LIFE CYCLES, STAGES AND TOURISM HISTORY
The Catalonia (Spain) Experience

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Abstract: To date, most analysis on the historic development of tourism has been limited to observing its evolution through a single Life Cycle identified with the mass tourism stage. However, many of the major destinations have a much longer history and seem to have passed through different consecutive Life Cycles related to different stages. Research shows the value of the Tourism Area Life Cycle combined with Regulation theory when analyzing the long-term historical development of tourism. In this article, we present the case of Catalonia, one of the main tourist destinations in Europe. The article shows how the combination of these theories can be especially practical for constructing a global model that groups tourism development by phases with its paradigmatic changes. Keywords: tourism history, life cycle, Catalonia, Spain, mass tourism. © 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

This article’s initial goal was to carry out a re-envisioning of one of the most frequently used models to analyze tourism development, Butler’s (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (from now on TALC), from a multidisciplinary historical approach. For this purpose, we have chosen as a case study the longue durée of the history of one of the main tourist regions in Europe: Catalonia. Because of its strategic location, Catalonia has traditionally been a bridge between Europe and the Mediterranean and has historically developed an open character for itself based on all kinds of relationships: cultural, social and commercial. In the last few centuries, it has traditionally been considered the economic motor of Spain and has often been referred to as “Spain’s factory” by the most renowned historians of Spanish economics (Nadal, 1985) as a result of its significant industrial development. Nevertheless, over the last half of the 20th century and parallel to the general outsourcing process in Western economies, its structure

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was oriented towards the service sector and in this context tourism became one of the region’s main industries.

In fact, over the last few decades, Catalonia has become the first most important international tourist area in Spain and the fifth in Europe (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2005). According to the Catalan Statistics Office (Institut d’Estadística de Catalunya, 1984–2009), those sectors that are directly attached to tourism have more than 10% of the region’s Gross Domestic Product share and employ 16.7% of the active population, making it the most relevant cluster in the Catalan economy. Dynamism in Catalan tourism has been maintained during the last few years despite the changing situations of its main origin markets, growing both in arrivals and, most significantly, in their related incomes.

Nevertheless, the development process of tourism in Catalonia has scarcely been studied from a historical viewpoint. Moreover, although it has been clearly demonstrated that it was from the 50s when mass tourism emerged and the industry began to gain some importance in the regional economy, many elements indicate the existence of a prior long-term development. Our initial idea is that its origin can be established at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, and that it has passed through various great stages (or paradigms) and Life Cycles to achieve its current economic and socio-cultural significance. We must add that although pre-mass tourism may be of little interest in terms of its economic impact, it has a relevant role from a cultural, social and technological perspective, and it laid the groundwork for the success of mass tourism in the 20th century.

**Literature Review**

Beginning with the literature that studies the origins and development of tourism in Catalonia, we have seen that the main studies have generally dealt with a medium term analysis from an economic geography and applied economics perspective (Barbazà, 1966; Cals, 1989). On the other hand, the international state-of-the-art shows that the history of tourism is a relatively recent matter (Butler & Wall, 1985; Towner, 1988) and that the main research interests have focused on the cultural foundation of the historical evolution of tourism (Buzard, 1993; Inglis, 2000; Pemble, 1987). However, some other approaches have related the history of tourism to the development of new technologies for transport, the increase in consumption or the tourism industrialization process (Burkart & Medlik, 1981; Holloway, 1989; Smith, 2001). We must add that, in recent years, research on the history of tourism has experienced a significant advance and some new experiences are being studied (Walton, 2005).

However, there has been an absence of a long-term historical approach to regional historical development, especially in relation to the Mediterranean destinations, and this was the main aim of the reference material (Garay, 2007) that this article is based on. It was our opinion that this review should reveal the changes in production, organizational methods and technological innovations, as well as the
changes in the search for social differentiation based on tourism consumption or the creation of a tourism image connected to a territorial identity. In fact, we understood that any study about the development of this industry should deepen both the dimensions of time, space and territory. One of our main aims was to understand how the tourist attraction is supported over time.

Obviously there have been newer interpretations about the development of tourist destinations, but Richard Butler’s (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle has been studying these elements for nearly three decades, specifically to explain the development in a *fordist* context and also to analyze its evolution towards a *post-fordist* context. From a theoretical approach, we wanted to see if it could be applicable to a long-term historical study of a destination in a simple analysis or whether it needed to be combined with other points of view. In fact, Butler (2009) states that the TALC model works well with destinations established in earlier days, when the life span of a destination might have been a century or more. However, we think that further consideration is needed about the possibility of different consecutive TALCs and a better explanation about the restructuring processes that occurs between them.

In our understanding, one of the main values of TALC is that it integrates an economic and territorial interpretation of tourism. Thus, the theory model analyses the evolutionary phases of tourist area development from the changes in the growing number of tourists visiting the area (demand) and the consequent infra-structure expansion, basically those of accommodation (supply) and communication (transport). Special attention is given to public intervention in the development as well as the characterization of tourism, the local stakeholders and the relationship between the two. Butler adapted a set of theories previously used in many areas such as sociology and management and created a model that explains how tourist areas evolve (see Figure 1).

