

## **Casino Gambling Tourism-A View From Community: The Case of North Cyprus (TRNC)**

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### **Abstract**

This study is an investigation of a host community's perception of the social and cultural impacts of casino gambling in the major coastal tourist destination of Northern Cyprus, where it represents a vital source of income and employment for the area. The study is also an evaluation of this perception within the context of 'tourism-host community' interaction, in respect to a general theory of community participation in the decision-making process. To achieve this aim, a survey questionnaire was applied to collect data from the Kyrenia district (the main venue for casino gambling activities) in Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The questionnaires were analyzed to access: (1) the general attitude towards casino gambling, (2) the social and cultural impacts of casino gambling on local residents, (3) the community's concerns about the presence of casinos in their community, and (4) to develop a profile of respondents in respect of their attitudes towards gambling behaviour. Findings indicated that the respondents had a negative attitude towards casino gambling. The socio-cultural impacts that were cited most frequently were crime and domestic violence, prostitution, threat to the traditional way of life, social values, diminishing the historic, aesthetic value of Kyrenia town, and threatening the basis of family structure and life. Findings also revealed that tourism planners and developers need to be aware of the perceptions of the community and of actively encouraging community members involvement in any decision-making processes, connected to specific types of tourism - particularly gambling. Many casinos have been constructed on the coastal environment, which raises numerous concerns regarding the ecological impact of casinos on the health and sustainability of the coastal areas. The study revealed that there is no integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in place which "emphasizes the integration of systems, co-ordination of policies and institutions, management concerns, development objectives and

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stakeholder interests across the different landscapes of the coastal zone” (Hope & Lekorwe, 1999, p. 853). The community’s concerns were directed at the serious lack of awareness displayed towards these issues.

Keywords: Residents’ attitudes; Casino Gambling; Tourism Development; Growth machine thesis; North Cyprus.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Tourism is one of the world’s largest industries and small islands are, by far, the most tourism dependent destinations in the world (Ayres, 2000; Croes, 2006; Lockhart, 1997; Uyarra et al., 2005). In a small island like the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (i.e., hereafter referred to as North Cyprus), where the major industry is tourism, it is expected that the utmost attention be given to the interaction between the ‘community’ and the tourism system in that community (Dogan, 1989; Hampton, 2005). As Tran (2006, p. 366) noted:

Public participation has been recommended as an effective means to establish sound sustainable development practice. To ensure the active participation of the local community in planning and implementing a sustainable development program, it is necessary to understand their perception of development issues that affect their community, and to be aware of their knowledge, feeling and behavior.

With respect to casino gambling as a form of tourism development (Harrill, 2004; Hall, 2008), two aspects inherent in this rather unique type of leisure activity are worthy of examination. First, the complexity of the issue and the act or processes of ‘gambling’ itself generate opinions which are not unified. Second, many communities, in which casinos are proposed, are not necessarily positive about such a development, and may oppose any such proposal if the casino is planned to be located in their immediate vicinity. (Giacopassi, Nicholas, & Grant, 1999; Griswold & Nichols, 2006). Negative or positive feelings of residents in the community will be either detrimental to, or beneficial for the future harmonious growth of the leisure sector. As Gu and Wong (2006, p. 253) noted:

The interrelationships between various elements in the tourism system are studied widely, especially the host community’s feedback on the impacts of tourism, because it has been recognized that the perception and attitudes of residents toward the impacts of tourism are essential in providing valuable input in dealing with the strategic managerial decisions, marketing and operation of existing and future programs and projects. Additionally, the views of the host community must be taken into account if the industry is to be sustainable in the long term.

This is why firsthand knowledge of the community’s perception towards casino gambling is vital if the aim is to incorporate them into the actual planning process (Gjerald, 2005; Harrill, 2004). As Hall noted: “...opposition has often emerged towards the development of casinos by various interests in a destination because of the perceived impact of casinos on host communities, particularly in relation to a

perceived increase in crime and prostitution and the effectiveness of governments at regulating casino gambling” (Hall, 2000, p. 31).

Casino gambling is one of the all year round tourist activities in north Cyprus. This activity is not new; however, it has remained controversial (Scott & Asikoglu, 2001). This research has sought to identify the local residents’ perceptions towards the impact of casino gambling in Kyrenia (Girne in Turkish), one of the most popular tourist destinations in North Cyprus. The main aim is to explore residents’ views of the impact of casino gambling on the economic, social, cultural welfare and overall environmental status of the local people. The identification of residents’ perceptions of the impact of casino gambling on these aspects of life could provide useful information for planning and management purposes (Harrill, 2004; Reid, Dair, & George, 2004). The magnitude and nature of these impacts (positive and negative) will, for the first time, be explored throughout this study and will provide sound evidence, based on this field study, regarding the future role of communities in the leisure sector (Murphy & Murphy, 2004).

### ***1.1 Conceptualization***

#### *Tourism and the host community*

Tourism in general and casino gambling, as a form of tourism development, in particular, is a multifaceted industry composed of numerous layers/dimensions. To name a few; attractions, transportation, accommodation, promotion, services, information, infrastructure, entertainment, environment, migration, human resources, entrepreneurship, culture, finance, labor, leadership, competition, and governmental policy (Gunn & Var, 2002). These dimensions exercise considerable influence on a community’s landscape through employment, land use, environment, socio-cultural, spatial, and overall quality of life systems. “Because of this pervasive influence, obtaining the input of residents should be integral to any tourism planning process” (Harrill, 2004, p. 252). There is ample evidence in the literature that, as a means to restructure the economy of various destinations, tourism will not take place without social, economic, cultural, spatial, and environmental impacts. These impacts are not independent from the very communities that they are affecting and in many cases are incurring fundamental changes in the fabric of their societies. In this context, the basis for the conceptualization of this study is founded upon three dimensional interactions between (i) community, (ii) tourism, and (iii) economic development. *Community* is defined as “a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government and have a cultural and historical heritage” (Murphy et al., 2004, p. 16). For the purpose of this study, *tourism* is defined as “...the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs” (Gunn et al., 2002, p. 8). The *economic development*, which is taken to be synonymous with sustainable development, encompasses economic growth with a focus on addressing the community’s various interests and needs, including a just distribution of income, resource protection, sustainability, place of women, marginalized people, poverty, human right and democracy (Burns, 1999; Dorothy & Weil, 1997; Haque, 1999; Todaro & Smith, 2009). Acknowledging that ‘community’ is a complex dimension with numerous characteristics and that ‘tourism’ is highly variable as it is composed of different types of activities and consumes various types of resources, ‘economic development’ can be understood to be an outcome or synthesis of the two

constructs – community and tourism. In relation to ‘economic development’, communities embrace tourism and its planning to achieve numerous objectives addressed by the concept of development. To put the aforementioned concept in perspective, Harill (2004, p. 251) stressed that

Tourism is becoming an important component of economic development programs around the world. Planners who have traditionally viewed economic development as “bricks and mortar” industrial development now consider tourism a viable strategy as traditional industries relocate for cheaper labor and resources. At the same time, residents in many areas are encountering tourism’s impacts and benefits for the first time. To gain support for tourism projects and initiatives, many planners now strive to understand how the public perceives the tourism industry.

