RESORT COMPLEXES AS A SEPARATE CATEGORY IN THE THEORY OF TOURISM

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The socio-economic and political conditions in Europe and the developed world, affirmed in the postwar years, favor the mass character of the general demand for tourist services for recreation and are an important prerequisite for the industrialization of the tourist sector. In response to the growing interest in organized recreation the tourist business undertakes and implements investment projects which provide the consumption of both basic and various extra services – for familiarization, cultural, entertaining, sport and others, as well as the satisfaction of users’ needs that arise on site. During the 50s of the last century this policy turned from corporate into state one. The development of tourism in a number of countries was laid on a scientific ground in the institutes for planning national and regional programs for convenient tourist resources and establishing a tourist industry1, named respectively: DATAR – France, URBION – Slovakia, JOROK – Austria, TERPLAN – Czechoslovakia, VAROSEPITES – Hungary, ETUP in the Bulgarian KNIPITUGA2 Center, FONATUR – Mexico and so on; which lead exactly to the emerging modern-type resort complexes. “The construction of “Golden sands” and “Drouzhba” resort complexes marked the beginning of large international tourism in Bulgaria”3. Later this was added by “Albena”, “Rousalka”, “Sunny beach”, “Elenite”, “Dunes”, “Kiten”, “Borovets” and “Pamporovo”. Worldwide the structural and organizational specifics of these complexes were predetermined by the different ways of conceptualizing, planning and implementing the investment projects and the different sources of investment capital – state or private, group or individual4. The main goal remains the same – a complex tourist product. The metamorphosis in tourist relations follows the tendency for a complex nature of tourist services which turned into a basic competitive advantage of destinations.

The evolution of the resort complexes involves an even larger concentration of investment capital, jobs and production capacity, with which they acquire even bigger economic, social and ecological significance for the region. Parallel to this, they are influenced by a number of factors from all spheres of the surrounding environment, which cause structural-and-functional transformations, specific phenomena and processes in them. All these have a direct or indirect impact on the tourist product, the market position of the resort complexes, the way people accept them and the whole

tourist destination. Indicative is the example with the consequences in economic, social and ecological aspect from overbuilding in our Black-sea complexes after they were privatized (see Figure 1)

Source: “Ecological aspects of the development of resort complexes on the Black-sea coast”

Figure 1. Overloading natural resources in the resort complexes on the Bulgarian Black-sea coast

The on-going negative processes and phenomena in the development of resort complexes result not only into worse company performance in them, but also into economic, social and ecological harms for the society as a whole. These are caused by the multifaceted and multi-factor interaction of industrial tourism with all spheres of public relations. In order to cope with these processes through a relevant micro- and macro-managerial policy it is necessary to know thoroughly the structural and functional specifics of resort complexes, which, in turn, underlines the relevance of the topic of this paper.

A number of Bulgarian and foreign authors describe resort complexes in a general economic and territorial aspect. They do not go into researching their system characteristics. B. Kalinkov\(^6\) makes a thorough historical review of the emergence and the circumstances for building the resort complexes on the Bulgarian Northern Black-sea coast. He outlines their place and role in Bulgarian industrial tourism, as well as their significance for the development of the city of Varna as a tourist destination. Sv. Rakadzhijiska views resort complexes as an important and determining element or as the “flagships” of general tourist supply of Bulgaria as a destination and positioning

it on the tourist market. P. Evrev includes resort complexes as a subject of his research in territorial-and-development planning of tourism. He goes in depth in studying the issue by introducing a typology of resort sites depending on the type of the tourist resource, location and the presence or absence of permanent population; thus he elaborates the topic of zoning the territories of the resort sites. The methods for modelling the processes in tourist complexes, introduced by D. Tadarakov, have internal trend and positive contribution to designing them.

Other authors like Pearce D. and Wong P. P. analyze resort complexes in economic and social aspect: their indicators of growth, the size and significance for the national industry and local communities. Rimy Knafou and Stock Mathis view resort sites in territorial geographic aspect, whereas Patrick Lavery traces their emergence depending on the socio-psychological and economic factors of tourist demand. Lozato-Giotart J.-P. studied the periods in forming the tourist sites on the ground of tourists’ interest and tourist flow. Yvette Barbaza studied seaside tourism on the Mediterranean and the Black sea and views the emergence and development of resort complexes mainly in geographical aspect. In characterizing them she introduced three criteria: size and distribution of the existing local population, spontaneous or planned development of tourist facilities, intensive or extensive distribution of tourist sites.

The deductive analysis shows that “resort complexes” is a name accepted for use without laying down the definition framework of the concept and studying the system characteristics of the phenomena. In the science of tourism no necessary attention is paid to the emerging specifics of tourist services in resort complexes and the ongoing processes there that are essential for tourism. The information about them, essential for the tourist activity, is not studied separately. Thus management practice lacks the specialized methodology, while inadequacies appear in the theory of tourism which concern the characteristic features and the processes of creating tourist products in the resort complexes. The findings so far logically lead to the necessity for laying a theoretical basis for a further more thorough study of the phenomenon of the resort complexes by use of an inductive way, a theoretical synthesis, which is accepted as the main goal of this theoretical paper. Thus the following research tasks are solved:

1. Defining, differentiating and characterizing the concept “resort complex”.

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11 Wong, P.P. Tourism development and resort on the east coast of the Peninsular Malaysia, Tropical Geography, Singapore, 1986.
2. Design analysis and typological features of resort complexes.

3. Defining the prerequisites for separating resort complexes as an independent scientific category.

1. Defining, differentiating and characterizing the concept “resort complex”

In descriptive literature using the concepts “resort”, “resort complex” and “tourist complex” as synonyms often makes them equal, with unclear distinctions of meaning. These three concepts overlap their meaning in a common section which expresses opportunities for tourist services on a tourist site with available curative and recreational resources. Yet, for the goals of specialized studies it is necessary to make their meaning precise semantically and etymologically.

Historically, the Bulgarian word “kurort” (from “curo” in Latin – cure, take care of) 16 for “resort” appeared first, implying the meaning above, as early as ancient times. Its usage was broadly affirmed in the German speaking countries in association with naming the places for rest, cure and recreation by using the favorable impact of climate, mineral water, sea water and others 17. The name “kurort” was accepted and remained for usage in Slavonic languages as an equivalent of the English name “resort” – a place visited for recreation 18. The types of natural resources and the therapies associated with them considerably enlarge the meaning of this concept nowadays and it often has an additional implication such as: mountain, sea, ski, spa resort and others; yet, the principle of applying it for cure through natural resources remains.

The name “tourist complex”, widely spread already, appeared in modern tourist relations in association with structuring the multi-functional material base on the ground of the growing requirements and opportunities of tourist demand in this direction. Such development was observed in the sphere of business, sport, entertainment, religious and recreational tourism, including in the tourist market congress and sport centers, theme parks, as well as tourist complexes. The name tourist complex serves as a byword for all these. With its broader scope of meaning this concept is applied most often in descriptive and documentary Bulgarian and foreign literature. It is it that has been used in the last draft for amending and adding the Law for tourism in 2011. A definition is proposed which says: “A tourist complex” is an independent territorially distinguished group of places for accommodation, with built general engineering and tourist infrastructure, where basic and various additional tourist services are provided. It is made up of at least 5 places for accommodation and has at least one outlet for eating and entertainment 19. Besides that the use of the expression “…places for accommodation…” allows for mixing the concept “tourist complex” with “hotel complex”, which is inadmissible for the professional jargon of tourism, the definition above does not distinguish the types of complexes according to the used tourist resource.