Although Butler’s model presents some phases and theory scenarios that are hardly ever found in a pure state in tourist area destinations, it allows us to theorize the different phases a tourist area might go through. The process begins with an “exploration” of the tourist area where a small group of tourists is interested by the place and attracted by its “exoticism”, its natural and cultural conditions, its purity and authenticity and by the lack of institutionalization of its tourism facilities. The contact between tourists and local inhabitants is usually kind and fluid, for the latter understands the arrival of tourists as a sporadic phenomenon that is sometimes surprising and anecdotal. A priori, the initial presence of outsiders does not represent any disturbance in the area’s natural rhythm. As a result, the physical and social surroundings are barely changed. In the second phase, called “involvement”, local initiatives develop tourist facilities and the promotion of the area makes the number of new tourists grow and increase in regularity. It is at this point that a tourist season emerges, as highlighted by Butler (1980).

The third phase, “development”, is distinguished by a progressive growth in the number of tourists, as they are attracted by an increase in the promotion of the area. Here, natural and cultural sites could
be substituted by new “artificial” ones. In the next phase, “consolidation”, the rate of tourists’ visits may begin to decrease, despite the fact that the absolute figures keep growing. It is during this phase that the number of tourists may exceed the number of inhabitants. This is also the point when the area can be considered to have a tourism-based economy. Therefore, the area may begin to fall into decline, and have an excessive level of artificiality, mass arrivals and a detachment between tourists and local inhabitants. The following phase, “stagnation”, is notable for record figures of tourist arrivals. The area reaches the highest number of incoming tourists and is no longer a fashionable destination. The tourist typology is now more conservative and part of the tourism infrastructure is now used by other types of businesses such as the second home phenomenon.

From this point on many scenarios are possible. Initially, if there is no re-orientation of tourism through the actions of private local stakeholders or public administrations, the destinations will enter a sixth phase called “decline”: the tourist area will be unable to compete with its rivals and a spatial and numeric recession of the industry will begin. Nevertheless, if private local stakeholders and public administrations carry out some re-orientation of the tourist area, its tourism may enter a different phase. This phase involves the re-orientation or re-invention of the tourist area, consequently the sixth phase would correspond to a rejuvenation that is committed to an almost complete change of the characteristics and attractions of the tourist area. There have been frequent bibliographical references to the model, since the article’s
publication (Butler, 1980), addressing the development aspects of different tourist areas and opening up new discussion themes. Among these are those which have debated the foundations of the theory and the operability of the model or, more recently, the transition between *fordist* and *post-fordist* stages, be it monographically or together with other kinds of analysis (for a good synthesis see the literature survey of Lagiewski, 2009).

**Study Methods**

After reading this literature, we conclude that TALC could serve as a good theoretical framework but needs to be combined with other approaches for two specific reasons. First, because its explanation about decline or re-orientation processes following a period of stagnation seems too simplistic and restrictive (following the ideas of Agarwal, 2002). Second, because our idea was that the evolution and decline of tourism, if we consider a long-term analysis, has not necessarily only been associated with the course of one large Life Cycle but has undergone several consecutive Life Cycles associated with great tourism stages or paradigms that are related directly to the major paradigms of capitalism. In the literature that has addressed the processes of capitalist restructuring we’ve found what we think is a good explanation of the re-orientation processes in tourism and the existence of different stages or paradigms in its evolution.

This is precisely the main issue highlighted by the so-called Regulation Theory. This was formulated by The Regulation School, which was specially developed in France by eminent authors such as Aglietta, Boyer, and Lipietz (Boyer, 1990) and has been discussed and reviewed in recent decades (Balleisen & Moss, 2010; Jessop, 2001). It seeks to understand how economic and social structures are transformed in the long run, adopting an institutionalist approach: economic phenomena and its transformations can only be understood from an interdisciplinary approach (and tourism seems to be a perfect example). According to Regulation theory, any accumulation regime (related to production and consumption systems) reaches a crisis point in which the former mode of regulation cannot be sustained, and society will be forced to find new rules and regulations, forming a new model of regulation (new legal, political and institutional systems and new forms of competence). Here, we don’t see merely an outward change, but an entire internal transformation. This makes a new accumulation regime possible, which in the future eventually develops into a crisis, and so on.

In fact, we considered this a useful way of overcoming the rigidity of re-orientation TALC premises and making it more flexible and practical. While in TALC, the way tourism in destinations has led to stagnation is quite simple and focuses on exceeding the carrying capacity for economic or environmental reasons and an unfashionable image related to the inability of the destination to defend its position against new more competitive destinations. In the Regulation theories, these
processes of decline, rejuvenation or reinvention explained by the whole tourism activity are more complex, adding relevant information that is particularly related to the adaptation (or not) of public and private organizational forms to the new scenario. In short, as occurs in the overall economy and in society, in the tourist industry, as part of the production and consumption system, these structural crisis periods involving a transformation of legal, political and institutional systems also occur. And, as in the general system, different authors (Costa & Martinotti, 2008; Urry, 1990) have analyzed the tourism restructuration processes from a similar perspective.

