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# Mass media's production of destination images: Majorca's image in three Swedish newspapers, 1950-2000

*La production par les médias d'images de destinations touristiques: la représentation de Majorque dans trois journaux suédois de 1950 à 2000*

Kristina N. Lindström

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## The media geography of tourism

### Background and aim

- 1 In this article it is argued that human mobility has become increasingly bound up with the growth of the media and its representation of places (e.g. Harvey, 1989; Giddens, 1990; Janelle, 1991; Thrift, 1997; Dicken, 1998). Due to the fact that the commercial production of attractive media images of foreign places is central to the tourism industry, this is perhaps more evident in tourism than in any other business (Urry, 1995). Hence, it can be argued that tourism is an activity trading in information and that the creation, production and distribution of information about tourist destinations through various media actors are core activities in the tourism industry. This article deals with mass media's production of destination images, that is, the process of choosing, cultivating and presenting media images of tourist destinations. Mass media encompasses journalistic work such as news and travel writing in print media, radio and television (cp. Nielsen, 2001). The aim is to describe and analyse the media images applied to one tourist destination in a selection of Swedish newspapers during the period 1950-2000. Furthermore, the aim generates three research questions: (1) How much space do the newspapers dedicate to the tourist destination? (2) What do media images of the tourist destination contain, i.e. what do the newspapers choose to write

about? (3) How have media images of the tourist destination evolved during the period 1950-2000, i.e. the era of mass tourism<sup>1</sup>? Before turning to the results of the empirical study, it is of relevance to obtain a clear idea of the concept media destination image and of mass media's production of these destination images.

## The production of media destination images

- 2 The term image is widely used in the field of human geography (Tani, 2001a) as well as in tourism research in other disciplines (Pike, 2002). Even though it is a concept with shifting disciplinary and historical meanings, a dominant focus can be found, that is, a consumer/demand-side focus, i.e. most definitions of (destination) image refer to perceptions and mental images in people's minds (e.g. Gould and White, 1986; Um and Crompton, 1990; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Young, 1999). Hence, a less developed focus is that of destination image as a phenomenon that is interpreted in relation to socially produced space (Burgess, 1990; Burgess and Gold, 1985; Zonn, 1990; Hanefors and Mossberg, 2000; Tani, 2001b). Thus, an overall definition of the concept of destination image can be divided into two intertwined sub-categories, *mental images and media images*, where the former aims at a consumer perspective and mental perceptions of reality and the latter includes a producer perspective and media representation of reality. This study is above all interested in the role of media destination images and the way a tourist destination is represented in various media through social and cultural production processes. Whether media images really affect people's mental images of places is not dealt with here.
- 3 Such an interpretation of destination image implies a more complex understanding of place image than Lynch's (1960) classical definition of an image of a place as "the result of a two-way process between the observer and his environment" (p. 6). Instead, an image of a place has become increasingly bound up with the growth of the media industries and their complex production processes. The production of media images of tourist destinations means more than simple transmissions of reality through the media:
 

"Media do more than simply represent the world outside: they offer different ways of apprehending it and comprehending spaces. More than this they also create mediated environments and relationships whose distinctive geographies have significant implications in today's world." (Crang, 1998, p. 99)
- 4 Accordingly, the production of mediated images of tourist destinations means a process of multiple coding of place. In such a process, information about the destination is chosen, moulded and interpreted by the influence of many actors and in several stages, and finally presented as media content (Burgess, 1990; Thrift, 1997; Crang, 1998; Hughes, 1998; Hay and Israel, 2001). The media images of the tourist industry are, as Harvey (2000) points out, problematic from a geographical perspective since they represent the place as spectacular, exotic and extraordinary. Place images tend to be stereotyped interpretations of reality (Shields, 1991). Dann (1996a) develops the problematic role of the *language of tourism* as he claims that tourism has its own discourse. Above all, the tourism discourse is a language of social control as image formation agents within and outside the tourism industry produce images according to specific norms and thus build up the tourist's expectation about the tourist destination and the tourist experience (cp. Dann, 1996b; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998).

