**Typological features and functioning of tourist resorts**

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**Abstract.** This scientific paper presents a systematic and typological analysis of resort complexes in tourism industry with a view to studying their functioning and their external interaction with the social processes, their horizontal integration with the other economic activities, and their vertical subordination in the system of the tourist national policy.

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

Historically, the term "resort" ("курорт" in Slavic languages) emerged in antiquity as an expression of the meaning "healing", "care"\(^1\), from the Latin word "curo". Its use in German-speaking countries has been broadly established in connection with recreation, treatment and restoration sites through the beneficial effects of climate, mineral waters, sea water, etc. The name "курорт" is perceived and remains in use among Slavic languages, the equivalent of the English "resort", a recovery venue\(^2\). Different types of natural resources and related therapies considerably broaden the meaning of this concept today, and it is often supplemented, for example, by mountain, sea, ski, spa resorts, etc., but the principle of its application related to nature treatment is maintained.

The broadly-named "tourist complex" appears in modern tourist relations in connection with tourist facility structuring with a complex purpose based on the increasing requirements and opportunities of the tourist demands in this area. Such a development is witnessed in relation to tourist services in the field of business, sports, entertainment, religious and recreational tourism, including in the tourist market congress and sports centers, theme parks, and resorts. The concept of a tourist complex has been used to encompass all of the above. With its wider meaning, this term finds its most common application in descriptive and documentary Bulgarian and foreign literature.

It is also used in addition to the 2011 Tourism Act with the following definition: "Tourist Complex" is a separate, territorially separate group of places of accommodation, with a common engineering and tourist infrastructure where basic and varied additional tourist services are offered. It is made up of at least 5 accommodation places and there is at least one dining and entertainment establishment.\(^3\) Apart from the fact that the use of the phrase "places of accommodation" allows the concept of "tourist complex" to be mixed with the concept of "hotel complex", which is unacceptable for the professional language of tourism, the definition does not distinguish the types of complexes according to the tourist resources used.

The name "resort complexes" individualizes the group of tourist resorts utilizing natural resources. This term achieves higher accuracy of expression. At the same time, its use requires a narrower targeting of application and therefore achieves a lower prevalence.

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In foreign-language literature, this word is almost incomprehensible. The proper use of the term "resort complex" for the tourism research purposes requires its exact definition, which, in the author’s opinion, should include the following:

"Territorially separate and infrastructurally unified from the tourist sites, means, and facilities, forming a complex tourist product of basic and auxiliary services for accommodation, nutrition, treatment, transport, sports, and entertainment, providing the consumption of the adjacent natural tourism resources of restorative nature."

After specifying the content of the term, it is important to define its definition area or the perimeters of general and private significance with respect to its close names. In its syntactic connection with the "tourist complex", "resort complex" preserves part of the content in its importance of complexity in the organization of services, limiting it within the types of tourism, consuming natural tourism resources with curative and restorative impact.

It follows that a resort can be defined as a recreational tourist complex. It can be said that the objects under the name "resort complex" are a subset of "tourist complex", derived from the same group, but containing a general limiting characteristic and this is the adjacent natural recreational resource. In other words, all resorts are also tourist resorts, but not all tourist complexes are resorts (see Figure 1). A typical example of this are Disneyland Parks, offering comprehensive tourist services (including accommodation), but based exclusively on anthropogenic tourism resources. A number of examples of purposeful construction of complete resorts in Bulgaria are the above listed sea, mountain and balneological ones.

The definition of the boundaries of significance should also be made with regard to the terms "resort" and "resort complex". While a resort covers the scope of a tourist resort for recreational tourism, including not purely tourist elements, a resort complex unites mainly tourist sites and related infrastructure. The morphology of "resort" lacks the element of complexity of services.

Another distinction needs to be made between "resort complex" and "hotel complex". While a hotel complex may not only have a restoration purpose and may be only part of the accommodation base of the tourist area, a resort complex is targeted and covers the entire group of tourist sites. In multiple comparability, a hotel complex can be an integral part of a resort in the way already described.

