

The major sources of economic income many areas of the world tourism essay

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Mallorca is the largest of the Balearic Island, at a size of 3, 667 square Kilometres and is located off the South-east coast of Spain. The islands coastline stretches for 550 km, and has a climate of hot summers and mild winters with average temperatures reaching 21 Celsius. Mallorcas current population is just over 790, 000, and the official language is either Catalan or Spanish, although due to the increasing number of tourists many young Mallorcans can speak some English and German. Tourism in Mallorca began to grow rapidly in the 1950s, with 98, 000 tourists visiting the island. By 1995 almost three million tourists had visited, and by 2001 more than 19, 200, 000 people had visited the island by air, with another 1. 5 million visiting by sea. The main attractions to Mallorca for tourists are sandy beaches, the weather, tourist infrastructure and for some, the many clubs located on the island. In total there are three million beds available on the island, which is more than enough for three times the local population. Since this huge rise in the number of tourists, tourism has become the main form of income for Mallorcans and tourism accounts for 85% of the islands income (Jackson et al 1999). The summer months is the peak season for tourists visiting the island, while during the spring, winter and autumn it is cooler and cheaper. Normally the winter caters for those with second homes on the island, and also elderly holidays.

The consequences of mass, concentrated tourism in Mallorca has however led to many problems on the island. Tourists have a very negative impact on Mallorcas environment. On a field course to Mallorca in 2007, it discovered that at peak times of the year, 25 tons of sand is carried from Es Trenc beach by tourists in their towels, toes and shoes. Tourists also cause water

shortages across through swimming pools, hotels and golf courses. Tourists also tend to shower a lot more often than the host population. This is very damaging for Mallorca as water then has to be shipped in from main land which can be very costly. Mallorca also has a lot of air pollution. Amazingly Mallorcans own the most number of cars per head in Europe. In Calvi  alone there are eight hundred cars per thousand of the population. According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), seventy million cars pass through Calvi  each year. Fifty million of these are driven by tourists. Also of course there is the amount of litter that tourists leave behind which has a major impact on the environment and wild life.

However, the cost to Mallorcas environment has been blinded, at least until recently, by the great economic prosperity that tourism has brought to the island. Mallorcas economy is heavily reliant on tourism (85% of income). Tourism is an integrated and fragmented product, meaning that money from tourists goes directly to hotels, restaurants and shops. This expenditure coming from tourists can also have indirect benefits with improvements to infrastructure and community services (Mathieson et al 1992). This has been proved in Mallorca because Mallorcans enjoy some of the highest living standards in Spain. Tourism in Mallorca is also the main employer, and Mallorcas employment levels are very low because of the tourism industry and also the current housing and construction boom, to cater for more tourists. However, Mallorca has become far too reliant on tourism as its main source of income. Should the tourism industry for what ever reason collapse in Mallorca, then the economy could potentially be devastated. With the

current financial crisis, tourism has already fallen by 15% (Unger SalÃ“n 2009). Also with high seasonal variation, should a tourist business not be successful during the peak season (summer), then it will be very hard to survive financially through the winter months. The tourism boom in Mallorca has also led to a 30% increase in the price of land, partially due to homes being built with black money. This has forced many young Mallorcans to leave the island in search of affordable land to live on. This potentially has effects for the future of Mallorca as young people are seen as being initiative and are being forced off the island.

As you can see, past and even some present tourism practices are not sustainable in Mallorca. However, since the end of the 1980s to present the regional and national government policies have worked hard to try and make tourism in Mallorca more sustainable.

The WTO defines sustainable tourism as œmeeting the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future” (1992). Perhaps a definition of sustainable tourism more relevant to Mallorca would be œTourism should be sustained without having an effect on other activities within the area. It should not hog or displace the current economy but should complement and bolster it. It should help diversify the economy rather than replacing certain aspects of it”. Can Mallorca actually achieve sustainable tourism? Since the mid 1980s, and even more so during the 1990s, government policies have been trying to make tourism in Mallorca sustainable.

During the 1970s tourism in Mallorca was seen as a job creator, and the effects on the environment were ignored. The government first began to notice the problems associated with tourism during the recession in 1974. Visitor numbers were at their lowest levels since the Franco regime, and it began to show on the island (The Mallorca Tourist Board 2006). In 1983 the Balearics were given full autonomy to establish its own tourism policy, independent from Central Government in Spain. This was a major step on the road to sustainability as local government could be far more effective in distributing sustainable policies as they know what the most problematic areas are. Following autonomous government decrees came a series of policies to make Mallorca a more sustainable tourist destination. Work by Estaban Bardolet suggests that Mallorcas aims were to œprotect the environment, limit growth, improve quality of services, infrastructure and product. These aims will be useful in order to find out how effective Mallorca has been about becoming more sustainable. To find out just how effective sustainable policy in Mallorca has been, the essay will be split into sub sections, firstly looking at ~environmental protection, then ~limiting growth and finally ~improving the quality of product.

