

Sport and Tourism: a potentially conflictual relationship. The case of Marinas in Tenerife

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Abstract: This paper points out the conflicts that can arise in the field of Sports and Tourism through a case study of two marinas on the island of Tenerife (Spain). Following a qualitative approach, the discourses of the participants of seven different water sports were analysed. In spite of the traditional optimistic approach towards the relationship between sport and tourism, research results showed that conflicts can arise if this is not carefully managed. Conflicts were found at three levels. First, at a sport practice level, where conflict can arise between the different sports held in and around marinas. Second, at a socio-economic level, conflicts can arise between the different social groups that use marinas. Third, at a tourism level, conflict can arise between tourism development and the use of marinas as a sporting venue. The paper concludes by emphasizing key issues to bear in mind when managing the relationship between tourism and sport, such as the brand image of both sports on the hand and tourism destinations on the other hand, and the social groups that usually play each sport and visit each destination.

Key words: Conflict; Tourism; Sport Sociology; Water Sports; Social Stratification; Social Desirability.

Resumen: El artículo se centra en los conflictos que pueden surgir en el ámbito del deporte y el turismo partiendo del estudio de un caso centrado en dos puertos deportivos de la isla de Tenerife (España). A través de una aproximación cualitativa, se analizó el discurso de los participantes en siete actividades deportivas marinas diferentes. Frente a la tradicional visión optimista en torno a la relación entre deporte y turismo, los resultados de la investigación muestran que pueden surgir conflictos si ésta no se gestiona adecuadamente. Los conflictos pueden darse a tres niveles. En primer lugar, a nivel de práctica deportiva, donde los problemas pueden surgir entre las diferentes actividades deportivas que se dan en torno a los puertos deportivos. En segundo lugar, entre los diferentes grupos sociales que usan los puertos deportivos. En tercer lugar, a nivel turístico, los conflictos pueden surgir entre el modelo de desarrollo turístico y el uso que se le da a las marinas como espacios deportivos. El artículo concluye enfatizando las cuestiones clave a considerar para gestionar adecuadamente la relación deporte y turismo, tales como las de la imagen de marca asociada tanto a los deportes como a los destinos turísticos, así como los grupos sociales que habitualmente practican un deporte o visitan un destino.

Palabras clave: Conflicto; Turismo; Sociología del Deporte; Estratificación Social; Deseabilidad Social.

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Introduction

Sport tourism development is a strategy carried out more and more by tourism destinations, especially by large consolidated ones. The aims of such a strategy are manifold: product differentiation, enhancement of competitive advantages and, ultimately, the promotion of socio-economic development (Griffin & Hayllar, 2007; Higham & Hinch, 2002), even in avowedly communist societies (Sugden, 2007). Within this context, water sports play a crucial role, since the sea is a key resource in the traditional sea, sun and sand destination and can be used as a powerful sporting venue. New trends in tourism towards an active conception of the activity (Perkins & Thorns, 2001) reinforce the role of sports in tourism, leading to the practice of sports tourism and tourism sports (Gibson, 2004; Gammon & Robinson, 2003).

Actually, new trends in tourism have led to a position in which, depending upon the concept use, almost every mass sea and sun tourist can be considered as a sport tourist. (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). A great proportion of sun and sea tourists get involved in different activities such as walking, banana trips, casual snorkeling, pedalo or waterboat renting, etc. Therefore, if a wide conception of sport that includes physical and recreational activities is used, any tourist involved in the aforementioned activities could be considered as a "sport tourist", according to the Gibson (2004: 249) classification as a "tourist involved in activities as opposed to "aficionados". There is a vast literature about issues regarding the distinction between "sport tourism" and "tourism sport", as much as about sport and physical activity. However, our interest in this paper is to understand water sports as touristic resources and to study the conflicts that arise in the intersection between tourism and sport, rather than considering differences between such concepts.