This study assumes that the lack of community involvement is not just a theoretical discourse; it is a parameter to defend the interests of the residents in the long run against endogenous as well as exogenous elements. As Mitchell and Reid (2001, p. 114) eloquently described it: “tourism in the developing world has frequently been a double-edged sword; while it may provide a venue for communities and people to augment their income or livelihood, the majority of the benefits tend to flow out of them. Additionally, real power and decision-making regularly resides outside of community control and influence”. Therefore, the parameters of the concept revolve around the question: ‘*to what extent are the residents’ perceptions significant to plan, develop, and implement a sustainable tourism system?*’

On the other hand, tourism, in general, and casino gambling in particular, is potentially capable of bypassing the community’s interests and instead of capitalizing on generating benefits for the investors, who may not be involved in a particular destination’s political and economic structure. “...In other words, local people and their communities have become the objects of development but not the subjects of it” (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 114).

## ***1.2 The Community Involvement Model***

Communities are at the forefront of any development and they are most likely to be affected by the processes and the projects that are taking place in their environments; “Thus, in an effort to counter the tensions resulting from the more negative impacts from uneven/unplanned development, many researchers are suggesting that tourism-dominated communities should plan their evolution more systematically, thereby taking into account residents’ attitudes and perceptions about its growth at the outset” (Reid et al., 2004, p. 624). As the objective of this study is to explore the residents’ attitude, the justification is based on the reality that the residents’ attitudes toward tourism development in general and casino gambling in particular range along a continuum from negative to positive (Harrill & Potts, 2003; Harrison, 1992). In addition, achieving this objective is critical to the long-term viability of tourism destinations (Ap & Crompton, 1998). Furthermore, communities are assumed to be an active participant in civic institutions (Murphy, 1985), and planners are obliged to have a community approach (i.e., bottom up) to tourism planning, which emphasizes development in the community rather than development of the community (Hall, 2008). Our model is based on this narrative (see Figure 1). The structure of the model is framed by 6 stages: (i) *supply side* in which tourism planning and development is contemplated

and decided by an amalgamation of different layers in the society, including community as a formidable stakeholder; (ii) *community/residents* which are seen as the main layer in the process (i.e., as part of civic institutions), and subject of our research (i.e., community centered model); (iii) *impact* which can be social, economic, political, cultural, spatial, and environmental; (iv) *residents' perceptions* (i.e., attitudes towards casino gambling as a form of tourism); (v) *planning approach* (i.e., concerns of the tourism planners and managers in relation to different approaches); (vi) *implementation* (i.e., development in the community vs. development of the community). The model assumes a process whereby the community is present all along and will remain as a partner throughout the planning and implementation process. The model is based on a *community-centered* approach to tourism planning and development with community perceptions taking center stage.

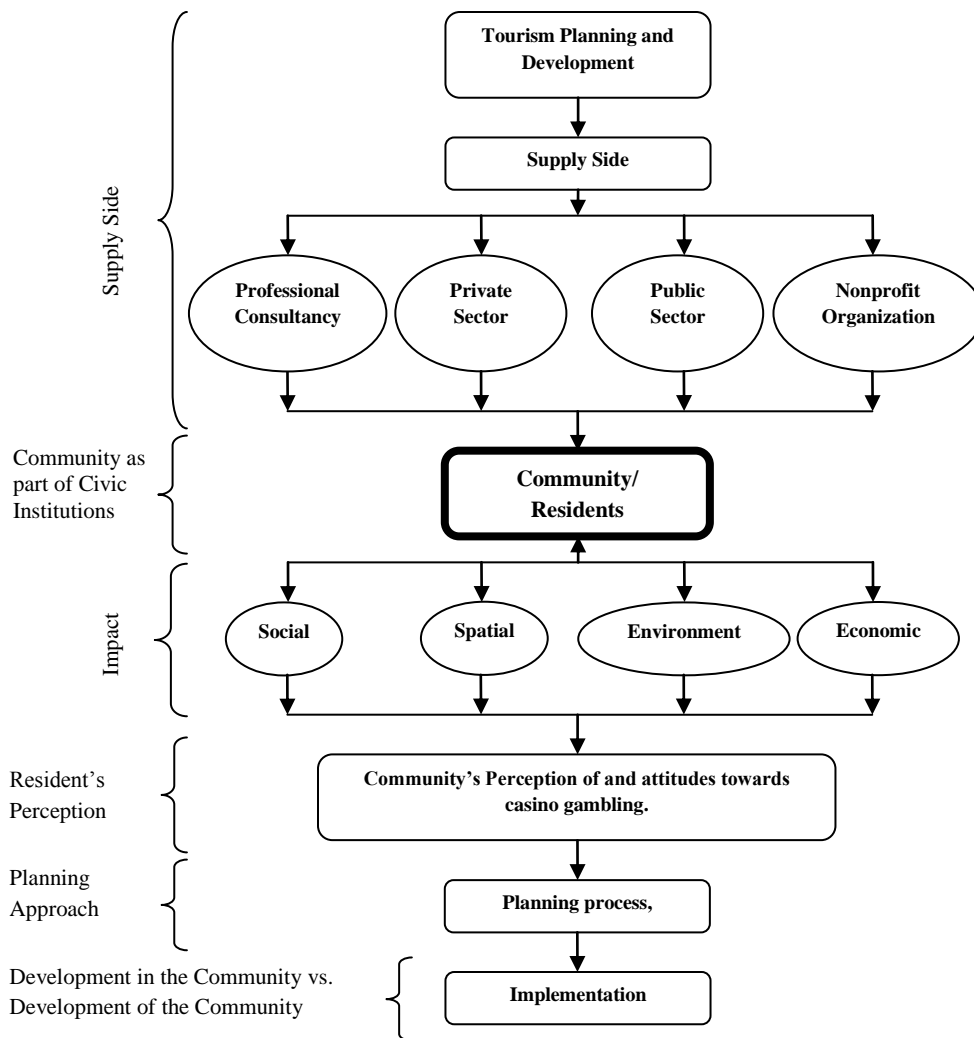


Figure 1. A community centered tourism development model

## 2.0 Literature Review

### *Residents' attitudes towards casino gambling*

This second tire of the research on community perception focuses on the casino gambling sector in various locations, including various cross-country studies on this form of tourism and its impact on communities. “The foundation of the many and varied gaming impact studies stems mainly from the general tourism impact studies of the 1970s. These studies suggest that residents’ perceptions of casino development in their communities have been broadly classified into social, economic, and environmental impacts” (Kang, Leeb, Yoonb, & Long, 2008, p. 682). As casino gambling has become rather a desired form of tourism and leisure industry worldwide, it is evident that when tourism development involves casino gambling, both the real and perceived impacts can be dramatic (Stitt, Nicholas, & Giacompassi, 2005).

