

Nightlife entertainment management: Social sustainability and conflict in tourist destinations

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Abstract | Changes in the way of life of societies have led to an intense growth of nightlife tourism around the world, mainly in cities and coastal areas, and expectations are for continued growth in the future. Malpractice in this sector and excesses in the holiday behaviour of groups of tourists, often related to alcohol, have led to the emergence of so-called booze tourism. This phenomenon has a negative impact not only on tourism but also on the safety and daily life of residents. This paper explores governance measures for the efficient management of nightlife, mainly in the face of the problems generated by booze tourism. For this purpose, we evaluate the risk environments and solutions adopted in three locations in Spain, one of the world leaders in the nightlife sector. The analysis includes observations from residents, authorities and citizen protection entities, informal discussions and collection of secondary data. A series of recommendations drawn from empirical experience can be summarised in four key concepts: unity, collaboration, legislation and quality.

Keywords | Clubbing travellers, booze tourism, nightlife tourism, alcotourism, governance

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1. Introduction

Few tourists choose a destination just by the name itself or by a single factor. The traveller tends to look for experiences, moments to share and later to remember for the feelings they awaken, nightlife being one of the most experiential types of tourism (Matutes, 2017). The experiences come from a complex set of situational factors that occur in the nightlife environment, including music, lighting, decoration, crowding, temperature, alcohol consumption and other substances. The nightlife environment releases an emotional energy in which individuals perceive they can transgress the confines of their ordinary lives and become more savage and adventurous (Tutenges, 2012).

Nightlife is a type of tourism that has experienced significant growth in many urban and non-urban destinations (Sönmez et al, 2013). Cities grow in size and make greater use of night-time (Seijas, 2017). The nightlife has been promoted in an attempt to reconcile the interests of companies in the sector and the resident community. This is a regulated and town-planned sector and respectful of the residents' right to rest. Only some of the operators of this industry carry out practices bordering on legality or clearly outside the legal context, the excesses of which can cause, for example, the appearance of booze tourism, which has a negative impact not only on the tourism of destinations, mainly urban and coastal, but also on the safety and daily life of residents.

The proliferation of tour operators offering reduced-price package tours, including alcohol, to young adults -mostly aged 18-35- has led to sector excesses and insecurity in local communities (Hughes et al, 2008). These operators program and promote these package tours, transport tourists from their countries of origin, mainly Great Britain and Germany, to trendy destinations in Mediterranean countries in getaways of three to ten days. Tourists tend to behave differently than they do in their countries, removing personal bounda-

ries in what has been called behavioural investment (Calafat et al, 2010).

In areas with strong seasonality or low occupancy levels, there may be an over tolerance between part of the local sector, since with the entry of these external operators a business arises that would hardly exist in the low season. Flats are rented; the transport sector moves, bars and rooms are occupied. The common expression of many of the small business entrepreneurs in this sector is, "it's not the best thing, but at least we have something". Thus booze tourism emerges beyond the reach of those responsible for the governance of a tourist destination who are, moreover, lacking the means and capacity to control this type of tourism and the negative image in the media.

Few studies have addressed the problems of security and disturbance of public order in tourist destinations, and the disruption of the peace and daily life of the host community. The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, to explore the problems of insecurity, social coexistence and bad image in tourist destinations caused by the excess – or lack of control – of booze tourism and, secondly, to analyse the strategies and governance measures that guide public bodies towards proper nightlife management. The application of knowledge on crisis management in tourism can help address these problems and improve the resilience and social sustainability of the destination. Using a case-study approach allowed for the analysis of best practices in three locations affected by this problem. The results of the analysis provide the key measures that have been taken to overcome these adversities.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Governance of the tourism crisis

Most crisis management models in tourism consist of three basic phases: prevention-

preparedness, response-implementation and resolution-recovery (Ritchie, 2004; Faulkner, 2001). Depending on whether the emphasis is on the preparation phase or the recovery phase, strategies can be classified as pro-active or reactive. Preparedness for a potential crisis is key to the recovery strategy (Pforr & Hosie, 2010; Chien & Law, 2003; Henderson, 2003). A proactive approach strengthens positive aspects, including cooperation between the parties involved, and reduces uncertainty (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018). Based on the knowledge provided by the strategic models, different studies present the main stages for the development of a crisis management policy in tourism (De Sausmarez, 2004; Rodríguez-Toubes, & Fraiz, 2012). These models can serve as a guide and clarify governance policies in crisis management caused by events with different profiles. They emphasize the proactive approach and prevention elements as key aspects of crisis management.

