

THE CASE OF PUERTO DE LA CRUZ: THE RENEWAL OF THE OFFER OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION DESTINATIONS CONSOLIDATED PROCESS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Academic references on building renewal (physical / functional) are getting consolidated since the mid-80s, from the need to counteract the loss of competitiveness of many consolidated tourist destinations which offer accommodation with a lack of adaptation and modernization for tourism demand. Tourist literature shows accommodation offer renewal as a key part within the different restructuring strategies for mature destinations with improvement expectations. In practice, this adaptation of the consolidated destinations on an obsolete model depends, largely, on the implementation of new tourism management and planning and certain elements of attraction to encourage and provide answers to the many and varied ways of understanding the XXI century tourism, according to the needs to reinvent these destinations. Renewal operations through accommodation supply modernization are nowadays one of the most important within the multiple restructuring strategies to overcome the obsolescence and loss of competitiveness situation of tourist destinations in decline phase. Therefore, this paper focuses its analysis on the building renewal process on the accommodation in Puerto de la Cruz (Tenerife), a consolidated destination from the 60s, of great importance in the past sector but which drags historically a gradual process of loss of competitiveness that served us as a case study. As it has been said above, the structure of the paper is composed of three main parts:

1. In the first part of this paper the theoretical and conceptual foundations on which this research is supported will be addressed. Thus, the problem statement, its justification, the current state of the research topic, its objectives, hypothesis and methodology of work will be discussed. For this, a contextualization of various theoretical models of tourist development in established tourist destinations will be done, in order to raise the problems many of them are facing on the final stages of the cycle (maturity, stagnation, decline) with the implementation of various strategies for renewal, rejuvenation, retraining, etc. depending on the terminology used.

2. The second part of this research includes the analysis of the results of building renewal process in Puerto de la Cruz, in order to identify, through the licenses, the entire set of renewal operations that has been undertaken in tourist establishments in the city. To do this, first, the general framework on the renewal of tourism destination will be described, focusing on the quantitative part (number of licenses, types of remodellings, distribution by category, age, etc.). And secondly, the whole process of renewal will be discussed, in this case focusing more on the qualitative side, dividing it in several time phases depending on the different elements that have been intervening and the different stages of evolution of the case study . This way we will obtain a detailed study of its analysis to raise the subsequent valuation.
3. The third part of this research focuses on aspects of discussion and general assessment from the results obtained in the previous section. It will analyze the various factors and positive and negative conditions that have intervened in the building renewal process of Puerto de la Cruz, in order to determine the degree of actual application of this renewal for the modernization of the own tourist facilities as the improvements from the tourist destination. Finally an assessment of objectives and hypotheses compliance is performed in order to determine whether the implementation on the building renewal strategy in Puerto de la Cruz has been sufficient and effective to produce a genuine process of renewal in tourist facilities improving the tourist area. At this point we will finish this work with the relevant conclusions from research.

2. OBJECTIVES

On this basis, this paper has as its main objective to define, analyze and evaluate the process of tourist accommodation building renewal in Puerto de la Cruz in order to systematize, from licenses (as the main source of information) the depreciation process of this tourist destination with the policies carried out on renewal of private space. In addition to this main objective, other specific objectives related to the analysis (quantitative and qualitative) have been suggested analysis related to remodelling licenses of tourist accommodations and its relationship with the tourist development of the destination; strategies and actions regarding renewal that had been developed in the accommodation sector as well as the real degree of actual improvement and modernization; classify and determine the average renewal type developed in the accommodation supply and define and clarify the causes, reasons and responsables for the success or failure of the renewal process at the destination.

3. METHODOLOGY

In terms of methodology, research in this document tries to develop an explanatory research whose basic objective is to provide conclusive evidence on the questions and hypothesis initially raised and provide sufficient knowledge to help understand the causes or reasons of the phenomenon under study; the process of renewal at the supply of accommodation in a mature destination. From this perspective, the structuring of

the methodology was helpful and useful in establishing the most important courses of action to develop this paper. In this regard, the scheme was divided into three phases; Phase I Planning and design conceptual and methodological approach, Phase II development, analysis, results and discussion of research and evaluation III, conclusions and recommendations.

In relation to the sources of information, we have to emphasize those related to documentary and informative ones (academic references, plans, projects, reports, legal texts, legislation, press, tourist brochures, accommodation sites, travelers communities, etc.) and statistical and mapping sources with the creation of a GIS type. In any case, we have to highlight the licenses as the main source of information for this paper, proceeding to collect them in the Planning Department and the Municipal Archives of the City of Puerto de la Cruz. These have been essential for the analysis and assessment of the renovation process of tourist accommodation supply. To this end, the identification of the licenses was achieved from 1955 -and without interruption until today- analyzing all the records on renovation in tourism. After removing the primal information in the resolutions of licenses it was necessary an accurate inspection of the most relevant licenses to extract data from a greater degree of specificity. From this process the following sequence has been developed:

Structuring, emptying of data and information processing; we had to deal with all available licenses filed since 1955 to remove those licenses belonging to the tourism sector. Thus, those related to hotels and tourist apartments were selected. In relation to the processing of information, an approximate number of 13,100 queries were made, based on an average of approximately 250 licenses per year for 53 years and the first quarter of last year of analysis (1955-2009). Of the total 13,100 queries on planning licenses, we finally identified approximately 1,000 records related to the tourism sector for our database. Once we obtained this important volume of data, a systematic treatment of the information was needed through the following process:

- 1) The classification of urban licenses depending on their nature and accommodation type. They were divided into two groups, hotel and non-hotel.
- 2) Analysis, management, review and treatment of urban licenses granted for each tourist modalities. The aim of this procedure was to correct and, if necessary, to add information to those licenses that needed it.
- 3) Election of the final sample for the creation of the license classification; in this regard, we tried to achieve a classification purely based on remodelling licenses. Thus, licenses for the new building of hotels or tourist apartments, legalization of remodellings, the demolition of old hotels or licenses to make remodellings to non-hotel tourist or residential use regime were excluded.