Researchers have also applied and based their analysis of residents’ attitudes towards casino gambling on various theories in social science and psychology. In fact, “Hormans developed social exchange theory to explain the social behavior of humans in economic undertakings by incorporating economics, psychology, and sociology” (as cited in Kang et al., 2008, p. 683). Accordingly, community attachment, social exchange, and growth machine theories, as based in sociology and other disciplines, provide a basis for explaining how residents’ attitudes towards the impacts of casino gambling are formed. For instance, casino establishments are usually involved and managed by powerful political interests within and outside communities as well as by international investors. Therefore, urban regime and growth machine theories (Clark, 2003; Fainstain & Campell, 1996) can be highly instrumental in developing a better conceptual understanding of the attitudes towards gambling and the influences this sector might have on residents (Harrill, 2004). At any rate, scholars who studied residents’ attitudes, either towards tourism in general or casino gambling in particular, have applied more or less the same theoretical constructs albeit employing different models. The bulk of the research on attitudes of the residents toward casino gambling remains anything but conclusive (see Table 1). None of the studies have been able to verify a clear support for or against this sector within the communities in which they investigated. For instance, the earliest study on the perceived impact of a potential casino to be built in two small Massachusetts towns, established that residents believed casinos would bring both advantages and disadvantages to their community (Pizam & Pokela, 1985). On the pro casino gambling spectrum, research shows it has become an increasingly accepted recreational activity that has strengthened communities, for example, by generating tax revenues that can be used to finance community services in the fields of health and education (Lee & Back, 2003, 2006; Long, 1996; Nichols, Giacompassi, & Stitt, 2002; Piscitelli & Albanese, 2000), thus encouraging civic involvement. Long’s (1996) study of gambling communities in South Dakota and Colorado revealed that residents did not have a strong anti-gambling attitude, however, they were not unified in regarding gambling’s economic, social, and personal benefits.

Table 1. *Selected Factors and Dimensions on Residents' Attitudes Toward Tourism and Casino Gambling Development*

Casino gambling as a form of tourism development.	Theoretical perspectives/ Evaluation Matrix.	
<b>Dimensions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casino</li> <li>• Casino gambling</li> <li>• Casino project</li> <li>• Impact on community life</li> <li>• Social impact</li> <li>• Economic impact</li> <li>• Environmental impact</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Urban sustainability</li> <li>• Place-building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congestion</li> <li>• Land use</li> <li>• Local economy</li> <li>• Ethical and moral debate</li> <li>• Neighborhood quality</li> <li>• Town image</li> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Prostitution</li> <li>• Mixed feeling</li> <li>• Livability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butler's PLC model</li> <li>• Community attachment theory</li> <li>• Social exchange theory</li> <li>• Growth machine theory</li> <li>• Urban regime theory</li> <li>• Doxey's Irridex model</li> <li>• Economic dependency</li> </ul>
<b>Implications for tourism planners and managers:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining the research process</li> <li>• Place specific research</li> <li>• Identifying each destination in relation to a dominant theoretical explanation</li> <li>• Planning decisions based on the realities of each destination</li> <li>• Planning that matters</li> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Planning approaches</li> <li>• Political economy of destinations</li> <li>• Place-building</li> <li>• Place-meaning</li> <li>• Sustainability/livability</li> </ul>		

Some scholars have suggested that there is a relationship between gambling as a form of tourism and certain socioeconomic variables of the community. For example, in a study of the gambling community in the USA (i.e., Deadwood, South Dakota), Caneday and Zeiger (1991) explored that the more money residents made from directly related tourism jobs, the less likely they perceived negative attitudes. In addition, the higher educated tourism-employed residents were more likely to perceive a negative attitude towards the impact of gambling. However, respondents in all of the casino communities identified noise, traffic congestion and crime as the disadvantages resulting from casinos operating within their

communities. In another study, Giacomassi et al. (1999) carried out research in eight US communities that were new casino jurisdictions. Respondents were required to provide their insights and perspectives in respect of the positive and negative effects that casinos have had on their communities. The result was not a unanimous agreement regarding various attributes.

In their study on the perceived social, economic and environmental impact of casino gambling in Korea, Lee et al. (2003) examined perceptions both before and after the casinos were opened. Results revealed that residents generally perceived both positive and negative factors as less strong after the casinos opened. Kwan (2004) conducted a study that examined the attitudes of Macau resident towards gambling. The study revealed mixed attitudes towards gambling, but key social impacts that were frequently cited were family quarrels and the need to borrow money to gamble. After 5 years of deregulation of gaming in Macau, Vong (2009) explored that residents have become more conservative in their attitudes toward gambling. She revealed that residents' attitudes were influenced by the cost of living, economy, and environment.

Felsenstein and Freeman (2001) factored in the positive and negative economic benefits and social costs of casino gambling in their evaluation and believed that these effects are often glossed over (either deliberately or unintentionally) in many impact analyses. In a study by Kang, Long and Perdue (1996) of gambling communities, three categories of attitudes were revealed: reluctance to have gambling in the community; the economic impact perceived to be minimal as the benefit of gambling flew out; and some personal satisfaction as gambling brought opportunities to meet other people. Nonetheless, for purpose-built casino gambling destinations, compromises have been made over relaxing both historic preservation and environmental regulations. In these circumstances, as noted Kang et al. "residents may feel that much has been sacrificed to achieve financial gain for outside ownership as few of the casinos are locally owned and operated" (2008, p. 692). In another study by Hsu (2000a) on the impact of riverboat casino gaming and the community quality of life, residents were highly negative of supporting this type of tourism strategy as they "had experienced the undesirable 'lag effect', a term to describe outcomes of community tourism development processes that lag anticipated goals. Undesirable lag effects occur when expected benefit are slow to materialize or are entirely absent, or when negative consequences overcome positive gains" (2000b, p. 394). In another study of riverboat casino, residents' and business owners' attitudes were measured by Hsu (2000a) and findings indicated that riverboat casinos, "for the most part, had no direct impact on respondents' personal lives or businesses. Both business owners and residents agreed that players visiting the riverboats were not real "tourists" because they did not visit other attractions in the community" (2000a, p. 12).

