Article

The Internalization of Participation and Coherence Dimensions of Governance in Tourism Destination Management Organizations—An Exploratory Approach

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Abstract: This exploratory research aims to determine how governance is internalized in tourism destinations management organizations (DMO). Governance internalization is understood as the commitment of destination management-related organizations to the deployment of governance concepts, precepts, practices, and actions and the rolling out and exercise of their functions, responsibilities, and power. The methodology that was used is that of case studies. A total of eight organizations acknowledging different degrees of governance commitment have been analyzed through in-depth interviews and documentary reviews. For each case, two dimensions of governance—participation and coherence—have been analyzed. It has been observed how organizations with a higher or lower degree of commitment show clear equivalence between their governance vision and the level of internalization of the participation and coherence dimensions. However, a rhetorical implementation of governance concepts, precepts, practices, and actions is found among destinations with more lukewarm positions.

Keywords: tourism governance; governance internalization; participation; coherence; destination management; Catalonia

1. Introduction

The concept of governance is multidimensional and even a superficial inspection reveals that it has several different meanings [1]. The European Commission, for instance, defines it as the rules, processes, and behavior that participate in the exercise of European competences from the point of view of openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence [2].

Tourism researchers have approached the concept in a broad way by analyzing, among the main issues, the role of stakeholders [3], cooperation [4,5], destination management [6,7], complex environments [8], participation [9], territorial differences [10], the impact on sustainability [11–13], public-private relations [14], quantification tools [2,15], conflict resolution [16], future trends [17], and models [18]. Those different approaches have the interest of gaining a clearer understanding of how governance can help successfully manage the complexity of destinations in common, particularly from the perspective of the coordination and the networking between actors [19]. Tourism governance thus can be understood as a tool with which destinations may adapt to changes in the complex environments that they inhabit [8]. Within this framework, acknowledging the level of governance internalization in organizations related to tourism destination management may lead to a growing ability to respond to the complexity of destinations.

For some authors, quality management internalization entails an active use of underlying practices to modify behavior and decision-making [20]. For others, it is understood as implementation and daily practice [21]. Whereas these ideas can be applied to the analysis of governance internalization, in this exploratory approach, internalization is understood as the commitment of destination management-related organizations to the deployment of governance concepts, precepts, practices, and actions deriving from the governance of tourism destinations and the rolling out and exercise of the functions, responsibilities, and power assigned to them.

But is the governance of tourist destinations really internalized? Or is it just a rhetorical question? To answer this question, this exploratory study aims to determine how governance is internalized in tourism destination organizations, to measure the level of governance internalization in tourism destinations, and whether previous positions on governance actually translate into management. To evaluate internalization, eight Catalan tourism organizations were analyzed through in-depth interviews and documentary analysis. Tourism destination organization governance is configured on the basis of several dimensions, which does not imply that they are equally important. The greatest weight is given to participation (31.07%), followed by coherence (24.27%) [18]. That is why, from a methodological perspective, research was limited to two main dimensions of governance: participation and coherence.

The criteria for the selection of cases are explained in the methodological section. The analysis revealing the degree of internalization in each case is presented in the results section, whereas the academic and practical implications of the empirical evidence obtained are subsequently debated in the discussion section. The elements that favor and those that hinder the internalization of governance, through participation and coherence, are detailed in the conclusions section.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Governance and Tourism Destinations

Tourism is characterized by interdependency [22]. Therefore, different types of cooperation among actors produce different levels of the exercise of power and different mechanisms to exercise it in destination management [23]. This is why tourism is fertile ground for the deployment of different models of governance. The causes are to be found in aspects such as the usual public-private relations, the fact of having to involve residents in the management of the destination, and the transversality that characterizes tourism [24]. It was not until the 1990s that governance began to receive greater attention in tourism research [25].

A certain evolution can be observed in the exercise of responsibility over destinations, where the focus was initially placed on planning to reach a greater attention on governance, passing through the idea of management [26]. For some scholars, tourism destination governance consists of the development of rules and mechanisms for the implementation of policies and business strategies that involve all institutions and individuals [27]. For others, this concept is understood more as the coordination between the different levels of government, civil society, and existing businesses in the destination [28]. Additionally, it is generally accepted that destination governance aims to improve a destination's competitiveness by eliciting and steering common actions [29].

Several dimensions have been identified by researchers when discussing governance. Ruhanen et al. [30] identified as many as 40. Other scholars summarize this number. For instance, Baud and Dhanalakshmi [31] concentrate on two; Ackerman [32] on three; Frischtak [33], Licht et al. [34], and Ashbaugh-Skaife et al. [35] on four; Friedmann [36], Luo [37], Beritelli et al. [27], and Nordin and Svenson [7] on five; Bhimani [38], Batterbury and Fernando [39], and Bai et al. [40] on six; Bono i Gispert and Anton Clavé [18] on seven; Kaufmann [41] on eight; and Eagles [42] and Siddiqi et al. [43] define up to ten.

The main identified governance dimensions are the following seven: participation [6,9,42,44–47]; coherence [2,27,42]; responsibility [41,42,48,49]; accountability [2]; effectiveness [50–52]; openness or transparency [30,42,53,54], and know-how [6,27]. Bono i Gispert and Anton Clavé [18] highlight that participation and coherence account for 55.34% of the overall weight of the seven governance dimensions that they identify among Catalan tourism management destination organizations.

To go further in the understanding of the role of governance in tourism destination management organizations, it would be useful to discuss how it entails an active use of underlying practices of decision-making in the daily practice of organizations. Whereas some papers propose a theoretical framework [55] and others sometimes focus on particular aspects such as planning [56], no study has yet been identified that explores how to measure governance commitment in the deployment of governance concepts, precepts, practices, and actions and the rolling out and exercise of the functions, responsibilities, and power, which is how the concept of internalization is defined in this paper.

2.2. Internalization of Governance Practices

The concept of internalization has often been applied to fields such as quality management [20,57,58] and environmental management [59,60]. From this perspective, internalization is a process of transition from explicit to tacit knowledge [61]. Nair and Prajogo [20] clarify that it represents a process of absorbing both tacit and explicit information into organizations and translating it into knowledge. Naveh and Marcus [21] explain the concept of internalization as implementation and daily practice.

Current internalization research attempts to ascertain links between motivations, and whether internal or external causes had a greater effect on internalization [62] and internalization processes, as well as the actions derived from them. Internal causes include concern for the quality of services and products, as well as the systematization of processes, improved management control [63], international recognition, more efficient impact on demand [64], reduction of errors and costs, improved efficiency [65], quality culture, leadership, employee commitment, and training [66]. External causes include customer requirements, environmental concerns and social pressure [66], image improvement [67], and also competitive pressure or the existence of certain regulations [68]. The goal has been to understand whether the effects arose solely from following standardized systems or also originated in pre-existing elements [69]. In the area of quality management, some studies identify a greater weight of internal over external causes at the service of internalization [58]. Other authors [70] who have dealt with this point have reached the opposite conclusion and argue that the internalization of variables, in this case environmental, by companies is the result of the external influences of environmental legislation and the pressure that is imposed by the national and international communities that translate into internal repercussions.

Although institutional pressures generally strengthen the internalization of proactive environmental practices, it is precisely in the field of environmental management that the influence of stakeholders can either support the integration of these practices or encourage their superficial adoption [71]. More specifically, other authors state that the pressure from secondary stakeholders does not contribute to internalization [72].

Studies of internalization are more numerous in industry sectors than in tourism [66]. Attention has also been paid to the greater difficulties that are faced by small businesses in dealing with quality certification processes that lead to the internalization of guidelines and, therefore, to greater competitiveness. Resource constraints can place small business managers at a disadvantage [73]. Other studies have sought to distinguish between the application of procedures derived from a standardized quality management system and its true internalization and how, if that internalization is certain, it translates into a real growth in the intellectual capital of organizations [65].

To apply the concept of internalization to the analysis of tourism destination governance, as previously stated in the introductory section, for the purposes of this research governance internalization is understood as the commitment of destination management-related organizations to the deployment of governance concepts, precepts, practices, and actions and the rolling out and exercise of the functions, responsibilities, and power. The focus of the analysis is on participation and coherence, as they have been identified by Bono i Gispert and Anton Clavé [18] as the two main dimensions of governance in tourism destination organizations.

2.3. Participation and Coherence

In recent years, participation has been gaining more strength and specific weight when reflecting on governance and is surely a key factor for it to be effective [74]. Participation is understood as working together and the possibility of taking part in the actions of others, assuming a responsibility in their management space [18]. Participation takes different forms: spontaneous, induced, or coerced, depending on whether it is initiated by the actors themselves, whether they are invited to be part of the governing bodies, or whether it is used to reduce possible errors in the decisions taken [9]. There is also a growing trend towards accountability among managers and public policies that seeks to participate as a mechanism to promote accountability [75].

It has also become evident that participation encounters obstacles that prevent its suitable development. Certain academics identify the basic reasons [76] as a lack of resources or insufficient credibility. Additionally, in the field of tourism development, important challenges and doubts are generated around who should be able to participate and how and where. There are doubts as to whether actors with greater weight finally end up neutralizing the concerns and needs of those stakeholders that could be referred to as minor. There are also doubts in some cases about the legitimization mechanisms of this participation [10]. Above all, it is necessary for the participation to be based on the reputation, legitimacy, and representativeness [48] of those who are integrated into the management and, therefore, the governance mechanisms. Among some scholars [11], it is not only a very important element for the improvement of democratic processes but is also associated with the idea of sustainable tourism. Due to all of this, it is important to understand the commitment of destination management organizations to the deployment of participation practices as part of their governance system. This is key in terms of the analysis of the internalization of governance practices. Among other issues, it is an aspect that should lead to a reflection on how tourism management organizations incorporate incentive mechanisms. This could be very innovative in this field for those who do not participate or may even disincentivise those who benefit from the status quo to participate [76]. In any case, and whatever the mechanism by which participation is favored, it is a fact that policies that are intensively promoted through participation result in better inputs, translate into better outputs [46], and allow changes to be faced with greater guarantees [77].

Coherence as a concept has not been studied as much. However, some institutions, including the European Commission [78], have identified it in its uniqueness. Some authors have interpreted coherence as the way in which actors are coordinated within an organization, given that they have different objectives and interests, rather than how management is deployed [79]. Others have seen coherence as the ability to obtain support for cooperation and partnership with the objective of implementing operations agreed among various destination actors [6]. From this point of view, coherence would also be linked to the participation dimension. To be precise, coherence is understood in this paper as how a tourism destination organization is managed with the goal of coordinating their available resources to achieve a congruent vision of a future scenario for the destination [18]. Hence, to understand the internalization of coherence in a tourism destination organization means knowing its commitment to the design and implementation of policies among all levels of its government to ensure that tourism policies are effective [80].

As a dimension for the implementation of a strategy, in the end coherence relates to the vision of such an organization that embeds the achievement of its objectives. Vision has been defined in multiple ways in academia but, as a fundamental part of the coherence dimension, it can be understood as a tool that is used to situate it in a future scenario, inducing people to act for a common goal, providing meaning and direction and with a key role for strategy implementation and planning deployment [81]. Vision is also a fundamental attribute of effective leadership and, in turn, a basis for the leadership power itself [82]. The leader transforms the organizational culture so that the members of the organization understand, accept, and drive their actions [83]. Vision needs to be established first in order to subsequently develop the mission and strategy [82].

It should also be recalled that traditionally, from the management perspective, in the broad sense of organizational management rather than just business management, the vision defines the strategy and the strategy defines the organizational structure [84]. Strategy is thus the first step in bringing the vision, which is necessarily future-oriented, to the present [85].

3. Materials and Methodology

3.1. Objectives

This exploratory approach aims to determine how governance is internalized in tourism destination management organizations, to measure the level of governance internalization in tourism destinations, and whether previous positions on governance actually translate into management. The purpose is, therefore, to provide an answer to the question of how the stakeholders of a tourism system internalize governance. To this end, the level of internalization of two main dimensions of tourism governance (participation and coherence) has been analyzed in the case of eight tourism management destination-related organizations in the Catalan tourism system.

The hypothesis that was established is that in order to achieve a high level of governance internalization in a tourism destination organization, a very strong prior commitment to the concept is necessary. Case studies will provide access to organizations whose theoretical positioning with respect to the idea of participation and coherence is known. This will enable their actions in favor of these dimensions to be compared. The confrontation of positioning versus performance will allow us to confirm or refute the hypothesis.

3.2. Study Area

The research was undertaken through the analysis of eight case studies in the Catalan tourism system. Tourism is an important part of Catalonia's economy, given that 78,000 directly involved companies operate in it and contribute 12% of GDP and 13.3% of employment [86]. In relation to governance issues, Catalonia can count on 88 private associations that defend their corporate interests and promote their activities and 165 registered local tourist offices, mostly led by the local public administration. Some of them act as destination management organizations, whereas others are basically promotion offices. The public sector also operates at a county, provincial, and Catalan level.

Significantly for the aim of this paper, from the 2000s, tourism activity in some parts of Catalonia began to generate greater interest among citizens, the media, and public debates, largely due to the growth in negative externalities and the deteriorating relationships between residents and visitors [87]. Hence, citizens demanded greater participation in the strategic planning of the activity and a more precise vision about the role of tourism in the Catalan society and economy. Although this is a debate that may be understood as a deliberately activated process of ideological confrontation about tourism and its limits in terms of expansion and development [88], it places tourism governance at the centre of the policy and the professional and academic debate in Catalonia.

3.3. Selection of Case Studies

As stated in the literature review section, Bono i Gispert and Anton Clavé [18] identified seven dimensions of governance when analyzing the institutional tourism system in Catalonia: participation, coherence, responsibility, effectiveness, know-how/quality, openness, and simplification. Their research also identified that the participation dimension had the greatest weight (31.07%). Participation and coherence (24.27%) were the two most frequently manifested dimensions when respondents were asked about the concepts they associated with governance. Following these analytical results, this paper proposes to determine governance internalization by studying the dimensions of participation and coherence in eight of the Catalan tourism organizations that were analyzed in the previously cited research [18].

A case study analysis has been designed for this purpose. As is widely acknowledged, case study analyses are a valuable way of exploring events as they happen [89]. Case studies demonstrate a flexibility that is not evident in many alternative research modes and can illustrate the complexities of a situation by recognizing more than one contributing factor. Consequently, they are used extensively in tourism research [90]. Case studies are not only a frequently used but also a very useful and much needed approach in tourism research [91]. While the case study approach has been criticized for its lack of representational and generalizable data, the multiple case study approach can overcome this disadvantage [89].

Following the data that were used by Bono i Gispert and Anton Clavé in their previous study [18] of seven dimensions of governance (participation, coherence, responsibility, effectiveness, know-how/quality, openness, and simplification) in 90 organizations of the Catalan tourism system, two organizations presenting accentuated values in the two dimensions used in this paper to analyse internalization (participation and coherence) were chosen. Data that were used in the previous paper [18] that allows them to be identified is given in Appendix A (Table A1). As a result, two of each of the eight selected destination management organizations either have high participation-high coherence, low participation-high coherence, high participation-low coherence or, finally, low participation-low coherence. Together with the values that were obtained in the two dimensions used to analyze the level of governance internalization, the selection also took into account aspects such as geographical location, the public and private nature, the type of product, and the volume of beds offered at the destination. Table 1 summarizes the key characteristics of each of the eight selected organizations. They are numbered as case studies in order to maintain the anonymity of the organizations.

Table 1. Characteristics of the selected organizations and evaluation levels of the dimensions of participation and coherence. Source: Authors.

Organization Observed	Participation Evaluation	Coherence Evaluation	Typology
Case 1: Local tourist office in a destination with 30,400 accommodation places	7.14	9.29	High participation High coherence HPHC
Case 2: Provincial tourism board with 70,100 accommodation places	8.21	8.36	High participation High coherence HPHC
Case 3: Mixed county entity in a destination with high natural values and 7900 accommodation places	4.50	9.64	Low participation High coherence LPHC
Case 4: County tourist office in a destination with high heritage and rural values and 1100 accommodation places	4.29	8.20	Low participation High coherence LPHC
Case 5: Private local sectorial representational body in a consolidated coastal destination with 51,000 accommodation places	9.64	2.29	High participation Low coherence HPLC

Table 1. *Cont.*

Organization Observed	Participation Evaluation	Coherence Evaluation	Typology
Case 6: Local tourist office in a destination of high cultural value and 2400 accommodation places	9.16	3.21	High participation Low coherence HPLC
Case 7: Private provincial sectorial representational body in a consolidated coastal and inland destination with 257,000 accommodation places	4.18	1.52	Low participation Low coherence LPLC
Case 8: Local tourist office in a destination with high heritage values and 200 accommodation places	4.41	2.71	Low participation Low coherence LPLC

3.4. Information Gathering for the Selected Case Studies

To analyze the level of internalization of the participation and coherence dimensions of governance in the selected organizations, a semi-structured interview script was designed. With regard to participation, the aim of the interview was to identify whether it was plural and sufficient, extended to other non-sectorial social groups, functional, translated into the needs of the actors in the ecosystem, included working groups, had internal and external coordination mechanisms, and to what extent it included cooperation, co-financing, co-decision-making, and co-responsibility. In terms of coherence, the aim was to identify the existence of a strategy, planning, vision, the degree of leadership over the actors and quality management, the adaptation of the organizational structure to the strategy, the evaluation of results, the existence of a service charter, identified competitiveness factors, and challenges for the destination.

In the eight selected case studies, the interviewees were the senior technical directors or presidents of each organization. The interviews lasted on average 70 min and were recorded at the workplace using Teams in November and December 2020. All the interviewees remained anonymous, and confidentiality was ensured (see Appendix B). In addition to the interviews, reviews were carried out of the organizations' strategic plans and service charters with regards to the dimensions that were analyzed.

3.5. Data Analysis

The degree of compliance of the identified evidence with elements related to the participation and coherence dimensions was evaluated according to the five levels of measurement shown in Table 2. Each level was quantified according to a number of a previously established score level with increasing scores based on five-point increments. The type of evidence identified is established for each element analyzed. Once it has been defined, a score is assigned among the possible options in that range. The score is set to better adjust the level of compliance. This model was inspired by the evaluation model that was established by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) to determine the organizations' level of excellence.

Table 2. System for quantifying governance internalization through participation and coherence. Source: Authors.