In the context of the broader sport tourism framework, marinas have become a key resource by which traditional destinations can improve their market position. In the Spanish case, the Balearic Islands have often been considered as the paradigmatic case, but the Canary Islands are also quite

a good example (Martín-Rojo & Peláez-Verdet, 2003; Melián-González & García-Falcón, 2003; Morales-Nin *et al*, 2005). Among policy makers, academics and media marinas are usually associated with an image of glamour and prestige, celebrities and economic elites. Therefore, they are expected to contribute to upgrading destinations. Underlying this idea is the assumption that the relationship between sports and tourism, and between marinas and tourism, can only be positive. However, this may not always be the case, and conflicts may arise if development is not carefully managed. This paper highlights three levels of the relationship between marinas and tourism at which conflict may arise. First of all, conflict may arise among the different participants of the numerous sports developed around the marinas. Secondly, conflict may arise among the multifarious social groups that use these activities as a means of expression. Finally, conflicts are related to the impacts of the activity and to the attitudes of locals towards tourism. The results of the research show that only a realistic approach to the possible conflicts can yield an adequate management of the relationship between sports and tourism.

Harmony and conflict in the relationship between sport and tourism

Sport has long been considered a key motive for travel and tourism. Not only are major sporting events important tourist attractions, but also the practice of well-established sport tourism, such as sailing tourism, golf tourism, winter sports tourism, and cycle tourism play a crucial role in a destination's tourist attraction capacity (Bramwell, 1997; Daniels, 2007; Kim & Chalip, 2004; O'Brien, 2006). Even certain activities that could be considered as less important, being a mix of sport, physical and recreational activity, are a great complement to the tourist offer. We are talking about a wide range of activities, with little or no regulation and though developed mostly in natural environments can also be found in urban areas (Bach, 1993; L'Aoustet & Griffet, 2001). As some authors like De Villiers (2003: 94) remark, both

traditional sport tourism and these new practices fit very well in a new conception of tourism that links it with health and well-being. Furthermore, some of these new emerging activities represent a great opportunity for the diversification of tourist destinations (Lee, 2003: 6).

This relationship between sport, tourism and recreation has been amply shown by the literature and seems unquestionable. However, the link between sports and tourism is not always positive. Authors such as Sousa (2004), Williams *et al* (1984) and Dunning *et al* (2002) have studied conflicts related to the violence generated by some groups of sporting event tourists. Others have focused on the emerging ecological conflicts created by the practice of sport tourism in natural environments (Bellan & Bellan- Santini, 2001; Domroes, 2001; Guyer & Pollard, 1997; Ingold *et al*, 1993; Stockwell *et al*, 1991). The development of the so called "active tourism" activities, such as rafting, speleology, canyoning or mountain biking, that have become a summer option for resorts that base their economies on winter sports has certainly implied a widening of the ecological impacts of tourism. Even so, the inherent conflicts in the sports- tourism relationship are all too often incorrectly considered. Two reasons can be given to explain this. First of all, taking an overall approach, the benefits of the relationship are probably more important than the costs. Secondly, most studies in the field of Sports and Tourism start from a functionalist approach, and this approach usually leads to an emphasis on the positive points and minimizes the negatives. As Rojek points out (quoted in Henderson *et al*, 2004), leisure theory since World War II developed a functionalist approach, and leisure activities were considered from an individualistic point of view, ignoring the context in which they were held. Besides that, a functionalist approach inherently highlights the positive sides of every social phenomenon. Therefore, the relationship between sport and tourism has followed a similar path, emphasizing, since the very first studies the multiple benefits that it brings (Zahuar, 2004).

Nevertheless, the negative aspects of the relationship between sports, recreation and

tourism are becoming more and more evident (Schneider, 2000; Vaske *et al.*, 2007). Violence in sporting events is not only drawing increased attention, but also several studies have shown the conflicts around sport tourism apply in natural environments. Some authors have studied conflicts in surf, ski and snowboarding (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003; Vaske *et al.* 2000, 2004); others have analysed conflicts between rowing and motor boats (Adelman *et al.*, 1982), or mountaineering (Léséleuc, 2003). In a broader sense, Vanreusel (1995) has shown the cultural, ecological and symbolic conflicts that can arise around sports tourism, both between different sport tourists and between sport tourists and the local population. It is within this context that marinas can be considered as a scenario for possible conflicts. This paper aims to explore the potential conflicts around marinas, something that seems essential for their adequate management. The analysis of the conflicts in and around marinas do not stem from an ideological position. On the contrary, it follows the theoretical framework proposed by Collins (1975) and Collins & Rossel (2002), that considers conflict as a process which is characteristic of social life, a result of everyday life interactions.