Similarly, Sheng and Tsui (2009) evaluated the impact of tourism (i.e., mainly casino gambling) in Macau in relation to residents' gain and loss in the context of sustainable tourism development. They did not measure the residents' perception; however, they assessed the impact on the community by applying a general equilibrium model and discovered that notwithstanding the apparent increase in its nominal GDP, various types of negative externalities were generated in the community. They argued that excessive, uncontrolled or too rapid tourism growth has many explicit and hidden externalities that undermine the sustainable development of the destination. Therefore, it is recommended that the government



should keep sustainability in mind when making tourism policies, carefully taking all related social, environmental and political factors into consideration (Sheng et al., 2009). Research has also been pursued in zones or place-based populations (i.e. Indian reservations) where casino gambling has become a popular form of tourism development. Notwithstanding the positive impacts, the challenge remains regarding the negative social and cultural consequences (Gonzales, Lyson, & Mauer, 2007).

Some studies on community perception towards casino gambling have discovered ‘problem gambling’ as one of the by-products of this form of tourism in different gaming communities. Loo, Raylu, and Oei (2008) discovered that ‘problem gambling’ is in the rise among the Chinese where gambling is perceived as a form of entertainment; and western types of interventions are used to explain and treat the problem. Ligthelm (2001) surveyed a gambling community in South Africa aiming to monitor community perceptions of and trends in gambling behavior. The result revealed the magnitude of ‘at risk’ problem gambling in Mpumalanga. ‘Gambling problem’ is not limited to a few gambling communities, as there is ample evidence of this problem associated with the existence of this form of entertainment on one hand, and lack of policies of how to manage gambling communities on the other (Abbott & Volberg, 2006; Bjelde, Chromy, & Pankow, 2008; Scull & Woolcock, 2005).

### **3.0 The Case of North Cyprus**

#### ***3.1 Country Profile***

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sardinia and Sicily. It lies 70 kilometers south of Turkey, 100 kilometers west of Syria and 320 kilometers north of Egypt. The island of Cyprus covers an area of 9,250 square kilometers of which 3,355 square kilometers belong to Northern Cyprus with a population of 265,100 inhabitants (Northern Cyprus, 2011) (see Figure 2). The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (Turkish: Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti, KKTC), commonly called North Cyprus, is a de facto independent republic located in the northern part of the island of Cyprus. The partition of the island occurred in 1974 and the island was divided into the North Cyprus (Turkish) and South Cyprus (Greek) enclaves (Altınay & Bowen, 2006). The TRNC declared its independence in 1983, recognized diplomatically only by Turkey. With the partition of the island, a new political chapter began on the island (Dinkov & Stoyanov, 2005; Holsti, 1990) with measurable economic, social, spatial, political, and environmental implications. In the aftermath of the partition of the island, for nearly four decades, every effort to unify the Island has failed. Despite all the odds (i.e., political and economic sanctions), North Cyprus has been able to establish itself as a viable economy based upon ‘tourism’ industry. One of the main tourism activities in the north has been the flourishing industry of ‘casino gambling’. Nonetheless, tourism still remains as a significant sector in the economy and the net earnings have increased from \$175.6 million in 1996 to \$376.2 million in 2007. The tourism sector employed 8,208 persons in 866 tourism establishments (i.e., including all kinds of accommodations and tourism related establishments). The ratio of net tourism income to the trade balance stood at 27.4% for the year 2007. The number of arrivals in north Cyprus, according to the latest report, reached 740,296 of which about 80% of the arrivals came from Turkey (i.e., the main tourism market) while the rest came from countries other than Turkey. The average length of stay recorded as 2.9 nights for the visitors from Turkey, and 5.3 nights

for the visitors from countries other than Turkey. As a destination, the TRNC suffers from a low occupancy rate; for 2007 it recorded a 32.2% occupancy rate (MET, 2008). By the year 2007, the TRNC's accommodation facilities had experienced a boom and the number of beds reached 16,180 units in 142 establishments ranging from 5 star hotels to traditional houses licensed by the ministry of economics and tourism. With respect to the number of visitors, the TRNC has been able to overcome the accommodation deficiency of the past decade, and as of today, 42% of the bed capacity is supplied by 5 star hotels (MET, 2008) (see Table 2).



Figure 2. Map of Cyprus with demarcation line.

Table 2. *Tourism Share in TRNC's Economy (1996-2007)*

Years	Number of Arrivals	Net tourism income (million usd)	Ratio of net tourism Income to the trade balance (%)	Occupancy rate (%)
1996	146,668	175.6	70.0	32.5
1997	193,746	183.2	61.3	35.6
1998	209,142	186.0	55.2	36.6
1999	231,926	192.8	53.5	36.7
2000	254,448	198.3	53.0	37.2
2001	228,316	93.7	39.5	30.9
2002	285,419	114.1	43.2	37.8
2003	272,162	178.8	41.9	37.0
2004	306,244	288.3	36.4	40.7
2005	335,235	328.8	28.0	40.2
2006	368,891	303.2	23.2	33.2
2007	423,396	376.2	27.4	32.2

Source: MET, 2008.

### ***3.2 Casino Gambling in the TRNC***

Casino gambling as a form of tourism development in the TRNC goes back to the early 1970s when the Turkish enclave of the then the Republic of Cyprus, decreed the law of ‘betting and gambling legislations’ (i.e., law No: 15/1971) to regulate and monitor the activities of gambling houses and establishments. To the same decree, another amendment was added under the same title (i.e., No: 20/1971), which was followed by yet another decree (i.e., No: 20/1975). However, it was not until the 1980s – coinciding with the consolidation of the partition of the island – when further amendments were added to the same law (i.e., No: 44/1984) indicating further regulation as the gambling industry was evolving and most likely employing new gambling technologies, particularly newly computerized slot machines (KKTC Cumhuriyet Meclisi, 2010; Kibris Gazetesi, 2009c). Nonetheless, it was not until the 1990s in which a new chapter began to appear in the coffer of gambling industry in the TRNC, as the political landscape took a sharp turn against gambling and casinos in Turkey in 1997. As Scott noted, “In 1997, following mounting reports of widespread problem gambling and stories linking casinos with organized crime and corrupt politicians, the government of Turkey finally bowed to public and political pressure and closed down its commercial casino sector. A large part of the industry immediately shifted operations to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (2003, p. 1). In fact, at the present, most of the gamblers come from Turkey, where gambling is illegal (Lisaniler, Rodriguez, & Ugurla, 2005).

Presently, 25 casinos are in operation in North Cyprus, a high concentration for such a small territory as northern Cyprus (Scott et al., 2001). The total gaming tables stand at 438, with 4,663 slot machines; casinos employ 3,258 persons and generate over €12 million Euros in license fees, including charging fees for each gaming table and slot machine (MET, 2008). Casino gambling and its significance as a form of tourism development have remained intact, and the number of casinos

has increased due to the full backing of the government, notwithstanding its controversial nature. However, as the general election was scheduled to be held in April 2009, which coincided with the issuance of new licenses for new casinos, a heated debate began to appear in the local newspapers, namely *Kibris Gazetesi* and *Afrika* (i.e., two widely read daily newspapers in the country), which reflected the polarized public opinion regarding the rapid proliferation of casinos. Such polarized public opinion is not new (Scott et al., 2001).