- 5 Destination images are created by various internal and external agents in the tourism industry. One such image formation agent is the mass media, often defined as an autonomous (Gartner, 1993) and non-commercial (Fodness and Murray, 1997) actor in tourism. However, even though such theoretical categorisations contributes to the understanding of how the aim and conditions of an information source affect consumer behaviour and destination development, one must remember that this is just a theoretical construct. In reality, it is difficult to distinguish one information process from another since they intertwine in the stage of production as well as in the stage of consumption. An image formation agent uses the outcome of other image formation agents as sources and in the consumption stage, multiple-source information search is used, and thus, mass media content must be seen as the result of a process of selection of people, events and conditions, which in turn is moulded by factors and conditions within and outside the mass media institution. Journalists do not simply describe places, conditions and events, but rather media content reflects information gathering, editorial policies and public relations activities and the struggle between different interest groups in the outcome of media content (Burgess and Gold, 1985; Burgess, 1990; Hughes, 1998; Hay and Israel, 2001). The mass media production process is dependent on several social institutions (e.g. other image formation agents in the tourism industry) and thus, it could not be considered a completely autonomous production process. The dependency of mass media institutions on other institutions in society is evident, as mass media industries become more commercialised (McQuail, 1994).
- 6 It can be claimed that mass media content is produced according to a specific logic, that is, a cultural standardisation of the processing of media raw material (i.e. reality) (Altheide and Snow, 1979 in McQuail, 1994). In sum, the media logic of news media is its preferences for the immediate, the dramatic and for personalisation. Historically, the role of place in news media has changed primarily as an effect of inventions within transport and communication media. Before the 1840's, news coverage was dependent on the speed of means of transportation and the production of news was above all concerned with occurrences in places in the media audience's local environment. When the telegraph was invented, the electronic era began and news coverage was no longer dependent on the speed of physical transportation. Thus, when physical proximity no longer decided the currency of the news, there was a shift from geographical bundling to topical sorting (Brooker-Gross, 1985; Postman, 1986). Place became an unquestioned backcloth to people, events and conditions brought to people's attention by the mass media:
- "A few film shots establish location; a few sentences in a newspaper report place and occasionally explain the news. Nevertheless, these references are important since the majority pass into our taken-for-granted understanding of the world" (Burgess, 1985, p. 192).
- 7 Accordingly, one consequence of the rapid transmission of information is that place is of minor importance in the media information flow. It can be argued that place is replaceable in favour of events. Nevertheless, there have been some attempts to clarify factors determining place's coverage patterns in news media (Burgess and Gold, 1985; Burgess, 1990; Avraham, 2000). One such attempt is Avraham's (ibid.) study of determining factors of the amount and nature of cities' coverage patterns in national news media. I believe these factors are valid in a broader context, that is, places' (e.g. tourist destinations) news media coverage. Four primary factors are defined as

determinants. Firstly, *the characteristics of the place*, that is, population size, number of important institutions, geographical location and crime rate. Secondly, *the public relations efforts* made by the place or actors such as tour operators and NGOs in order to get as much positive and as little negative media attention as possible. Thirdly, *the media institution's editorial policy* towards the coverage of the place in terms of journalists covering the place, including the journalists' personal relationships towards the place, sources used, definition of "news" and definition of the media's target audience and its preferences. As a result of the news media's interest in negative news, crimes and accidents tend to dominate place media images. Alderman's (1997) study of the hyper-coverage of the OJ Simpson trial and its consequences for Los Angeles' media image is one interesting example of this. Furthermore, in tourism it is often stressed that negative conditions such as natural disasters (Milo and Yoder, 1991; Gartner, 1993) and terrorism (Nielsen, 2000) will cause media coverage of tourist destinations. The fact that newspapers consist of several sections means that they have different ways of representing place, i.e. different media logic. Here journalistic work can be divided into two broad categories, news and fictional content, of which the former is based on facts. Travel writing is a type of journalism positioned somewhere in between facts - fiction. Central to news media is the production of news, nevertheless most commercial news media contains little news. Furthermore, travel writing has become an important and growing genre of news reporting (Wood, 1977; McQuail, 1994; McManus, 1995; Holland and Huggan, 1998). Finally, *the social and political environment* in which the mass media institution operates influence places' coverage patterns in news media. This means that factors such as freedom of speech and what is on the public agenda shape the tourist destination's media image.

## Majorca in three Swedish newspapers: the empirical study

### Study area and data sources

- 8 This article deals with Majorca's media destination image, yet it is relevant to say something about Majorca per se as the island's identity as a Swedish tourist destination was vital for the choice of media destination image. Firstly, Majorca is a good example of how tourism completely transforms a society, both in terms of exploitation and successful destination development. Fifty years ago, the Balearic Islands were peripheral agricultural societies in fascist Spain. Since then, Majorca has become one of the most important destinations for mass tourism in Europe. Secondly, as a destination for mass tourism, Majorca has tended to be in the hands of powerful external decision-makers such as tour operators and airline companies (Bull, 1997). This is interesting from a media perspective since these are important image formation agents in tourism (Gartner, 1993). Furthermore, as an island with tourism as the dominating business, the media coverage on the tourist destination Majorca is easy to distinguish in the media flow. Finally, in spite of the fact that Swedish tourists in Majorca constitute a small share of the total number of tourists, dominated by British and German tourists, the island plays a significant role as a tourist destination on the Swedish market during the whole study period (Buswell, 1996; Swedish Civil Aviation Administration, 2001).

- 9 In this study, the mass media encompasses journalistic work such as news and travel writing in print media, radio and television (cp. Nielsen, 2001). The aim of the empirical study demanded an old, but still comprehensible kind of mass medium and thus, the selected mass medium was the newspaper. Due to the fact that one of the research questions concerned the evolution of the tourist destination's media images over a period of fifty years, print media was a natural choice in favour of more effective electronic mass media. Furthermore, the fact that newspapers consist of different sections (see above) means that the relationship between news production and travel reports could be analysed. The analysed mass media during the whole study period included the national quality broad sheet paper (morning paper) Dagens Nyheter and the national tabloid Expressen (469 texts). During the period 1975 - 2000, the local morning paper, Göteborgs-Posten, was included in the study (95 texts). The empirical material consists of the total number of newspaper texts about Majorca found in the three above-mentioned Swedish newspapers between 1950-2000.

## Methodology

- 10 The texts are analysed from a tourism-geographic perspective, i.e. the focus is on how media images portray the tourist destination. It is important to stress the fact that the aim is not to compare the destination's media image to the actual destination development in Majorca (c.p. Buswell, 1996; Bull, 1997; Salvà Tomàs, 1997). The methods employed are quantitative and qualitative analyses of content in the newspapers' texts about Majorca. The quantitative work involves analysing the space allocated to the newspaper texts (number of texts and size) and comprehensively categorising the places, people, events and conditions noted in relation to Majorca. The qualitative work involves an in-depth analysis of the newspaper texts, which aims at giving a refined picture of the content used in the presentation of Majorca.

## Space allocated to Majorca in the newspapers

- 11 As is shown in table 1, the tabloid dedicated considerably more space (amount and size) to Majorca than the national morning paper. The analysis shows that the tabloid's average article about Majorca occupies one third of a page, less than seven times a year. The average article in the national morning paper occupies less than one tenth of a page in the paper, less than three times a year. As far as the number of newspaper articles is concerned, the analysis shows variation over the measured period of time, that to a large extent coincides with Majorca's popularity on the Swedish market. Furthermore, the evolution of the size allocated to Majorca in the newspapers tends to coincide with the amount of published articles. The study is mainly concerned with the textual part of the articles, yet one important result of the measurement of size dedicated to Majorca in the newspapers, is that approximately half the material consists of visual elements, i.e. photos, maps and illustrations.

Table 1. Amount of text and size allocated to Majorca<sup>2</sup>.

Amount of text	National morning paper	Tabloid	Total
Total amount of text	134	335	469
Average amount of text a year	2,7	6,7	9,4
Size (cm <sup>2</sup> )	National morning paper	Tabloid	Total
Total size	26 639	88 222	114 861
Text	13 781	44 922	58 703
Illustration	12 858	43 300	56 158
Average text size	199	263	245
Average annual size	634	2 101	2 735

- 12 The fact that a newspaper consists of different sections and categories of text makes the study interesting to the point that it could achieve a deeper understanding of how different media forms affect the media destination image. Different categories of texts mean different representations of reality (McQuail, 1994). This is further developed below, however, the quantitative analysis of the space allocated to the two broad categories of text found in the newspaper shows that the increase and decrease of news coverage and travel writing coincide. Possibly, there is a trend towards more news coverage than travel writing during the high season and in periods of success. The period with the most frequent news coverage on Majorca coincides with Majorca's high season May - October and, particularly with the general industrial holiday in Sweden in July. However, when it comes to the feature material, i.e. travel writing, the trend is not as evident as with the news coverage. In order to obtain a deeper understanding of how the newspapers choose and cultivate specific images of Majorca, quantitative and qualitative analyses of the content of the 564 texts were carried out.

### Descriptions of Majorca in the newspapers

- 13 As previously discussed, a newspaper consists of a number of sections, which implies different ways of moulding the reality of place into media content. In the case of the three Swedish newspapers' images of Majorca, two broad categories were found, i.e. news and travel writing. News from Majorca is usually about an event or a series of events disturbing the normal conditions of the tourist destination and thus the comfort of the tourists. News coverage is often sudden and unexpected, e.g. news about accidents, fires or acts of crime. Furthermore, the purpose of news from Majorca is to confirm the comfort and security of the tourist destination. In these images, Swedish actors such as the Swedish Church and Swedish journalists play important roles as experts and trouble-shooters. News from Majorca is nearly always about events, conditions or people that affect the Swedish audience, i.e. potential tourists, if not or if the proximity to the audience is weak, it seldom becomes more than a news item.
- 14 Three categories of travel writing were found, all of them published in the newspapers' travel sections or in a similar section. Two of them, the *experience report* and the *informative report*, are more frequent than the third category, the *critical report*. Travel writing orientated towards communicating the tourist experience tells the story of the Swedish tourist in Majorca, where he lives, what food he eats, what activities he participates in, whom he spends time with, what souvenirs he buys, and so on. Quite often it is the tourist experience of the journalist that is expressed in the report.

Furthermore, the tourist experiences in the reports have both positive and negative values, and thus travel writing about Majorca is about the experience of the “tourist paradise” as well as about displeased tourists. The informative report on Majorca contains concrete guidelines and advice concerning how to make the stay in Majorca as pleasant as possible in terms of getting as much value for money as possible. This means frequent publishing of various lists and statistics, e.g. travel packages, tour operators, hotels, restaurants, attractions, souvenirs, price-levels and climate. Furthermore, an orientation towards specific target groups is noted, e.g. how to travel to Majorca with children, if you are disabled, if you are retired, if you are a teenager or if you are on a honeymoon trip. The critical report constitutes the third category of travel writing that was found in the newspaper texts about Majorca. These are reports questioning the consequences of tourism in Majorca. However, this category hardly received any space until the 1990s. In addition to news and travel writing, a small amount of other texts such as columns, reviews and letters to the editor are found in the newspapers.

- 15 In the tourism/image literature, there is often a distinction made between inside and outside perspectives on place, or tourist space versus local space. That is, when a tourist destination develops, specific tourist spaces evolve both in the physical and in the human landscape (Lew, 1994; MacCannell, 1999; Jafari, 2000; Waldren, 1996; Tani, 2001a). This theoretical assumption has been used as an analytic tool in the quantitative analysis of the newspaper media content about Majorca. The outside perspective is defined as the tourist perspective on Majorca, i.e. images of tourist spaces, tourist attractions, tourists and events and circumstances taking place in the tourist bubble. Majorca's media images are dominated by the tourist perspective where, as is shown in Table 1, approximately ninety per cent of the newspaper texts apply a tourist perspective. The inside perspective is defined as newspaper texts dealing with the local community, its people, culture and physical landscape, including tourism from a local point of view. Approximately one out of ten newspaper texts has the inside or local perspective. The two perspectives were further developed into six sub-categories of which four are sub-categories to the tourist perspective and two are sub-categories to the local perspective. The 564 texts about Majorca were classified in accordance with the six themes, that is, one text could only get the value of one theme. The six themes are further explained below.
- 16 Media images of *the familiar tourist destination* dominate Majorca's media image as nearly every third article has the familiar tourist destination as the overall theme. This means that the newspaper articles above all revolve around descriptions of the touristy Majorca; climate, tourist areas, hotels, means of transportation, food and beverages, price levels, things worth seeing etc. Media images of the familiar Majorca also include reports on life in the tourist bubble, especially the Swedish tourists' experiences of Majorca. Media images of *the Swedish tourist destination* play an important role in the overall media image of Majorca. The theme is above all evident in the second phase (1960-1973). Media images of the Swedish Majorca revolve around people, events, traditions, food and other things that can be more related to Sweden, Swedish customs and to the Swedish culture, than to the local society. Media images of *the extraordinary tourist destination* are not very dominant, nevertheless, these media images play an important role in the newspapers' creation of an exotic, untouched, and authentic destination. Media images of the extraordinary island Majorca include reports from the environment outside the familiar and exploited tourist bubble. Media images of the