17 Apostolov, N. p. 359.
The name “resort complexes” individualizes the group of tourist complexes that make use of natural resources. This term reaches higher accuracy of expression. Together with this its usage requires narrower purposefulness of application, because of which it is less widely spread. Seldom are the cases, as in “Decision of PA № 45 from 25.01.2005 for determining geographical formations of national significance… the resort complexes: “Albena”, “Golden sands”…”, where the term is used mainly in its geographical implication, without defining its meaning. In foreign literature this word partnership is almost not used. The correct use of the term “resort complex” for the aims of theoretical studies in tourism requires its precise definition which, as the author’s opinion here, needs to be as follows: “a territorially distinguished and infrastructurally united set of tourist outlets, means and facilities that form a complex tourist product made up of basic and additional services for accommodation, eating, cure, transport, sport and entertainment and provide the use of the adjacent tourist resources with recreational character”.

After clarifying the content of the term, it is important to determine also its sphere of definition or the parameters of general and private significance in respect to the names close to it. In its syntactic interdependence with “tourist complex”, “resort complex” keeps part of the content in its meaning of a complexity of organizing services by limiting it within the types of tourism that use natural tourist resources with curative and recreational impact. Therefore, one can also define the resort complex as a recreational tourist complex. We can say that the outlets named “resort complex” are a subdivision of the group “tourist complex”, they result from the same group but they have a common limiting feature and this is the adjacent natural recreational resource. In other words, all resort complexes are also tourist complexes, but not all tourist complexes are resorts (see Figure 2). A typical example for this are the Disneyland theme parks which offer complex tourist services (including accommodation) based exclusively on anthropogenic tourist resources. Examples of purposefully constructed substantial resort complexes are the already listed above sea, mountain and balneological resorts.

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Figure 2. Scheme of the semantic and syntactic interdependence of the terms “resort”, “resort complex” and “tourist complex”

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20 State gazette, issue 11, 01.02.2005, p. 3.
One should also clarify the limits of meaning in respect to the terms “resort” and “resort complex”. Whereas the term “resort” covers the scope of a tourist site for recreational tourism, including non-tourist elements, the term “resort complex” unites mainly tourist outlets and the infrastructure associated with them. The morphology of “resort” lacks the element of complexity of services.

It is also necessary to make another distinction between “resort complex” and “hotel complex”. While a hotel complex can be meant not only for recreation and can be only part of the accommodation base of a tourist site, a resort complex has a specific purpose and comprises the whole group of tourist outlets. In comparing multiple categories a hotel complex can be a constituent part of a resort complex the way described above.

According to its form, the concept “resort complexes” is a defining category in the following aspects: geographic, territorial, functional, organizational and product, with a focus on the typological wholeness of the tourist product. In its content it reveals the functional completeness of the organizational unit that is input as specifics and goal of its existence. By nature the term “resort complex” reaches greater precision of meaning and homogeneousness of its structure in respect to exploitation of natural tourist resources, completeness and scope of tourist services, as well as the predominant type of tourist activity. In general, resort complexes are a form of organization of complex tourist services in resort sites.

2. Design analysis and typological features of resort complexes

Irrespective of the way they are made – by thorough planning or gradual building, resort complexes genetically aggregate enough multitude and variety of production capacities of tourist services, which add integrity and completeness to the whole tourist product. In realizing its functional purpose (to provide complete use of the natural tourist resource and turn tourists’ stay into a pleasant and useful experience), they concentrate within their limits the respective material base and organizational potential. The resort complexes, made on high level of integrity, are systems of functionally united elements which are linked with plenty of subsystems and activities providing their harmonious and purposeful work in a whole mechanism (see Figure 3). The system structure of resorts is a projection of the concept for a complex tourist product. The separate elements of the system – the functional units (tourist, administrative, technical and other outlets and centers) are grouped according to their purpose into:

- **tourist (resort) material base** (it would be a debatable issue to distinguish firmly some types of outlets): means for accommodation and eating, sport and curative facilities, retail outlets; tourist outlets for entertainment, culture and sightseeing; centers and points for therapeutic, information, organizational and agent services; attractive transport, ports, parks, beaches, ski runs and others.