In its form, the concept "resort complex" is a definite category in the following aspects: geographic, territorial, functional, organizational, product, with a focus on the species integrity of the tourist product. In terms of content, it reveals the functional completeness of the organizational unit embedded in its specificity and purpose. In its nature, the concept "resort complex" achieves a higher meaningful concreti-
zation and homogenization of its composition in terms of the exploitation of natural tourism resources, the completeness and scope of the 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 resorts.

**Structure analysis and typology of resort complexes.**

Regardless of the way of setting up, a complete planning or gradual upgrading, resort complexes genetically aggregate enough and a variety of production capacities of tourist services that give the overall tourist product a fullness and integrity. In fulfillment of their functional purpose (to ensure the full consumption of the natural tourist resource and to make the stay of tourists a pleasant and useful experience), they focus within their respective material base and organizational potential. Resort complexes built on a highly integrated level are systems of functionally united elements associated with multiple subsystems and activities, ensuring their harmonious and purposeful work in a comprehensive mechanism.

The complex layout of the complexes is a projection of the concept of a complex tourist product. The individual elements of the system of functional units (tourist, administrative, technical and other sites and centers) are grouped according to their purpose in:

- tourist (resort) facilities
- administrative and material facilities: means and facilities of the general complex management, the internal economy, the fire department, the police and the medical services.
- engineering and technical facilities: internal and external transport facilities, park and resource facilities, electricity and water supply networks, sewage and water purification, beach service, marinas, bridges, ski runs and facilities, swimming pools and bathhouses, etc.

The functional completeness and unity of the "resort complex" system is implemented by subsystems, which combine the different operational units through activities that ensure the operation of the complex. In terms of content, subsystems are defined as: administrative (supreme in hierarchy) serving and maintaining. Each of these subsystems includes the means and capacity to perform the profiled activities:

- administrative subsystem: operational management
  - (methodical guidance, quality control, operational control, exchange of operational and statistical information);
  - strategic management (concept, planning, programming);
  - marketing (market research, planning, positioning, promotion, contracting, analyzes and evaluations), communications (comprehensive tourist information, internal and external business communication and contacts);
  - environmental monitoring (monitoring and control of the environment and production processes within and around the complex);
  - internal management (property management, finance, accounting and statistics, material and information supply);
- service subsystem - activities: organizational, serving production, information, cultural, sports, artistic, etc.
- maintenance subsystem - medical service, fire safety, maintaining public order and security; internal and external complex transport (tourist and business); technical, technological and energy control; maintenance, supply and emergency servicing of all facilities and tourist resources.

The system structure is broadly common to the different types of tourist complexes. The specificity of the resorts brings variety in the range and specialization of some activities and subsystems, but not in the structural principles as a whole.

In complexes with high organizational integration between tourist sites, each subsystem comprises all elements of the complex in a centralized manner. With the deepening of the structural analysis at the micro level - a functional unit, it can be seen that each individual tourist object is a separate functional system already described in the theory of tourism. The new one in this case is its integration on a macro level - in the general complex functional system.

Resort complexes developed according to a comprehensive conceptual plan have the possibility of introducing an important structural principle, namely territorial and functional zoning. According to this principle, the territory of the natural resource to the periphery of the complex form service zones resource facilities, leisure common areas, accommodation, food and entertainment establishments, transport and engineered according to their purpose and interoperability with priority to tourism comfort. It is the purposeful zone distribution that achieves high integrity and gives full meaning to the content of the term "resort complex".

The **typological analysis** of resorts applies criteria for their characteristics related to natural resources, their structuring and their functional organization, depending on the aspect and the purposes of consideration. Resorts from the past and from modern resorts retain the same motive for selecting a geographic location where occur and develop presence on beneficial for human health factor of natural origin. Depending on the type of natural resource they exploit, resorts are defined as:

- **climatic** - can be marine, mountain, forest, steppe, etc.
- **balneological** - application therapies with mineral waters, sea water, curative mud, lye, algae, and others.
- **combined** - combining several factors such as: balneo-climate, sea-mud, etc.\(^4\)

Another important aspect in the characterization of the resorts is the resident one, i.e. whether there is a permanent local population.