The main issues debated were the concerns of those segments in the society who were angered by the government's new policy of rendering new licenses. Some called it a big scandal by the government for issuing new licenses to tourism establishments with attached casinos as their main operation (*Kibris Gazetesi*, 2009a, p. 1-7). They were criticizing the government for providing tax breaks to these establishments. In another issue of *Kibris Gazetesi* (2009c, p. 7), the gambling legislation was called a 'disastrous law', in which authorities were accused of converting every corner of the landscape into a casino gambling site. The reaction to the new laws was expressed by asking the government to withdraw the policy of expanding casino gambling (*Kibris Gazetesi*, 2009b, p. 1-7). *Afrika*, the second highly read daily, metaphorically referred to Karpaz (i.e., the wildlife sanctuary and a proposed national park), as 'it is not Las Vegas, but Las Karpaz' (*Afrika*, 2009). Insofar as numbers are concerned, with the new proposed casino projects in various parts of the country including Karpaz wilderness and Kantara Park, the total of casinos in the TRNC will reach 33 (*Kibris Gazetesi*, 2009b, p. 1). In regards to legislation to monitor the operation of the casinos, the evidence indicates that the previous laws have not been too effective; therefore, the committee of 'law and social affairs' (i.e., one of the main governmental body responsible for preparation of new legislations) is contemplating revising the old gambling law. The proposal to revise the law generated uproar in the media as it coincided with issuing of new licenses to the newly proposed casinos. The inadequacy of the existing regulations regarding casino gambling was reflected in an interview with the head of the committee of 'law and social affairs' in *Kibris Gazetesi* (2009c); a reference was made to the new law regarding the EU's demand (i.e., there is a prospect for the TRNC to join the EU in the future) for more effective monitoring. It was stressed by the head of the committee during the interview that the EU had commissioned a group of 6 to visit the TRNC and evaluate the laws regarding the casino gambling activities, especially in relation to black money (i.e., unaccounted for and untaxed cash generated by dealings in a black economy, black market, or organized crime). The interviewee emphasized that "the existing laws are not adequate to control, monitor and examine the operation of the casinos; therefore, there is a need for more effective laws" (*Kibris Gazetesi*, 2009c, p. 12). This is also in line with the fact emphasizing that small island developing states (SIDS) are vulnerable to the influence of criminal activities such as money laundering through casino gambling and the inevitable social problems caused by the type of tourism associated with large casinos (Yasarata, Altinay, Burns, & Okumus, 2010). Furthermore, the EU commission had made three recommendations. First, every person who is involved in gambling, in any of the casinos, should be registered in order to facilitate monitoring the gambling affairs of the gamblers by the authorities. Second, every form of gambling, gambling equipments/instruments, and activities must be examined, controlled, and monitored by the authorities, and third, a thorough investigation

should be conducted on investors who are applying for a new license in order to open up a new casino (Kibris Gazetesi, 2009c).

In parallel with casino gambling, the proliferation of the sex industry in North Cyprus has raised a few eyebrows within the community who attribute the magnitude of this activity to the proliferation of casinos. Four types of sex outlets are involved in this industry, namely: ‘night clubs’, ‘pubs’, ‘massage parlors’ and ‘kahvehanes’ (Lisaniler et al., 2005). Despite the public’s repulsion towards the presence of these outlets, there are 43 ‘night clubs’, 9 ‘pubs’, 2 ‘massage parlors’, and a few Kahvehanes in operation, where 336 formally licensed women (*konsomatrices*) are employed (Yucel, 2006). The main patrons of these outlets (i.e., especially the night clubs) are casinos where “a particularly lucrative practice in the industry is the hiring of *konsomatrices* for the entire evening to casino-hotels, rather than directly to the individual client. These casinos in turn offer their customers packaged deals where gambling and prostitution are mixed” (Lisaniler et al., 2005, p. 83). It is a paradox that prostitution has not been legalized in North Cyprus; however, nightclubs and pubs are establishments licensed to serve alcohol and employ the services of women termed *konsomatrices*. As defined by the law, these are women who eat and drink with clients at a nightclub and make an income out of this practice. Although it is illegal for *konsomatrices* to practice prostitution, they do routinely engage in sex acts for money, both on the nightclub premises and outside. This reality is well understood by both legislators and police in North Cyprus (Lisaniler et al., 2005).

## **4.0 Methodology**

### **4.1 Study Site**

The city of Kyrenia (Girne in Turkish) was selected for this study because it is the main tourist destination and the main venue of the casinos in North Cyprus. The city is located on the north coast with a pleasant climate, historical landmarks, picturesque topography, harbor, and significant overall accessibility, which makes it highly attractive within the whole island (Gunce, 2003) (see Figure 2). However, its subjugation to intensive casino gambling poses a threat to the city’s image as a sustainable destination because the spatial distribution of the casinos and their physical locations are important considerations in relation to pollution, congestion, over-development, urbanization, and overall logical development patterns and systems in a coastal urban area (Gunce, 2003; Logar, 2010; Burgess, 1979). Out of 25 casinos, 17 are located in and around the city of Kyrenia. The city is home to 78% of the total tourist accommodation establishments and 70% of the total hotel rooms. Kyrenia received 75% of the tourists in the year 2008 (MET, 2007; Webster & Timothy, 2006). The recent growth of casino gambling establishments is striking, increasing from 17 in 2003 to 25 in 2008, all of which are attached to or located in hotels and other tourist accommodations. This expansion reflects the growing popularity of an activity that has remained controversial for over years. During the time of this study, 6 more applications have been filed through the authorities and have been given licenses to open up new casinos (MET, 2008; Kibris Gazetesi, 2009c, p. 7).