- **administrative and provisional material base**: means and facilities of general complex management, inside economy, departments of the fire-protection service, police and medical service.

- **engineering-and-technical material base**: facilities of inside and outside transport, park and resource economy, electro- and water-pipe network,
sewage and water purification, services at the beach, yacht piers, bridges, ski runs and facilities, swimming pools and baths and so on.

- the functional completeness and unity of the system “resort complex” is made through **subsystems** which combine the various exploitation units through **activities** ensuring the work in the complex. According to their structural contents these subsystems are defined as: administrative (on top level of the hierarchy), servicing and maintaining. Each of these subsystems includes means and capacity for carrying out the profile activities.

- **administrative subsystem**: operational management (methodical guidance, quality control, exploitation control, exchange of operational and statistical information); strategic management (conceptualizing, planning, programing), marketing (market research, planning, positioning, promotion, negotiating, analyses and evaluation); communications (general-complex tourist information, inside and outside business communication and contacts); ecological control (monitoring and control of the environment and production processes within and around the complex); inside economy (property management, finance, accounting and statistics, material and information supply);

- **service subsystem** – activities: organizational, production servicing, information, cultural, sport, artistic and others;

- **maintenance subsystem** – medical services; fire-protection security; keeping public order and security; transport inside and outside the complex (for tourists and for staff); technical, technological and power control; maintenance, supply and emergency services for the whole material base and tourist resources.

To a considerable degree the system structure is common for the various types of tourist complexes. The specifics of resort complexes brings variety to the scope and specialization of some activities and subsystems, but not to the structural principles as a whole.

![Figure 3. Structural scheme of resort complexes](image-url)

In complexes with high organizational integrity among tourist outlets each subsystem comprises all elements of the complex in a centralized way. When making
a deeper structural analysis on the micro level of the functional unit, one observes that each separate tourist outlet is actually a separate functional system that has already been described in the theory of tourism. What is new here is the integration of this unit on a macro level – in the general complex functional system.

The resort complexes, developed on the ground of a whole conceptual plan, have the opportunity to implement also an important structural principle – territorial and functional zoning. According to this principle from the territory of the natural resource to the periphery of the complex there are formed the zones of the facilities for servicing the resource, the common parts for entertainment, the outlets for accommodation, eating and entertainment, the transport and engineering-and-technical means according to their purpose and functional compatibility, with a priority on comfort for tourists. It is exactly the purposeful zone allocation that reaches high integrity and brings fullness to the content of the term “resort complex”.

The typological analysis of resort complexes applies criteria for characterizing them that refer to natural resources, their structure and functional organization depending on the aspect and goals of the review. The resort sites from the past and modern resort complexes keep the same motive for choosing a geographical location where to appear and develop – the presence of a natural factor favorable for human health. According to the type of the natural tourist resource they exploit, resort complexes are defined as:

- **climatic** – can be sea, mountain, forest, prairie and others;
- **balneo-curative** – they apply treatment with mineral water, sea water, curative mud, lye, seaweeds and others;
- **combined** – they combine several factors like: balneo-climatic, sea-and-mud-curative and so on.

Another important aspect in the typological characteristics of resort complexes is the residential one, i.e. whether or not there is permanent local population. This condition divides resort complexes into:

- **independent**;
- **dependent (mixed)**.

Independent resort complexes include means of accommodation only for tourists. D. Pears names this type “isolated complexes” or giving priority to the impact of natural resources. Staff in the complex stay there only during the time of their work duties. It is admissible for a small number of them to stay longer, without this causing a change in the general surrounding.

The resorts which appeared in earlier historical periods like mineral baths and seaside towns were first inhabited by local people and later tourist facilities were constructed in them. This resulted into a symbiosis of two different types of life organizations – vacation-and-visiting and settled-and-local which brought negative impact to each of them.

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In the structural analysis of complexes one can find various structural schemes which refer to the configuration of implementing them. Reviewed in this way, the system elements and the links between them form two types of systems:

- integrated (limited) type;
- disintegrated (module) type.