Study Methods

This paper approaches the study of conflicts around sporting marinas through a case study on the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands. The Canary Islands are a mature destination, offering mainly sea, sun and sand tourism. Most tourists come from the UK, Germany, mainland Spain, the Benelux and the Scandinavian countries with smaller numbers coming from the rest of Europe. Most of them are repeat visitors, and in 2004, almost 40% of all visitors had previously visited the islands (ISTAC / Canary Islands Statistics Institute, 2005), and had come through a package tour bought from the main European tour operators. In 2006, the islands received over 9.5 million international tourists and 2.3 millions domestic tourists (Gobierno de Canarias / Government of the Canary Islands, 2007). Four out of the seven islands (Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gran

Canaria and Tenerife) receive large numbers of tourists, while the tourist development of the remaining three islands (La Palma, La Gomera and El Hierro) is much more limited.

Tourism in the Canary Islands started in the 1960s and in the following thirty years they became a very important tourist destination for British, German and Spanish markets. The Canary Islands are one of the main tourist destinations in Spain, representing between 20-25% of tourism revenues and 10- 15% of tourist arrivals, depending upon sources. In 2006 Spain received a total of 58,451,141 foreign visitors, according to data provided by IET (Instituto Español de Turismo, that is to say, Spanish Tourism Institute and INE - Instituto Nacional de Estadística or National Statistics Institute-) (2006), and was among the top three world tourist destinations, representing 12,3% of international tourist arrivals in Europe for the same period. The importance of the Canary Islands for the European Tourism market can be highlighted by a single comparison: in 2004, this small archipelago of just over 7.000 km² received half the number of international tourists of such an important tourist area as the Caribbean.

Among the islands, Tenerife, the island where the fieldwork was carried out, received the highest number of tourists (3.2 million for the same period). Tourism on the island is centred around two main resorts, Puerto de La Cruz and Los Cristianos- Playa de Las Américas. Puerto de la Cruz, located centrally on the northern coast of the island is the oldest resort. Nowadays, it receives almost 30% of the tourist activity in Tenerife. In the south-west of the island, resorts around Los Cristianos- Playa de Las Américas represent the bulk of the tourism in Tenerife (around 70%). Eighty km north-east of Las Américas and 35 kms east of Puerto de la Cruz are the cities of La Laguna and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, the major centres of economic cultural and political activity, which contain almost half of the population of the island.

Giscard d'Estaing (2001: 96) pointed out that research into the Sport Tourism field faces the problem of a lack of good statistics. This has also been the case for the

situation analyzed here, and therefore, an approach based on methodological pluralism (Ragin, 1994) was adopted. The aim of the research was to collect, through personal interviews, the discourses of sportsmen and women developing activities in and around marinas in Tenerife. Sports practice starts from the way social actors comprehend and give meaning to reality. In the case of sports in and around marinas, the starting point is a sports infrastructure that can play a crucial role as a space of reference for practising water sport that goes far beyond its role as a berth for vessels. The objective of the research was to obtain a deeper understanding of the role that such infrastructures can play in fostering different watersports, both among tourists and local residents. Through interviews with water sportsmen and women, managers, entrepreneurs and workers related to marinas and watersports activities, the research tried to stress their experiences and perceptions using a qualitative approach. This approach tried to avoid the incorrect consideration of issues such as motivations, emotions, feelings and perceptions about watersports that usually results when purely quantitative approaches are applied. Rather than statistical significance, the study looked for social significance or relevance. Following Gibson (2004) and Weed (2006), the researchers wanted to determine the explicit and implicit reasons given by stakeholders for the conflicts developed around the marinas.