#### **4.2 Sampling and Measurement Scale**

The study design employed a preliminary measurement items based on existing literature on community perception of casino gambling and tourism development based on a review of the tourism literature pertaining to residents' perceptions of gaming and tourism development impacts (Ap et al., 1998; Dogan, 1989; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Hsu, 2000a; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Lee et al., 2003; Nepal, 2008; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990; Ryan & Montgomery, 1994; Vong, 2009; Williams & Lawson 2001). Based on the initial measurement items selection, a self-administered questionnaire was developed as an instrument to measure residents' attitudes towards specific aspects of casino gambling as a form of tourism development. A pilot questionnaire was employed to ensure that the research instrument as a whole functioned and operated well. A Turkish version of the questionnaire was pilot tested on a group (N=40) of graduate students and instructors at the Eastern Mediterranean University in the city of Famagusta (i.e., location of several casinos) and the city of Kyrenia (i.e., home to Girne American University and the site of the study) to ensure the clarity of the wording and to further improve the survey instrument. Finally, the questionnaire was comprised of three sections. The first part contained 28 questions about residents' attitudes towards casino gambling in their community. Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with 28 statements about casino gambling on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), which has a prominent application in most investigations into attitudes and perceptions (Bryman, 2004; Mason & Cheyne, 2000). The second section consisted of 5 questions which required no more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This section was intended to assess the perception of the residents by using variables such as whether or not the respondents had ever been previously consulted on the issue of casino gambling; the respondents' overall attitude regarding the presence of casino gambling in their community; the respondents' views in relation to the economic impact of casino gambling (i.e., particularly whereby casino gambling is associated with general price increases for everyday commodities, property... etc.); the role of casino gambling as a leisure activity. The third section of the instrument consisted of demographic data which included, gender, age, education, and the length of residency in the city of Kyrenia. More than 350 questionnaires were distributed by different informants who were natives of Kyrenia, university graduates, and proficient in the Turkish language. They were specifically selected to be competent enough to be able to explain about the nature and purpose of this study just in case respondents felt a degree of intimidation with respect to casino gambling, which generally speaking is a sensitive/ thorny issue at the best of times. In doing so, the weaknesses inherent in this non-probability sampling method were ameliorated. (Teye, Sonmez, & Sirakaya, 2002). Altogether, 305 completed questionnaires were collected and used for the purpose of data analysis.

This study used non-probability sampling which is essentially an umbrella term to capture all forms of sampling (e.g., convenience sampling) that are not conducted according to the canons of probability sampling (Bryman, 2004). In general this method of sampling is not unusual in social research for exploring perceptions towards the gaming and tourism industry in particular (Sparks & Pan, 2009). In order to properly address the research questions of interest and to obtain the most representative sample possible, it was decided to distribute questionnaires to the residents from the Kyrenia district. The manner in which the researcher approached the respondents was a critical aspect of the administration of the

survey. The survey was to be representative of both females and males; people of various age groups (with the majority between 18 and 40 years old); people from different income groups; people with different qualifications; and people living in suburban and urban areas. This was to ensure that the sample was representative of the population which is homogeneous with respect to characteristic highly shared widely in islands and microstates (Anckar, 1999). Ninety percent of the respondents were long-term residents in the community. The distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents was also methodical, as it was highly decentralized to allow for spatial variations. This prevented the survey from clustering in one spatial area (e.g., central business district), and increased the degree of representativeness of the sample throughout the district.

### ***4.3 Data Analysis and Results***

During the months of June, July, and August of 2007 data was collected from respondents who were permanent residents of Kyrenia. The responses to the questions were analyzed using SPSS (Kinnear & Gray, 2004) version 12.0. Identified respondents throughout the town were given the questionnaire on a cross-sectional basis for spatial variations of residents in an attempt to assess their perceptions about the presence of casino gambling in their community by addressing various social, cultural, environmental, and economical issues or concerns. The demographic profile of the 305 respondents consisted of 65.6% male and 34.4% female. The majority (48.5%) were in the age group between 18 and 30 years old, followed by the 31-40 age groups (29.8%). The age group of 55 and above represented only 4.3%. The age group of 41-55 captured 14.1%. Most respondents had lived in Kyrenia for at least 5 years, and 39.3% resided in Kyrenia for more than 10 years. The educational profile of respondents comprised of university-level education (44.6%), post-graduate degrees (10.8%), high-school diplomas (34.4%), and college certificate (10.2%). The extent of community attachment was high among respondents, as all owned properties in the Kyrenia district.

#### *1. Residents' attitudes towards casino gambling-induced community concern:*

Eleven factors indicating residents' concerns towards casino gambling were analyzed (see Table 3). The result of the analysis revealed that residents did not have a considerable positive view of casino gambling in their community. For example, they strongly opposed the presence of casinos in their immediate environment but equally strongly agreed that casinos should be relocated outside the city of Kyrenia (mean =3.357). And, with the highest score (mean=3.712), they strongly supported the idea that residents should have been made more aware by public officials about casino gambling prior to subjecting the community to this form of tourism. Furthermore, residents were found to be frequenting the casinos for leisure purposes due to the lack of other recreational options (mean=3.446). Believing that frequenting casinos for leisure purposes will eventually lead to gambling, they strongly disagreed with allowing locals to enter casinos without any restrictions (mean=2.797). When asked whether casino gambling can be considered as a main leisure activity in Kyrenia, they disagreed (mean=2.912). Nonetheless, there was no indication that residents wanted an outright ban of casino gambling, notwithstanding their dissatisfaction with this form of tourism (mean=2.856). When asked whether casinos should remain attached to the main hotels, respondents agreed with their separation (mean=3.138), which, in a way, is an indication of their skepticism about

this particular form of tourism as opposed to mainstream tourism. In fact, there is a strong sentiment among the public in North Cyprus who believe that major hotels are always reserved for the gamblers, which reduces the availability of hotel accommodation for non-gamblers. They also expressed their dissatisfaction on the perception of casino gambling as being suspect while strongly agreeing with government's control of the casino activities (mean=3.636).

Table 3. *Residents' Attitudes Towards Casino Gambling-Induced Community Concerns*

Impact Variables	Frequency	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Local residents should be allowed to enter casinos freely.	93		30.5				2.797	1.530
Casino gambling should be separated from main hotels.	77		25.2				3.138	1.524
Casinos should be relocated to areas outside the city and community.	93	30.5					3.357	1.491
Casino gambling is the main form of leisure in Kyrenia.	81			26.6			2.912	1.481
Casino gambling should be banned.	96		31.5				2.856	1.602
Locals gamble because of lack of alternative leisure options.	82			26.9			3.446	1.420
I am aware of government's policy regarding casino gambling.	80					26.2	2.607	1.289
Government's control of casino gambling is inadequate.	101	33.1					3.636	1.270
It is highly essential to raise public awareness about casino gambling.	115	37.7					3.712	1.356
Casino gambling is an immoral activity.	77	25.2					3.207	1.419
Casinos are an appropriate place for socialization.	97		31.8				2.390	1.286

Mean measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. n=305.



Respondents strongly disagreed when asked if they were aware of the government's policy towards casino gambling (mean=2.607), which is attributed to the lack of community involvement in the decision making process. Residents were highly skeptical of casinos as an appropriate venue for socialization (mean=2.390). When asked about morality and gambling, they agreed strongly on the immorality of gambling (mean=3.207).

