

LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE AND SURF TOURISM: ATTRACTION AND MOTIVATION FACTORS IN THE “NATURAL PARK OF THE STRAIT” (SPAIN)

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In this paper we study the impact of different geographical, physical and environmental, and socio-cultural landscape factors in the formation and development of a sports tourism destination specialized in nature and water sports (windsurfing, surfing, kite surfing...): the municipality of Tarifa and the Natural Park of the Strait (Andalusian, Spain). These territories have been transformed socioeconomic and spatially in recent decades by the extent of these tourist-sports practices have achieved value for tourism, so anthology, some spaces and land resources previously considered unattractive to conventional leisure sun and beach areas as strong winds and big waves.

This is performed an analysis of the environmental, climatic, historical and cultural landscape of the spaces that make up the system of territorial heritage and that support and qualification surfer practices, as well as the perception of them as competitive factors and tourist attraction among local actors involved in the development of these sports from their own experience and valuation. Also studied in this work the current problem of sustainability of the surfing activity and its basic territorial resources, conflicts of use and appropriation of practice spaces and their strengths and weaknesses.

And finally, have attempted to obtain valid conclusions to explain the surfer potential as a coastal tourism product and configuration the “Strait” territory as specialized sports tourism destination, result of a systematic and sociogeographic construction partner with important territorial implications, generating alternative tourism model and differential relation to other areas of the Andalusian coast and conventional mass tourism of sun and beach. The conclusions are intended as a tool for planning and integrated management of this type of destinations and provide the development of sports tourism models competitive, sustainable and integrated.

In recent decades have been forged in the Natural Park numerous products, activities and leisure spaces that introduce new tourist-recreational use of existing land resources, partly ignored by the local population and the conventional tourist users sunny beach or

rural and nature-based tourism (ocean waves, wind). Water sliding sports are an example certainly paradigm to analyze in a particular geographical context the determinants factors of tourist and recreational attraction of surfing destinations.

The tourist-sports destination object of study has emerged largely from the imagination of practitioners surfers, composed set of perspectives, expectations, preconceptions and beliefs that have these athletes this destination. This tourist imaginary is constituted through subjectivity and the user experience and the information obtained by other people and by the media, not being otherwise finally the development of the area and its heritage assets “through the perceptual world of visitor” (Cammarata, 2006; Almirón, 2004 and Hiernaux, 2002). From consideration of the territory, its geographical-cultural reality, its heritage assets and its imaginary can be reached first conceptualization and characterization of the tourist destination as the social construction based on the territorial ownership according to the interests and viewpoints of operation of different actors participating (Viviana, 2012) and also as a “territorial system” with a functional and formal uniqueness derived from the dominant tourism itself.

The study area is certainly a good example of tourism development model of spontaneous generation where the rise of outdoor sports and particularly for windsurfing and kitesurfing - has generated a specialization and differentiation of destination, overcoming the models of mass tourism of sun and sand and prevailing real-residential character in the Andalusian coast and improving seasonality. Moreover, the much desired linkage of tourism resources and aesthetic values of the environment, environmentalism and culture which is pursued both in mature destinations found in this coastal area where a retrospective expression in which the “destination “and” territory “ have become a qualified tourist attraction for a specialized nature sports demand. Surf sports tourism could jump from the beaches to convert the waves and the wind in major tourist resources that were previously and now underutilized with great flexibility and adaptation prime tourism resources providing, for example, a continuous diversification submodalities sport derived from traditional surf, innovation and dissemination practices among ever wider public, and the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial dimensions, including connections and positive synergies between this type of tourism and other subsectors economic activity locally.

For this reason, opportunities, potentials and limitations offered the heritage assets of surf destinations should be well studied, especially when you have to face some problems of sustainability in the field of natural spaces of great environmental fragility such as this study and can cause adverse reaction of surfers and image deterioration and assessment of aquatic leisure spaces between those who claim as their own from the point of view of preserving their cosmogony, aesthetic, emotional character and identity, as has been noted in several international surfers destinations (Augustin, 1994; Buckley, 2002; Taylor, 2007; Krause, 2007; Farmer and Short, 2007; Ponting, 2009 and Corne, 2009).

The principal competitive and motivational factors of attraction for sports tourism surf are remarkably territorial component, such as environmental and landscape quality of geographical space, particularly from the beaches and coastal natural areas and bioclimatic conditions, wave, wind and bathymetry and the variety of environments and natural conditions that make this coastal space a pitch very qualified to practice in different sports

surfismo submodalities. In fact, all these physical and environmental variables reach an average rating above 4 points in the Delphi survey that we conducted, unless the quality and cleanliness of coastal waters and biodiversity in natural resources and ecosystems, which in any case reach a too high valuation. Besides these physical-environmental, only the factors surf schools, commercial establishments linked to these water sports and leisure young atmosphere above average rate of 4 points.

