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Multidisciplinary Issues and Contemporary Discussions in Social Science
(Global Meeting of Social Science Community)
(Virtual/Online conference)

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Rome, Italy
5-7 April 2020

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VALERIA COCCO¹ AND MARCO BROGNA²

THE TOURIST DESTINATION DEVELOPING PROCESS: SEVILLE CASE STUDY

Abstract

According to the World Tourism Organization, the sustainable tourism meets the needs of tourists and inhabitants of an area; and, at the same time, it protects and improves opportunities for the future. The sustainable tourism, in fact, could be considered as a mile stone and a guiding principle for territorial resources management and as a tool to satisfy the economic, social and aesthetic needs of the people. At the same time, the management of sustainable tourism guarantee the cultural integrity of the areas, the fundamental balance of nature and the biodiversity, supporting and improving the quality of the life of residents and tourists.

The relationship between tourism and territory is complex and dynamic. In fact, in the current international economic situation, tourism is one of the main engines of the global economy, since it is configured as a sector in continuous expansion and whose effects both in terms of flows and turnover are continuously increasing (around + 4% every year).

However, the contribution that tourism offers to the territories is not only economic, but also social. A welcoming place for tourists is a place where the quality of life is high, first of all for the residents; in fact, investing in infrastructure, services, healthy and public security is an advantage for both residents and tourists. Indeed, the easy movement of goods and people and the introduction of a tool like the internet in everyday life contributed to shorten the distances.

The research is focused on the Seville case study, that from the last 2 years displayed a national and international growth of the tourists' flows. In fact, the Spanish city of Seville is one of the most touristic destination of the Andalusia and has been characterized by an interesting development in the sustainable tourism sector, and, in particular, it is considered an important destination for both cultural and MICE tourism in the national and international market.

The research analyses the tourism developing strategy of the Andalusian destination, through a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative methodology), including the study of the main data of the Seville region and the strategic and organizational elements proposed by the government and involved into the tourist destination developing process.

Keywords: Sustainability, competitiveness, tourism

JEL Codes: Z30, Z32, Z38, Z39

1. Seville: an analysis of the tourist destination

The city of Seville is one of the most important urban tourist destinations in Spain. It occupies the third place after Madrid and Barcelona, both for the number of accommodation facilities and for the number of hosted guests.

The tradition of ancient customs, the vast historical and artistic heritage of the city, and the strong cultural identity managed to maintain a strong sense of belonging and social cohesion in the area.

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In fact, the city of Seville is an important destination for cultural tourism. Not only. Seville is growing in the MICE tourism, both in the national and international market and it was chosen by Lonely Planet as the 2018 tourist destination.

The evolution of tourism in Seville fixes into the two major events: the Ibero-American exhibition of 1929 and the universal exhibition of 1992.

In both the events there was a transformation of the urban fabric of the city and an expansion of the tourist space. The governance of the territory and the strong connection within political and economic events of the country have been a driver for the tourist developing context over the centuries.

After the Ibero-American exhibition of 1929, there was a renovated interest in travelling in the Andalusia region and in the 50s there was a touristic boom for the region. In particular, the favorite tourist destination of the region was the coast area, so, in that period, Seville lost its tourist centrality in

Andalusia. In this scenario, Seville was just a destination for excursion or for short trips for the tourists who were headed to the Andalusian coast.

The large amount of tourist flows in the coast area led to a saturation phenomenon in certain areas of Andalusia; so, there was an increase in the demand for housing and an increase in investments in the real estate market of holiday homes. Thus, a great transformation was observed in the urban landscape, as well as improvements in infrastructure and public services.

In occasion of the 1992 universal exhibition, Seville designed the strategies to become a competitive tourist destination and made many changes for the urbanization of the city. So, the 1992 exhibition marked the birth of the current tourist system of Seville that started to attract a growing number of tourists (more than half a million annual travelers, 50% foreigners mainly from America, France, Portugal, England, Germany and Italy).