The development of a license classification and types of licenses; the grouping process of urban licenses in major, minor and installation work ones was carried out and, therefore, the types of remodellings themselves. This proved to be the greater time and effort commitment. It was due to the complexity of identifying, grouping and classifying the types of remodelling to relate them, subsequently, with the different types of licenses that

we proposed in this research paper. The classification of remodellings was articulated from three large blocks where all contents on the remodelling in tourist destination buildings coalesce. These are made from two sides: from the point of view of the remodelling nature-contents; and from the conception of its location (rooms, common spaces, open spaces, etc.). Also, different groups were created within the major structural axes of urban licenses to develop each of them sectorally but interrelated according to the analysis used in this work. From the entire process, systematization, explanation and development of types of urban licenses, a classification of structural and integrated remodelling as a summary table could be established. This has enabled us to access information for the contents of the remodellings occurred in tourist establishments in Puerto de la Cruz referring to the types of remodelling divided by location and its main features.

Sample design and processing; in terms of the study population, all tourist facilities available in Puerto de la Cruz throughout its history were taken as reference. From a statistical point of view, we could gather information from 90 establishments, although afterwards, through the revision adopted by the of Renewal of tourism infrastructure of Puerto de la Cruz plan, 12 Tourist accommodations were found to be closed or were detected as with «no recognized use», 9 were fully intended for residential use but listed as officially «touristic» and 10 were keeping degrees of mixed use (residential and tourism). For this reason, the most comprehensive analysis was performed at 75 tourist facilities which fully retained their touristic nature. The collection of information was done through visits to tourist establishments during a period of three months in 2008. The information collected was reviewed and updated during the months of May and August 2011, through personal visits, phone calls consultations to the tourist Police report on the supply of accommodation of the city, the list of hotels and apartments at the tourist Information Service of Puerto de la Cruz and through corporate webpages of the facilities themselves. Interviewing processes with the various people responsible for spreading this information were also undertaken. Once we obtained the information from the questionnaires on paper, we proceeded to its review in depth, in order to validate them. The coding of the questionnaires / establishments was made, taking into account the design and construction of our own database in Excel, where the information was transcribed from paper to digital format. After recording the data, they were exported to the database that had been built in the GIS, where we finally made the information processing. This database was established within the framework of the Project I + D + i ReinvenTUR, because this work is one of the research results expected from this project, where, apart from collecting a great amount of information in the supply of tourist accommodation at the Canary Islands, it had deepened in a special way on information from Puerto de la Cruz.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This investigation has shown that the process of renewal of tourism in Puerto de la Cruz has followed an unlike dynamic of a tourist destination with an old hotel offer and with a high degree of obsolescence. This deficit has attempted to cover the lack of a coordinated strategy for planning and management of a tourist destination in a state

of decay. This scenario starts from certain premises that are necessary to understand the paradoxical carácter of what has been previously exposed and which are summarized in the following points.

First, 649 remodelling licenses of tourist accommodations have been recorded during the investigation period (53 years), (considering all facilities) which equates to an average of 12 licenses per year. This shows the poor process of tourism renewal, especially if we consider that the average has been 9 performances per accommodation and many of these buildings have ceased their tourist activity (via closing and reconvertig into residential). So, in response to one of the hypotheses raised in the document, this data reveals the clear deficit in the number of remodellings necessary to develop a process of «real» renewal.

Second, according to Butler's Theory of tourist destinations' life cycle, there is a consistent relationship between the development of the stagnation phase, begun in the 80s, and progressive loss of the number of remodellings occurred in the hotel infrastructure. The evolution of the process of building renewal is «unnatural», fitting perfectly with the different phases proposed by Butler.

Thirdly, the remodellings that have taken place in the hotels mainly correspond to minor works of maintenance and conservation, accounting for 80% of all remodellings. It is, therefore, a process of building renewal mainly marked by a process of «three Ps» (painting, paving and patching), with minor replacement works and tourism buildings' decoration and, therefore, far from remodelling works that could increase the quality degree of the hotels themselves.

Finally, the destination's situation of obsolescence and that of many accommodation establishments is the result of a series of conditions or factors, which have not enabled the renewal of the range of accommodation (legislative effect, residential nature, economic crisis, deficit in tourism governance, lack of incentives, competitiveness loss, little hotel profitability, etc.) Thus, according to the principles and objectives in tourism public policy in the Canary Islands, the renewal of tourism in this destination has not had the expected success. Despite what has been above mentioned, the establishment and management of the Consortium for Tourism Rehabilitation of Puerto de la Cruz should be viewed positively, since it seems to have generated a turnaround and overtones of hope for this sector with the signing of various agreements with the hotel business community; a total of 39 rehabilitation projects, 2 new construction projects, a new establishment of rural type and 11 projects with the possibility of joining the Modernization and Improvement of tourism competitiveness Plan (pending). However, time and future work to complement and deepen regarding building renewal will determine the success or failure of it, and therefore, the renewal of the tourist destination.