The use of the qualitative approach in the Sociology of Sport emphasizes the role of individuals (Patton, 2002; Gratton & Jones, 2003). In order to collect every discourse that could be relevant for the purposes of the research, various factors, such as socio-demographic factors and the type of sport were considered. The *conditio sine qua no* for every interviewee was to participate in at least one of the watersports considered. Five groups of different sporting activities were considered for the study: 1) Scuba diving 2) Motor boat 3) Sailing 4) Surfing and 5) Expressive activities, such as water games, and use of pedalos and banana boats.

Another factor that can influence the motivation for taking part in watersport in marinas is whether the marina is embed-

ded in a larger harbour or is isolated. Therefore, different marinas were selected for the study. For the case of marinas embedded in a larger harbour, Marina Tenerife, Puerto Chico and Marina del Atlántico, all of them embedded in the harbour of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, capital of the island, were selected for the interviews. For the case of marinas isolated from bigger maritime infrastructures, the case selected was Puerto Colón, in the municipality of Adeje, in the southern part of Tenerife, which is embedded in the larger touristic resort (Los Cristianos- Las Américas) of the islands. Beside its role as a marina, Puerto Colon has become in the latter years a very important base for whale watching cruises (Hernández, 2005). Finally, a third factor considered in the sampling was that tourists and locals could have a different perception of the marinas. Therefore, a three criteria were used for selecting the sample: 1) two types of marinas, 2) two types of possible relationship with the island and 3) six different sports. For each group of sporting activities, interviewees were selected depending on whether they were locals or residents and whether they were based in an isolated marina or in a marina embedded in a larger infrastructure. The total number of interviews was 18, fifteen of them with sportsmen and women, an interview with the manager of a marina, an interview with the person in charge of a sports federation and another with a sales representative of water activities for tourists.

Interviews non-directed, so that the interviewee could express what he or she deemed relevant for the purposes of the research. Interviews were recorded digitally and then transcribed. The diversity of discourses collected allowed us not only to study in depth the conflicts but also the differences and similarities between locals and tourists and between the different sports considered. It also provided evidence of the different potential for sport fostering and as a tourist attraction of both isolated and embedded marinas.

Marinas: an open reality

Sport marinas are sport infrastructures whose impacts go well beyond the sporting

domain. Therefore, to truly understand the dynamics in and around them, the three dimensions, tourism, sport and economics should be considered. We will now proceed to analyse each dimension separately and the potential conflicts that can occur within each of them. However, the three dimensions are so closely related that they can only be separated for analytical purposes.

Sport conflicts in marinas

Conflicts around the sporting dimension of marinas have to do with the conflicts that arise among the different sports hosted in them. For the sake of simplicity, they can be classified into two categories: conflicts in the marinas and conflicts around the marinas. Since water sports differ in their relationship with the sea, conflicts around the marinas are related to the key issue of whether to develop marinas or not. There is a division between those sports which just use the sea as a sport venue and need no marinas (such as surfing) and those sports that use the marina as their sport venue and need it as a "conditio sine qua non" in order to develop their activity (such as sailing). The first group is usually opposed to the developing of marinas for several reasons. They tend to see the building of marinas as a transformation of the landscape that alters its natural beauty and heritage and hinders their possibilities to practise sports. This is especially the case for surfers, since marina building usually involves changes in the natural waves. On the other hand, the group of sports that need at least a berth in a marina to develop their activity, such as sailing or motor boats, would support further developments in marina construction, since that would definitely enhance the possibility to practise their sports. Besides this basic divide between those sports that would benefit from marina development and those that would suffer from it, there are conflicts and competition for the use of the space among those sports that use the marinas as a sporting venue.

Another problem for practising water sports, according to the interviewees is the price, which is beyond the reach of many social groups. Apart from the simple fact that prices are high, many interviewees

point out that services provided by marinas in Tenerife are scarce. Another major source of conflict seems to be, when marinas are embedded in larger harbours, the excess of control by coastguards and maritime police. Such a strict control often hinders the development of water sports, and since fines are quite common, this is an extra financial burden. All of this shows a conflict between individual behaviour and social norms and institutions that try to regulate them. Sports practices are under the same tensions as contemporary leisure, where individuals search for a recreational area which is often increasingly regulated (Elias, 1989, 1992). Many interviewees point out that in Tenerife, given the importance of the tourism industry in the island, marinas are becoming more a touristic space than a sport venue. The use of marinas for whale watching excursions and other tourism oriented activities limit their possibilities for water sports.