2. Urban rearrangement of a touristic Seville

The reorganization of the urban fabric in occasion of the mega events was able to make a change also in the Seville touristic rearrangement (Cocco, 2017). In fact, considering that the characteristic profiles of the tourist were mainly the adult visitor, with a certain purchasing power and the “saver” tourist, the rearrangement of the touristic accommodation involved the construction of new accommodations, located on the edge of the historic center for the well-spender tourists and the outskirts camping for the young and “savers” tourists. Despite a partial decentralization of the tourist space, the interest of visitors continued to focus on the historic center, where the main point of interest and the artistic monument of the city were located.

Thus, also the accessibility of Seville from other regions of Spain and from the foreigner countries was favored by the development of urban mobility and airports - on the occasion of Expo 1992, the first high-speed line (AVE) was built in Spain, the Madrid - Seville line; the San Pablo airport was completely renovated -. The improvement of the accessibility to Seville was able to multiply the volume of passengers registered between 1960 and 1990 from 96,933 to 1,630,833 (Rodríguez, 2013; Galán de la Oliva, 2014).

The new urban planning changes linked to the 1992 expo signed the contemporary tourism in Seville and strengthen the MICE tourism thanks to the new congress venues – i.e. the urbanization of Isla de la Cartuja was the place where the 1992 event was hosted - and a transformation in demand and tastes of tourists.

In a nutshell, the 1992 universal exhibition represented a moment of change in Seville and reformulated the entire tourism system of Seville.

3. Tourism data and trends in Seville

The following analysis aims to observe the tourist phenomenon and its evolution over time. Starting from an analysis of the Spanish territory, the attention is then focused on the city of Seville.

Every two years, the World Economic Forum draws up a ranking about tourism competitiveness in “The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report”. In the WEF report, tourism competitiveness is measured thanks to the use of various indicators, concerning different areas such as safety, sustainability, infrastructure, cultural heritage, etc. (Ramírez, 2008).

Table 1. International arrivals and Ranking of Spain for the tourism sector in the last seven years

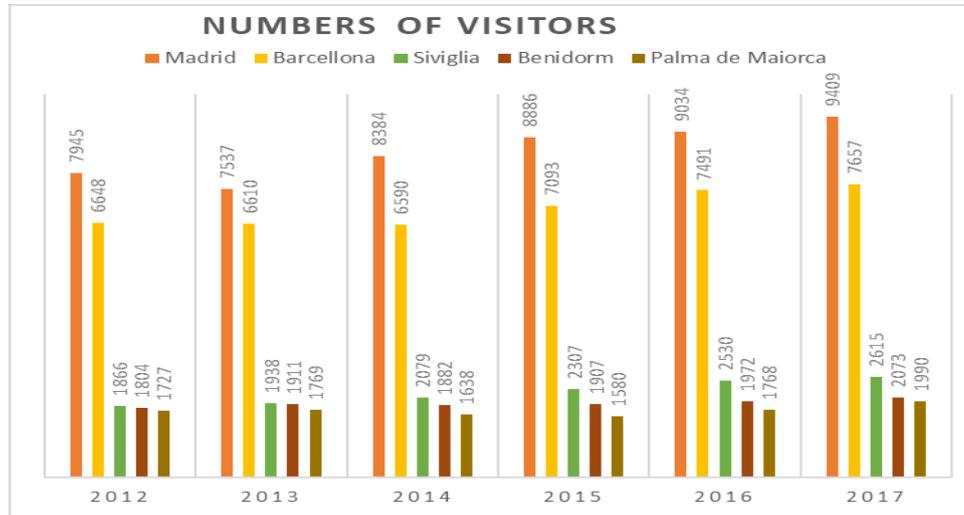
Year	Spain Rank	International Arrival
2011	8°	56.694.000
2013	4°	60.661.000
2015	1°	63.230.400
2017	1°	68.521.255

Source: Own elaboration from data WEF (2011-2017).

Considering the data related to Spain, it is evident an ever-increasing positioning in the last decade.

In 2011, the Iberian nation was considered the eighth country in the world for tourism competitiveness. Just two years later, it had already managed to climb four in the position. Indeed, since 2015 Spain has been the first country in terms of tourism competitiveness in the world (Porter, 1991).