*2. Residents' attitudes towards casino gambling-induced socio-economic concerns:*

Twelve factors relating to the respondents' perception towards casino gambling-induced socio-economic opportunities were analyzed (see Table 4). Respondents strongly agreed with an increase in employment opportunities due to the presence of casino gambling (mean=3.243), followed by respondents' negative attitudes towards casino gambling as a factor for their community's well-being and economic prosperity (mean=2.440). In addition, they did not believe that casino gambling as a formidable tax base was used for the provision of public services in Kyrenia (mean=2.816), and they were highly skeptical of casino gambling as a contributor to their quality of life (mean=2.649). When asked about the impact of casino gambling on crime and prostitution, they agreed that casino gambling is a catalyst for an increase of these types of activities (mean=3.436) and (mean=3.321) respectively. However, respondents did not agree that casino gambling is the major cause of traffic congestion and pollution (mean=2.485). This is congruent with the fact that rapid urbanization of the city of Kyrenia has been seen over the last five years, caused by second home development, especially by the British market. Relevant to this variable, respondents were somewhat neutral when asked whether casino gambling caused rapid urban sprawl (mean=3.075). Furthermore, the situation was exacerbated by the lack of city planning, which is a critical public sectors problem in North Cyprus. Nevertheless, respondents were highly negative of casino gambling, as they perceived it, as a threat to traditional values (mean=3.557). The city of Kyrenia is also a historical city in North Cyprus with numerous palaces and castles from antiquity. Respondents perceived the presence of casino gambling negatively when asked if this form of tourism affects their cultural identity (mean=3.557) and their historical resources (mean=3.515). Finally, they agreed that casino gambling can be a threat to family structure as well (mean=3.479).

Table 4. *Residents' Attitudes of Casino Gambling-Induced Socio-Economic Concern*

Impact Variables	Frequency	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Casinos cause the increase of rate of crime and domestic violence.	93	30.5					3.436	1.434
Casinos cause the increased in traffic congestion and pollution.	102		33.4				2.485	1.374
Casinos cause the increase in prostitution.	100	32.8					3.321	1.556
Casinos are increasing employment opportunities.	86			28.2			3.243	1.440
Casinos bring economic prosperity and well-being to the community	96				31.5		2.440	1.279
Casinos are tax base for the city that contributes to social services.	78		25.6				2.816	1.407
Casinos contribute to high quality of life and living standard.	82		26.9				2.649	1.364
Casinos cause rapid urbanization and urban sprawl.	83			27.2			3.075	1.378
Historic values of Kyrenia have been affected as a result of existing casinos.	114			37.4			3.515	1.323
Casinos are threat to the traditional way of life and social values.	98	32.1					3.557	1.364
Casinos have positive impact on cultural identity.	92		30.2				2.456	1.295
Casinos are threat to the family structure.	88	28.9					3.479	1.318

Mean measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 =strongly agree. n=305.

### 3. *Residents' attitudes towards casino gambling-induced feelings (community attachments):*

Within the broad perspective of a community's feelings towards tourism development, the community attachment theory has been utilized to understand and explore how communities perceive different impacts of tourism and how they reflect upon those impacts. However, this mental state of attitudinal behavior should not be confused with 'opinion'. As Getz articulates "mental states, or dispositions, attitudes are reinforced by perceptions and beliefs of reality, but are closely related to deeply held values and even to personality-unlike opinions, they do not change quickly" (qud. in Harrill et al., 2003, p. 234). Therefore, residents' attitudes have been scrutinized based upon their feelings about both the processes and outcomes of tourism development – in this case, casino gambling. This line of research on

residents’ feelings and perceptions has been analyzed by measuring residents’ attachment levels in terms of length of residence, birth place, ethnic heritage, level of tourism development, feelings of community attachment, and rating quality of life and satisfaction with the community as a place to live (Ap et al., 1998; Green, 2005; Gursoy, Jurovski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurovski, 1998; Lankford & Howard, 1994; McCool and Martin, 1994). This is instrumental in understanding how residents make sense of their lives and experiences with the presence of casino gambling in their community (Hsu, 2000b). Based on the aforementioned theoretical backdrop, our study applied 7 variable constructs to explore residents’ attitudes through their attachment to the community, vis-à-vis, the presence and the impact of casino gambling. (see Table 5). The study revealed that residents were against an increase in the number of casinos in Kyrenia (mean=2.295). When asked whether they have been consulted prior to the casino projects, the response was overwhelmingly negative (mean=3.567). They did also perceive the presence of casinos as an influential factor to entice locals to be involved in gambling (mean=3.459), which verifies an association between gambling accessibility and gambling involvement (Lund, 2009). Respondents strongly disagreed that casinos strengthened their city’s image (mean=2.623), and 89.5% of the respondents answered ‘NO’ when asked if they have ever been contacted or consulted about their views regarding the whole process of casino development. When asked if they were happy with the presence of casinos in their community, 55.4% responded ‘NO’. When asked if they blame casinos for the increase in the living expenditures in their community, 54.1% responded ‘YES’ to this question. When asked if they were happy and comfortable with the image that has been projected about their city as a ‘casino gambling destination’ 89.5%, of respondents expressed ‘NO’. In the meantime, majority of the respondents blamed casinos for high prices of goods and services in their city.

Table 5. *Residents’ Attitudes Toward Casino Gambling-Induced Feelings (Community Attachments)*

Impact Variables	Frequency	Strongly disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
More casinos should be built in Kyrenia.	120			39.3		2.295	1.266
Casinos are established without consulting residents.	95		31.1			3.567	1.314
Presence of casinos entices locals to gamble.	92		30.2			3.459	1.409
Casinos will bring prestige to the city.	85	27.9				2.623	1.354

Mean measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 =strongly agree. n=305.

## 5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The literature presented here indicates an array of studies that have focused on residents’ attitudes toward tourism development in general and casino gambling/gaming development in particular. This line of research signifies an

