

TOURIST ACTIVITIES AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPANISH URBAN SETTLEMENT SYSTEM (1997-2002)

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I. OBJECTIVE

The growth of tourism has created new expectatives for the development of the majority of urban and rural municipalities in Spain and has introduced a new element of dynamism in the system of settlements. This has led us to conduct this investigation in order to verify empirically, by statistical analysis, the relationship between the function of tourism, population growth and the socio-economic development, taking into account the type of tourist activity which is dominant.

II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

1. As for the statistic indicators

The difficulty of having to scale municipal statistical indicators covering the whole of Spanish territory and allowing for a evolutionary study according to a time series is well known by now. Within this limitation, and taking into account the empirical study, we have selected three variables statistics: population growth, tourism specialization and the level of socio-economic development. The measurement of these variables according to us is as follows:

- For the demographic variable we used population data from the National Statistical Institute for the years 1997 and 2002, ranking the municipalities depending on the size and rate of growth.
- To measure the tourist activity we have taken —as basic indicator— the tourist index included in the La Caixa Economic Yearbook for the years 1997 and 2002. From here, we proceeded as follows:
 - i. We estimated the share of tourism of each municipality (q), namely their participation in the ratio of tax revenue from economic activities in the IAE.

- ii. We calculated the evolution of the tourist quota (q) between the two years and in this way we obtained the tourist dynamism index.
 - iii. Then, applying the model of the urban-based population data to the tourist share, we built the ratio of tourism specialization. First we calculated the theoretical quota on the basis of population (qt). By comparing the obtained theoretical quota (qt) with the actual quota calculated before (q), we established the level of specialization when $q > qt$, with the rate of specialization being $ie = q / qt$
- We measured the third variable, the socio-economic development, following the household income available in each municipality and its variation in the analyzed period. We have also used the Index of Municipal Economic Activity of La Caixa Statistical Yearbook

2. As for The Number Of Studied Municipalities

In a general introductory approximation we have worked with the Spanish total; but, according to the goals, we were interested in studying the more urbanized municipalities, using 30,000 inhabitants as selection criterion; but among them, many had low tourist figures. Therefore, we added a restriction: to include only those municipalities with a tourist index > 0.030 , as it was observed that this value marked a point of discontinuity in the statistics distribution for the national series. At the end we got a selection of 108 municipalities for 2002 and 105 for 1997. With these we have made our study.

III. CONCLUSIONS

As expected, tourism is running as an urban and territorial development factor, generating significant changes in the system of settlements, but it neither acts the same way nor has the same impact on all municipalities or in all cities.

1. First, in terms of the relationship between the development of tourism and urban development, the following conclusions can be highlighted:
 - a. In small and medium-sized seaside towns the largest increase occurred simultaneously on tourism, population and income.
 - b. The highest increase in tourist activities have occurred in the cities with specialized cultural tourism, but this increase has not met correspondence in the evolution of the population and income.
 - c. In small and middle towns with regional or subregional economic role, tourist activities have experienced a strong dynamism, despite not being cities with tourist specialization.
 - d. In the capital cities, the strong tertiary sector of their urban economies have put tourism in a diverse position as for their participation in the urban economic dynamism. For some it is the basic factor of urban development, as in the coastal resort towns, but in others it is an additional factor, as in the case of cultural or urban tourism, being a function associated with the economic specialization of the city, and therefore a subsidiary factor of urban development.

- e. Accordingly, the results tell us that, except for the sun and beach tourism, in the remaining cases the wish for a sustainable urban development in cultural tourism is a goal of dubious effectiveness according to the tests, because the increased activity and the tourist share are not associated with an increase in the family income, or to a significant growth of the population.
Therefore, compared to the limitations of cultural tourism as an engine for strategic urban development, the results were more significant when a city with a diversified and competitive economic base develops their tourist resources as a complementary role that can provide synergy to the development of the urban process.
 - f. In short, the sun and beach tourism is the one that contributed most significant developments; cultural tourism serves as an additional factor and urban tourism is more a derived activity than a driving factor.
2. Secondly, with regard to the relationship of tourist development with the development of the system of settlements:
- a. There has been a process of declining diffusion of tourist activities in the system of settlements.
 - b. Big global cities are the centres of the most dynamic and important tourist activity (Madrid and Barcelona).
 - c. In the medium-sized cities, except those that have comparative advantages and high competitive value, tourism functions as a supplementary or secondary economic activity.
 - d. Tourism as an economic activity has acted as an enhancing factor for the network of small and medium cities.
 - e. Also, big maritime cities, which initially operated as poles of initial attraction, have become cities of services, shifting its role to the extensive tourist developments along the coast, with which they form major urban conurbations, generating real linear urban regions (e.g., on the Costa del Sol around Malaga, in the Bay of Palma and Alicante), which presumably will pose new challenges in the future for planning and management in the context of sustainability.
 - f. The smaller towns (with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants) are those who in relative terms have experienced a greater relative interannual increase of tourism (rural and incidental tourism), although their participation in the entire system of settlements remains low.

All this empirical evidence makes us see the strong implication that tourism has had on urban and territorial development in Spain and how their relationship varies depending on the type of tourist specialization and the demographic and functional dimension of the city, as we intended to prove in the first place.