In relation to these suggestions, one of the principal hypotheses of our work is that tourism in Catalonia has experienced four important stages of development in the past two centuries (proto-tourism, pre-fordism, fordism and post-fordism). These stages are characterized by different tourism accumulation regimes (production and consumption of tourism activities) and tourism models of regulation (political, institutional and competence forms related to tourism) whose evolution and transformation are influenced by cultural, social, economic and technological elements. The location’s distinctiveness and the interaction between the different tourist actors (local and foreign) are also decisive in this evolution. As Butler (2009) points out, tourism is much more than an economic activity, and as such, is even more prone to influence by non-economic factors than many other consumer purchases. In turn, these tourism stages are closely related to the general accumulation regimes and models of regulation experienced by the entire Catalan economy and society (first and second industrialization, fordism and post-fordism). Finally, and perhaps one of the most important points, each of these tourism stages can be described through a differentiated Butler’s TALC.

From this premise, we have used a methodology focused on the detection of the changes in these elements (cultural, social, economic and technological), where the territorial element and the dialogue between actors play a prevailing role in the possible reorganization of the industry. Therefore, we have taken into account the principal elements that guide the dynamics of tourism in the destination and others like internal mobility and accessibility to the area or the dialectics between tourism, society and environment. In this sense, we have used a wide range of sources, both bibliographical and statistical. Beginning with the bibliographical sources, we have worked with primary and secondary sources that have also allowed us to discover the original destination descriptions made by the first tourists and observers, as well as a contemporary historical analysis (the one most cited throughout this article). The statistical sources on tourism and passenger movement, like the official Spanish Statistics Institute, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) (1965–1970, 1971–1975, 1976–1998, 1999–2009) and the official Catalan Statistics Institute, Institut d’Estadística de Catalunya (1984–2006) have been particularly useful for analyzing the performance of the phases described in TALC in the mass period, highlighting the demand records (passengers and overnight stays in hotels).
Although, in the original study (Garay, 2007) we presented time-series for different types of tourist accommodation (hotels, campsites, rural tourism) (INE, 1954–2006), we should clarify that in this case we have chosen to be synthetic and to present only hotel demand data. In any case, these have been quite significant because throughout the period hotel data represent around 80% of total demand registered in the destination, and its use is perfectly justified in relation to Butler’s TALC premises. We must clarify that in the case of Spain there is no tourism demand data (national or regional) until 1966, when the time-series we have worked in begins (the INE one). It is also necessary to mention the existence of different sample changes in the historical series, which had to be treated using different econometric procedures, both in supply and demand data (Garay, 2007).

FROM DISCOVERY TO PROFESSIONALIZATION

In analyzing the origins of tourism in Catalonia, in other words, what is understood to be the beginning of what we have called the *proto-tourism* stage, we may say that although Catalonia, and the rest of Spain, was not included in the initial routes of the phenomenon that was a precursor of tourism in other countries, the *Grand Tour*, it was still the destination of many enlightened scientists, both Spanish (Lavaur, 1985) and foreign (Guerrero, 1990), by the end of the 18th century (Antonio Ponz, Francisco de Zamora, Joseph Marshall, Philip Thickness, Henry Swinburne, Joseph Townsed and Arthur Young, among others). These first tourists, who were real explorers in the terms expressed by Butler, initially traveled to Catalonia with scientific (economic or social studies) or political (diplomacy) aims and recorded their first impressions of the country, especially in terms of its economic changes and administrative peculiarities. Nevertheless, for our analysis, the most important thing about these first visits lies in the social, cultural and economic descriptions made of the region, which produced, for the first time, a subjective evaluation of the landscape and heritage. In fact, they created the first picturesque image of Catalonia that romantics (Laborde, Mérimée, Stendhal and George Sand) explored at the beginning of 19th century (Sobrequés, 1999). Moreover, this picturesque image described some destinations that have largely survived into the 20th century and will be attractive to the future mass tourism development.

Following this initial exploration phase from enlightened and romantic perceptions, local stakeholders became involved for the first time. So, a new urban bourgeois class (that was a main player in the first emerging industrialization of Catalonia) slowly supplanted the previous aristocratic “exclusivist tourist” and became the main protagonist in the world of leisure and travel consumption throughout the next century and a half (in fact, until the beginning of the mass tourism stage). Nevertheless, this emerging bourgeoisie reproduced and mimicked the aristocratic tourism trend and ran its class relationship through leisure, as highlighted by Buzard (1993). In relation to this leisure consumption, the bourgeoisie were also the main investors in
many new activities. The spa phenomenon in Catalonia is the main example of this assertion. It began to receive attention towards the end of the 18th century thanks to the rediscovery of the virtues of hot springs by the aristocracy and especially by the success of the scientific hygienists’ theses. These theses triumphed in Europe in the early 19th century and were crystallized largely through this new bourgeois demand and its ability to invest in business and boost many thermal destinations, generally in the countryside (Caldes de Montbui, La Garriga) or at the seaside (Maresme, near Barcelona) (Molina, 1999).