Evidence	Score Range	Score Level
Zero or anecdotic evidence	0–10	3 levels: 0-5-10
Some evidence	15–35	5 levels: 15-20-25-30-35
Quite a lot of evidence	40–60	5 levels: 40-45-50-55-60
Clear evidence	65–85	5 levels: 65-70-75-80-85
Total evidence	90–100	3 levels: 90-95-100

This evaluation system is applied to 11 aspects that are related to participation and 10 aspects that are related to coherence. With this system, the maximum score that can be obtained in relation to participation is 1100 points and in relation to coherence 1000. These results are then transformed into an equivalent percentage.

4. Results

4.1. Description of the Internalization Dynamics in Each Analyzed Tourism Destination Organization

Case study 1.

Background: Local tourist office in a consolidated coastal destination with 30,400 accommodation places.

Type: High Participation-High Coherence (HPHC).

Main features: The importance of informal government structures and the intensity of cooperation with third parties. Lack of a clear definition of the vision that guides the whole management.

Participation and coherence approach: The governing bodies include two external representatives with an indirect interest in tourism. The importance of informal governance structures that take on the role of guidance and decision-making areas and governing bodies with an administrative validation role. The intensity of cooperation with third parties can be interpreted as a mechanism of management maturity. Transversal internal coordination has been strengthened by COVID-19. External stakeholders do not contribute to the funding of the organization. Co-responsibility is established in the decision-making process but not in the results.

Strategic planning is undertaken with stakeholders, taking into account the evolution of the results and identifying future trends. There is an awareness of the necessity to train and empower the team to improve the quality of management in a context of change, paying special attention to the digital transformation. The quantitative evaluation of results is one of the organization's pending tasks.

The medium- and long-term challenges for the destination are to reduce seasonality, increase visitor spending, and achieve a greater diversification among the home markets. The first and third are well integrated into the strategy, but not the second.

Applicable lessons: Informal governance structures can bring agility to management.

Case study 2.

Background: Provincial tourism board in an inland destination with 70,100 accommodation places.

Type: High Participation-High Coherence (HPHC).

Main features: The strategic definition of the organization and the leadership of the destination's actors reinforced through financial support.

Participation and coherence approach: The organization is the reference for all the destination's actors. It makes financial contributions to external organizations, which reinforces its leadership. Performance analysis is not carried out to the desired extent, although objectives are achieved qualitatively. Governing bodies are the General Meeting and the Board of Directors. The General Meeting is made up of some 20 members from both the public and private sectors and their role is more to receive information about the activity than to actively participate in the decisions regarding the actions to be taken. The Board of Directors is the actual decision-making body and has four members, three from the public sector and one from the private sector. There is no social representation from outside the sector and only the General Meeting has representatives from the commercial sector. There is no one-size-fits-all mechanism for meeting the needs and expectations of stakeholders, as the relationship is very direct, consistent, and close. External coordination is intensive. Transversal internal coordination mechanisms have recently weakened.

A Strategic Plan was drawn up for the period 2019–2022 as the result of a participatory process that generated a highly consensual document. Annual action plans are derived from the Strategic Plan. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, in 2020 a strategy revision document was worked on.

The organization is a reference entity for all the destination's stakeholders. The fact that they make financial contributions to external organizations reinforces this leadership. There is no evaluation analysis of results to the desired degree, but the achievement of objectives is taken into account in a qualitative manner.

In relation to competitiveness, reference is made to excellence, responsibility, innovation, and ecology. Challenges include accessibility, the load-bearing ability of some of the main resources, the internationalization of marketing, and increased competition.

Applicable lessons: Budgetary capacity can be at the service of leadership.

Case study 3.

Background: A mixed county-level body in a destination with high natural values and 7900 accommodation places.

Type: Low Participation-High Coherence (LPHC).

Main features: The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism as a framework for management, non-submission to the effects of political-electoral cycles in the configuration of the governing bodies, and an integrated and shared perception of the destination.

Participation and coherence approach: Small destination, very integrated and globally shared, which means access to the interlocutors is easy and the channels for noting their concerns do not require greater structuring. There are specific working groups known as "driving groups" for undertaking certain projects or for dealing with certain challenges. The governing bodies are the Assembly and the Board. The Assembly is made up of 48 members distributed equally between the public and private sectors. Of particular value is the presence of a Natural Park administration among them. The Board has 12 members, 6 public and 6 private. The governing bodies favor a plural and representative participation, although they do not encompass other social groups, a fact that needs to be corrected. Non-dependency on the electoral cycles facilitates the establishment of governing bodies.

There are many areas of cooperation and collaboration. COVID-19 has acted as a stimulus and has led projects with a high cooperative value to be set in motion. The budget that is associated with the operating structure is shared between the public (58%) and private (42%) sectors.

The areas that will help to increase the destination's competitiveness have been identified as accessibility and sustainable mobility. These elements are also challenges that are taken on together with citizen participation and the change in the perception of the citizens themselves with regard to the tourism activity.

Applicable lessons: Non-dependency on the electoral cycles facilitates the establishment of governing bodies.

Case study 4.

Background: County-level tourist office in a destination with high heritage and rural values and 1100 accommodation places.

Type: Low Participation-High Coherence (LPHC).

Main features: There is a lack of actor participation as, due to the low critical mass and lack of associations, they have failed to develop proactive representational tools.

Participation and coherence approach: There is no external participation, either public or private, in the governing bodies and there is no demand for greater participation on their part. There is no social representation in the governing bodies. Actors channel their needs and expectations informally. The Youth Department of the county administration manages accommodation services, and the Environment Department maintains the network of trails of tourist interest. They have already managed to externalize 75% of the human resources

financing. External stakeholders only participate informally in a consultative manner without co-responsibility or co-decision-making. A strategic plan was drawn up in 2011 and needs to be updated.

The organizational structure is not designed on the basis of the objectives to be achieved for the reasons mentioned above. It has a solid service charter and a well-balanced price scale, which leads to a well-established co-financing system. The evaluation of results is applied only to initiatives that are undertaken in coordination with other actors.

Competitiveness factors include a greater structuring of system actors and an increase in budgetary resources. In terms of the challenges defined include a greater perception of the region as a tourist area, the activation of private actors, and improved coordination.

Applicable lessons: Service charters clarify expected functions and can reinforce leadership.

Case study 5.

Background: Private sectorial representational body in a consolidated coastal destination with 51,000 accommodation places.

Type: High Participation-Low Coherence (HPLC).

Main features: The challenges are well defined. The project to transform the destination has meant that cooperation between the actors has been greatly strengthened. The role as a lobby limit some of the governance internalization dynamics.

Participation and coherence approach: The governing bodies are the board and the assembly. The board is made up of 10 members and the assembly of 64 members who represent 99% of the destination's accommodation places. They do not include social groups that are affected by the sector. The local dimension facilitates access and contact and, therefore, does not require a more structured procedure for ascertaining the needs and expectations of stakeholders. The structure is very small and limits transversal coordination dynamics within the organization itself. A total of 70% of the budget comes from membership fees and 30% from advertising or actions with suppliers. Their lobbying nature leads them to not establish a strategy for the organization, they do not have a defined vision, but they acknowledge that this has been undertaken by the working group for the transformation of the destination. Neither do they have a defined service charter, as such, although they do offer tax, legal, urban planning and energy efficiency advice. They have working groups to address certain issues, e.g., economising on water, energy efficiency, taxation, and sustainability.

It is worth mentioning the importance of the working group for the transformation of the destination that was established in 2010 to develop a plan for its renewal.

They interpret that the elements affecting competitiveness are the demand changes, the evolution in marketing systems, and the updating of the accommodation offer. They define very precisely the medium- and long-term challenges: destination accessibility with the improvement of the communication network, the reconversion of the available accommodation, the search for solutions to amortise the obsolete supply, mobility and pacification of the seafront, and the revitalization of the old towns.

Applicable lessons: Specific working groups are useful for dealing with highly complex challenges.

Case study 6.

Background: Local tourist office in a destination of high cultural value with 2400 accommodation places.

Type: High Participation-Low Coherence (HPLC).

Main features: The challenges to be faced and the competitiveness factors that need to be worked on are clearly defined. It is surprising to see the low intensity with which the elements of participation are expressed and even more so when there is a significant number of actors.

Participation and coherence approach: The tourist office is linked to a council department within the economic promotion department. There is no representation of social groups in the governing bodies, nor a clear definition of the frequency and dynamics of the meetings. With regard to the collection of information on the needs of the actors, it is acknowledged that this is not systematic, although it has been reactivated as a result of COVID-19. No working groups have been established, although the tourist office is part of a county-level working group. The only collaboration with other organizations is with the county council. As for the existence of internal transversal coordination structures, these are established from the economic promotion department. The resources are 100% publicly sourced. There is no co-decision-making and no co-responsibility dynamics with the actors.

There is a document that was prepared in 2016 with broad strategic lines just for communication. No annual planning mechanisms associated with changes in the sector have been established. The results are evaluated primarily for the definition of future actions. It does not have a service charter. The elements that affect the improvement of competitiveness are seasonality, the resolution of internal problems for marketing, and the generation of joint experiences with the town's main cultural assets. The challenges are defined by establishing networks with private agents, diversifying product, improving coordination with other public administrations, and improving the relationship with cultural actors in the town.

Applicable lessons: A clear definition of the challenges facilitates the organization's orientation.

Case study 7.

Background: A private provincial sectorial representational body in a consolidated coastal and inland destination with 257,000 accommodation places.

Type: Low Participation-Low Coherence (LPLC).