The impact of disasters on the tourism market is greater than usual due to the characteristics of the product or service being offered and the negative effect of media exaggeration (Faulkner, 2001). The media can complicate the recovery of the tourism sector, since initially there is an intense coverage of negative news and then is prolonged in time with opinion articles (Milo & Yoder, 1991). According to Pike (2004, p. 169) "effective media relations is the most important aspect of a destination recovery response".

Organisations promoting tourism at the destination (generally known as Destination Management Organizations, DMOs) have the knowledge of the sector and the necessary involvement to lead crisis prevention and planning strategies and the process of communication with the main stakeholders, public and private, in order to achieve a rapid recovery of the destination (Henderson, 2002; Hystad & Keller, 2006). According to Blackman and Ritchie (2008) "the key role of DMOs in a crisis or disaster is related to two key activities: crisis communication with key stakeholders or publics and

the development and implementation of crisis recovery marketing strategies" (p. 46). For all these reasons, DMOs, because of their knowledge and resources, play a key role in restoring credibility (Carlsen & Liburd, 2010; Frisby, 2002).

2.2. Insecurity and risk in nightlife

Pub crawls is a type of ritual that basically consists of a group of people consuming alcohol while visiting a number of places to drink throughout the night (Tutenges, 2015). Studies on the phenomenon of pub crawling in its relation to tourism have grown in recent years, addressing ethnographic and conceptual aspects (Tutenges, 2015; Tutenges 2012; Briggs & Turner, 2011; Andrews, 2005), alcohol and drug consumption (Bellis et al, 2009; Lomba, Apostolo, & Mendes, 2009; Hesse et al, 2008; Sonmez et al, 2006; Bellis et al, 2003; Elliott et al, 1998) and risk-taking attitudes of (and for) participants (Tutenges, 2009; Hughes et al, 2008; Apostolopoulos, Sonmez, & Yu, 2002; Zinkiewicz, Davey, & Curd, 1999; Ryan et al, 1996). The practice of traveling to drink, the so-called booze tourism or alcotourism (Bell, 2008) that leads to insecurity, quarrels, noise, filth and bad image, has aroused the interest of researchers, both in studies on tourism and in studies on alcohol consumption.

Security is currently the main concern for the nightlife sector (Canalis, 2015). The perception of nightlife as something insecure is due to the fact that night is perceived as a negative space where crime and conflict are exacerbated (Seijas, 2017). According to Seijas (2017), "there are few long-term strategic plans for managing and maximising the benefits of the night time economy" and this is because "cities and places are planned for the daytime, but licensed and restricted at night. This creates a proactive, strategic approach to managing daytime uses (such as schools, retail parks, shopping malls, office buildings), but a re-

active process for managing the night” (p. 10). It is necessary to develop a community-based urban planning that guarantees the liveability of the city and the peaceful coexistence between the different social groups (Nofre et al, 2018).

The main players in the night-time economy, including nightlife, are those who enjoy the night, those who work it and those who manage it (Seijas, 2017). Sönmez et al (2013) carry out a taxonomy of the stakeholders involved in this network of populations. Among the primary risk suppliers, they include tour operators and travel agencies, their onsite representatives (holiday reps), and the owners of Dance and Drinking (D&D) venues. Risk intermediaries include owners and managers of accommodation, staff working at local clubs and bars, organisers of party events, and webmasters of the websites dedicated to clubbing. Primary risk consumers include tourists, the tourism sector that works closely with risk providers for the extra income they earn in the low season, as well as the resident community that lives and works in the destination. Finally, peripheral players include members of the security and civil protection forces, local government personnel such as bus drivers, first-aid personnel, hospitals and emergency services, taxi drivers, staff working in the local tourism and hospital sector, and food and beverage venue staff.

Hughes et al. (2011) note that “cheap international travel and open borders within Europe have been commercially exploited to create nightlife resorts where risks to health, such as injury and violence, frequently result from highly intoxicogenic environments” (p. 88) and according to Bellis et al. (2009), “international nightlife resorts are major sources of recruitment, relapse and escalation in drug use”. Coastal and urban destinations with numerous hotel beds and high-medium seasonality can be victims of this type of tourism. It has been the case of the Portuguese Algarve, a consolidated destination, oriented mainly to a calm tourism of sun, beach and golf, that in June 2017 suffered

riots in the streets of Albufeira caused by young British arrived in a week jam-packed called “Portugal Invasion” organized by independent agencies based in London. The invasion of drunk tourists left Albufeira worried about its image (DN, 2017).