The bourgeoisie were especially interested in strengthening their class relations during their stays at Spa Resorts (normally for a month or two during the summer season). In parallel, local stakeholders were creating Catalonia’s tourist imagery through new phenomena such as scientific hiking (Roma, 1996), attached to local intellectual movements such as La Reinaxença, which (as was happening in other European countries) was particularly related to patriotic claims and the rediscovery and reinterpretation of the countryside as a symbol of cultural identity. However, in order to insure the definite production of an involvement phase, a response was necessary from local stakeholders through the supply of a new infrastructure. This process was crystallized by the development of the Catalan railway between 1855 and 1865, which allowed the discovery and connection of rural and seaside destinations to new industrial cities, especially Barcelona and other industrial cities (Sabadell, Terrassa, Manresa). In this sense, small trains (carrilets in Catalan) that usually transported coal were often re-used in order to carry weekend holidaymakers. This was also occurring in other countries such as the United Kingdom; the best example was organized by Thomas Cook and is thought to be the first tourist trip (Smith, 2001).

Moreover, greater accessibility to traditional destinations such as the Maresme thermal resorts gave rise to an initial seaside development at the end of the 19th century. This was later extended to the town of Sitges, south of Barcelona, mimicking bathing practices that were en vogue in the French Riviera and that were particularly promoted by local artists. The 19th century also marked the beginning of urban tourism in Barcelona, initiating a proto-touristic local life cycle. This was made evident by the arrival of a small group of explorer tourists (the majority forming part of the romantics mentioned above) to the development of the first hospitality supply and finally the implication of the town council in the organization of the 1888 Universal Exhibition. The event was an initial point for further gatherings, the main aim of which was the promotion of the city and placed it, for the first time, in the panorama of the main European destinations (Hereu, 1990).

It is important to stress the significance of territory distinctiveness in this first proto-tourism stage, since both the arrival of scientists in the late 18th century, and the development of spa tourism, hiking or the first urban tourism in Barcelona were always based on the attractiveness of the area. Enlightened scientists came to Catalonia to see precisely this distinctiveness, in a geographic, economic and anthropological
sense (Guerrero, 1990). Spa attraction was based on the medicinal qualities of hot thermal waters in conjunction with peaceful countryside and, above all, scientific hiking, which derived from patriotic identification with countryside manners and morals. Finally, the discovery of Barcelona also derived from its particular distinctiveness: for romantics its medieval city was unique and herein laid its attraction (Sobreques, 1999). Later, as a result of the process of expansion of the city (Sarda’s Eixample) and the transformation as a result of the 1888 Exhibition infrastructures, many tourists were interested in the spectacular city’s urban progress (Hereu, 1990).

It was at the beginning of the 20th century when the first great transformation of tourism in Catalonia occurred. The long Life Cycle associated with the proto-tourism stage that began in the early nineteenth century experienced a significant crisis and its representative activities went out of fashion. However this was not related to an excess in the capacity of the destination (in fact, in this period, the destination’s development was very far from exceeding its inherent capacity) or to pressure from other competitors. It was instead related to a reorientation or rejuvenation in terms of economic and especially socio-cultural elements, both from internal and external origins and directly linked to the general transformation associated with the transition towards a new (the second) industrialization stage. The changes began with the emergence of new cultural, economic, social and technological influences that transformed tourists’ likes and made proto-tourism old-fashioned. A new type of demand appeared then and consequently the market began to adapt itself to it. The above proto-tourism framework was overwhelmed and then the emergence of a new model of regulation was needed that could promote a new development stage of the activity, which we have called pre-fordist.

What is interesting here is that we can explain these transformations through Regulation theory and again, just as in the previous stage, this new period can be described perfectly by a new Life Cycle. This started at the End of the 19th century when a new flux of explorers who were discovering different Mediterranean seaside destinations (Riviera in France, the Adriatic in Italy and the Costa Brava in Catalonia) appeared. These coastal destinations became fashionable thanks to the artists who reproduced their scenery, and to the emergence of new means of transport (planes and especially the emergence of the automobile). These new forms of transport transformed the leisure world, replacing the rigid forms of proto-tourism with a new tourism in which mobility (just think of the revolution of the motorcar) was again the center of the industry. In the same sense, we can discuss the discovery of ski tourism (following the hikers’ sanctuaries in the Pyrenees Mountains) and a revival of urban tourism.

