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**SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURIST PROMOTION:
THE CASE OF SPAIN**

The current context of globalization, easy access to information and the economic crisis have made the tourist market hardly competitive. Therefore, different destinations try to convey a good image, whether new or strengthened, for which they are developing important promotional strategies. This is the case of Spain, where institutional promotion of tourism has played an important role in its development and undoubtedly has contributed to the achievement of the leader position that Spain has now as a tourist destination. The tourist boom of the late 1950s brought a lot of income and popularity, but also serious damages to Spanish environment, mainly coasts. Thus, Spanish marketing strategies have adapted to the successive tourist market's needs, taking into account the importance of being sustainable. Tourism development and sustainability can coexist if there is right strategic planning, and the long experience of Spain have take us to develop a qualitative analysis of all the promotional campaigns developed since the very beginning, examining through examples its promotional evolution from a summer destination to a diversified and sustainable tourist destination.

Keywords: tourism; sustainability; country branding; destination image; Spain.

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ЕКОЛОГІЯ ТА ПРОСУВАННЯ ТУРИЗМУ: ПРИКЛАД ІСПАНІЇ

У статті показано, як у сучасному контексті глобалізації, легкого доступу до інформації та економічної кризи загострилась конкуренція на туристичних ринках. Багато туристичних напрямків стали звертати більше уваги на власний імідж та переглядати його, для чого розробляються окремі стратегії просування. У випадку Іспанії державне просування туризму зіграло особливу роль та суттєво посилило позиції країни на ринку туризму. Туристичний бум кінця 1950-их зробив країну заможною та популярною, але одночасно завдав значної шкоди навколишньому середовищу, особливо узбережжю. Саме тому Іспанія розробила нові маркетингові стратегії, що брали до уваги її екологічні потреби. Розвиток туризму та екологія можуть співіснувати, якщо має місце вірна стратегія розвитку. Багаторічний досвід Іспанії, наведений у даній статті, демонструє, яким чином можна посунути акцент з виключного пляжного туризму на різноманіття інших туристичних напрямків, піклуючись при цьому про середовище.

Ключові слова: туризм; стійкий розвиток; брендинг країни; імідж туристичного напрямку; Іспанія.

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ЭКОЛОГИЯ И ПРОДВИЖЕНИЕ ТУРИЗМА: ПРИМЕР ИСПАНИИ

В статье показано, как в современном контексте глобализации, лёгкого доступа к информации и экономического кризиса обострилась конкуренция на туристических рынках. Многие туристические направления стали обращать больше внимания на свой имидж и пересматривать его, для чего разрабатываются отдельные стратегии продвижения. В случае Испании государственное продвижение туризма сыграло особую роль и несомненно существенно укрепило позиции страны на рынке туризма.

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Туристический бум конца 1950-ых обогатил страну и принёс ей популярность, но вместе с тем принёс и значительный вред окружающей среде, особенно побережью. В связи с этим Испании разработали новые маркетинговые стратегии, учитывая свои экологические потребности. Развитие туризма и экология могут сосуществовать, если разработана верная стратегия. И многолетний опыт Испании, представленный в данной статье, показывает, как можно сместить акцент с исключительно пляжного туризма на разнообразие других туристических направлений при сбережении экологии.
Ключевые слова: туризм; устойчивое развитие; брендинг страны; имидж туристического направления; Испания.

Introduction

In recent years, the concept of "sustainability" has been placed in almost every area of knowledge. Related to tourism, numerous conferences, books and academic studies have analyzed sustainable tourism and how important it is for destinations and territories (Swarbrooke, 1999). Although sustainable tourism implies not just protecting environment, but also long-term economic viability and social justice, the first kind is which usually receives most attention, and in this paper we are referring to that type mainly, according to the importance of the relationship between tourism and environment. That is why, in some cases, talking about tourism implies certain controversy because of the environmental damage that tourist development can make. However, that situation exists when there is a lack of planning. Tourism development and sustainability can coexist if there is a right strategy to preserve environment (Vogeler, Hernandez, 2003). In fact, tourism can even help the preservation of natural resources in some ways, by creating official protected areas like national parks, for example. The application of sustainability to tourist planning is essential. Every destination needs to preserve its natural resources in order to be competitive in a long-term (Ministerio de Economia y Hacienda, and Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, 1999), taking into account also the respect of population and territories around.

While sustainable development should be a goal for all policies and actions, sustainable tourism should make politicians understand that there are often limits to what will be achieved in short and medium term (Bramwell et al., 1996). Sustainable tourism encourages destinations and enterprises care about the impacts of tourism on natural environment and demonstrates the importance of natural resources preservation.

