricultural Organization DEMETER.

However, on a positive note, a number of respondents expressed cautious optimism concerning the future:

R9: Considering how it works in other countries, wine tourism does not really exist yet in Greece. The country's wine tourism potential is undeveloped, though I think it could have a future.

With respect to the factors influencing the sector's resilience and the consequences of the current crisis, Thematic analysis revealed several issues which were classified into three categories, namely: Economic; Social; and Environmental. Social challenges were further divided into five sub-categories. Figure 1 summarizes the results, illustrating the multiplicity of threats to the resilience of wine tourism, along with examples of particular stress factors. Space limits inhibit us from going through each and every one of these issues in depth; however, specific findings are discussed below.

Economic Challenges/ Stress Factors

Overall, despite the crippling effects of the ongoing Greek financial crisis, it appears that its impacts may not have been devastating to those involved in wine tourism:

R3: In my opinion, family-owned wineries that were well run, might have yielded a little due to the crisis, maybe they hesitated, maybe they were affected, but they did not close down.

R20: The crisis had a 'positive' effect on wineries, since it reinforced exports, in combination with the EU programs . . . It is hard to break into foreign markets. Before the crisis, most winemakers were selling domestically and had been lulled into a false sense of security. For now, the sector is resilient and this has much to do with the increased focus toward foreign markets.

With respect to the international wine trade, some respondents argued that the reduction of imported wines in recent years due to the economic downturn made Greek products more competitive in the domestic market. Hence, where the crisis has had an impact was in terms of liquidity shortage and investments in wine tourism facilities:

R36: There is a shortage of cash, meaning that one has to try to survive by making cuts, by being careful and by not investing. Consequently, value is not added and one remains stationary.

R10: I believe that someone will prefer to export and not to engage in wine tourism. .
. I am not sure that the 'off Broadway' producer will invest in such ventures.

Interestingly, while the crisis did not seem to have an impact on winery visits in destinations like Santorini and Crete -where tourism is mostly inbound-, winemakers in the mainland have noticed a remarkable decline in terms of both visitation numbers and cellar door sales:

R6: Whereas at Christmas we drew in between 5,000 and 6,000 Euros, now we are only making 500 euro. No one comes by these days...Even upper-income visitors buy less, the impact of crisis is mostly psychological.

Social Challenges/ Stress Factors

Social issues were classified into five categories, namely political; organizational; cultural; structural; and entrepreneurial. One set of comments identified government instability and institutional deficiencies, while, several legislative and other shortcomings were also encountered:

R34: Who arranges things these days? Who is managing the agricultural policy for viticulture and the wine sector, or the development of wine tourism? One is at a dead end. There is only one employee of either the Ministry of Tourism or the Ministry of Agriculture. And what does one employee mean? He remains in his position for 1-2 years, then the government changes and someone else comes, he will stay in charge for three years, he has limited knowledge and too little time to comprehend this composite world... Subsisting an institutional formation is what we need at least, if not requesting for public grant funding (who would dare to raise such an issue this time?).

Further, many of the interviewees expressed concern over the absence of coordination and strategic planning. Lack of executives in wine tourism networks remains a critical issue. They also stressed the importance of limited training opportunities and the need for information/ records management:

R6: Greek wine tourism has been mostly associated with luxury infrastructure and the prestige of the winery. Yet, emphasis should be put on training and consultancy. There is a need for executives who could assist in specific activities, that by their nature the winemaker accepts that he does not have the ability to take charge. The education of wine tourism stakeholders is also essential. There is a need for strategic planning and

management, to know how much does wine tourism cost, where we want to be in twenty years.

R8: There is a need for data collection...I would suggest setting up an organization that will guide this venture at a national level.

R32: Strategic planning cannot derive only from the central administration, the Ministry that is. It also has to include the regional administration, along with all the relevant stakeholders.