Following Regulation theory, new forms of competence, organizations and norms appeared and this was also related to a new TALC stage, because the initial exploration phase was answered by a new involvement phase in which local stakeholders began to professionalize and industrialize the accommodation and restaurant supply (Muntanyola, 1932; Calderó, 1932). If in the previous proto-tourism stage, hotels
and restaurants had still maintained a traditional kind of production, with the appearance of this new demand, they must now adapt to new conditions. In hotels there were new services such as elevators, garages or improved services and amenities. The restoration abandoned traditional cuisine and finally launched an international gastronomic character (specially imported from French cuisine). In Catalonia, the focus of this new involvement phase was obviously Barcelona, but soon it was moved to the new local destinations situated on the coast.

The emergence of new organizations driving tourism in the region was just as important. As a result of the success of the 1888 Exhibition, Barcelona’s bourgeoisie and aristocracy estates began to be really interested in the phenomenon of tourism and were involved in the creation of the first tourist initiative unions, such as the Societat d’Atracció de Forasters (The Society for Attracting Foreign Visitors) (González, 2003). The Societat devoted much of their work to promoting the Catalan region by sponsoring awareness of its heritage and natural resources through new publications such as Barcelona Atracció (the first periodical tourist publication in Spanish) (Vidal, 2005), the first tourism congresses and conferences in Spain, and especially the implication in creating new official and governmental tourist organizations. The role of the Societat was decisive in the creation of the Comisarià Regia (Royal Commissioner), the first public organization that was really committed to the conservation of the area’s rich heritage.

From the 1920s on one may observe an incipient development in the industry and the transformation of the tourism industry, from low supply concentrated in activities such as spa resorts, to a new context with the development of new specific types of tourism, which were to become generic in the next stage. In the first place, ski tourism became the winter tourism par excellence; in the second, bathing, derived from spa proto-tourism forms (Fabregas, 1974), on to winter bath tourism (as in the French Riviera), which finally became summer tourism, which resulted in sun and sand tourism in the second half of 20th century. In any case, as in the general economic system, this was still an elite tourism, which developed an increasing supply while demand was still largely restricted to the wealthiest strata of society. In relation to urban tourism, the 1929 Universal Exhibition was again a symbol of the development of a set of elements that define the paradigm that we are analyzing such as the boost in accommodation and transport infrastructure, urban remodeling or monumentality development, which strengthened Barcelona’s new image (Grandás, 1988).

Finally, and concerning the development phase of the tourist area in this pre-fordist stage, and in consistence with Regulation and TALC theories, after the work carried out by the first non-governmental tourism organizations, the public administration made a significant effort in tourism promotion and managing development and the Oficina de Turisme de Catalunya (Catalunya Tourism Office) played a decisive role in the Republican era (Farreras, 1973). During this process, the main companies reached larger dimensions and transport developed. As we said, the hospitality industry was professionalized and industrialized: from the traditional inn to the hotel, which included new
amenities and innovations imported from the French and Swiss hospitality industry. During these years, the first companies dedicated to scheduled visits (by boat or bus) to various local destinations such as the Costa Brava also appeared. In this sense, it is especially important to stress the technological influences related to the development of new transportation and the influence of the administration and the private sector in the development of new related infrastructure, as in the emergence of the civil airports (El Prat) and the construction of the first national roads. At first, commercial airports were born out of military installations and later became independent, welcoming a greater number of tourists. European airlines like Lufthansa soon came to Catalonia, in response to an increased movement of passengers (Farreras, 1973). With respect to roads, the central government initiated a policy for improving and expanding the network.

Overall, this boost was intended (Calderó, 1932; Muntanyola, 1932) to make tourism in Catalonia and Spain a mass and popular activity. Following Butler’s ideas, this growth became evolutionary, building on existing social and economic infrastructures and following a consistent pattern allowing an increasing proportion of people to participate in tourism. Given the significant growth in tourism demand (a new imbalance and change in the accumulation regime) would expect a new adaptation of the model of regulation. Precisely in this sense, the action of public agencies like the Oficina de Turisme de Catalunya and the emergence of new tourism management laws in the context of the regional Republican government were intended. However, contemporary social and political problems, and finally the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, severely interrupted this initial development in Catalan (and European) tourism, which would take around twenty years to reappear.

FROM MASS TO FLEXIBLE PRODUCTION

After the crisis caused by the war and immediate postwar period in Catalonia, it wasn’t until around 1950 that a new stage in Mediterranean tourism occurred. This new stage was to be the most important up until then: fordist or mass tourism. This stage was represented by a new accumulation regime and a subsequent model of regulation in the tourism activity based on, among other aspects, mass production and consumption and the consolidation of the Welfare State in most of Western Europe. This new stage was again associated with a new general social and economic paradigm, known as the Golden Age of Capitalism, where tourism took a leading role in most Western countries and was considered the Fourth Wave that changed the lives of most of its citizens (Dower, 1965). This new stage was also associated with a new Life Cycle.