In Spain, the tourist boom of the late 1950s brought a lot of income and popularity, but also serious damages to its environment. Spain's enthusiastic response to tourist's appetite for sun, sand and sea led to the overdevelopment of Spain's coastlines, representing one of the world's most glaring examples of mass tourism consequences (WTO and ETC, 2009). Being a popular summer destination brought to Spain the unplanned construction of big buildings, residential areas or new installations without worrying about environmental impacts. In addition, the population density in Spanish littoral cities and villages is 5 times higher than national average, and it triples during the high season (Vogeler, Hernandez, 2003), being the impact of human population growth one of the key issues in sustainable development (Hunter, 1997).

Many commentators assume that public sector tourism planning must play a major role in the development of sustainable tourism, and its marketing campaigns

and strategies will have impact on destination (Swarbrooke, 1999). Besides, the image of a tourist destination must be thoroughly investigated before product positioning attempts are undertaken (Zafar, 1991). Thus, the promotion of Spain as a tourist destination has played a fundamental role in the evolution of its image and in the kind of tourist products the government has been trying to promote. During the 1980s, Spanish government took a brave decision on the radical turn, focusing international tourist marketing on culture and interior (WTO and ECT, 2009), thanks to image repositioning and the creation of popular tourist brand that still remains. It is not difficult to perceive the changes and the evolution of marketing campaigns, mainly after the creation of the mentioned tourist brand in 1984. The objective of this paper is to analyze the relationship between tourist promotion and sustainability in a qualitative study on Spain, using the methods we describe in the next epigraph.

Materials and methods

To illustrate with the examples how the promotion of a tourist destination can influence the sustainability of the territory, we have taken Spain as a reference because of its long experience in tourist marketing and its remarkable rebranding, which had not only retained its traditional beach market, but it also introduced a different Spain to new markets (WTO and ETC, 2009) in a more sustainable way. Firstly, in order to understand the objectives behind the promotional campaigns, a descriptive analysis has been carried on the information found in the secondary sources about TURESPANA and Spanish tourist policy in general, analyzing its evolution through the main official documents developed by central government in order to improve the competitiveness of Spain as a tourist destination and its influence on the country's sustainability:

- Competitive Plans (1992, 1996): Plan Marco de Competitividad del Turismo Espanol 1992–1995 (FUTURES I) and Plan Marco de Competitividad del Turismo Espanol 1996–1999 (FUTURES II);
- Strategies and Actions Plan of Tourism (1997): Plan de Estrategias y Actuaciones de la Administracion General del Estado en Materia Turistica;
- Tourism Quality Plan (2000): Plan Integral de Calidad del Turismo Espanol 2000–2006 (PICTE);
- 2020 Horizon Spanish Tourism Plan (2007, 2012): Plan del Turismo Espanol Horizonte 2020 – Plan 2008–2012;
- National Global Tourism Plan (2012): Plan Nacional e Integral de Turismo 2012–2015 (PNIT).

Secondly, we have tried to locate images not only from the official campaigns of TURESPANA since the creation of the tourist brand in 1984, but also the images of promotional actions the Government developed before that, observing the evolution from Spanish tourist boom during the 1950s to nowadays. To do so, a descriptive and comparative analyses of different campaigns has been carried out, studying in each of them different conveyed messages and objectives in order to understand the evolution of Spain's image and its influence on its sustainability as a tourist destination.

Results and discussions

– *Tourist policy in Spain*

The first normative document related to tourism in Spain dated back to 1905, but it was in 1951 when the first Ministry of tourism, called "Ministry of Information

and Tourism", was created (Tena, 2006). At that moment Spain already started to be a popular tourist destination, which brought the need for the creation of an entity to organize the tourist phenomenon in the country. However, fast and intensive growth of the tourist activity and its newness, with no precedents in legislation, generated an unplanned industry which was becoming increasingly intensive, quick and uncontrolled.

There is no specific reference to any concept related to sustainability in the tourist political plans until FUTURES I, where there were references to the preservation of the environment (Velasco, 2010). Thus, the evolution of the considerations related to sustainability from Spanish tourist policy came as follows:

– FUTURES I (1992–1995). With this Competitive Plan the government established new strategies to consolidate tourism as an economic sector, attending the need of its impacts, especially in the environment. Among its objectives, we can find "the preservation of natural and urban environment, making it compatible with tourism activities" (Secretaria General de Turismo, 1992).

– FUTURES II (1996–1999). This Plan included a New Products Program which considered the sustainability of the presented projects related to environment. This second Competitive Plan did mention the concept "sustainability" as its main point, and considered the sustainability model in the development of tourist destinations (Secretaria General de Turismo, 1995a).

– Plan de Estrategias y Actuaciones de la Administracion General del Estado en Materia Turistica (1997). One of the strategies of this Plan was "Development of the concept of environmental sustainability", and its objectives included encouraging Sustainable Tourism Plans in tourist destinations and the incorporation of environmental management in tourist enterprises (Secretaria General de Turismo, 1995b).