Graph 1. Number of tourists for the point of interest in Spain (2012 -2017)

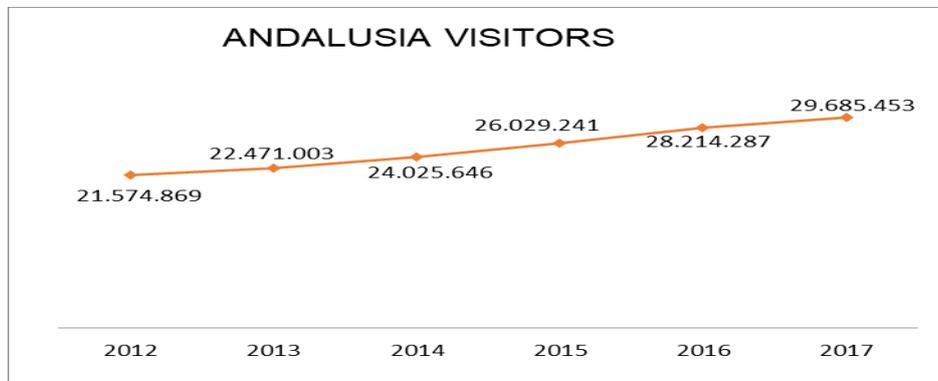


Source: Own elaboration from the data INE (2012-2017).

In the following two years, it continued to improve its competitiveness, consolidating its leadership also for the following two years. Furthermore, in less than six years, tourists' arrivals increased by about 20%, a greater increase than the increase rate in the European area. In other words, in terms of international interest and tourist hospitality Spain has outperformed the very strong and close competitors such as France and Italy.

As highlighted by the Graph 1, the tourism growth in Spain is related, in particular, to Madrid and Barcelona. The two cities, in fact, are representing almost half of the overall top 5 arrivals. Then, focusing the attention on the 3 other destinations analyzed, Seville is the one with the highest number of visitors and also it is the one with the highest increase. In fact, in just 5 years the increase rate of visitors in Seville is even higher of the increase rate of Barcelona and Madrid.

Graph 2. Trend in tourist visitors in Andalusia (2012-2017)



Source: Own elaboration from data Junta de Andalucia (2012-2017).

In Andalusia, about 50% of tourists are foreigners, mainly from France, Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. According to the Boletín de Coyuntura Turística elaborated by Turespaña, in the 2016 in all Spain, the tourism GDP grew + 4.9%, 80,000 new jobs and + 10% visitors; and in Seville, there was a total of 2,733,631 travelers, overnight stays increase +9%, average stay was just 2 nights.

4. Conclusions

Seville is currently experiencing a tourist boom with high number of overnight stays and hotel occupancy, unceasing opening of new institutions, incorporation to all the new tourist modes and trends born in these years and expansion of the tourist uses of spaces and resources.

Seville through cultural tourism was able to attract visitors who did not guarantee a long average stay, so there was a need to operate a plan to diversify the offer through an expansion of the tourist and attraction resources of the city. In this regard, an integration of tourist services started in order to increase the average stay time and give tourists the opportunity to fully experience the city. The tool of the “Plan de Accion Turismo de Sevilla 2017” called “Andalusian Soul” provides the strategic alliance between the four main Andalusian provinces (Seville, Malaga, Cordoba and Granada), to increase the number of tourist arrivals, and consequently the average stay, through an improvement in the tourist offer and the quantity of tourism-related activities, the average expenditure per tourist and therefore to consolidate the tourist position of Seville at regional, national and international level. Not only. The Plan de Accion Turismo de Sevilla 2017 provides to promote a new tourism strategy directly linked to the tourist offer, improving the tourism product of Seville through the expansion of the basic offer and the creation of a system that allows an integral management of the product and implementing cooperation between tourism actors. This could be an excellent way to integrate tourist offers and obtain even more efficient results to encourage an increase the average stay in the city of Seville. This, in fact, could enable all four territories to benefit from tourism resources and offer a new integrated and complete tourism product that could further increase tourist visitors even in the future.

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