In the cases when the complex is a result of a general investment initiative, which gives the opportunity for a complete conceptualizing, planning, “ex nihilo” construction and general strategic and operational management, its structure is made up of functional zones which comply with architectural and practical purposefulness. Outlets outside the hotels are the most spectacular attractions and develop intensively the complex space in general. The territories adjacent to the hotels are not restrictively separated and tourists have equal access to all facilities and outlets in the complex. Such functional configuration enables the system to work as a whole organism and defines it as an organic type. This type reaches the highest degree of functional integration among outlets and the opportunity for the largest variety of services for each guest in each hotel. Typical examples in world practice are Club Méditerranée, Sandals Resorts, Cancun in Mexico, Mamaia in Romania and our resort complexes until they were privatized. “…in building these resorts facilities came before the tourists”.

In the rest of the cases of forming resorts separate owners construct independent hotel complexes. The guest in a similar complex has the scope of services in the hotel. Outside it, he can find mainly other similar hotels with similar services where he is “not a guest”. The boundaries of the hotel complexes prevent the exchange of guests among them. The space between the hotels is not developed enough and has only the most necessary items. In other words, the resort complex constitutes of independent hotel complexes – modules that provide a complete tourist product but functioning separately and in competition for all types of services. That is the type for developing the national design for the seaside of Languedoc-Roussillon in France, the Alpine ski resorts, the sea resorts in Tunisia, Morocco, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey.

The differences in the configuration of the two types are transformed into functional when exploiting them. In the end result of tourist experiences they bring two types of basic perceptions: in the modular type the tourist is a guest of the hotel complex, whereas in the integrated type the tourist is a guest of the whole resort complex. The integrated type fills in the functional aspect of the term resort complex at most.

Last but not least in significance, is the functional criterion management of the tourist activity. The forms of the general management of the complex can be as follows:

- centralized management;
- decentralized management.

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25 “ex-nihilo” – a term signifying the construction of structures on an empty plot of land.
Centralized management, implemented through an administrative body that is general for the complex, is characteristic of sole ownership of the tourist superstructure. It is an irrevocable condition for reaching functional harmony in the organic type of resort complexes. D. Pears says that “it guarantees effective and balanced planning and development, quick realization and return of investment and reaching a high-status clientele. The coordination, general planning and physical integration of the complex facilities result into high functionality. Examples for this are Club Mediterranée, "La Grand Plagne", “Port Grimaud”, as well as the listed above Bulgarian resort complexes until their privatization. The latter reach even above-complex integration, united into a national tourist enterprise.

Decentralized management, characteristic of the module-type complexes, is actually independent management of the separate and legally independent tourist outlets. It does not go above its micro level and does not reach implementation of the general functioning and development of the complex.

3. Defining the prerequisites for separating resort complexes as an Independent scientific category. When reviewing the phenomenon of resort complex as a system element of tourist relations, the deductive analysis does not find any new principles in the dynamics of the system. Therefore, there is no ground to come up with new scientific laws of tourist interaction that refer to the outlet. However, there are present qualitatively new states of the tourist activity, which take place only in the conditions of its functioning in the trends: investment and operation management, socio-psychological impact, economic significance and legal dependences. These are also the spheres that lead to the prerequisites for differentiated scientific research of the phenomenon of resort complexes.

In comparing the independent type of resort complexes and the dependent one, or with other non-complex forms of tourist services, one finds out the qualitatively new socio-psychological environment of the “sheer tourist atmosphere”. It reveals the advantages of the complex tourist services as tourists’ emotional experiences as a result of consumed non-material goods. In the base of forming customer satisfaction is also the lack of disadvantages of the urban and other non-tourist surroundings. In this context it is necessary to focus scientific research in the sphere of social psychology, marketing, territorial-and-administrative management on clarifying the advantages and opportunities of independent resort complexes in helping investment planning and realization.

The comparative analysis of the performance of resort complexes shows the advantages of the integrated ones to modular types, of their centralized management to decentralized one. This shows that applying the first type leads to achieving the following economic effects:

• operational, ecological and market purposefulness in structuring the elements of the system, its functionality and end product;

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achieving an ultimately broad scope of additional services and completeness of the tourist product;
• ensuring the accessibility and attractiveness of every nook on the territory for every tourist and creating the sense of “being a guest to the whole complex”;
• concentration of high production capacity and stimulating consumption, together with optimal loading of the natural resource;
• as a consequence of the latter – increasing income from taxes, local employment and social balance;
• consolidating the market position of the whole complex in contract relations with tour operators and turning it from “being lead” in general into “leading” in the particular case;
• programs for modernizing the material base, revalorization of the natural resource and keeping the general conceptual type of the complex.

That is why the theory of tourism should be added with studies into the detailed typological characteristics, the functional and structural features of integrated and modular resort complexes, the efficiency of their centralized and decentralized management. These theoretical assumptions give the necessary ground for choosing decisions in configuring and exploiting resort complexes with the goal to prevent the negative effects described in the beginning of the paper (Fig. 1).

The legal aspect of the specific features that resort complexes bring in tourist relations is expressed mainly in the system of ownership of tourist outlets and the ensuing responsibility for the condition of the external environment. The policy, which is relevant internationally, for keeping natural tourist resources requires defining accurately and clearly and taking the responsibilities for exploiting them. With sole ownership of the outlets in the resort complex the responsibility is easy to define and requires the respective obligation in respect to the accepted directive in the policy. In the conditions of a centralized resort complex it is easy to apply programs that comply with the ultimate loading and renewal of natural resources, as well as with introducing “the carrying capacity” as a leading regulative instrument in managing the size and direction of tourist flows. The legal aspect needs to be included as a source of considerations in making concepts and strategies for the development of resort complexes, as well as in coming up with management schemes and political programs on micro- and macro-regulative level.

The start, set in the system analysis of resort complexes, needs to be developed further into a detailed and complete theory which should be updated in time, having in mind the dynamics of development of the phenomenon. Besides elaborating the studies that refer to the internal system of resort complexes, it is necessary to broaden the knowledge about their external interaction with social processes, their horizontal integration with the remaining economic activities, as well as their vertical subordination in the system of tourist and general national policy.

In theoretical aspect one can conclude that the defined features of resort complexes in their typological variety and in comparison with the remaining structural and organizational forms of producing tourist services carry significant cognitive potential. That is why an obligation for the science of tourism is to add and deepen
knowledge about them through differentiated studies, while the category of “resort complexes” can take an independent place as a subject for studies in the theory of tourism. Elaborating the knowledge about this phenomenon is a precious scientific ground for the managerial activity in the political, economic, ecological and other spheres of social relations.

The outlined above typological and structural characteristic of resort complexes forms a qualification set of tools applicable in investment projects – in choosing a certain structural-and-functional configuration, in operational activities – applying a certain scheme of management in the system, situational and factor analyses of their efficiency in the optimization processes. Elaborating the differentiated knowledge about resort complexes and applying it in practice increases the potential of tourist industry aimed at increasing the quality of the product and customer satisfaction which result into progressive economic development. Equally important is its significance also for making and implementing a tourist policy on behalf of the central and local authorities and performing their regulative functions which affect the revalorization of the natural tourist resources and the environment, social balance and in general the protection of public interests and sustainable social development.

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Abstracts

The emergence of resort complexes in response to the growing demand for organized recreation on a global scale, introduces into tourist relations altogether new systemic states of high importance to tourist development in a number of aspects. On the other hand, according to the author, the science of tourism does not study in a differential manner the processes and phenomena occurring in them. That is why the present article is an attempt at outlining the main characteristics of the phenomenon “resort complex” by defining the concept and conducting a brief systematic and typological analysis of its manifestations, with a view to a further in-depth study and inclusion into the theory of tourism.

Keywords: resort complex, definition, typology, systems analysis, structure, functionality, differentiated category.