3. Measures and actions taken

Some destinations living with the booze tourism have started to take action. It is necessary to reflect on the model of tourism that is pursued and bet on it, be it family tourism, senior tourism, cultural, gastronomic or event tourism. The solutions will be different depending on the model chosen. Some elements complicate management: (1) the need for skilful coordination, as the stakeholders involved are numerous and varied; (2) legal loopholes, for example in relation to the sale of alcohol, to which local authorities do not have the capacity to respond swiftly and quickly adopt orders or decrees; (3) significant press coverage and negative attention in recent years (Andriotis, 2010), which may delay the recovery of the destination’s credibility, diverting tourist arrivals to other peaceful destinations.

Depending on the type of crisis, the impact can be different, both in the image and in perception of the tourist and in the economic results of the businesses. The reaction of tourists differs according to the risk factor. In the case of terrorism, the police presence can increase the sense of alertness and be detrimental to the image of destination. However, in the case of booze tourism, the police presence enhances the perception of positive conditions (security) and the gradual decrease of negative conditions (delinquency in the street, impunity, noise, fraud, dirt) (Moreira, 2008).

Sönmez et al (2013) provide a list of specific recommendations for both countries of origin and destination of travellers and for governments, as well as for the tourism sector, in order to minimise

risk and increase travellers' awareness of threats. In particular, one of the main measures to achieve a safe and healthy nightlife is control of the sale and availability of alcoholic beverages. Some specific measures can help the responsible consumption of alcohol: ban alcohol consumption in the street, set a minimum sale price for alcohol that reduces promotions (happy hour), training of barmen and distributors, e. g. prohibition of sales to minors or how to treat drunken customers, and awareness campaigns for visitors to alert them to the existing sanctions in the country (Calafat et al, 2010). In this regard, since 2012, the International Nightlife Association, with the support of local associations and administrations, has been promoting a multi-locality campaign with the slogan "Maximum Fun, Minimum Disturbance!".

One figure that has helped to reconcile nightlife with the rest of the local community is the figure of the Night Mayor or Night Czar. He or she is a mediator between the resident community and the owners of nightlife venues. The municipalities usually finance them, although the private sector is also often involved. He or she acts as a Justice of the Peace, has not sanctioning capacity and tries to reconcile the development of the activity of nightlife venues with respect for the rest of citizens. In cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin and London, it has also proved to be a very useful tool for working on the leisure of cities from a creative and artistic point of view (Travé & Díaz, 2019).

4. Methodology

Our approach follows the case-study methodology. This is well suited to our topic since, due to the scarcity of empirical studies on the topic, any valid data collection on the topic is currently a valuable contribution. Based upon study, observation, and the compilation of data, a number of hypotheses can be put forward, transforming

claims into statements through logical inference, and eventually gaining a full-fledged theoretic framework. In our case, by focusing the analysis on specific tourist destinations that suffered negative impacts on their image by the so-called booze tourism, and evaluating how they have dealt with them, it is possible to replicate the results obtained to formulate a set of initial proposals. To this first approximation, more cases may be added in later studies until the theory reaches a saturation stage (Eisenhardt, 1989). In this way, the relevance of the case does not need to rely on any statistical attributes, but on logical features and relations. The features of a given case under study are extended to others through the theory's explanatory power (Mitchell, 1983). Therefore, it provides a way for new theories to emerge and develop.

4.1 Case studies in Spain

Spain is one of the world leaders in the nightlife sector. This sector employs 250,000 people directly and indirectly and represents close to 3% of Spanish GDP (Travé and Díaz, 2019). Nearly 23% of tourists choose Spain for nightlife (Hosteltur, 2018), which is one of the main motivations of tourists visiting Spain, after the "sun and beach". Spain's experience in this field can serve as a reference for other countries seeking to create a complementary offer to their traditional resources.

However, considering the spontaneous mentions in the social networks of tourists travelling to Spain, the data reflect a different interest in the different types of tourism. We note that "sun and beach" and nightlife are losing interest among foreign visitors, while there is a greater inclination for natural and active tourism. Thus, the most mentioned tourist products in 2018 are cultural tourism (28% of tourist mentions), sun and beach (19%), natural tourism (12%), active (10%), gastronomic (9%) and nightlife (7%) (Mabrian, 2018).