Socio-economic conflicts in marinas

Socio-economic conflicts in and around marinas have to do with the fact that they are not only a sport venue but also a space for sociability and for economic activity. This research points out three main conflicts: first of all, it seems to be an inherent conflict in the democratization of an activity which, for many, is socially meaningful only for as long as it elitist and scarce. Secondly, there is a conflict between motor water sports and sailing, which reflects a conflict between social groups. Finally, there is a conflict between those who use the marinas as a sport venue and those who use them as a means to show their wealth and socio-economic position.

Which are the social groups that use the marinas? This question should be answered bearing in mind the different sports that are developed in and around marinas, but some generalizations can be made. According to the interviewees, most sailors, surfers, sport fishermen, etc. are upper-middle class males, and what seems most interesting, women that engaged in these activities usually begin following their husbands, fiancées or boyfriends. Why is the use of marinas mostly confined to certain social groups? Authors like Savelli (1990) point

out that the development of “postfordist tourism” involves the appearance and development of dynamics of social differentiation. In fordist tourism, tourism had become a means of social integration, providing each individual with a sense of belonging to a community. Holidays were a social conquest, and everybody had holidays at a similar period (summer) and enjoyed them going to similar places and engaging in similar activities. On the contrary, since the mid 1980s, tourism became more and more a means of social differentiation, where individuals try to drift apart from the rest of the society by means of their capacity to pay for different holidays and their ability to enjoy them. In this context, water sports and water sports tourism have been long associated with elites, prestige and social differentiation. And according to the interviewees, they still continue to be, even though many emphasize that at least partial democratization has occurred. Elitism in water sports have to do with the financial cost of the activities, and with the attitudes of the participants, who usually consider themselves as an elite and look with disdain upon novices and aficionados. Most interviewees agree that a strong effort has been made to facilitate the practice of water sports through credit sales. All this considered, an inherent conflicts remains: if the democratization of marinas is successful, those who approach water sports seeking exclusivity will have to migrate to other practices.

The conflict between the growth of water sports and their capacity to differentiate those who get engaged in them is also connected to the formerly mentioned assumption that marinas can contribute to the upgrading of tourist destinations. If the strategy to develop marinas is successful, more and more tourists will engage in water sports in more and more tourist destinations. If more and more tourists engage in water sports everywhere, it will no longer be a sign of distinction, and will not be effective in upgrading a destination. In that case, the marinas would become useless for the purpose for which they were originally built.

The second conflict arises between the different types of clientele to which a marina can cater. Most interviewees make a

clear distinction between motorised water sports and non-motorised water sports. The conflict between sailing and motor water sports stands out not only as a conflict between different activities, but also as a conflict between two different conceptions of the relationship with the sea, as was revealed from the interviews. The opposition between sailing and motor water sport reflects an opposition between a bohemian concept of navigation, seen as an end in itself (some *yachters*, as they call themselves, turn sailing into a way of living) and an instrumental concept of it that sees it as a way of showing a way of living. It is quite interesting to point out that some of the sailors interviewed contrast “life on board” and “life off board”, implicitly considering the latter less authentic. Using Bourdieu’s words (1994), this comparison between sail-motor can be seen as a comparison between new and old middle classes. Sailing is a sport considered to be more classy, characteristic of those who have not only money but “old money”, and thereby a certain kind of socialization. On the contrary, motor water sports are seen as characteristic of new rich and are given less social consideration and prestige on the basis of the interviews. Since old money tends to despise new rich, and vice versa, the promoters of a marina need to consider which public to cater for. For it seems that attracting one group will implicitly drive the other away.