The territory and its qualities as well as its relations with el-tourism productive environment is undoubtedly one of the key benchmarks of quality tourism, seen by many tourists, particularly for sports tourism nature, as “quality geographical”; ie as “environmental quality in their objective and subjective side, the place where consumption falls” (Avila and Barrado, 2005). Moreover, the geographical space plays an essential role in facilitating diversity and innovation to new offers active leisure in nature, to the extent that this, in the productive system and tourism consumption entails variables and important factors such as location and resources that ultimately translate into different possibilities for structuring products and own degree of competitiveness of different destinations. The territorial variable is one of the “fixed capital” of sports activities in nature, a motivational complement the sports tourist to enjoy “life experiences” in different spaces to their origin and a qualifying element also such practices.

However, surveys show that heritage resources and cultural activities as factors attracting surfers only play a secondary role, especially among sports practitioners, clubs and schools and camps, recognizing that users are motivated primarily by sports, just have a general idea of the cultural resources of the area and / or simply not interested in them, it actually welcomes the opportunity to perform various activities surfing.

In this case study we have deepened knowledge of surf tourism destinations through its competitive factors and tourist attraction and the experience and assessment linked to the surfing sports practices local agents. And for this we have considered sports tourism surf from a systemic view, a derivation of an eminently social process and inducer of economic activities and even a local subculture, which builds symbolically, idealizes for tourism and uses the coastal territory and its heritage resources as constitutive basis of the tourist-sport experience and the product being offered and sold to tourists, mostly based on search and consumption of the perfect wave and wind. Importantly, this “land of surf” is, at first, shaped by a unique natural environment and landscape, while fragile and controversial, and also a subculture conditions “safe adventure” and an imaginary serving a variety of aspects: 1) psychological factors (exclusivity, adventure, nature and landscape virginity identity environment, leisure and coexistence of the user community ...); 2.) strategic (infrastructure and equipment items, weather, waves and wind and other factors relevant to surfing) and 3) of practical nature, referring, for example, the existence of repair shops and factories tables and candles and good accessibility to the beaches.

With this study we understand that consideration and evaluation of the landscape in the destinations of sports tourism surf has to be based on an integral concept, transcending the isolated consideration of heritage resources as point attractions of the territory, as they are integrated and articulated in a landscape system, without prejudice to their degree of tourist valuation, as we have seen, by local actors. Destination competitiveness ultimately depends on its “plural attractiveness” (Augustin, 2007) represented by the different units,

landscaping products and sub-brands, in addition to other dimensions and indicators of environmental, socio-cultural, economic, etc. also transcend the mere consideration of aesthetic and scenic aspects of physical-environmental support of the surfing practices. And all this, in a necessary process of tourism planning, has to be taken into account when making decisions about the product composition and development of balanced, competitive and integrated tourism-sport models from which to provide satisfactory experiences its users.

The study area, from a geographical point of view, not only describes a spatial location and half-support of a specialized physical and sports activities, but also a human experience, a subculture of practitioners, and an identity space on the they carry certain values and expectations, for imagery that comes from the information received from its perceptual systems and passing through multiple psychological, mental and sociocultural filters (De Alesi, 2009 and Falaix, 2009).

The declaration as a protected area of the Natural Park of the Strait has served to give the real estate-residential development and urban expansion inside, get a “plug” effect against industrial and agricultural pressures and seek alternative forms of nature tourism in the that physical sports and leisure surfer practices are playing an important role. Surveys and GIS show that is still far from the “tourist implosion” aggressive transformer space, since the activities arising de novo from the seventies like water sliding sports have been closely tied to resources and values natural environment and not merely the remedy of sun and sand, without generating an aggressive colonization of the territory and without evolving into mass tourism with a speculative and dense soil consumption so that the natural landscape, far from diluirse- still a clear role against artificialised built and space. This has led to opportunities for tourist and leisure sports fully differential and a great competitive and future development in relation to “repetitive” and “standardized” sun and beach destinations many other places on the Andalusian coast.

We must insist, however, on the existence of poor and low regulation and protection of activities such as surfing and some assets that support these as the coastal landscape and waves, despite reaching a “productivist” economic valuation of first magnitude to local agents and tourism surveyed users, as also happens in other locations studied (Eberlein, 2011; Lazarow, 2009 and Lazarow, Miller and Blackwell, 2009). We tend, therefore, by harmonizing urbanization and tourist facilities with the landscape, since it is the most effective for the preservation of the environment and to ensure a degree of permanence of those features that makes sense to keep and display the destination proceedings against standardization. The recovery and maintenance of the landscape of the fact that tourism in general in the area and the surfer in particular can be compatible with existing values when these are not just operate by substitution, but experiment by the coexistence of performances compatible.