– PICTE (2000). One of its main objectives was the environmental sustainability of tourist activities and in one of its programs, "Destinations Quality", there was a specific point about sustainability and the need for taking care of the growth limits in some tourist areas, including the cooperation between tourist and environmental stakeholders in order to establish long-term sustainable aspects (Secretaria General de Turismo, 2000).

– Plan del Turismo Espanol Horizonte 2020 – Plan 2008–2012 (2007). In this Plan, which still applies, the concept of sustainability is a fundamental key and it is one of the basic elements of the central model. One of its objectives is to improve the sustainability of Spanish tourism model, assuring the quality of natural environment, applying the sustainable concept in all the tourist decisions (Secretaria General de Turismo, 2007, 2012).

– PNIT 2012–2015 (2012). With this new Plan, the central government wants to convey a new vision of Spain, which includes the sustainability as a need to be a competitive destination. At this respect, the Plan includes an evaluation of Spanish tourist offer to assure a sustainable management and development (Secretaria de Estado de Turismo, 2012).

As we can see, the evolution of the importance of sustainability in Spanish tourist policy is positive. During the most important growth of tourism industry in Spain, there was no mentioning to any concept related to sustainability, and its development was unplanned and very damaging to the environment. On the other hand, when

Spanish government understood the importance of tourism sustainable management, the political Plans started to make a difference in the perception of tourism activity and the influence of sustainable concepts in tourist development is increasingly greater. This positive evolution is reflected in the image of Spain as a tourist destination since Plans and Programs are related to its tourist promotion, as we analyze further.

– **TURESPANIA**

The Instituto de Turismo de Espana (TURESPANIA), created in 1990, is an administrative unit of the central government in charge of promoting Spain abroad as a tourist destination. Sustainability is one of the aspects the government wants to convey, thus, among its main areas of action, we can excel "drawing up plans and programs to foster innovation, quality, sustainability and competitiveness of tourism products and destinations" (BOE, 2009). Apart from that, it is important to mention that TURESPANIA is the major tool for tourism policy in Spain, which is not limited to merely promote tourism supply but also tries to improve those areas where could be negative effects on the sustainability of tourism (TURESPANIA's website). In order to do that, it has a Sub-Direction of Tourist Development and Sustainability, responsible for the creation of strategies meant to the development and improvement of the sustainable planning and management of tourist destinations (BOE, 2009).

The tourist policy developed by TURESPANIA fundamentally tries to preserve the potential of Spanish destinations, and it has a compromise of valuing the relevance of the environment as an important aspect to reduce the socioeconomic and touristic unbalance of the territories (TURESPANIA's website). However, the main objective of TURESPANIA is the promotion of Spain abroad, for which it develops consecutive promotional campaigns in order to convey a good image of Spain as a tourist destination. Further, not only the campaigns of TURESPANIA are analyzed, but also the promotional actions developed before its creation.

– **Evolution of Spanish tourist promotion**

Ironically, before the popularity of Spanish tourism started, the promotional campaigns developed by central government emphasized not only Spanish sun but also the historical and traditional parts of the country, because the goal was to attract cultural tourists of high social level (see the examples of promotional posters during the 1940s in: <http://blogs.elpais.com/.a/6a00d8341bfb1653ef015432f72c00970c-550wi>).

During the 1950s the tourism in Spain started to grow faster and the government created the first popular slogan: "Spain is different" (see some examples of the promotional posters during the 1960s in: <http://blogs.elpais.com/.a/6a00d8341bfb1653ef015432f74181970c-550wi>). This new campaign breaks with previous, as it moves away from the cultural image and begins to highlight the sun and beach tourism, which would soon become the country's unique image for years. The "Spain is different" claim was such a success that transcended the merely tourist industry, becoming a popular definition of Spanish features. The key of its success was getting to personalize the "folklore" as a characteristic aspect and taking the advantage of the stereotypes in a positive way, keeping this slogan in the Spaniards memory not just as a tourist claim, but also as a historic fact from that period (Plumed, 2012). However, despite the success related to the growth

of tourist activity, the strategy was not fully defined and taking the advantage of the popularity of just one tourist product reflects an unsustainable management.

Even when the government tried to promote new products like business tourism, the campaigns used the "sun and beach" image as the base element to do it (see some examples of the promotional posters during the 1970s in: <http://blogs.elpais.com/.a/6a00d8341bfb1653ef014e89175aa4970d-550wi>).