When it comes to cultural issues, the lack of collaboration among the winemakers was highlighted as a major hindrance to wine tourism development. Respondents also underlined the necessity of trust building and synergies:

R26: There is individualism and we do not trust our executives... The Greek winemaker who is a new 'fruit' in Greece has a very short history, while his French counterpart has been around for 500 years. Thus, you see a totally different culture. And because the Greek winemaker developed and enlarged with his own work (he was a vineyard owner, became a winemaker, engaged in marketing, was a salesperson, created his label, had an opinion about everything), he cannot easily respect and trust the others' opinion. This is because he was a one-man orchestra. If he does not cease to be a one-man orchestra in his work, how will he do this on the next piece?

R2: Winemakers cannot sit down and discuss with honesty about what the distinct weaknesses of each of their regions are or how to overcome potential obstacles. Despite being aware of their problems, they do not talk about them...

There is a sequential relationship between product involvement and consumers' desire to visit a wine region (Brown, Havitz, & Getz, 2007). However, many people see wine as elitist, feeling that they cannot appreciate it due to their limited knowledge (Bach, 2007; Jefford & Draper, 2007). Some of the respondents perceived this misconception as a potential barrier to winery visitation:

R36: It is some sort of snobbism. It is hard for one to get into the mentality to go to a winery thinking this activity applies only to pretentious snobs.

R17: Visiting wineries is not something Greek people commonly do. Of course, the new generation has begun to know more about wine lately.

R13: The Greek person has been trapped into the European lifestyle, in the consumption of foreign products. A huge mistake is that rather than making wine an indispensable part of culture, it has been introduced as a 'lifestyle choice'.

When it comes to structural barriers, participants commented on the fact that many wineries are dispersed and isolated from main tourism hubs.

R4: In particular regions, there are no hotels, there are no restaurants, so what is one to do if they visit? This means a whole lot of work needs to be completed before even talking about beginning wine tourism.

R10: A critical mass (of wineries) is necessary. You have to make an experience complete.

The last sub-category of "social challenges" includes several topics that can be labeled entrepreneurial. For instance, there are wine producers who do not have a thorough understanding of what wine tourism entails (R36). Another source of concern expressed by some respondents was related to time constraints. Due to the small size of several wineries, their owners find the multitasking that is required in the day-to-day operations an especially onerous challenge.

R6: It is a very difficult task, therefore, we count on our children. I mean, I am a viticulturist. I have to clean the winery, in am in charge of the exports, of hospitality . . . I mean, it can't work like this.

R10: Unless we plan and manage wine tourism properly, potential visitors – rather than serving as ambassadors – might turn into defamers.

Finally, several interviewees also express worries over service quality issues and the concept of carrying capacity:

R5: We need to promote local particularities . . . to offer a real wine tourism experience (the thinking man's holiday)...We need narratives (story telling).

R20: When wine tourism reaches the stage of development it will transform into mass tourism; winery visitors will not be able to enjoy the wine tourism experience. Every operation should impose an upper limit on visitation numbers. The carrying capacity of each winery is a critical success factor... The offered wine tourism product should be differentiated according to each target's needs and expectations.

Environmental Challenges/ Stress Factors

The third thematic cluster that has emerged from the qualitative data is what we term the “environmental threats or constraints”. ‘Reduction of vineyard surface area’ and the issue of ‘Land uses’ were mainly addressed by the respondents:

R36: A major challenge concerns the absence of spatial land use planning, even in areas considered as Appellations of Origin ... It is not unusual to see a car cemetery right next to a beautiful winery...The issue of wine tourism is that it also relates to aesthetics.

R2: Winemakers should openly discuss how to protect the vineyard landscape against pollution; abandonment; urban intrusion; and other negative interventions...

R22: Eradication of vineyards was a false step, it should not have happened in Greece...From 1960, when the vines began to be uprooted, the Ministry should have set up a Bank for restitutions.

R34: Due to the decrease in vineyard surface area, the country will no longer be self-sufficient in wine. Production has fallen dramatically.

Notably, respondents seem to be complacent regarding the topic of ‘Climate change’ (R9; R22; R27). In fact, one of the respondents perceives this phenomenon as being rather an opportunity than an immediate threat.

R22: Our grape varieties are quite resilient when it comes to drought and that is why they attract worldwide interest, especially from regions that face such problems, such as in Australia and California.

Nevertheless, one of the interviewees considers that the impacts of climate change are already observed in insular regions:

R21: (In Crete) we often have to deal with the lack of snowfall, extended drought seasons, extreme weather conditions. In our region, the wine harvest starts in July.