In order to address the main challenges that concern the sector, such as security, noise and boozing tourism, since 2017 the first three congresses focusing exclusively on nightlife have been organised in Spain. These are the first and second Nightlife National Conference (Congreso Nacional de Ocio Nocturno, CNON), held respectively in Seville, May 2017, and Valencia, April 2018, and the first Nightlife Conference "Spain Nightlife" in Tenerife, March 2019. The main conclusions of these conferences, which brought together the main actors of the sector, were to give visibility to the nightlife sector, to integrate the different actors in a common objective, and to promote the capacity for self-regulation and collaboration with the authority. There is a strong interest in the sector to give normality to the activity and clean the image of the night-time businessperson, showing its importance as a generator of wealth and employment.

The image of an activity on the verge of legality or under suspicion damages the sector, so it is necessary to give visibility to the sector and stop criminalizing it. It is also necessary to achieve the unity of the sector, sharing problems and opportunities among the various stakeholders involved: owners and managers of clubs, hotels and restaurants, public administration, police and service providers. Working together will help to pursue non-compliance with regulations and illegal behaviours that may lead, for example, to the removal of licences and certifications, to expel from unions and associations, or the prohibition of advertising proposals by tour operators who use alcohol as a means of attracting young people.

Despite the existence of a common pattern indicating the existence of problems in the nightlife scene of young people, the patterns substantially differ among the different territories studied (Calafat et al, 2010). The following section analyses three cases of Mediterranean tourist destinations that have used different measures to tackle the problem.

Ibiza

At the beginning of this century, the Balearic Islands faced the problem of drug consumption and the lure of Ibiza as a destination of initiation in drugs for many young people in Europe. A study carried out in the period 2007-2010 found that a significant percentage of tourists had their first experience with an illegal drug while in Ibiza (20% of the British, 15% of the Spanish and 5% of the Germans) (Calafat et al, 2010). A direct channel of communication was established between the nightlife sector personnel and law enforcement officials involved in the fight against drugs in order to reduce the magnitude of the problem (El Mundo, 2010).

Simultaneously, the economic crisis affected the sector, and the island's most important business owners shifted the centre of attention of the business to the customer of the adult experiential tourism. Nightlife can be the most experiential type of tourism, and differentiated nightlife entertainment is less affected by the crisis and customers have a higher average expenditure (Matutes, 2017). Ibiza's largest hotel group, the Palladium Hotel Group, has been the flagship of the model shift towards adult experiential tourism, promoting a high-quality type of nightlife recreational context. This corporation incorporates the concept of beach club, extending the schedule from 17:00 to 24:00, creating the concept of disco-hotel that has expanded the offer to customers with greater purchasing power, from 35 to 45 years. The service is aimed at the visitor-client to experience a high quality and luxury product, which involves a high level of expenditure, e.g. VIP tables, world-renowned DJs (Martin Garrix, Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike and David Guetta) and dress code for parties, whose result is a business with significant growth in recent years. Many people no longer travel to Ibiza because of gambling and alcohol, but for the whole environment surrounding the experience: theme parties, shows and DJs. As

Tutenges (2012) notes, “the ‘buzz’ and ‘high’ that many people experience in nightlife should therefore not be interpreted as a simple outcome of the substances that they ingest” (p. 133).

Ibiza currently leads the world in the quality of nightlife entertainment. According to the International Nightlife Association, valuing the attributes of quality of service and the show, sound, and safety of clubs and D&D venues, among the fifteen best clubs in the world six are in Ibiza, five in Las Vegas and the other four are in Dubai, Miami, London and Camoriu (Brazil) (International Nightlife Association, 2019). The hotel-club Hi Ibiza ranks first in the world. Ultimately, this model provides high security control, but concentrates business in a few hands.

