Reflections on measuring the sustainability of tourism at the destination scale

Raúl Hernández Martín
Head of the Chair in Tourism CajaCanarias-Ashotel
University of la Laguna

Objectives

- Identifying two main scales of analysis for MST: global and local
- Integration of the global and the local scales of analysis in MST
- Contribution to the extension of the existing conceptual framework for tourism statistics
Policy issues in MST

1 Global challenge
- CO2 emissions, depletion of non-renewable resources, SDGs

Global sustainability

Visitors Tourism Industry Destinations

Sea level rise, climate change mitigation, ...

2 Destination challenge
- Congestion
- Waste production
- Water scarcity
- Loss of identity
- Local wellbeing
- Labour conditions

......

Policy issues in MST

Contribution of tourism to global sustainability

Sustainability of local tourism destinations
• **Comments:**
  – Accumulative scales of analysis
  – Available international methodologies

• **Economic:** Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA, 2008)

• **Environmental:** System of Environmental Economic Accounting (EEA, 2012): water, resources and energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, waste, green jobs, etc.

• **Social:** world heritage sites, poverty alleviation
Sustainability of local tourism destinations

- **Comments:**
  - Visitors + tourism industry + local population + environment
  - System of indicators (some initiatives)
  - Local singularities, relevance of perceptions of stakeholders
  - Non-additive indicators (air purity, quality of sea water)

- **Economic:** income, local control, decent jobs,…
- **Environmental:** water quality, biodiversity, air quality, waste management, sea water quality, green firms,…
- **Social:** education, health, poverty, wealth distribution, crime, corruption, job security, gender inequality, protection of heritage, respect of traditional values,….

The relevance of the destination approach

1% of municipalities in Spain account for 63.5% of tourism overnights and, thus, for most tourism sustainability problems
The relevance of the destination approach

The growing concerns about overtourism and congestion

‘Overtourism’?
Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions
Executive Summary

International statistical standards regarding tourism measurement (IRTS, 2008 & TSA, 2008)

Supply perspective
(activities & products)

Demand perspective

Tourism industry
Other industries

Visitors
Non-visitors
Global approach: Supply

Tourism industry  Other industries

Non-visitors  Visitors

Supply perspective (activities & products)

Global approach: demand

Tourism industry  Other industries

Non-visitors  Visitors

Supply perspective (activities & products)
Extended framework for sustainable tourism

Extended framework for sustainable tourism

Non-visitors
Visitors
Tourism industry Other industries

Rest of the territory
Destinations
Non-visitors
Visitors
Tourism industry Other industries
Global tourism supply perspective

Global tourism demand perspective
Destination supply perspective

Destination demand perspective
Integrated destination perspective

Integrating destinations in the existing tourism statistics framework
Extended approach for measuring tourism at a local scale

Tourism destinations (defined through significance)
- Large share of experiences oriented to
- Large share of experiences take place at
- Local destinations
- Tourism area of influence

Tourism characteristic products and activities (IRTS, 2008) defined through significance
- Large share of consumption
- Large share of production

Visitors (IRTS, 2008) defined through the usual environment
- Large share of establishments located in
- Large share of establishments belong to

UN Sustainable Development Goals

- = Visitors + non visitors
- = Tourism industry + other industries
- = Tourism destinations + other places
New concepts, definitions and UNWTO guidelines are needed

A system of indicators for destination sustainability is needed

- Despite advances, some limitations of existing initiatives:
  - Sustainability (policy) implications of individual indicators
  - Weights, relevance and interrelations of individual indicators
  - No clear object of analysis (tourism industry vs destinations)
  - Singularities of individual destinations
  - Combination of quantitative indicators and stakeholders’ perceptions
  - Effects of seasonality on sustainability
Provision of new methods for new statistical information

Delimitation of tourism destinations for statistical purposes and decision-making

The case of the Canary Islands

Source: Canary Islands Institute of Statistics
The importance of geolocating tourism information

Revenue per available room in 9 local destinations in 2 municipalities, Tenerife, 2017

Source: Canary Islands Institute of Statistics, Tourist accommodation survey

Thank you very much!!!

Raúl Hernández-Martín (rahernan@ull.es)
Head of the Chair in Tourism CajaCanarias-Ashotel
University of La Laguna