Main features: The private nature of the body limits some of the internalization aspects. The elements that need to be addressed to increase competitiveness by combining sectorial and global factors are clearly identified.

Participation and coherence approach: The governing bodies are the assembly and the board. The assembly is the highest decision-making body and is made up of all 80 members. The board is responsible for day-to-day management and consists of a maximum of 10 people. There is no representation of social groups other than those of the members themselves. The system for compiling and analyzing the needs and expectations of associates is considered deficient and ends up being limited to the debates that take place in the assembly and the board. There is participation by some working groups that are not promoted by the body itself but are of a sectorial nature in organizations of a wider territorial scope. There are no transversal coordination structures as the organization is very small. External cooperation is established mainly with those sectorial organizations with a wider territorial scope. A total of 80% of the resources are generated through membership fees and 20% of the budget originates from certain external collaborators and suppliers.

There are no co-decision-making and co-responsibility dynamics on the part of other external groups. There is no evaluation of results. There is a detailed service charter with which the members clearly identify the benefits of their participation in the association. These include training, promotion and marketing, preferential relationship with suppliers, statistics monitoring, assessment, etc.

The areas that need to be addressed to increase competitiveness have been identified as requalification of the accommodation supply, security, improving public services, and combating illegality in the accommodation supply. The challenges the destination has to face are also identified: seasonality and an evolution in the marketing system towards appropriate prices.

Applicable lessons: Governance in the private sector takes on nuances that must be interpreted differently.

Case study 8.

Background: A local tourist office in a destination with high heritage values and 200 accommodation places.

Type: Low Participation-Low Coherence (LPLC).

Main features: The levels of participation and coherence are very low due to the small size of the municipality and the sector and the minimal structure of the tourist office, despite the area's important heritage assets.

Participation and coherence approach: There is no specific council department for tourism, but a direct and hierarchical relationship with the mayor. Participation groups consisting of local residents are defined: citizenry, social services, town planning, tourism, culture, and festivals. The tourism group is not yet structured and the actors have very individualized dynamics. The needs of stakeholders are not systematically collected as the town's tourism structure is very small and contacts are direct, informal, and sporadic. There are no working groups fostered by the tourist office. Regarding the relationship with other organizations, there are links with the group of tourist offices structured by the Provincial Tourism Board for promotion and training. There are no transversal internal coordination structures, although once again it must be understood that this is the council of a town with less than 250 inhabitants. The town council provides 100% of the financial resources. There are also no co-decision-making or co-responsibility dynamics.

There is no strategic definition. There is no planning that takes into account the evolution of the sector. There is no defined view of what the destination is expected to be. No results are evaluated and there is no service charter.

Product diversification and sustainability are identified as areas to focus on to increase competitiveness. The challenges to be faced are an improved fit into the cultural route configured between three counties, greater participation of the private sector, and the definition of a county tourism strategy with which to link.

Applicable lessons: Without clearly establishing the vision, it is difficult to deploy the whole strategy.

4.2. Summary and Measurement of the Observed Internalization Dynamics

Table 3 summarises evidence for each case and Table 4 provides a quantified assessment of them according to the measurement proposed system that was described in Section 3.4 on data analysis. It allows to make a comparative and quantified measurement of the level of internalization of the elements that make up the participation and coherence dimensions of governance.

The final values are shown in Table 4 in which the total of the scores for each case is then converted into a percentage in relation to the maximum value that could be reached: 1100 points in the case of participation and 1000 in the case of coherence. These are the values used to compare positioning and performance as summarized in Table 5 of the discussion section.

Table 3. Summary of the study cases that were analyzed. Source: Authors.

	CASE 1: Local DMO	CASE 2: Provincial DMO	CASE 3: County DMO	CASE 4: County DMO	CASE 5: Local Accommodation Association	CASE 6: Local DMO	CASE 7: Provincial Accommodation Association	CASE 8: Local DMO
TYPOLOGY (Table 2)	HPHC	HPHC	LPHC	LPHC	HPLC	HPLC	LPLC	LPLC
TYPE OF BODY	Public	Public	Mixed	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public
PARTICIPATION								
Plural and sufficient	Yes, equality	Yes, although number of members should be increased	Yes, equality	No, only public management structure	Yes, includes 99% of the beds	No, only public management structure	Yes, with territorial sensitivity	No
Extended to other social groups	Yes, to two groups	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Meeting efficiency	Yes, every 2/3 months	Yes, monthly	Yes, monthly	Yes	Yes, monthly	No	Yes, monthly	No
Translation of needs	Yes, unstructured	Yes	Yes, unstructured	Sporadically	Sporadically	No	No	No
Working groups	Yes, very important	Yes	Yes, important and diverse	Sporadically	Yes, very important	Sporadically	No, it participates in those of third parties	No
External coordination	High and multilevel	High and multilevel	High and multilevel	Medium and inter-county	High and multilevel	Low	Medium	Low
Internal coordination	High, reinforced by COVID-19.	Low	Medium	Medium	Nil, the dimension does not facilitate it	Low, with the economic promotion department	Nil, the dimension does not facilitate it	Nil
Cooperation	High	High	High, reinforced by COVID-19	Medium	High	Sporadically	Medium	Nil
Co-financing	Non-existent	Non-existent	42%	75%	30%	Non-existent	20%	Non-existent
Co-decision taking	High	High	High	Nil	Nil, internal dynamic	Nil	Nil, internal dynamic	Nil
Co-responsibility	High	High	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
COHERENCE								
Strategic definition	Strategic plan	Strategic plan, under review due to COVID-19	Strategic plan, revised every five years	Pending update	Non-existent	Focus solely on the area of communication	Non-existent	Non-existent

Table 3. *Cont.*

	CASE 1: Local DMO	CASE 2: Provincial DMO	CASE 3: County DMO	CASE 4: County DMO	CASE 5: Local Accommodation Association	CASE 6: Local DMO	CASE 7: Provincial Accommodation Association	CASE 8: Local DMO
Planning	High and annual	High and annual	High and annual	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent
Vision	Non-concrete	Very clear	Very clear	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent
Leadership of the actors	High	High and reinforced with economic support	High	High of the public actors	Only in its own sectorial area	Nil	Medium and based on the services offered	Nil
Quality management leadership	High	Medium	High	Low	Nil	Low	Nil	Nil
Organization conditioned by the strategy	High	Medium	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Management: Evaluation of results	Non-existent	Sporadically	Systematized	Non-existent	Non-existent	Sporadically	Non-existent	Non-existent
Management: Service charter	Non-existent	Partial	Solidly defined	Solidly defined and with fixed prices	Well defined	Non-existent	Well defined	Non-existent
Competitiveness factors	Authenticity of the destination and seasonality	Excellence, responsibility, innovation, and ecology	Accessibility and sustainable mobility	Structuring of the system's actors and increase in the budgetary resources	Accessibility, reconversion accommodation offer, reduction in HUTS (holiday homes) offer	Seasonality, closer links with cultural actors, and product marketing	Safety, offer qualification, illegality, greater commitment of local bodies	Diversification and sustainability
Challenges	Seasonality, increased spending, and demand diversification	Accessibility, load capacity of some resources, internationalization, and increased competition	Citizen participation and changes in the perception of the tourism phenomenon	Perception of the county as a tourism area, private actor activation, and greater coordination	Changes in demand, marketing, and updating the accommodation offer	Closer links with private actors, product diversification, and improved coordination	Seasonality, increase in prices, increase in number of members	Better fit into the county strategy and greater participation of private actors
TYPOLOGY KEY	HPHC: High participation, high coherence; LPHC: Low participation, high coherence; HPLC: High participation, low coherence; LPLC Low Participation, low coherence							

Table 4. Quantified evaluation of the level of internalization. Source: Authors.