In the forties and early to mid-fifties, and in the context of postwar crises, tourism in Catalonia still satisfied the criteria of a pre-fordist paradigm, with tourist consumption that was still restricted to the elites. However, this began to change with the beginning of a new exploration phase characterized by the arrival of a new flux of tourists to the
These new tourists were not the traditional *pre-fordist* Catalan and Spanish bourgeois; they were middle and lower-class tourists that came from neighboring France, who, to begin with, only traveled to Catalonia for short one-day or weekend trips, attracted by a cultural affinity, proximity, and the low prices of the underdeveloped destination. Here, the territory was again a key factor, as its proximity to southern France propitiated the beginning of this stage and its initial phase. The French had just emerged from the postwar period, consequently, the first international tourism that they could enjoy needed to be cheap and near-by, and Catalonia met all these requirements. Over the next few years, other European tourists (First Germans, and later the British and Scandinavians) from further away joined these first explorers. They were also attracted by Catalan *sun and sand* attractions and took advantage of the European post-war road improvement to reach the Mediterranean Sea.

With the growth in visitor numbers in the fifties, the Catalan tourism supply adapted, moderately increasing the number of places. By this time, an early accommodation infra-structure was developed on the Catalan coast (Vila Fradera, 1961), initially based on small low-quality hotels, whose financing was made using local capital that was earned through selling agricultural land (Cals, 1989). However, to boost a real new stage in tourism the regulatory model needed to be adapted to the new conditions of tourism production and consumption. This is also related to a new phase in the TALC model assumption, the involvement phase, and in Catalonia is particularly represented by one of the most important steps in the Spanish political economy: the 1959 *Plan de Estabilización* (Stabilization Plan) (Bayón, 1999). The Plan broke with the autarkic policies of the early Franco’s government and included measures such as devaluation, liberalization and rationalization. The increase in disposable income of Europeans in the age of the Welfare State at the beginning of the 60s facilitated (among other advances) a further growth in tourist arrivals to Spain (and, of course to Catalonia) and the beginning of a spectacular development phase.

In this development phase, a set of elements converged to boost the tourism demand in Catalonia, as can be observed in Figure 2, constructed from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Statistics Institute) (1965–1970; 1971–1975; 1976–1998, 1999–2009). On the one hand, from a cultural perspective, Catalonia, like the rest of Spain, was seen as an exotic destination, untouched by Western development. On the other hand, rising incomes in Western Europe, the extension of the Welfare State model, the consolidation of a working middle class and technological improvements, like charter flights and the popularization of the car were also favorable to tourism in the area. In this sense, not only did the consumption system develop, with demand growth, but also the production system, adapting to the features of the new massive accumulation regime. This was how together the interest from tour-operators and the development of intermediary companies provided a spectacular growth in demand, which was mostly international at the beginning. This effect was transmitted to a new growth in the supply of accommodation. This supply and demand feed-
back cycle enabled the economy of tourism to take-off in Catalonia as well as on the Spanish Mediterranean coast. In fact, this virtuous cycle facilitated the launch of the Catalan and Spanish economies in a wider sense, as the remittances from the tourists (and emigrants) provided the capital necessary to re-enable the local economy.

In this context, and again noting the importance of the model of regulation in the consolidation of the fordist paradigm and the evolution of its associated Life Cycle, General Franco’s government maintained during these years a “laissez-faire” way of regulating and managing tourism (Pellejero, 2005). They gave free reign to the market’s actions and, more specifically, to speculative investment, which triggered not only tourism but also the residential model implemented throughout the majority of the Spanish Mediterranean coast. Although the Ministry of Information and Tourism was established as early as 1952, its work focused heavily on the promotion of Spanish Tourism (only from a national perspective, not including regional particularities) and was less worried about regulation and intervention. In fact, the goal was not to interfere excessively in an activity that was enjoying such spectacular growth and driving the rest of the economy. However, the total lack of regulation (particularly as regards the territorial planning of local destinations) was to have a critical impact in the future. We can link this back to the ideas of TALC, which pointed to the key importance of the intervention of management to prevent development exceeding various dimensions (economic, social and ecological) of the carrying capacity of the destination.

At the end of the 70s, although demand kept on increasing (see Figure 2), growth was no longer uniform and the first signs of weakening in international demand appeared. However, this was compensated by a strong growth in national demand, derived from the increase in the

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**Figure 2. Hotel Demand: Individual Hotel Registrations. Catalonia 1966–2008**
Spanish Gross Domestic Product per capita and the beginnings of the Welfare State in Spain. Finally, after some twenty years of uninterrupted growth, the destination experienced a slight stagnation (see Figure 2) as a result of exogenous and endogenous elements, chiefly the international economic conjuncture together with the social instability of Franco’s dictatorship in its later years. The increase in fuel prices due to the international economic crisis particularly affected the demand for charter flights (Iribas & Gaviria, 1974) and subsequently the big intermediary companies and tour-operators, finally reached local supply through an increase in prices. In addition to this, there was the growth in the cost of labor for tourism supply, related with the first wage demands in the context of the democratic transition period (known as Transición).