Discussion

Results clearly reinforce the view that tourism is constantly coping with a range of different challenges, which do not take place in a vacuum, but are related to a wider socio-ecological

context (Calgaro, Lloyd, & Dominey-Howes, 2014). With respect to wine tourism, certain challenges identified in this chapter are common to the overall wine industry, as reported in previous studies. For instance, Alonso & Bressan (2015) have also addressed economic constraints and institutional barriers as major impediments to the resilience of Italian micro-wineries. In the Spanish context, the sustainability of Canary Island's wine tourism has been found to be hindered by the low level of government support, the lack of organization within the wine industry and the limited resources for investing in hospitality facilities (Alonso & Liu, 2012a).

Undoubtedly, the interviews demonstrate the general effect of the global economic crisis on the Greek economy, with a number of respondents feeling that the recession has dampened wine tourism's further development. Nevertheless, most of the key informants consider the sector resilient enough to emerge from the current crisis, accrediting this 'relative strength' to two determinants:

- First, the general characteristics of the country's wine industry. The latter is largely comprised of small and medium, family-owned businesses (ICAP, 2015). This structure indicates several competencies, such as diversity; self-organization; self-correction; and local control, which are inextricably related to resilience (Jepson, 2016; Holladay & Powel, 2013).
- Second, a significant shift in marketing strategies towards internalization, which occurred during (or due to) the crisis. Reinforced by European funds⁶, wineries developed a stronger orientation on export growth, in an effort to diversify, enter new markets or tackle the decrease of sales nationally (see also Alonso, Bressan, O'Shea, & Krajsic, 2014). This advancement implies that the sector possesses flexibility, which is a critical resilience building skill, allowing for "the implementation of short-term adaptation processes to imminent external challenges" (Luthe & Wyss, 2016, p. 27).

Whereas some of the challenges identified in this study may indeed be external or have a temporary aspect (i.e., weather fluctuations), others are highly embedded within historically contingent trajectories that overall have a major bearing on sociocultural structures. Institutional deficiencies or non-collaborative behavior represent such examples. Extending this view, we argue that the economic crisis constitutes the primary driver of change that has caused - and continues to cause - adverse impacts in multiple levels of the wine tourism system.

⁶ "Extroversion – business competitiveness (2007 – 2013)" and "Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation" (EPAnEK, 2014-2020) (Aspridis, Sdrolias, Blanas, Kyriakou, & Grigoriou, 2013).

It is important to underline, that, shortly after the completion of this study, Greece's wine tourism sector experienced another two major perturbations, both of which were actually produced by the crisis. These include:

- The imposition of banking capital controls in June 29, 2015, which adversely impacted Greek businesses, particularly SMEs (Nassr, Robano & Wehinger, 2016).
- The introduction of excise tax on wine⁷ - voted in late 2015 and implemented in the beginning of 2016; it was one of many austerity measures that have been imposed since 2010. The tax caused "*huge unrest in the industry*", since it was expected to seriously affect retail prices and, consequently, overall wine sales (Euromonitor, 2016).

Given the aforementioned discussion, the argument that "a crisis is not an exceptional event, exogenous to economic development cycles, but rather it is a substantial element of structural dynamics", is strongly supported (Bianchi & Labori, 2011, p. 12). Operating in the 'zone of uncertainty' (Davidson et al., 2013) is a continuous condition to which wine tourism businesses have to constantly respond. This gives rise to the so-called evolutionary perspective of resilience, which sheds light into "the dynamic interplay of persistence, adaptability and transformability" (Davoudi, 2012, p. 306).

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to employ the resilience framework in order to examine the future prospects of Greek wine tourism. Based on key stakeholders' perceptions, we addressed the main concerns in this area, by classifying the identified threats into economic, social and environmental. As a final point, it should be noted that the current chapter does not claim to provide definitive answers or build a comprehensive theory; instead, it seeks to highlight the significance of adopting a holistic approach in investigating the complex wine tourism sector. Our findings may offer some insight into this area, indicating implications for both policy makers and planners involved in the design of long-term wine tourism strategies. The conceptualization of shocks and stressors that affect the resilience of the Greek wine tourism system proposes a 'roadmap' towards the development of the sector in a sustainable manner.