	CASE 1: Local DMO	CASE 2: Provincial DMO	CASE 3: County DMO	CASE 4: County DMO	CASE 5: Local Accommodation Association	CASE 6: Local DMO	CASE 7: Provincial Accommodation Association	CASE 8: Local DMO
TYPOLLOGY (Table 2)	HPHC	HPHC	LPHC	LPHC	HPLC	HPLC	LPLC	LPLC
TYPE OF BODY	Public	Public	Mixed	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public
PARTICIPATION								
Plural and sufficient	Total evidence 100	Clear evidence 75	Total evidence 100	No evidence 0	Clear evidence 85	No evidence 0	Clear evidence 85	Anecdotic ev. 10
Extended to other social groups	Clear evidence 75	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Functionality of meetings	Clear evidence 75	Clear evidence 70	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	No evidence 0	Total evidence 100	No evidence 0
Translation of needs	Clear evidence 80	Clear evidence 75	Clear evidence 75	Some evidence 20	Some evidence 30	Anecdotic ev. 10	Anecdotic ev. 10	Anecdotic ev. 10
Working groups	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	Some evidence 20	Total evidence 90	Some evidence 15	Anecdotic ev. 10	No evidence 0
External coordination	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	Clear evidence 85	Quite a lot of ev. 60	Clear evidence 85	Some evidence 30	Quite a lot of ev. 60	Some evidence 25
Internal coordination	Clear evidence 70	Some evidence 35	Quite a lot of ev. 60	Quite a lot of ev. 50	No evidence 0	Some evidence 35	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Cooperation	Clear evidence 85	Clear evidence 75	Clear evidence 75	Quite a lot of ev. 60	Clear evidence 75	Some evidence 25	Quite a lot of ev. 60	No evidence 0
Co-financing	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	Clear evidence 85	Clear evidence 75	Quite a lot of ev. 40	No evidence 0	Some evidence 35	No evidence 0
Co-decision-making	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Co-responsibility	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
COHERENCE								
Strategic definition	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	Some evidence 30	No evidence 0	Some evidence 35	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Planning	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Clear evidence 75	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Vision	Some evidence 15	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Leadership of the actors	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Clear evidence 70	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	Quite a lot of ev. 60	No evidence 0
Quality management leadership	Clear evidence 75	Quite a lot of ev. 60	Total evidence 90	Some evidence 35	No evidence 0	Some evidence 15	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Organization conditioned by the strategy	Clear evidence 70	Quite a lot of ev. 60	Clear evidence 85	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Management: Evaluation of results	No evidence 0	Some evidence 15	Total evidence 90	Some evidence 15	No evidence 0	Some evidence 15	No evidence 0	No evidence 0
Management: Service charter	No evidence 0	Some evidence 35	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 100	Total evidence 90	No evidence 0	Clear evidence 85	No evidence 0
Competitiveness factors	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Quite a lot of ev. 50
Challenges	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90	Total evidence 90
PARTICIPATION LEVEL	865/1100 78.63%	710/1100 64.54%	860/1100 78.18%	385/1100 35.00%	505/1100 45.90%	115/1100 10.45%	360/1100 32.72%	45/1100 4.09%
COHERENCE LEVEL	700/1000 70.00%	730/1000 73.00%	910/1000 91.00%	430/1000 43.00%	270/1000 27.00%	245/1000 24.50%	325/1000 32.50%	140/1000 14.00%
PREVIOUS DEFINED POSITIONING COMPLIANCE	Yes	Y	Partially and unorientated (P ≈ C)	Partially and orientated (P < C)	Partially and orientated (P > C)	Partially and unorientated (P < C)	Yes	Yes
TYPOLOGY KEY	HPHC: High Participation, High Coherence; LPHC: Low Participation, High Coherence; HPLC: High Participation, Low Coherence; LPLC Low Participation, Low Coherence							

Table 5. Comparison between previous vision and level of internalization through the dimensions of participation and coherence. Source: Authors.

Cases	Type	Participation		Coherence		Previous Defined Vision Compliance
		Previous Evaluation of the Concept	Level of Internalization	Previous Evaluation of the Concept	Level of Internalization	
Case 1: Local DMO	HPHC	7.14	(865/1100) 7.86	9.29	(700/1000) 7.00	Yes
Case 2: Provincial DMO	HPHC	8.21	(710/1100) 6.45	8.36	(730/1000) 7.30	Yes
Case 3: County DMO	LPHC	4.50	(860/1100) 7.81	9.64	(910/1000) 9.10	Partially and unorientated (P ≈ C)
Case 4: County DMO	LPHC	4.29	(385/1100) 3.50	8.20	(430/1000) 4.30	Partially and orientated (P < C)
Case 5: Local accommodation association	HPLC	9.64	(505/1100) 4.59	2.29	(270/1000) 2.70	Partially and orientated (P > C)
Case 6: Local DMO	HPLC	9.16	(115/1100) 1.04	3.21	(245/1000) 2.45	Partially and unorientated (P < C)
Case 7: Provincial accommodation association	BCBP	4.18	(360/1100) 3.27	1.52	(325/1000) 3.25	Yes
Case 8: Local DMO	BCBP	4.41	(45/1100) 0.41	2.71	(140/1000) 1.40	Yes
Previous position key		HPHC: High Participation, High Coherence LPHC: Low Participation, High Coherence HPLC: High Participation, Low Coherence LPLC: Low Participation, Low Coherence				

5. Discussion

The results shed light on to what extent internalization of the participation and coherence dimensions is playing an instrumental role in the governance practices of destination management organizations. By understanding internalization as implementation and daily practice [21], interesting considerations can be made based on the diversity and richness of the cases that were studied.

Participation as a dimension of governance cannot be the result of just a simple invitation to which a response is expected. It must be accompanied by a real desire for it to actually occur and, therefore, requires a series of mechanisms that facilitate it –proactivity, flexibility, new technological tools, etc.—provided by those who wish to promote it. Doubts regarding whether the most important actors also end up neutralizing the concerns and needs of those who could be called more minor stakeholders also have to be managed. In Case 4, it was stated that "there is no clamour from the sector to participate". This situation is that which requires the aforementioned elements as stimuli. In Case 8, it was stated that "the dynamics are very individualised". If participation is to be pursued, it will be necessary to favor the associative networks, seek the participation of non-organized actors, and foster a change towards a more participatory culture [92]. Once again, the high value of the informal government structures identified must be taken into account. It is precisely thanks to their lower rigidity and structure that they can be very useful to facilitating the participation of those who are usually less linked to the sector's organizations.

In some of the cases studied, it also became apparent that participation encounters obstacles that do not allow it to develop properly. Certain academics [76] identify the basic reasons for this as a lack of resources or insufficient credibility. In Case 6, it was said that "the low availability of human resources is an obstacle to actively participating in external coordination networks". This is an aspect that should lead to a reflection on how incentive mechanisms can be incorporated for those who do not participate or even mechanisms to encourage those who benefit from the status quo not to participate [76]. However, unless various socio-cultural, financial, economic, political, and administrative barriers to participatory development approaches are removed, effective and fruitful forms of community participation will not emerge [9]. Internalization will, therefore, be the result of a determined attitude and not a spontaneous result.

Participation identifies added value to induced informal structures that not only helps to give a voice to the linked actors but also neutralizes the habitual rigidities of public sector bureaucracy. It is paradoxical to see how government structures that are not sufficiently functional coexist with informal structures that guide the management of the bodies and that there is no desire to consolidate and formalize them. It is even said that "this working committee eventually ends up being our governing body" (Case 1). Related to tourism development, important challenges and doubts arise as to who, how, and where they should be able to participate. Doubts about whether the most important actors end up neutralizing the concerns and needs of those stakeholders that could be called minor.

With regard to participation, research has identified that there is a long way to go to expand participation beyond the sectorial groups that are directly linked to the activity. For instance, in Case 3 it was stated that "we need to integrate voices that do not come strictly from the tourism sector". Citizens are not seen as actors and in the few cases where participation is open to non-sectorial actors, it is with groups that share economic objectives. Other research has shown that citizens have been given a voice when situations occur with a certain level of conflict. This has led studies to be undertaken on the validity of citizen participation as a tool for the resolution of such situations [93].

Doubts are also generated in some cases about the legitimization mechanisms of this participation [10]. Above all, therefore, participation must be based on the reputation, legitimacy, and representativeness [48] of those who are integrated into the management and, therefore, governance mechanisms. Of these three elements in the research, representativeness has been prominently identified but not in the same way reputation and legitimacy. Legitimacy is claimed for participation at the same time that participation also serves to meet the need for legitimization of public policies [94].

In any case and whatever the mechanism by which participation is favored, it is a fact that policies driven intensively through participation collect better inputs, translate into better outputs [46], and allow to face changes with more guarantees [77]. Therefore, a higher level of internalization of governance will translate greater management results to destinations. This fact in particular also leads to reinforce the value of the link between participation and coherence that has been observed among part of the cases that were studied.

As far as coherence is concerned, the value of a vision has been identified as an internalization factor and its absence as the cause of a lack of strategic definition. First and foremost, a vision needs to be established in order to subsequently develop the mission and its strategy [82]. Strategy is thus the first step in bringing the necessarily forward-looking vision into the present [85]. It is necessary to remember that the vision also defines the strategy and the strategy the organizational structure [84]. It is concerning to see how planning reveals weakness among the cases studied, especially when it is known that planning is positively associated with the growth and profitability of organizations [95]. On the contrary, competitiveness factors and challenges to be faced, in the respective destinations where the organizations analyzed operate, are clearly identified and should be a solid basis on which to build the vision and, from there, the rest of the elements that make up the coherence.

Leadership functions in a similar way and is directly associated with strategy. If there is leadership, there is strategy and vice versa. In one of the cases that was analyzed (Case 3), this is very clearly shown to the point of stating that "the key to the success of our body is that it is a well-established model, not subject to electoral cycles, whichever government comes into power". It is also observed that certain areas of participation give impetus to certain elements of coherence: "The working committee has contributed considerably to us being more listened to and to strengthening our leadership" (Case 1). It should be remembered that vision is also a fundamental attribute of effective leadership and at the same time a basis of leadership power itself [82]. Leadership transforms an organizational culture in order to make the members of the organization understand, accept, and lead their actions [83].

Management by result is at a low level of development when speaking specifically of the public sector. This affects the organization and its processes as a whole and requires a very important change in organizational culture [96]. The evaluation of results as an integral element of coherence is that which shows the greatest weakness and, among the cases analyzed, it is an indicator of management maturity, and it is perhaps far from the approach of some academics who see the dynamics of cooperation between actors, and therefore of participation, as a limiting factor in the capacity to evaluate outcomes [45]. The existence of this deficit is generally acknowledged: "we have not advanced to the desired degree in terms of metrics" (Case 2). In some of the cases that were analyzed, the evaluation of results acquires the desired solvency when it is associated with an external commitment and methodology that drive it and, therefore, clearly contribute to internalization. It can be seen that far from interpreting that evaluation, it has a vital role to play in providing those responsible with the evidence that is needed to ensure that future policies are geared towards the areas with the highest performance in terms of the achievement of strategic objectives. Too often, the connection between strategic intent and outcome has become less obvious [97]. It is also true that the interpretation of tourism activity has often been very profitability-orientated. This has meant that destination management assessments have often been translated into mere economic indicators that have not facilitated a more in-depth analysis of the destination's holistic performance [98]. All these aspects together have not helped to configure solid evaluation guidelines.