Environmental Protection

The first law on protecting the environment came in 1984 with ~protecting natural areas of special interest, which limited tourism development and protected natural resources, and was followed by a law on œterritorial planning in 1987. The 1987 law was very important, as it was the first law put into place that regulated the construction of hotels and other buildings,

which in the past had been allowed to be built almost anywhere (Middleton et al 2001). Before this law was put into place, many new constructions were built on the beach front, which severely damaged the ecology of the sand dunes.

In 1988, a wetland area of approximately 2, 580 ha with a perimeter of 32 km was been created at SAlbufera. It was created in to help preserve Mallorcas natural environment and animal habitats. Since then the area has been declared a ZEPA, Bird Special Protection Zone, a Biosphere and a Ramsar site. Tourists are attracted to the area to see the rare bird species, which is ironic because the area was created to stop the mass tourist development and conserve the environment in the area. This was one of the very first environmental policies introduced by local government in the Balearics, and was followed up in 1991 with the law on 'Natural Areas' which put 33% of territory in the Balearic Islands under protection. This law proved very significant as it prevented any construction on these areas of land, and therefore preventing further damage to the natural environment.

In 1997 the government expanded its 1987 policy on territorial planning to focus on more long term planning for all activities and to encourage higher quality tourism without depleting natural resources this came through work with Local Agenda 21, which will be discussed later using CalviÀ as an example. Also a 'Law of Rural Land' was passed which put a cap on the amount of tourist villas and second homes which were allowed to be developed in rural areas. However, there was no evidence to suggest that this law lessened construction of tourist homes in rural areas and there has

also been an increase in the refurbishment of old farm houses, which has further weakened the presence of agriculture in rural areas of Mallorca.

In 2002, the Government of the Balearic Islands launched a tourist eco tax to help counteract the environmental problems caused by tourists. The tax amounted to an extra €1 per day, per adult (over 16) and would be collected by registered tourist accommodation (Middleton et al 2001). However the tax was abandoned in 2003 following a change in government. During its brief time the tax helped raise €25 million, which was used to help clean up Mallorcas environment (geographypages. co. uk). However the abolishment of the tax did show that the government were not fully committed to helping improve Mallorcas environment.

Limiting Growth

One of Mallorcas main problems as a tourist destination was its over crowdedness and frequently exceeding the carrying capacity. One of the first government policies to limit growth came in 1984 with ~Decree Cladera I. This policy demanded that 30m² of land for individual tourist beds and that some of the land was to be used for leisure. (Batle et al 1999). Then in 1987 the ~Decree Cladera II expanded the required land to 60m² and introduced a new minimum quality hotel standard. These policies were very successful as they limited the growth of cheap, poor quality hotels on the island. However, it can also be argued that this would simply cause a greater number of tourists to the island, because by the 1990s, people had more disposable

incomes, and no longer had to look for cheap, poor quality accommodation whilst on holiday as they could now afford much better.

In 1997 the *œD* plan was introduced which highlighted the need to promote off peak tourism to the island. The Mallorcan government worked hard to advertise and promote off peak visits to the island to try and relieve some of the pressure during the summer months. The plan has been reasonably effective with more people, especially the elderly visiting the island during the winter months. However there is still far too much pressure on the islands resources during the summer to say this plan has been effective.

In 1999 the Balearics Government introduced a new Tourism Law which brought together previous legislative acts. The new law stopped bed capacity for all of the Balearic Islands (Middleton et al 2001). This is very important because by decreasing, or stopping increases in the amount of tourist beds, you effectively reduce tourism growth on the island. The new law also set about limiting further development in urban areas, except for all ready approved sites. The most important act to come from this new law was to make any construction closer than 500 meters of the sea shore forbidden (in 1988 the Spanish Government had previously set it at 100 meters) (Middleton et al 2001). This again was very important as the construction of hotels and other tourist buildings along the seashore had on the past been destroying the coast line. On a fieldtrip to Mallorca in 2007 an examination of how construction had affected the ecology of sand dunes at Es Trenc took

place. The sand dunes examined were very unhealthy, due to the fact that a hotel had been built on it at

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Improving quality of product

At the end of the 1980s began the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. In 1988 the External Support Agencies (ESAs) Collaborative Council was established to help co-ordinate water sanitation. Following the establishment of this council the 'Global Sanitation Plan' was introduced in 1989 and was to be completed by 1997 at a cost of US\$200 million (Bardolet). As a result new water sewage systems were built in Mallorca which helped keep the sea clean. The plan was very successful in keeping beaches clean as by the end of the 20th Century, fifty beaches in the Balearics had been awarded 'Blue Flag' status. However the plan was not completely successful as there is a worry that the water table may have been contaminated by water that has not been recycled properly.

In 1990 a plan to 'embellish' tourist resorts was introduced. Over US\$100 million was invested in coastal areas to make walkways, lighting and green spaces along the seaside. The plan was very successful as it made coastal areas aesthetically very attractive to tourists. However, many local people living in the sea side areas dislike it as it has made seaside areas very urbanised.