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⁷ 20 cents per liter or 15 cents per 750 ml bottle.

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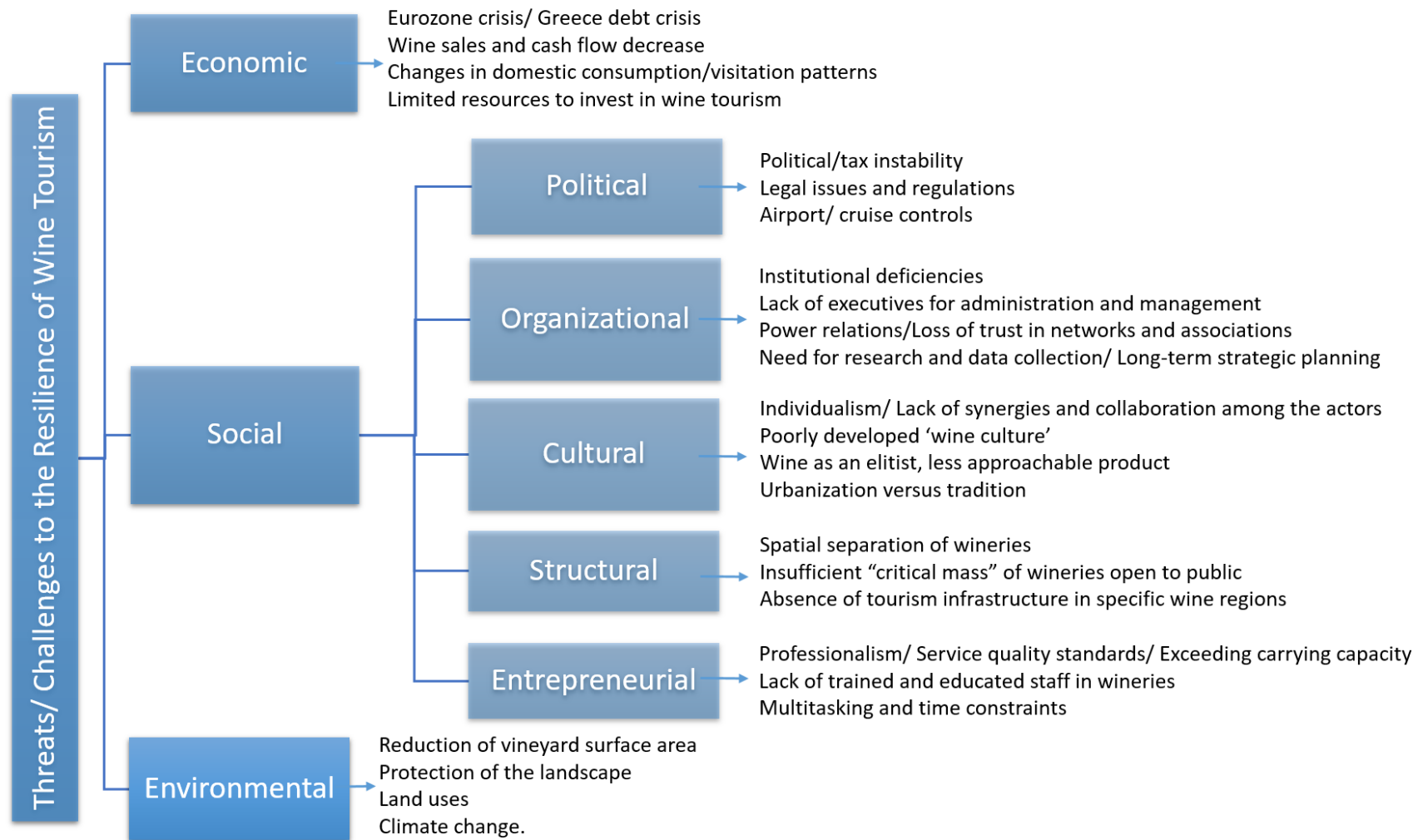


Figure 1. Main Challenges/ Threats to the Resilience of wine tourism