It will be difficult to internalize governance through coherence if there is no solid definition of vision, strategy, leadership, planning, and the adequacy of the organizational structure. Among these aspects, vision acquires a preponderant role that conditions the others. Expressed in another way, it is from the existence of the vision in an organization that coherence is consolidated as a dimension of governance because it has a determining character for the rest of the elements that integrate it.

With regard to the two dimensions, it is identified that public and private entities do not approach them in the same way. This is clearly observed in Case 5 with the statement "we lobby and this means that we do not carry out the same tasks as those responsible for the management of the destination" and in Case 7 when it is stated that "as an association we cannot do exactly the same as each of our companies".

The results also show that, although governance is required by both public and private actors in a tourism system, they operate in different ways. The reasons for this lie in the nature and objectives of each of them, which translate into governance internalization. This appears to indicate that the analyzed private organizations approach governance from the perspective of defending the interests of those they represent, and the services that are provided to them. This also may evidence that the mixed model of organization, with a true public-private configuration, is better than the others at managing from the perspective of internalization.

Aside from the evaluation of compliance with the defined criteria, in order to assess the level of internalization of the governance procedures it would be of great interest to compare the obtained quantified results arising from the interviews and the analysis of documentation with the previous perception of the eight analyzed organizations regarding

the importance of participation and coherence in their governance procedures, as well as their level of commitment reported in Appendix A. In this vein, Table 5 allows a comparison of the previous positioning of the eight analyzed organizations with their level of internalization of participation and coherence governance related practices.

Interestingly, in in the four cases where typologies reach the highest and lowest values of the two dimensions (HPHC, High Participation and High Coherence, and LPLC, Low Participation and Low Coherence) there is a correspondence between positioning and internalization. However, the four representative cases of the HPLC (High Participation and Low Coherence) and LPHC (Low Participation and High Coherence) combinations reveal situations in which only one of the two dimensions is internalized in the direction, high or low, expressed in the previous position. Additionally, the analysis also reveals a displacement of the matrix with a concentration around only two combinations, HPHC and LPLC, as seen in Figure 1. The cases in which the previous positions were already accentuated, higher or lower, remain in the same quadrant as the matrix. The other cases move towards those same quadrants. Internalization explains that the most "radicalized" positionings in the face of governance end up being dominant.
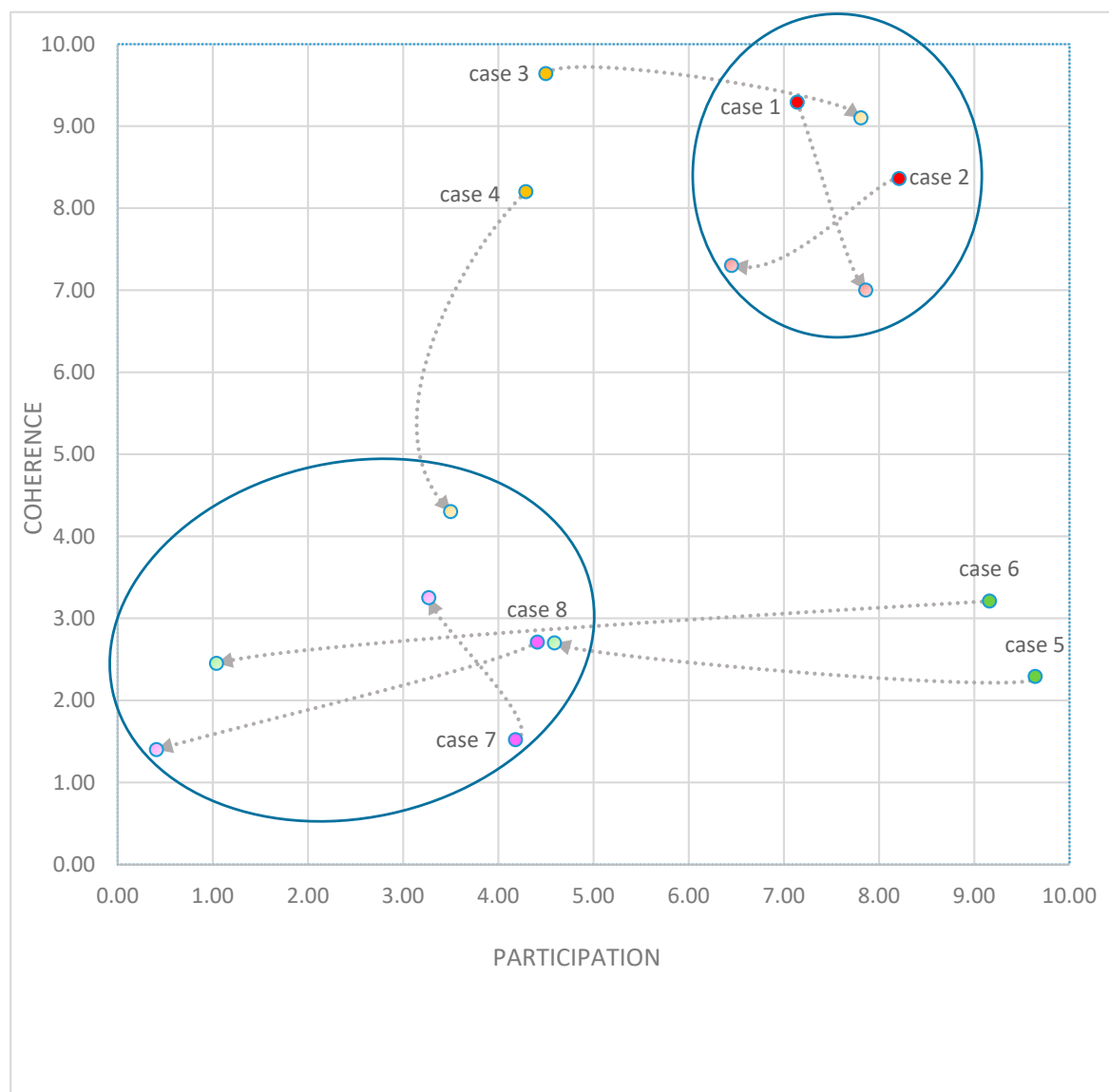

Figure 1. Differences between previous positioning in the level of internalization through the dimensions of participation and coherence Source: Authors.

To summarise, the analysis indicates that cases combining a previously high evaluation of one of the two analyzed dimensions with a low one of the other show partial equivalence with internalization. This means that in order for these two dimensions to favor the deployment of concepts, precepts, practices, and governance actions, as well as the exercise of the functions and responsibilities in a tourist destination, organizations must have a maximum level of commitment to participation and consistency.

6. Conclusions, Future Research, and Limitations

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

This research was based on the hypothesis that in order to achieve a high level of governance internalization in a tourism destination organization, a very strong prior commitment to the concept is necessary. Internalization analysis was applied to two key dimensions of governance—participation and coherence—and the research that was carried out through the implementation of a qualitative case study methodology to eight Catalan tourism destination management organizations provided data and valuable information that allowed us to confirm the initial hypothesis. Opening up and adding evidence to governance internalization, this research begins to fill an existing gap in some of the tourism governance analysis and highlights the interest of this exploratory approach. The method that was used to select the cases guarantees that the plurality of existing entities has been considered and, as Cihangir and Seremet [89] propose for these kinds of studies, in this case, it has been included the existing diversity in tourism destination organizations of the Catalan tourist system.

In general, the research highlights the fact that, from the internalization perspective, non-formalised areas for participation are built as a link with the sector to identify its needs and concerns and to determine the organizations' level of internalization governance. Non-formal structures have no less value even if they are not systematically deployed. This is an appreciation that is also identified in other studies [7] in which the contribution of informal groups to the management of destinations and their ability for innovation is valued. In some cases, structured and stable working groups are identified in public bodies that function as the true governing bodies, even if they are not formally recognized as such. It is paradoxical to have formal bodies that become less functional and need to be replaced by others whose formalization is not pursued, perhaps to avoid falling back into the same problem of inoperability. Focusing on coherence, it is clear that the vision is crucial for the internalization of governance procedures in tourism organizations and that its existence also leads to improved strategic definition, better planning, and better leadership. Interestingly, an organization's definition of its vision should not be seen as an insurmountable effort and should not depend on the greater or lesser availability of financial resources. However, it cannot be overlooked that the simple definition of the vision is not enough and it is necessary to communicate it, empower the teams and organize the organizational aspects in its direction [81].

It seems that although governance is required of both public and private actors in a tourism system, its dimensions do not operate in the same way in the two groups. The reasons lie in the nature and objectives of each of them, which translates into governance internalization. This appears to indicate that the analyzed private organizations approach these dimensions of governance from a different perspective, that of defending the interests of those they represent, and the services that are provided to them. It also appears to indicate that the mixed model of organization, with a true public-private configuration, is better than the others at managing from the perspective of internalization participation and coherence.