Therefore, one may say that Catalan tourism survived the economic crisis, but from this moment on, some restructuring was needed to get it back to its initial dynamics. After nearly two decades of mass and uniform tourism consumption, changes in demand led to differentiation, which was favored by the technological revolution in the seventies, particularly in telecommunications. Again, for production and consumption to find a new balance, a transformation was needed in the regulatory model that would lead to a new growth stage in Catalan tourism, the post-fordist stage. This was related to the beginning of a new Life Cycle, which has been coexisting in recent years with the fordist life cycle. As we shall discuss in the following lines, the transition into a new era of tourism in the region entailed not only a process of reinvention but also different coexisting Life Cycles, the possibility of which has also been targeted by Butler (2009). In fact, we think that Butler’s assumption that many, if not most, destinations do not involve one single cycle but a series of cycles at different stages of development, represents the overall pattern of development in the post-fordist stage.

In the mid-80s, the destination categorically left the cyclical crisis period of the previous decade, in line with Spain’s admittance to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986 and with the preparation for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona (Duran, 2002). By this time, a new kind of tourism demand had arrived (younger, more educated and experienced people that were interested in more than relaxation, sun and beaches). This began a new phase of exploration in which emerged new forms of tourism, that were especially influenced by the distinctiveness of the location, therefore giving more importance to rural areas (Cànoves, Villarino, Priestley, & Blanco, 2004), and the regeneration of urban tourism (Duran, 2002) and spa tourism (Molina, 2004). These forms of tourism were suddenly in much greater demand, which increased the total number of tourists, meanwhile traditional sun and sand tourism embraced new strategies and emergent products in order to rationalize itself (Clave, 2004).

It is from this moment that the development of the destination occurred through the conjunction of two general Life Cycles, mass tourism, which was in a consolidation phase, and post-fordist tourism, which started its exploration phase during these years. These processes were particularly related to the definitive democratization of the phenomenon.
of tourism and the climax of the national demand for tourism, which became predominant in relation to the total level of demand recorded in Catalonia. In this sense, the convergence between Spanish and European average incomes facilitated the maintenance of a long development cycle of mass tourism in the region (which has largely survived into the present day). Moreover, it helped prolong its overlap with the beginning of the *post-fordist* stage. Yet again, in order to adjust to changes in the accumulation regime, the model of regulation was transformed to promote a new growth stage. In Catalan tourism, this was especially apparent through two processes that are common in the general *post-fordist* paradigm: on the one hand, the transfer of tourism competences previously assumed by the State in favor of supranational bodies, as occurred after the entry of Spain into the EEC, and the decentralization of tourism competences and policies to the regional governments. It was just at this time that Catalonia’s current Autonomous Government, the *Generalitat*, was given the responsibility of its own tourism from the new democratic Central Government of Spain.

This was also the moment when many county and local councils started to think about promoting tourism, with a new understanding of the sector’s implications for the development of infrastructure and economic growth in general, which again was closely related to the TALC assumptions, especially since the involvement phase. In this context, the new autonomic tourism policy, derived from the decentralization of the late 70s, is fundamental for understanding the evolution of this new *post-fordist* reality, for it allowed the management of tourism to be brought closer to the location itself. This is especially so because of the local authority’s greater proximity and knowledge of the reality of the sector, their greater contact with business representatives (chambers of commerce, business associations, local entities), their capacity for dealing with the particularities of each destination and for finding out how to specialize supply so as give the tourists more direct attention. In a peripheral region like Catalonia, this is also related to the idea of avoiding “centre-periphery” conflict through the peripheral authorities sustaining control over decision-making and industrial development on a scale within the scope of local resources (Keller, 1987).

At this conjuncture and in relation to our assumptions, one may spotlight the relevance of the 1992 Olympic Games preparation and celebration in the evolution of the destination. The involvement of both public and private sectors in this event is fundamental to understanding the movement produced between a cycle related to mass tourism in its full maturity and a new *post-fordist* stage, which implies the diversification of the destination’s supply. The implication of stakeholders in this project is seen to be highly connected to the consolidation of Catalonia’s land communication infrastructure with Europe and the rest of Spain, as well as the enlargement of Barcelona’s El Prat airport and the emergence of two new airports in Reus and Gerona, which all host Low-Cost flights. Low-Cost flights (international arrivals) and the boom of the registration of vehicles in Spain (domestic
movement) during the nineties and early twenty-first century have been major triggers of, not only the development of tourism in Catalonia, but also for the new second home and retirement industry, whose development began in the sixties (as we saw previously), putting more pressure on something that was already essentially bursting at the seams. Moreover, this has had much to do with the problems of the real estate boom in recent years.

In addition, the significant growth in hotel capacity, among other things, has facilitated the exponential growth of tourism demand in Barcelona and Catalonia during the last few years, sometimes in relation to processes of rapid urban growth, causing significant civic protests, as in the case of the recent opening of the so-called Hotel Vela (Sailboat Hotel) on Barcelona’s waterfront. In fact, the success of the Olympic Games definitely placed the city and the region in the route of the world’s main attractions (Duran, 2002). The admittance to a new development phase of the post-fordist stage was verified in the 90s (especially after 1994) when new record figures in tourism demands were registered and the demand reaching Catalonia recovered a greater rhythm of growth than the one observed in the 60s’ development phase (as one may see in Figure 2). In this sense, there was a significant increase in demand for domestic tourism, while international tourism returned thanks to an increase in specific types of tourism (particularly urban tourism concentrated in Barcelona) and the positive economic conjuncture related to a large increasing cycle from the mid-80s until 2007 (see Figure 2), only interrupted by short crises in 1993 and 2000.