During the 1980s the government decided to invest more incomes and efforts in tourist promotion, and in 1984 the official logotype, el "sol de Miro" (Miro's sun) was launched, remaining still nowadays (Figure 1). It started a new era in tourist promotion of Spain because since that moment a unique brand will be used internationally, which meant a big step for public Spanish marketing, overall because it started in the 1980s and today is still on top. Miro's logotype has been introduced to every communication element of TURESPANA and it has become one of the signs of Spanish tourism identity, used not only by TURESPANA, but also by other entities.



Figure 1. Logotype of Spanish tourist brand: Miro's sun

From that moment, the official campaigns started to be developed consecutively, as we show:

- 1984–1990: "Spain. Everything under the sun". This claim was also created on the strengths of Spanish position at the tourist market in order to promote all the diversity of the Spanish offer. At that time, the country already enjoyed a great position as a sun and beach destination, so it was convenient to start to diversify the range, although the claim still mentioned the sun in it.

- 1991–1994: "Passion for life". This slogan is a result of the study of Spanish image. That analysis showed that an image of an active and alive country had to be launched, without mentioning climate anymore and promoting all kinds of tourism, trying to avoid seasonality and taking the new trends. This way, Spain was trying to get into more sustainable markets and excel the efforts that the government was doing to keep natural resources.

- 1995–1997: "Spain by...". This brief campaign included the pictures made by professional and popular photographers in order to show the different ways to see Spain, avoiding again focusing on summer vacation only.

- 1998–2001: "Bravo Spain". The goal of this campaign was to convey a modern, creative and innovated image of the country with a good tourist offer all the year

round. Thus, the government still wanted to avoid the sun and beach image, since the administration didn't want to get more quantity of tourists, but more quality in its tourism in every part of Spain, which is a fundamental aspect of sustainable tourism.

– 2002–2003: "Spain marks" (Figure 2). This campaign also pretended to dissociate Spanish image from sun and beach as a unique offer. This time, though, it also wanted to show Spain as a unique experience which change the tourist. With this message, TURESPANA shows Spain as a different destination thanks to top quality offer of culture, gastronomy and nature tourism.



Figure 2. Promotional posters of "Spain marks" campaign

– 2004–2009: "Smile! You are in Spain" (Figure 3). This campaign was created with the aim of consolidating the leadership of Spain in holiday vacation but also positioning it as a top quality cultural destination to get a growth in tourism based on the diversification of the product and the geographically relocation. With this campaign the government is still trying to have a balance among different kinds of tourism and trying also not to focus the tourist activity in coasts.



Figure 3. Promotional posters of "Smile! You are in Spain" campaign

– 2008–2010: "Spain. 25 years beyond the sun". During this period a special campaign was created because of the 25th anniversary of the Miro's logotype and Spanish tourist official brand, which TURESPANA used again to leave the beach destination image behind, as we can perceive in the claim "beyond the sun", giving the idea that Spain is much more than a sunny country.

– 2010–nowadays: "I need Spain" (Figure 4). The current slogan is still excelling similar values than the previous campaigns, but this time it is using a warmth

message in order to reach every kind of tourist showing the Spanish way of life, selling not only destinations, but also the emotions that places can convey.



Figure 4. Promotional posters of "I need Spain" campaign

Seeing all these campaigns together we realize that the government has been trying to convey a different image of Spain for years, an image far from just a summer holiday destination. Although some promotional posters still show beaches and some claims mention the sun, the message has been living an evolution, mainly since the government introduced sustainable concepts in tourism destinations management.

Conclusion

Sustainability has become a fundamental key for tourist management, and the government of every tourist destination should include it in its tourist policies, plans and programs. We can learn the consequences of unsustainable tourism management from the case of Spain, where a fast and unplanned growth in its tourist activity gave place to serious damages in its environment, mainly for Spanish coasts, apart from other types of sustainability, related to social and economic setbacks, which although are not considered in this study, they have the same relevance.

It is undeniable that Spanish tourism still depends on "sun and beach" products: the first motivation for tourists to go to Spain is the climate (IET, 2010a) and the months with the most of tourists are July and August (IET, 2013), demonstrating that the image of Spain as a tourist destination is still related to that kind of tourism, and that is the reason for the government to keep promoting that offer. However, the image of Spain as a cultural destination is increasing: 53.8% of foreign tourists made some cultural activity during their stay in Spain in 2009 (IET, 2010b), making the cultural offer the second motivation for tourists in Spain. This data are just an example of how the tourist offer of a country can diversify to improve tourist industry quality, managing it in a more sustainable way.

By analyzing the evolution of tourist policy and promotion of Spain, we perceive how sustainable management can influence the tourist industry, and also how the conveyed messages during promoting campaigns influence the image of a destination. Being sustainable is being competitive, and having a positive image is a key to have a good position. Thus, the link existing between sustainability and tourist promotion goes through a right tourist policy, making the government the major responsible for considering sustainability as essential as it really is.

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