Salou (Tarragona) and Lloret del Mar (Girona)

In the case of Salou, since 2000 the central issue has been the macro meeting called “Saloufest”, which every year brought together between 7,500-10,000 British young people for a week, before or after Easter. It was a much-consolidated festival, supported by the Association of Businesspersons of the tourist zone of Salou and the Catalan Federation of Associations of Restoration and Musicals Activities (La Vanguardia, 2016). These organisations justified their support because Saloufest provided work for companies and seven hotels during the low season, yielding five million euros to the destination. The organizers argued that Saloufest entailed the opening of hotels and apartments that otherwise would be closed, and the holiday program represented just five per thousand of the two million visitors to the place. A different vision was that of the local community, other hoteliers, the city council and the autonomous government who considered it simply as a booze tourism with all its drawbacks and with a strong negative impact on the image of the city (Hosteltur, 2016). The Salou City Council and the regional government entered into negotiations with the organising company, the British travel agency llovetour ow-

ned by the TUI group, and took unsuccessful legal action to remove the word Salou from the name of the event. Since 2014, a series of measures have been taken to make the implementation of Saloufest type programmes practically unfeasible, such as the compulsory licensing of activities for the youth tourism segment and the intensification of controls. In 2017 Saloufest stopped celebrating. The title of the news published in the Daily Mail leaves no room for doubt, “The party’s over for Saloufest! Spanish festival is cancelled after British students drive locals to despair with their annual ‘drunken’ antics” (Sobot & Fenwick, 2016).

The organizing company also failed to move the festival to Lloret de Mar (Girona) (Celma, 2016). In recent years this town has made efforts to diversify its offer, creating new products for family, sports and conventions tourism. Lloret del Mar defines itself as an urban sun and beach destination. Nightlife -with greater regulation- remains strategic but to this sector events tourism and sports tourism have been joined (Dulsat, 2016). Municipal ordinances to restore order in the street include increase the amount of penalties, establish the immediate fines collection to avoid impunity, hold companies directly liable for non-compliance, remove alcohol vending machines from the street, ban alcohol consumption as an advertising claim by tour operators, as well as tighten regulations on maximum capacity in clubs, bars and hotels.

5. Conclusion

Booze tourism is a risk for both visitors and residents. Businesses and individuals suffer its effects, it is a significant burden on local resources and, if appropriate actions are not taken, can damage the image of the destination in the medium term. Regarding the problem addressed in this study, a correct communication strategy, establishing contacts with the main stakeholders, has

the capacity to improve the social sustainability of the destination. Prevention measures and the proactive approach are key aspects of crisis management. Measures to prevent the problem must be designed and dealt with in a multi-lateral way. From the countries of origin, it necessarily involves positive socialization, information, and awareness raising for young people. The media and tour operators need to behave responsibly so as not to promote the image of the tourist destination as a place of lack of inhibition and control.

At the destination, the most effective strategy seems to be a combination of training, cooperation and control over compliance with laws (Calafat, Juan, & Duch, 2009). Four key elements appear on the scene:

(i) Public-private collaboration. The public administration must be agile and support the legal business with the backing of business organizations. It is noteworthy the key role that multi-stakeholder collaboration and co-ordination play in the development of prevention and response capacities in the destination. This implies the commitment of all the participants according to the responsibilities and competences assumed;

(ii) Unity within the sector. No matter how much effort is made by administrations in security matters or by business owners in improving the quality of their establishments, as long as some employers in the sector are reluctant to change, it will be very difficult to solve the problem of booze tourism. The joining together of the positions and interests among the night-time operators will help to pursue non-compliance with regulations and illegal behaviours.

(iii) Legislation. All actions must be supported by the law, so the law is a fundamental element. The development of legislation in Spain on the consumption of alcoholic beverages unfolds at the three levels, national,

regional and local, so it must be coherent, integrated, clear and applicable. In addition to the measures prohibiting the sale of alcohol to minors, already in force, other measures have proved effective, such as the exclusion of alcohol in all-inclusive package tours, the withdrawal of the sale of alcoholic beverages at petrol stations, the increase in penalties and the instantaneous collection of fines for the disorderly conduct;

(iv) Quality. This element includes the attributes that customers value most, both in terms of the products they consume and the services offered by the different segments of tourism. If a quality model is to be implemented for high income tourists, it is important that small businesses can also benefit from this market. From the residents' side, one of the relevant resolutions of tourism development in a destination is to improve the quality of life of the host community (Cornell, Tugade, & De Sagun, 2019). Overall, there can be no quality and excellence without security.

Public administrations, at different levels, have an important responsibility in the planning and development of destinations. Due to their experience in promotion and communication, as well as in the implementation of prevention strategies with the participation of the main public and private stakeholders, DMOs can play a key role in the social sustainability of the destination and in the recovery of credibility.

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