This condition divides the resorts into:

- self-contained;
- not self-contained (mixed).

The **self-contained resorts** include in their accommodation only tourists. D. Pearse calls this kind "isolated complexes", allowing for the predominance of the action of natural factors.\(^5\) Employees in the complex stay there only during their duties.

It is permissible to permanently accommodate a small number of them without altering the overall environment.

Resorts set up in earlier historic stages, such as mineral spring baths, coastal settlements, were originally populated with local residents and subsequently built up tourist facilities. The symbiosis thus obtained of two different types of living-holiday and resident organizations has a negative impact on each of them.

The **structural analysis** of the complexes reveals different spatial schemas referring to the configuration in which they

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are implemented. So dealt with, the system elements and the links between them form two types of systems, namely:

- **Integrated (organic) type.**
- **Disintegrated (modular) type.**

In cases where the complex is a result of a joint investment initiative allowing for overall planning, construction, strategic, and operational management, its structure is comprised of functional areas, subject to architectural and practical expediency. Outdoors represent the brightest attractions and intensely develop a common-space complex. The adjacent territories of the hotels are not restricted and the tourists have equal access to all facilities and sites in the complex. Such a functional configuration enables the system to function as an entire organism and defines it as an organic type.

This type achieves the highest degree of functional integration between objects and the widest possible variety of services for each guest from each hotel.

A typical example in the world practice is the Meditation Club, Sandals Resort, Cancun, Mexico, Mamma, Romania.

In other cases of formation, individual owners build individual hotel complexes. The guest of this complex has the range of services at its hotel. Outside, he finds mostly such hotels with similar services in which he "is not a guest". The boundaries of the hotel complexes hinder the exchange of guests among them.

The spaces around the hotels are developing poorly, to the most necessary. In other words, the resort is made up of independent hotel complexes, modules that provide a complete tourist product within their borders but operate separately, in competition for all types of services. This is how the project on the national plan of the coast of Languedoc-Roussillon - France, alpine ski resorts, sea resorts in Tunisia, Morocco, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey are being developed.

The configurable differences between the two types are transformed into functional in the process of their operation. In the outcome, the tourist experiences bring two types of basic sensations: the pre-modal type - the tourist is a guest of the hotel complex and pre-integrated type - the tourist is a guest of the whole resort complex.

The integrated type fills the maximum functional aspect of the resort complex term.

Last but not least, the functional criterion of managing tourism is important. The forms of general complex management can be:

- centralized management;
- decentralized management.

Centralized management, implemented by the administrative body, is characteristic of the sole ownership of the tourist superstructure. It is an indispensable condition for achieving functional harmony in organic resort complexes. For him, D. Pearse argues that "it ensures effective and balanced planning and development, rapid realization and return on investment and the achievement of high-quality clientele. Coordination, general planning and physical integration of complex facilities lead to high functionality."6

Examples include the Club of Meditation, La Grand Plagne, Port Grimaud, as well as the already listed resorts in Bulgaria until their privatization, which achieving even more complex integration, merged into a national tourist enterprise.

Decentralized management, characteristic of modular type complexes, is actually an independent management of individual, legally independent tourist sites. It does not exceed its micro-level and does not reach a total complex functioning and development.

**Determination of the prerequisites for differentiation of resort complexes as an independent scientific category.**

When considering the resort complex phenomenon as a system element of tourism relations, the deductive analysis does not reveal any manifestations of new systemic dynamics in the dynamics of the system. Therefore, there is no reason to draw new scientific laws of interaction related to the object. There are, however, qualitatively new conditions in the tourism activity, occurring only in the conditions of its operation, in the direction: investment and operational management, socio-psychological impact, economic importance, legal dependencies. These are also the areas, the sources of prerequisites for the differentiated scientific study of the phenomenon of resort complexes.