Finally, the third socio-economic conflict arises between those who use marinas as sporting venues and those who use them as the means to show their social condition and prestige is the most salient among those found in the research. Resulting from the interviews, a significant number of mooring owners or renters emerged as not really keen on water sports, since they seldom practice water activities. However, this does not mean they will soon leave a marina and give space for more aficionados. They own a mooring basically for the sake of social prestige. And for them, it is owning a mooring or being a member of a yacht club that confers social prestige, and not actually practising water sports. According to the interviewees, it is a phenomenon that not only occurs in the Canary Islands but also in other places,

such as the Balearic Islands, mainland Spain and other parts of Europe. Interviewees do not agree about how to consider this phenomenon. For some, it is a real cancer of the sector, since the “smuggler mooring owners” invest very little in water sports. For others, since assuring the continuity in paying the rent is a key issue for marinas, their money is as good for this purpose as any other. However, there seems to be an inherent conflict here: given a certain number of moorings, the higher the number of “smuggler owners” is, the lower the possibilities for sport practice, and vice versa.

Tourism conflicts in Marinas

Conflicts around the tourist dimension of marinas have to do with the limitation that the Canary Islands’ tourist model imposes on water sports. Tourism monopolizes marinas and hinders the development of sport activities, since both tourism and water sports are activities that compete for the same space, the coastal areas. The bulk of tourism activities in Tenerife take place along the coastline, and this fact hinders the possibilities to use the coast as a sporting venue. In the case of the marinas in the tourist area, it was found that a number of the moorings were being used as a base for whale watching vessels, and therefore not used for sport purposes. Since whale watching is a very successful enterprise for tourism in Tenerife, and there is stiff competition for space in a marina, and sport activities are not likely to win this competition. In the case of other sports, the competition is for the configuration of the space: surfers interviewed were very critical of tourism development in Tenerife. Tourism on the island has widely transformed the sea shore, creating new beaches and changing the previously existing ones. Since the average tourist prefers quiet beaches, in most cases this transformation has led to worse wave conditions, and therefore surfers believe that tourism development in Tenerife has mostly hindered their sport's possibilities. This is not to say that water sports and tourism have necessarily to be antagonistic, not even for such particular cases as surfing, specially sensitive with the environment (Wheaton, 2007). Interviewees related stories of successful surf and tour-

ism experiences, such as in the Mentawai Islands (Indonesia), but this shows that, in spite of the traditional optimistic approach, conflicts between tourism and water sports can easily arise if the relationship is not carefully managed.

Another source of conflict in the relationship between marinas and tourism are the so called "expressive activities", that is to say, activities, such as banana trips, pedalos, casual snorkeling, etc., that are designed as an entertainment for tourists. In the Canary Islands, where sea and sand tourism is so important, recreation plays a crucial role in the motivations and activities of social actors, and thus other sport and social spaces are influenced by a recreational perspective. For most vacationers, practising sport activities is considered to be more a game than a sport. However, sport, as an institutionalized social activity, imposes norms that turn what initially was just a game into a proper sport. Interviewees complained that only in one of the three marinas analysed, Marina Santa Cruz, the sports logic predominates. In the case of Puerto de Colon, the marina which is isolated from other harbours but embedded in the larger touristic resort of the island, the management and activities are focused on recreation rather than watersports (whale watching, banana trips etc.). In the case of Marina Tenerife, the overwhelming majority of the users of the marina are locals whose goals when coming to the marina have more to do with recreation and the search for social prestige rather than actually with watersports.

Finally, a third source of conflict in the relationship between marinas and tourism has to do with the perceptions and attitudes of locals towards tourism. Among interviewees a social discourse of criticism towards tourism was found, which is deemed to be relevant to certain groups in the Canary Islands's society (environmentalists, some political groups, farmers etc.). The rejection of tourism as the basis of the Island's socio-economic model has to do with different factors. First of all, tourism is blamed for attracting too many people to the Canary Islands and therefore creating demographic, environmental and social problems. However, these problems are usually associated with the type of tourists,

who are considered to have a low level of expenditure, cultural interest in the islands and whose travelling motivations are based on drinking alcohol and sun-bathing. These tourists are ideologically opposed to a group of tourist, labelled as "quality tourism", identified with elite (high-spending power) tourism. Since water sports and marina tourism is identified with this elite tourism, resident's perceptions towards this type of tourism is more positive than towards general tourism. Actually, perception is so positive that in a general context of a tourism moratorium, a law passed by the Government of the Canary Islands in 2003 that banned building new infrastructure for tourism, hotels and resorts linked to the development of marinas are still allowed. That is because, as mentioned before, marinas are expected to upgrade tourism. Therefore, marinas influence the discourses of residents towards tourism development. However, it has to be mentioned that discourses vary among different sports groups. As stated, surfers tend to have a negative perception of marina development, and this is also reflected in their discourse towards tourism development.