In 1994 the Balearic Government introduced the Hotel Accommodation Modernisation plan. The plan stated that hotels built before 1984 were to be

inspected and then renovated. The government set a deadline of completion of renovation by 1997. Any hotels which did not comply would be shut down, however by 1997 30% of hotels had not yet been finished so the deadline was extended to 1999 (Bardolet). The renovation work cost just under US\$800 million. However this plan greatly improved Mallorcas tourist accommodation, as combined with other acts, the emphasis on accommodation was now on quality rather than quantity. In 1996 the ~Law on Modernisation of the Complementary Tourism Supply was introduced to run along side the previous plan of 1994 however this law was aimed at the catering sector. Again this improved the quality of product as it improved the standards of the catering industry, and there for improving the quality of experience for tourists.

Case study Calvi

CalviÀ has grown as a tourism resort since the 1960s and is now the second largest urban area in Mallorca after Palma. CalviÀ s economy is highly reliant on tourism, with 95% of jobs being tourist-related. Average family incomes are 130% the national average, and 105% the European average (United Nations publication 2003). However, years of mass growth has led to environmental damage, aging leisure facilities and poor quality services for tourists (AquilÀ³ 2005). CalviÀ was becoming overcrowded with its population 3, 000 to 40, 000 inhabitants over a short period of time (CalviÀ Local Agenda 21). The first consequences of this were seen between 1988 and 1990 when tourism fell by 20%, CalviÀ was losing its competitiveness as a tourist resort.

CalviÀ had become unsustainable because damage caused to its natural environment, especially along coastal areas. The area suffered water shortages, air pollution and had problems with extensive amounts of rubbish. It also had very poor transportation links and lacked diverse employment opportunities as most of the population was employed in the tourism industry. However, biggest problem was tat CalviÀ had greatly exceeded its carrying capacity, and could no longer cope with the number of tourists visiting the area in the high season.

To reinstate CalviÀ as a major tourist destination in Mallorca, local councillors along with the Spanish Ministry for Tourism developed œThe CalviÀ Plan for Tourists Excellence at the start of the early 1990s (CalviÀ Local Agenda 21; Bustamante 1999). The plan had three main points, clear buildings along coastal areas, promote off-peak tourist practices and to train the population in employment in the tourism industry. However the plan did have its limitations. It is argues that it did not look at the long term development of the area, and merely wanted to deal with trying to once again boost tourist areas. It was also not properly co-ordinated in terms of economic, social and environmental interaction.

The failure of œCalviÀ Plan for Tourists Excellence led to the adoption of CalviÀ Local Agenda 21, one of the main sustainable policy instruments to come from Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (AguilÀ³ 2005). A strategy was put forward in 1996. The main aim of this policy was long term tourism . and local sustainable development with protecting and enhancing the environment being the main objective (Molz 2004). Ten action plans were devised, and

forty initiatives were put into action. This approach meant a new integrated approach to tourism between local council, national council and Non Government Organisations NGOs working together to make CalviÀ a more sustainable destination. It also allowed for resident participation, one of the key features of sustainable development (Bell et al 1999).

The sustainable action plan through ~CalviÀ Local Agenda 21 has been very successful in making CalviÀ a more sustainable tourist resort and in attracting tourists back to the area. In 2000 1. 6 million people visited CalviÀ , from which 86% came from abroad (CalviÀ Local Agenda 21).

Conclusion

In the Twenty First Century, Mallorca has developed itself into a high quality tourist resort, partly due to the efforts and policies put into place by the governments of the late 1980s and 1990s. In 2004, there were 180 hotels and agroturismos (transformed traditional Mallorcan fincas) had been built inland (Cox 2005). At first this may seem like a bad thing, as tourist developments are taking up even more land. However, this type of tourism accommodation is marketed to the eco-friendly tourist, who cares about their own impact on the tourist destination. This type of tourism is also of a very high quality, and also limits growth and overcrowding as the carrying capacity of these resorts is low. However, being so far inland the tourist is more likely to use a car to get to other areas because they are not in walking distance. This type of tourism is much more sustainable than the traditional

sun, sea and sand holidays that had previously been associated with Mallorca.

Mallorca has now emerged as a high quality tourist destination, challenging the traditional views of a bargain holiday destination. Mallorca now boasts five-star resorts, luxury hotels and very high quality restaurants. The service industry has also gained from higher class tourism, especially catering. In 2006 Mallorca had six Michelin- starred restaurants (businessweek. com 2006).

However, Mallorca still suffers from the stereotypical idea that the island is a cheap holiday destination offering beaches and cheap drink. Some government policies such as the eco-tax have failed, while others have not done enough to tackle problems such as the environmental damage caused by years of irresponsible tourist development plans. Some policies and work from groups in the 1990s have helped Mallorca become aware that tourist practices can not continue. However, there is still much work to be done in order to make Mallorca a fully sustainable holiday destination.