When comparing the independent type of resorts with the non-suited or with other, non-complex forms of tourist services, the new socio-psychological environment of the "purely tourist atmosphere" is qualitatively opened. It shows the positive aspects of the complex tourist service as emotional experiences of the tourists as a result of the consumed non-material goods. At the core of the formation of consumer satisfaction lies also the absence of the negatives of the urban and other non-tourist circles. In this context, it is necessary to focus research on social psychology, marketing, territorial administration, to clarify the advantages and opportunities of the individual resorts, in support of the investment planning and realization.

The comparative analysis of the performance of resort complexes shows the benefits of integrated to modular, centralized management over decentralized and proves that the application of the first type leads to the following economic effects:

- operational, environmental, and market-based expediency in structuring the elements of the system, the functionality and the end-product;
- achieving the widest range of additional services and completeness of the tourist product;
- ensuring accessibility and attractiveness of each area of the territory for each tourist and creating the feeling of "a guest of the whole complex";
- concentrating high production capacity and stimulating higher production capacity at an optimal load of the natural resource;
- as a result of this concentration, an increase in tax revenues, local employment, social balance;
- consolidation of a common market position in the contractual relationships with the tour operators and the transformation from "led" in the general case, in "leading" - in the private one;
- programs for modernization of the material base, revaluation of the nature resource and maintaining a common conceptual atmosphere of the complex.

Therefore, the theory of tourism has to be complemented by research of the detailed characteristics, functional and spatial features of the integrated and modular resort complexes, the efficiency of their centralized and decentralized management.

The legal aspect of the peculiarities that the resort brings to the tourist relations is mainly reflected in the system of ownership of the tourist sites and the associated responsibility towards the state of environment. The policy of preserving the natural tourist resources, which is internationally relevant,

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requires accurate and clear identification and assumption of responsibilities for their exploitation. Under sole ownership of the sites in the resort, responsibility is easily identifiable and imposes a corresponding commitment to generally accepted policy directives. In the conditions of centralized resort complexes programs are easy to be applied to meet the optimal load and recovery of natural resources as well as the introduction of "bearing capacity" as the leading normative tool in managing the magnitude and direction of tourist flows. Legal considerations should be included as a source of consideration when designing concepts and strategies for the development of resorts, and the development of management schemes and policy programs in micro and macro-regulation.

The starting point in the system analysis of the resorts is necessary to develop further a comprehensive and detailed theory that will be updated in time, given the dynamics of the development of the phenomenon. Apart from the deepening of the in-house research of the resorts, it is necessary to extend the knowledge about their external interaction with the social processes, their horizontal integration with the other economic activities, as well as their vertical subordination in the system of the tourism and the national policy.

In a theoretical aspect, it can be concluded that the peculiarities found in resorts according to their diversity and in comparison with other structural and organizational forms of tourism services, have a significant cognitive potential. Therefore, the science of tourism is committed to completing and deepening the knowledge about them through differentiated research, the category "resort complex" can take a standalone place as a subject of study in the theory of tourism. Expanding the knowledge of this phenomenon is a valuable scientific basis for managerial activity in the political, economic, environmental, and other spheres of social relations.

The summarized information about the typology and characteristics of resort complexes forms a qualification tool applicable in the investment design - in choosing one or another structural-functional configuration, in the operational activity - applying one or another management scheme; in the system, situational and factor analysis of their efficiency of the optimization processes.

Deepening the differential knowledge of resort complexes and its application in practice increases the potential of the tourism industry towards increasing product quality, consumer satisfaction, leading to progressive economic development. Equally important is its significance in the formulation and implementation of tourism policy by central and local government and the implementation of their regulatory functions concerning the revaluation of natural tourism resources and the environment, the social balance and, in general, the protection of public interests and sustainable socially developed economic development.

References: