

THE USE OF CONSTRUCTIONS PERMITS AS INDICATORS OF RENEWAL PROCESSES AT CONSOLIDATED TOURISTIC DESTINATIONS OF COASTAL AREAS¹

Moisés Simancas Cruz
Agustín Dorta Rodríguez
Héctor Dávila Mamely

Grupo de investigación ReinvenTUR: Renovación e Innovación Turística. Universidad de La Laguna.
Observatorio de Renovación Turística. Cátedra de Turismo CajaCanarias-Ashotel-Universidad de La Laguna
msimancas@ull.edu.es, agustin.drguez@gmail.com, hmamely@gmail.com

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, successful renewal performances include actions that go beyond the physical intervention and, of course, the simple renovation. Thus, the process of renewal must face changes and innovations in the different elements included in the tourist accommodation system, as the business model, marketing, business management, organizational and human resources structure, service delivery, etc.

From this point of view, any major or minor work that is to be made needs its own construction permit. This makes them one of the multiple indicators to describe the process of physical building renewal of tourist establishments. The main objective of this work is to provide the strengths and weaknesses of the use of granted licenses to measure urban renewal processes at mature tourist destinations. In order to provide an applied dimension to the various general statements, we rely on the process of renewal of tourist accommodations in Puerto de la Cruz (Tenerife, Spain).

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II. THE RELEVANCE OF THE URBAN CONSTRUCTION PERMIT AS AN INDICATOR OF THE DEGREE OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS RENEWAL

The construction permit is an administrative declaratory act -not constitutive-, compulsory, objective, neutral and legally requiring granting or denial of a permit or authorization of *ius aedificandi*. Therefore, it is an act of authorization (de la Concha, 2010). The relevance of the analysis of the construction permits for the renewal of tourist accommodation is that it provides an interesting quantitative information about them.

- This is a regulated procedure -not discretionary
- The license is granted *propter rem* and not *intuitu personae* (de la Concha, 2010). This makes that the license may be requested by owners, hotel chains or holding companies that manage tourist accommodation establishments through franchise contracts, rental agreement, assignment contract or similar.
- It is an act of intervention in the area of individual liberties. Obtaining a construction permit legitimizes the materialization of any action or construction and the development of the uses related to it. This is an authorization previous to the work involved.
- It is an exclusive competence of the municipal administration.
- Finally, analysis of the construction permits that have been granted provides a significant amount of information about the process of renewal of tourist accommodation establishments, especially on their statistical use.

III. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM: THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION TO MEASURE TOURIST ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS RENEWAL: THE USE OF CONSTRUCTION PERMITS FOR MAJOR AND MINOR WORKS.

These strengths of construction permits or licenses are offset by a number of weaknesses that limit its scope in the analysis of the processes of renewal of tourist accommodation.

- The license does not act as a homogeneous unit of analysis. This is due to the heterogeneity of regional and municipal regulations and legislation.
- Certain external renovation actions have been carried out without a planning permission, to avoid the associated costs (fee for the provision of urban services, fee for the private use of local public domain, construction tax facilities and works, project management, etc.).
- The questionnaire by the Ministerio de Fomento de la Dirección General de programación económica y Subdirección General de estadísticas y estudios del Gobierno de España which collects information at national level on licenses for major works, presents a series of statistical problems for analyzing tourist accommodation renovation processes:
- Apart from the data provided by the Ministry of Public Works, there are difficulties in the access to public information in this field of analysis. The regulation on the granting and use of information from urban planning licenses for major works at regional and municipal level is subject to local competition.

- This information gap is further complicated in the case of licenses for minor works. The different municipalities determine different models for its application. Thus, the types of permissions are very heterogeneous and vary depending on different factors related to its location.

From this point of view, here we show the methodology used in a Spanish tourist destination from the 50s to gather information from the building renewal made on tourist accommodations through an extensive use of exposed construction permits.

IV. RESULTS. CASE STUDY: MEASSURING TOURIST ACCOMODATION OFFER RENEWAL IN PUERTO DE LA CRUZ THROUGH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Puerto de la Cruz is one of the first coast tourist destinations of the Canary Islands (Spain). The analysis of major and minor work licenses granted in Puerto de la Cruz has allowed us to analyse the process of renewal of 90 existing tourist accommodation establishments in this tourist area. To do this, we proceeded to collect archived resolutions of construction permits between 1955 and 2009 in the Planning Department and the Municipal Archives of Puerto de la Cruz. This involved identifying and quantifying the legal operations of renewal, leaving out those that were made without municipal licenses.

During the period under review (1955-2009), 930 of the 13,100 resolutions granted were for tourist accommodation establishments (Table 1). Its analysis followed the next sequential process:

- 1) Review and treatment of construction permits, in order to correct and add information to those permits that needed key data, had inaccuracies or incomprehensible or doubtful data.
- 2) Identification of construction permits that were exclusively granted for the renovation of tourist accommodation.
- 3) Classification of permits by type, identifying major works, minor works and activities and facilities.
- 4) Consultation records and resolutions of permits, in order to extract specific data and visits to tourist establishments in order to interview people related to accommodations (reception staff, directors and owners).
- 5) Classification of construction permits according to type of accommodation.
- 6) Integration of information and statistical data disaggregated through a Geographic Information System.

With research data 649 permits for tourist accommodation establishments were recorded during the investigation period, representing an average of 12 licenses per year. This shows the tourist insufficient renewal process, especially if we consider that the average has been 9 performances per establishment. These results have corroborated the deficit on renewal at the tourist area of Puerto de la Cruz. The performances previously mentioned have been mainly based on minor works, conservation and physical maintenance of tourist accommodation establishments.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This research has raised the opportunity of using construction permits as a viable indicator to evaluate the process of renewal of tourist accommodation establishments. The analysis of the number and types can show the deficits of available public information about the processes of renewal of accommodation establishments at national and regional level as well as the heterogeneity of information systems available in this area.

From this point of view, a special emphasis has been placed on the importance of construction permits as a valid tool that provides a considerable number of measurable variables for improving the evaluation of tourist accommodation renewal process. However, it is recognized that there is a homogeneous unit of analysis, as it is subject to certain limitations (homogeneous sources, regulatory and legal issues, permits diversity, nature and their scope or location, etc.) which analytical capacity to the methodological process and to the results obtained.

However, its application to the analysis to tourist accommodation establishments renewal process in a tourist area of the Canary Islands, has allowed to contrast its potential in relation to any of the following issues:

- a) It provides enough analysis variables to achieve comprehensive knowledge of the renewal process on the tourist accommodation offer in accordance with its own evolution.
- b) It can be a conceptual systematization as an alternative to the problem of heterogeneity of information sources available. The classification of urban renewal licenses has allowed us to analyze the degree of renewal of tourist accommodation establishments depending on the type of permit. This has enabled us to go into detail about the information received by the renovation operations.

In summary, the results show the usefulness of construction permits in the renewal process of the hotel sector. Even with these data, it is necessary to influence new studies and cases in other tourist areas in order to homogenize, advance and improve the methodology proposed to corroborate its usefulness. Thus, we consider necessary to improve the analytical process in statistics on the tourist establishments for further planning and management of consolidated tourist destinations and thus allow greater knowledge.