In summary, although more emphasis is placed on empirical evidence, the main theoretical contribution of this research refers to the conceptualization of governance internalization and, in particular, the importance of a strong commitment to governance as a driver for achieving its internalization. In this regard, governance internalization is understood as the commitment of destination management-related organizations to

the deployment of governance concepts, precepts, practices, and actions deriving from the governance of tourism destinations and the roll-out and exercise of those functions, responsibilities, and power that are assigned to them. From this perspective, the results that were obtained could lead to the development of new governance assessment models or their integration with others that have similar objectives, for example, the EFQM for quality management assessment.

Therefore, the analysis provides a significant theoretical contribution in the sense that it helps explain the nature of the relationship between two phenomena—governance and internationalization—and thus to systematise observed structures and generalize research results [99].

Internalization analysis has hitherto mainly been applied to sustainability and quality management. By exploring governance internalization in DMOs, using participation and coherence as the main dimensions of analysis, it is possible to identify a series of elements that favor or hinder it and determine how governance depends on the internalization of its concepts, precepts, and practices. It has been established that these elements can be internal or external in nature, and that, once known, managers can act on them to the benefit of governance. In this analysis the results show that they are mostly internal.

Complementarily, this theoretical contribution should reinforce the position of DMO managers when taking on the responsibility of improving governance and should allow them to understand that, through internalization, there is an improvement, basically in their managerial style and priorities.

6.2. Practical Contributions

The analysis of governance internalization has helped us understand which areas within the governance participation and coherence dimensions deserve more attention in order to improve tourism destination management. It is clear that the participation of social groups other than the usual sectoral interest groups is a rarity in the cases that were analyzed and probably calls for more mature and evolved management models. It may also be associated with the fact that the cases that were analyzed are not located in destinations where tourism activity is perceived as a problem or generates conflicts. It has also been observed that there is a greater tendency towards greater external rather than internal coordination because it is easier to seek synergies with agencies with similar functions than within the internal areas of each tourism destination organization itself. This may be a lost opportunity for management improvement. Finally, it was identified that the much claimed participation does not quite translate into co-financing, co-decision making, and co-responsibility. In view of the difficulty in achieving higher levels of participation, it would be advisable to explore mechanisms that are more stimulating and facilitating (schedules, formats, technologies, tools, etc.) than the current ones.

Some very good practices have been identified in the configuration of service charters, which leads us to consider the potential and usefulness of this element for the benefit of coherence, which has perhaps not been fully considered. It is evident that the evaluation of results is the weakest element of the coherence dimension. On the other hand, competitiveness factors and challenges are clearly identified in a generalized manner, but whether or not they have a proper influence on the strategic definition of the coherence dimension is unclear.

Factors that favor the internalization of participation are evident: the consistency of specific working groups, the scope and strength of external and internal networks, and the true mixed nature of the governing bodies [77]. Factors that facilitate the internalization of coherence include the soundness of the strategic definition, the leadership of sectorial and public stakeholders, the soundness of the defined service charter, a clear definition of the challenges that are faced by the destination, the existence of standardized management models that require commitment, an integrated, global and shared interpretation of the destination, and non-submission to the effects of electoral cycles.

The factors that hinder the internalization of participation are identified as the low presence of sectorial stakeholders in governing bodies, the low participation of sectorial stakeholders, the low operability of sectorial stakeholders in governing bodies, the non-existence of specific working groups, and the weakness of external and internal relations networks. Observed factors that hinder the internalization of coherence are weakness or lack of strategic definition and planning, weakness of the organizational structure, weakness of leadership, lack of economic and personal resources similar to Papadopoulos and Warin's approach [76], politicization of decisions, shortcomings in technical training, and the size of the body when it is small.

Recognizing the internal and external elements that facilitate or hinder the internalization of governance acquires value for those that are responsible for destination management, since it allows them to focus their management efforts on building better destination governance.

6.3. Future Research and Limitations

Further research into other dimensions (responsibility, effectiveness, know-how/quality, openness, and simplification) that have yet to be dealt with would also be desirable. The results that were obtained are also an invitation to undertake additional research in order to identify the role and importance of internal and external factors behind the level of governance internalization, in particular destination management-related organizations, in the same direction as studies of governance internalization in other spheres.

Analysis of governance internalization in destination management entities representing different governance models could also be considered as a new area of study. The results that were obtained may invite further research using inferential techniques. Finally, how COVID-19 has affected governance by favoring and intensifying cooperation and relationship mechanisms among the system's actors also invites future research.

However, an important limitation for the research is the lack of literature on internalization in the specific field of governance and even more so when it comes to tourism in particular, whereas it is more common in other fields, such as quality or environmental management.

Author Contributions: O.B.i.G.: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, and writing—original draft. S.A.C.: Methodology, formal analysis, writing—review and editing, and supervision. M.C.F.: Methodology, formal analysis, writing—review and editing, and supervision. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Appendix A. Case Selection Questionnaire

To select the cases, we used the responses to two questions from 90 organizations in the Catalan tourism system that, in combination, allowed to make a quantified calculation of their view of participation and coherence as dimensions of interest in the governance of tourism destinations. In the first question they were asked to rank hierarchically according to importance a series of statements related to the seven dimensions of governance (participation, coherence, responsibility, effectiveness, know-how/quality, openness, and simplification), as identified by Bono i Gispert and Anton Clavé [18]. The second question asked them to quantitatively assess the role that the same series of statements should play in a good destination management model. In each question, two statements referred to participation (C, J) and two to coherence (E, L). The rest of the statements were also organised into pairs and referred to the other dimensions that were identified. Specifically, the two questions were:

1. Rank the following 14 statements from 0 (least important) to 10 (most important) according to their relevance as contributions to a good tourist destination management model.
2. Rank the following elements from 0 (least important) to 10 (most important) according to the weight and consideration they should be given in a good tourist destination management model.

The statements to be evaluated ranked respectively in each question were:

(a) Results are the main goal in management.
(b) Suitable sharing of information translates into improved management.
(c) Cooperation between all actors is a key element in the management of a tourist area.
(d) It is necessary to report on the actions carried out.
(e) The actions undertaken should correspond to a plan and an objective.
(f) A low level of bureaucracy favours competitiveness.
(g) Knowledge is a key value for ensuring success.
(h) It should be possible to measure the effect of the actions undertaken.
(i) Active communication improves the functioning of organizations.
(j) The people affected by an issue must be able to intervene in its solution.
(k) Ethical behavior should be more important than results.
(l) Organizations must clearly define their vision in order to carry out their functions well.
(m) The simplification of laws and regulations contributes to the proper functioning of organizations.
(n) Continuous training facilitates the adaptation of a sector as dynamic as tourism

The combination of these elements made it possible to make a calculation that describes the value that a surveyed organization attaches to each dimension. In the case of participation and coherence, the calculations of the measures that were obtained are extracted from the following formulas:

$$\text{Value of participation} = [(P1 + P2)/2]*PWF/14$$

$$\text{Value of coherence} = [(C1 + C2)/2]*CWF/14$$

where:

P1 = Evaluation from 0 to 10 of the importance of the first statement (C) regarding participation

P2 = Evaluation from 0 to 10 of the importance of the second statement (J) regarding participation

C1 = Evaluation from 0 to 10 of the importance of the first statement (E) regarding coherence

C2 = Evaluation from 0 to 10 of the importance of the second statement (L) regarding coherence

PWF, Participation weighting factor = [(15-HOP1) + (15-HOP2)]/2

CWF, Coherence weighting factor = [(15-HOC1) + (15-HOC2)]/2

HOP1 = Hierarchical order of the first statement (C) regarding participation in a series of 14 statements on the dimensions of governance

HOP2 = Hierarchical order of the second statement (J) regarding participation in a series of 14 statements on the dimensions of governance

HOC1 = Hierarchical order of the first statement (E) regarding coherence in a series of 14 statements on the dimensions of governance

HOC2 = Hierarchical order of the second statement (L) regarding coherence in a series of 14 statements on the dimensions of governance

The results that were obtained are shown in Table A1.

Table A1. Catalan tourism organizations evaluation of the dimensions of participation and coherence. Source: Authors.