important shift of attention from a strictly physical development approach to gaming industry and towards a more inclusive perspective, which is congruent with the debate on the processes and objectives of sustainable development (Sheng et al., 2009; Harrill, 2004). The focus on and consideration of residents' attitudes has influenced scholars because of changing attitudes at local and regional levels where communities are bearing the brunt of the cost of tourism and "feeling[s] of general loss of control over 'their' communities and lives are becoming significant problems in many places" (Butler, 2009, p. 8). On this point, numerous attempts have been made to investigate and explore residents' attitudes in different gaming destinations. Scholars have applied different theories and utilized different methodologies to understand the impacts of and attitudes toward this form of tourism by employing social, economic, spatial, physical, environmental, and behavioral factors. As described in the literature review, the outcome of the studies and findings of the research varies greatly for different gaming communities with regard to different theories and factors. In almost every study on residents' attitudes, either towards tourism development or towards gaming industry; scholars have utilized social exchange theory, economic dependency theory, community attachment and community satisfaction theory, and growth machine theory. At the same time, scholars have tried to determine which of these theories is more relevant to the specific cases that they studied. In most of the studies, several theories happened to be relevant to the case and each serves a catalyst to explain the attitudes; however, in certain cases one specific theory stood out as more powerful than the others (Green, 2005; Kaltenborn, Andersen, Nellemann, Bjerke, & Thrane, 2008). Nevertheless, the bulk of the literature on residents' attitudes is carried out in light of the 'positives' and 'negatives' aspects of the gaming industry, while ignoring cultural issues, place diversity, environmental crisis, as well as exogenous and endogenous power groups (i.e., the focus of growth machine theory), which are anchored in local systems. Furthermore, the bulk of the literature applied numerous theories but failed to clarify the strengths or weaknesses of each theory in relation to each specific case. Our findings have produced several significant revelations. First, every case is unique spatially, socially, politically, culturally, environmentally, and historically; therefore, there is no 'one size fits all' theoretical approach to study residents' perceptions. Second, the findings of the study showed that perceptions of the residents in the case of Kyrenia, by an overwhelming majority, happened to be negative and skeptical of casino gambling, which in turn affected residents' perception of the potential benefit level. The findings revealed that no matter how economically significant casino gambling might be, especially from policy makers' points of view, public resentment can be intensified if the residents are not part of the development process as stakeholders (Kaltenborn et al., 2008). This outcome can end up jeopardizing the process of achieving the objective of sustainability (Beeton & Pinge, 2003; Kang et al., 2008; Ligthelm, 2001). Third, the study results demonstrated that residents in Kyrenia's case were not advocating an outright ban of casino gambling; however, they consider casinos as the culprit behind various social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental problems. In the meantime, they did not see themselves as beneficiaries of casino gambling, either economically or socially. They felt and perceived the casino industry as an alien economic agent planted in their communities, which simply ran over their interests. In fact, in relation to employment, they are aware that the overwhelming majority of investments in casinos are foreign owned, which then employ foreign labor. This is also the case in many other gaming destinations which remains a contentious issue

(Beeton et al., 2003; Sheng et al., 2009). The study's result is also a verification of the notion that when residents do not perceive casino gambling as an appropriate form of tourism to accomplish further development and better their quality of life, their apprehension will defeat the purpose and make the community an unpleasant place in which to live and to visit (Hsu, 2000a).

The implantation of casinos in Kyrenia, which are owned and operated by foreign investors and licensed by the political elite, confirms the growth machine theory at work. In a nutshell, '*growth machine theory*', as developed by Molotch (1976) in his seminal paper (Jonas and Wilson, 1999), was an elaborate tool for explaining and analyzing the political economy of urbanization in the United States. The theory continues to inspire researchers as it addresses the basic issues of growth, local economic development, and promotion of policies towards these goals. The growth machine thesis is structured upon land uses, economic forces, and policies to facilitate processes of urban growth, but it also offers an elaboration or an exploration of place-building and sustainability. The theory has been utilized in various developed economies; however, Warner and Negrete (2005) and Evans (2002) have utilized the growth machine thesis to study the case of Valparaíso in Chile (i.e., in its several tourism destinations), and various cities in developing countries, respectively. The relevancy and utility of the growth machine theory stands out strongly as it deals with: land usage, which is a central dimension in tourism planning and development; local economic development, which is the main motivation of host communities to achieve place-building and place-sustainability; and the role of the government in formulating tourism investment policies where investors are the forces of growth (i.e., issues factored into our community centered model). In reference to the case of Kyrenia, local economic development (i.e., based on tourism) through the political economy of casino gambling (i.e., growth machine), and the institutional organization of coalition (i.e., policy makers) is devoid of residents' partnership and participation. Therefore, growth machine thesis remains a *tour de force* (Jonas & Wilson, 1999) as a theoretical instrument, because it focuses on the political economy of place and local economic development. It pinpoints specifically on the centrality of the strategies, schemes, and the needs of residents and their institutions at the local level. The theory rightfully construes that locations are socially produced (Logan & Molotch, 1987). However, in the case of Kyrenia, residents have not been a dynamic part of casino gambling coalition to mould and shape the local development policies. Casino gambling-based interests, which is also land-based (i.e., most of the casinos are located on the prime Real Estate) feature centrally in the growth machine theory. In the case of Kyrenia, as in the case of Valparaíso/Chile (Warner & Negrete, 2005), the exogenous financial players in a coalition with the local political elite and their cronies have removed the decision-making responsibilities from local governments, undermined locally based movements for neighborhood preservation or environmental protection, and subordinated local pro-community policies to outsiders (Jonas & Wilson, 1999; Logan et al., 1987). Furthermore, casino gambling, as a growth machine, has had greater leeway in manipulating building regulations, environmental requirements, and local concerns to their benefit. Two striking examples are the construction of Venus beach hotel, which impinged upon very fragile dune systems and transformed the coastal landscape scenery notwithstanding the community's pandemonium, and the Bafra tourism project, where the pristine environments

were removed and replaced by casino gambling establishments without a proper environmental impact assessment.

However, in our case, the absence of community involvement in the decision making process, which resulted in the community's feeling of alienation and resentment towards the gaming industry, is requiring planners and policy makers to take notice. Here the community is part of the wider array of stakeholders, where a lack of knowledge of the community's attitudes could easily culminate in making comprehensive plans obsolete (Burby, 2003), and the processes of and goals of sustainability irrelevant (Alonso, 2009). This study has explored the fact that, although there are certain positive impacts resulting from different forms of tourism activities on the welfare of a community, there are still some forms of tourism which cannot easily overcome the conflicts of interests that may exist between the community in question and the nature of a particular tourism activity. The results of this study, therefore, offer an important caveat for planners to ensure that they obtain firsthand knowledge of local attitudes and concerns about any tourism activity in their community (Alonso, 2009; Gunce, 2003; Harrill et al., 2003). It is also true that an imposed economic activity, such as casino gambling, will incur a certain amount of economic benefit for some, in the short term at least; however, it is vital to integrate the views of the community into the actual planning processes (Dredge, 2010) as well as to ensure its participation in these processes. Furthermore, the residents' attitudes, whether positive or negative about casino gambling, have been examined to test the 'growth machine theory'; as the theory focuses on the factions and coalitions that emerge in support of place-building and place-sustainability (Jonas et al., 1999). The result of the study demonstrated that the case of Kyrenia is unique as it moves beyond the confinement of theoretical explanations abundant in the literature. Particularly, it has not shown any sign of confirmation of social exchange and economic dependency theories in relation to residents' attitudes. Instead, the case of Kyrenia contains particular parameters of its own which are plausible enough to permit us to employ growth machine theory to explain our case. Nevertheless, as proposed by Warner and Negrete (2005), we call for research that explores the spectrum of residents' attitudes towards place-building from gaming destinations around the world in conversation with the agents of tourism sustainability so that researchers, policymakers and community stakeholders may learn how to strengthen their capacities for sustainable place-building within distinct conditions (Molotch, 1976; Martin, 1999).

## 6.0 References

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