Conclusions

The need to move towards more comprehensive research in the field of Sport and Tourism has already been pointed out by authors, such as Gibson (2004: 247-248). Following this approach, an attempt to show the conflicts that can arise around the relationship between sport and tourism in marinas has been made. We will now proceed to discuss the implications both for theory construction and for management.

With regard to the sport dimension of marinas, the most salient conflict has been found to be that between those sports that benefit from the existence of a marina and those which are hindered by it. Some sports, such as scuba diving or surfing, are less likely to use the space and resources of marinas. However, interviewees generally agreed that given certain circumstances these sports could also benefit from the existence of marinas. For scuba diving, marinas could become highly suitable bases from which to gain access to the sea if they were used as bases for scuba diving cruises.

The same could happen with surfing: marinas could be a base for surf cruises that allowed surfers to gain access to places that are dangerous or difficult to reach by road.

According to the information gathered through the interviews, it would also be positive for the sector if local authorities got more involved in water sport promotion, especially among the youth. This could help solve the lack of female participants in these sports. And finally, as for the problems created by the excess of control by coastguards, a deeper respect and mutual knowledge would be desirable. The delimitation and demarcation of permitted activities in and around marinas and harbours would also help.

Regarding the second domain considered, the socio-economic dimension of marinas, the first conflict identified had to do with the inherent conflict in the growth of an activity whose aim is to help to differentiate tourist destinations. In this respect, it seems essential that accurate planning should be undertaken, considering both the goals desired from the development strategy and the demand elasticity of outbound markets. In order to plan the development of water sports around marinas at a destination level, it seems crucial to consider whether there is an unsatisfied demand for nautical tourism in the relevant outbound markets or whether the tourists should be brought from other destinations. In that case, a detailed analysis of the competitive assets of the destination should be undertaken. Of course, the same applies to other forms of sport tourism, for example, golf tourism.

The second conflict identified around the socio-economic dimension of marinas had to do with the different social groups using them. Different sports have different social class images, ones identified as “high society” sports and others as “workers’ sports”. Therefore, tourist destinations planning to develop sport tourism should first analyse their brand image as a tourist destination and then develop sport tourism activities that fit their image, in order to prevent miscommunication from occurring. For instance, among all the Canary Islands, Fuerteventura is the island whose tourist image is most associated with surfing and windsurfing. Therefore, before planning the

development of marinas on this island, it should first be considered how to combine the targets of both surfing and windsurfing tourism and marinas as developing one type of tourism could discourage others.

With respect to the last of the dimensions considered, the conflicts in the touristic dimension of marinas, it is clear that they are connected with the prospects that stakeholders maintain about the development of sport tourism. Garham (1996) and Faulkner *et al* (1998) have pointed out that many sport tourists, both event and active sport tourists behave as “sport junkies”. Therefore, they limit the time and money they spend on tourism activities. So, in spite of promoters thinking of sport tourists as “high-spending power tourists”, they do not actually spend so much. According to the information gathered through the interviews, this can be the case for many surf tourists in Tenerife.

Besides that, the conflicts in the tourist dimension of marinas are mainly related to the fact that tourism and water sports are two activities that in most sea and sun destinations compete for the same space, the sea shore. An archetypal example of this would be the fact that whale watching ships occupy berths at marinas and therefore limit their possibilities as sport venues. Some interviewees pointed out that a solution to this would be to concentrate such activities in commercial harbours and leave marinas only for sport-related vessels.

All of these dimensions and conflicts need to be considered if developers are to adequately manage the relationship between sport, tourism and marinas. Finally, from a theoretical point of view, research results show that an approach that considers conflicts as an inherent part of social life seems much more useful for understanding sport tourism than traditional functionalistic approaches.

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