DATA. SET	PARTICIPATION			COHERENCE			PARTICIPATION			COHERENCE			PARTICI-PATION	COHER-ENCE
	HOP1	HOP2	PWF	HOC1	HOC2	CWF	P1	P2	MEAN	C1	C2	MEAN		
o2	1	8	11.00	5	3	11.00	9	9	9.00	5	10	7.50	6.75	5.89
o3	1	12	8.50	10	13	3.50	10	7	8.50	8	7	7.50	5.16	1.88
o4	1	12	8.50	2	6	11.00	10	4	7.00	8	6	7.00	4.25	5.50
o5	8	13	4.50	1	11	9.00	9	6	7.50	10	10	10.00	2.41	6.43
o6	2	13	7.50	5	3	11.00	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	5.36	7.86
o7	3	4	12	6	11	6.50	7	8	7.50	8	8	8.00	6.16	3.71
o8	2	11	8.50	3	1	13.00	10	6	8.00	9	10	9.50	4.86	8.82
o9	1	10	9.50	2	7	10.50	8	8	8.00	7	9	8.00	5.43	6.00
o11	2	6	11.00	1	12	8.50	9	8	8.50	10	8	9.00	6.68	5.46
o12	7	4	9.50	10	12	4.00	7	6	6.50	9	10	9.50	4.41	2.71
o13	4	3	12.00	1	6	11.50	9	7	8.00	10	2	6.00	6.57	4.93
o14	1	12	8.50	7	10	6.50	10	1	5.50	8	7	7.50	3.34	3.48
o15	3	7	10.00	4	11	7.50	10	9	9.50	10	10	10.00	6.79	5.36
o16	1	2	14.00	4	12	7.00	10	9	9.50	7	7	7.00	9.16	3.50
o17	1	2	14.00	8	12	5.00	10	9	9.50	9	9	9.00	9.16	3.21
o18	9	13	4.00	1	3	13.00	6	8	7.00	10	9	9.50	2.00	8.82
o21	12	4	7.00	7	8	7.50	10	9	9.50	7	9	8.00	4.75	4.29
o22	1	12	8.50	2	4	12.00	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	6.07	8.57
o23	7	10	6.50	1	13	8.00	7	9	8.00	8	6	7.00	3.71	4.00
o24	6	3	11.00	9	1	10.00	7	8	7.50	7	8	7.50	5.63	5.36
o25	4	9	8.50	2	14	7.00	10	9	9.50	10	9	9.50	5.77	4.75
o26	10	12	4.00	7	2	10.50	8	7	7.50	8	9	8.50	2.14	6.38
o27	1	11	9.00	2	3	12.50	9	8	8.50	9	9	9.00	5.46	8.04
o28	1	5	12.00	9	6	7.50	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	8.57	5.36
o29	1	7	11.00	12	5	6.50	0	0	0.00	2	0	1.00	0.00	0.46
o30	6	14	5.00	1	12	8.50	10	9	9.50	10	10	10.00	3.39	6.07
o32	1	8	11.00	3	5	11.00	10	8	9.00	9	9	9.00	6.75	7.07
o34	2	8	10.00	1	3	13.00	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	7.14	9.29
o35	1	12	8.50	2	13	7.50	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	6.07	5.36
o37	12	8	5.00	13	7	5.00	8	6	7.00	10	10	10.00	2.50	3.57
o38	6	9	7.50	4	12	7.00	9	7	8.00	10	7	8.50	4.29	4.25
o39	2	4	12.00	3	10	8.50	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	8.57	6.07
o40	3	10	8.50	2	1	13.50	7	7	7.00	5	8	6.50	4.25	6.27
o41	1	12	8.50	4	8	9.00	10	4	7.00	10	7	8.50	4.25	5.46
o42	2	1	14.00	3	4	11.50	10	5	7.50	10	8	9.00	7.23	7.39
o44	1	13	8.00	2	9	9.50	10	9	9.50	10	7	8.50	5.43	5.77
o45	1	11	9.00	2	6	11.00	10	7	8.50	10	8	9.00	5.46	7.07
o47	3	8	9.50	2	1	13.50	9	8	8.50	10	9	9.50	5.77	9.16
o49	1	12	8.50	3	2	12.50	10	9	9.50	10	10	10.00	5.77	8.93
o50	2	11	8.50	1	4	12.50	10	8	9.00	10	9	9.50	5.46	8.48
o51	14	6	5.00	10	8	6.00	10	8	9.00	10	10	10.00	3.21	4.29
o52	3	8	9.50	2	9	9.50	10	10	10.00	8	10	9.00	6.79	6.11
o53	1	14	7.50	3	4	11.50	10	7	8.50	9	9	9.00	4.55	7.39
o55	4	5	11.00	10	11	4.50	6	4	5.00	8	10	9.00	3.75	2.89
o57	1	10	9.50	7	11	6.00	10	6	8.00	7	7	7.00	5.43	3.00
o58	2	12	8.00	5	6	9.50	10	5	7.50	8	8	8.00	4.29	5.43
o59	13	4	6.50	11	14	2.50	9	9	9.00	9	8	8.50	4.18	1.52
o60	1	7	11.00	2	6	11.00	10	8	9.00	8	9	8.50	7.07	6.68
o61	14	5	5.50	12	6	6.00	10	8	9.00	8	9	8.50	3.54	3.64
o62	1	13	8.00	5	2	11.50	10	5	7.50	10	10	10.00	4.29	8.21
o63	4	11	7.50	5	12	6.50	8	7	7.50	8	8	8.00	4.02	3.71
o64	2	13	7.50	1	3	13.00	9	7	8.00	10	9	9.50	4.29	8.82
o67	1	6	12.00	2	7	10.50	10	9	9.50	10	10	10.00	7.80	7.50

Table A1. *Cont.*

DATA. SET	PARTICIPATION			COHERENCE			PARTICIPATION			COHERENCE			PARTICI-PATION	COHER-ENCE
	HOP1	HOP2	PWF	HOC1	HOC2	CWF	P1	P2	MEAN	C1	C2	MEAN		
o68	9	6	7.50	2	3	12.50	8	9	8.50	9	9	9.00	4.55	8.04
o69	2	5	12.00	3	1	13.00	10	10	10.00	8	10	9.00	8.21	8.36
o70	2	11	8.50	4	9	8.50	10	4	7.00	9	7	8.00	4.25	4.86
o72	3	12	7.50	1	11	9.00	10	7	8.50	10	9	9.50	4.55	6.11
o73	1	11	9.00	5	8	8.50	10	7	8.50	10	9	9.50	5.46	5.77
o74	1	2	14.00	10	12	4.00	10	10	10.00	8	8	8.00	9.64	2.29
o76	3	6	11.00	9	7	7.00	10	10	10.00	9	9	9.00	7.50	4.50
o77	1	10	9.50	7	4	9.50	9	3	6.00	9	7	8.00	4.07	5.43
o78	1	5	12.00	6	2	11.00	10	8	9.00	10	10	10.00	7.71	7.86
o79	1	8	11.00	2	5	11.50	10	9	9.50	7	8	7.50	7.13	6.16
o80	4	11	7.50	6	10	7.00	10	7	8.50	7	8	7.50	4.55	3.75
o81	3	10	8.50	4	2	12.00	9	6	7.50	10	8	9.00	4.55	7.71
o82	1	11	9.00	2	5	11.50	10	7	8.50	9	10	9.50	5.46	7.80
o84	1	12	8.50	10	11	4.50	10	8	9.00	9	7	8.00	5.46	2.57
o85	1	13	8.00	5	7	9.00	10	4	7.00	9	7	8.00	4.00	5.14
o86	3	9	9.00	2	5	11.50	7	7	7.00	7	9	8.00	4.50	6.57
o87	7	8	7.50	2	1	13.50	9	9	9.00	10	10	10.00	4.82	9.64
o88	13	9	4.00	11	4	7.50	10	5	7.50	9	6	7.50	2.14	4.02
o89	4	6	10.00	14	8	4.00	9	10	9.50	5	8	6.50	6.79	1.86
o90	13	6	5.50	12	3	7.50	9	8	8.50	8	6	7.00	3.34	3.75
o91	1	11	9.00	2	4	12.00	10	8	9.00	10	10	10.00	5.79	8.57
o92	3	9	9.00	1	4	12.50	10	6	8.00	10	10	10.00	5.14	8.93
o93	4	10	8.00	1	2	13.50	8	7	7.50	9	8	8.50	4.29	8.20
o94	6	8	8.00	11	1	9.00	8	8	8.00	8	10	9.00	4.57	5.79
o95	2	14	7.00	3	6	10.50	10	8	9.00	9	8	8.50	4.50	6.38
o96	10	4	8.00	12	8	5.00	10	7	8.50	8	6	7.00	4.86	2.50
o97	3	7	10.00	13	11	3.00	9	9	9.00	10	9	9.50	6.43	2.04
o98	3	14	6.50	1	2	13.50	10	6	8.00	10	10	10.00	3.71	9.64
o99	3	13	7.00	2	1	13.50	10	8	9.00	10	10	10.00	4.50	9.64
o100	1	10	9.50	5	2	11.50	10	8	9.00	10	9	9.50	6.11	7.80
o101	3	1	13.00	4	9	8.50	10	10	10.00	10	10	10.00	9.29	6.07
o102	2	5	12.00	7	6	8.50	9	9	9.00	9	9	9.00	7.39	5.46
o103	4	7	9.50	6	11	6.50	9	9	9.00	10	8	9.00	6.11	4.18
o104	1	14	7.50	12	4	7.00	10	7	8.50	8	8	8.00	4.55	4.00
o105	1	6	12.00	4	5	10.50	10	8	9.00	10	9	9.50	7.39	7.13
o106	13	9	4.00	6	2	11.00	8	8	8.00	8	8	8.00	2.29	6.29
o107	1	7	11.00	2	10	9.00	8	7	7.50	9	7	8.00	5.89	5.14

Appendix B. General Information of Interviewees and Organizations

Case Number	Interview Format	Responsibility Level	Gender	Duration (min)	Region	Typology	Public/ Private	Capacity (Beds)
1	Online	Director	Female	90	Coastal	Local tourist office	Mixed	30,400
2	Online	Director	Male	85	Inland	Provincial tourism board	Mixed	70,100
3	Online	Director	Female	95	Inland	County entity	Mixed	7900
4	Online	Tourism officer	Female	65	Inland	County tourist office	Public	1000
5	Online	President	Male	55	Coastal	Local association	Private	51,000
6	Online	Tourism officer	Female	60	Inland	Local tourist office	Public	2400
7	Online	President	Male	50	Coastal & Inland	Provincial association	Private	257,000
8	Online	Tourism officer	Female	45	Inland	Local tourist office	Public	200

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