In short, from 1990 on, Catalonia as a destination experienced a phase of transition between stages, marked by the consolidation and maturity of mass tourism and the exploration, involvement and the beginning of the development of a tourist set with specific post-fordist characteristics or the so called flexible leisure production. Catalan tourism supply experienced significant restructuring, which closed some small-scale companies and improved the hotel sector. The maturity of the traditional sun and sand tourism, located on the Catalan coast, showed the most marked characteristics through Butler’s TALC in the consolidation phase (and even sometimes in the stagnation phase), as well as in the implication and development phases of a new cycle in the new specific markets. In this sense, during the last few years, the phenomenon of tourists buying second homes increased (also related to TALC assumptions in the latter phases of TALC), while specific kinds of tourism were consolidated such as rural and nature tourism, cruises, nautical or events tourism. In this transformation and improvement process, the significant impact of Information and Communication Technologies on Catalan tourism companies created the basis for a new technological paradigm, changing the way of consuming tourism. In the same direction, we have to mention the emergence of Low-Cost flights and the rebirth of older means of transportation such as cruise liners (which are in fashion again) or trains (thanks to the development of high-speed services).
Ultimately, everything indicates that we are facing the definitive consolidation of post-fordism in Catalonia, a stage where it will be more important than ever to be aware of tourists. In this sense, destinations will have to develop new ways of communicating and, therefore, new market research methods will be necessary, together with a particular public policy management that understands the transformation in demand linked to socio-cultural changes (the need for responsible tourism is an example), the ecological boom and the transport revolution. In the context of an international crisis, like the one we have been experiencing from 2007 until now, the sector’s awareness of the orientation of growing new strategies is essential. Catalonia’s future as a destination is heading towards a new phase of consolidation (the post-fordist phase), characterized by the customization of a tourism product specifically oriented towards the value of territorial resources and tourist experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

The article has shown how TALC in conjunction with Regulation theory can create a valid framework for describing and understanding the history of a regional tourist destination. Figure 3 shows how the destination evolution can be explained and understood through this theoretical framework. We have seen how the first proto-tourist paradigm or stage began with an exploration phase, which started with the arrival of the first tourists; it went on with agent participation and developed through the 19th century through different specific activities like spas and hiking. Concerning the pre-fordist stage, the involvement of bourgeois promoting associations and the public sector provided the beginning of new TALC, related to the first industrialization of tourism production and a consumption that remained restricted to elites.

After a break during the war and postwar periods, tourism in Catalonia began a new TALC corresponding to a new paradigm, the fordist paradigm. Once again, the adaptation of the model of regulation was crucial for understanding a new stage of mass production and consumption in the destination. Without a Welfare State in Western Europe and a Stabilization Plan in Spain, mass tourism in Catalonia would not have been possible. Finally, in the seventies, after the impact of energy and economic crises, the changes in demand motivations and the technological improvements associated with the telecommunications revolution, the system needed a new reorientation to begin a new stage, the post-fordist stage. This was marked by the overflow of the Nation-State in tourism management and the emergence of a new tourism supply that was more flexible and oriented towards the new specific tourism demand.

In short, TALC can be overly reductive unless it is moderate and made more flexible with the addition of another theoretical approach like in this case, the Regulation approach. From the TALC perspective, the article shows how each of the major paradigms, from which the
history of tourism has been analyzed, can themselves be understood through a single Life Cycle (formerly applied specifically to the case of mass tourism). However, TALC does not offer a complete guide to how the transition from one life cycle to the next actually functions. In that sense, Regulation theory has offered us a good approach to finding out what led the restructuring processes between these paradigms, and we believe that this is probably one the most innovative aspects of the article. Related with this, in Butler (2006, p.19) it is possible to observe a historical development model that was similar to that shown in Figure 3 but it dealt with establishment of new resorts in neighboring locations and not with restructuration in one single destination.

Finally, in this paper we have seen how the tourism production and consumption systems experienced major transformations and produced structural crises that were overcome by adaptations of tourism regulation models (new institutions, laws, competence forms). Normally, the first transformations in the accumulation regime were related to the beginning of a new exploration phase and the regulation adaptations to an involvement phase. It seems that after these phases, a new equilibrium began and the destination entered a balanced phase of development, consolidation and maturity, until new cultural, social, economic and technological influences led the regime to new crises that would need new readjustments. As a final consideration, we think that history can offer us good lessons for the present and future of the industry. As has been demonstrated in this article, if we want sustainable and profitable future development, the current aim should be to beat conservative positions and short-term visions and reinvent part...
of the attraction that a destination presents, as took place at different times in the past.

REFERENCES