insecure tourist destination constitute the second most important theme in the overall Majorcan media image, where more than every fifth article deals with the insecure Majorca. The theme becomes more dominant over the years as a result of increased news coverage. A central aspect in the media images of *the insecure tourist destination* are stories about incidents and conditions disturbing the safe and familiar tourist bubble. Furthermore, trouble-shooters such as experts and institutions play an important role in the media images. As a rule these are Swedish actors, for example the Swedish Church, the Swedish Consulate and Swedish experts on fire fighting, health, pollution etc.

Table 2. Majorca's media image, 1950-2000: Two perspectives and six themes<sup>3</sup>.

	National press	National press	National press	National press	National press, total	Local press	Local press
	1950-1959	1960-1973	1974-1988	1989-2000	1950-2000	1974-1988	1989-2000
<b>Tourist perspective</b>							
The familiar tourist destination	87% (7)	38% (60)	38% (37)	30% (59)	<b>35% (163)</b>	46% (13)	25% (17)
The Swedish tourist destination	0% (0)	31% (49)	14% (14)	11% (21)	<b>18% (84)</b>	14% (4)	15% (10)
The extraordinary tourist destination	13% (1)	8% (13)	14% (14)	14% (27)	<b>12% (55)</b>	11% (3)	10% (7)
The insecure tourist destination	0% (0)	14% (23)	27% (26)	23% (47)	<b>21% (96)</b>	21% (6)	31% (21)
<b>Local perspective</b>							
Local community	0% (0)	7% (12)	1% (1)	6% (12)	<b>5% (25)</b>	4% (1)	12% (8)
Environmental hazard/control	0% (0)	1% (2)	3% (3)	11% (21)	<b>6% (26)</b>	4% (1)	6% (4)

**NUMBER OF TEXTS IN ( ); THE LOCAL MORNING PAPER IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COLUMN SHOWING THE WHOLE PERIOD (1950-2000); A SMALL NUMBER OF TEXTS DID NOT FIT IN THE CATEGORISATION AND DUE TO THIS THE SUM OF SOME OF THE COLUMNS IS NOT 100 PER CENT.**

- 17 The two remaining themes are subcategories of the local perspective, and thus represent approximately one tenth of the newspaper articles. Media images of the *local community* is the most infrequent theme, only five per cent of the articles deal with images of the local community outside the tourist's world, i.e. the tourist bubble. Media images of the local community include images of local people, local economy (including the tourism industry from a local perspective), political life in Majorca etc. Finally, media images of the *environmental hazard and control* represent six per cent of the empirical material. Interesting though, is the remarkable increase during the period 1989-2000. The theme deals with the negative effects of the exploitation of Majorca, and preventive work such as sustainable destination development. So far, the study has generated an overall picture of the space and the content of Majorca's media image in the three Swedish newspapers. The third and final research question concerns the evolution of Majorca's media image from 1950-2000.

## Salient features in the newspapers' images of Majorca between 1950-2000

- 18 The analysis of the 469 texts in the national morning paper and in the tabloid shows that the space allocated to Majorca coincides with Majorca's popularity as a tourist destination over the years. Inspired by Buswell's (1996) fundamental grouping of the island's destination development, four comprehensive stages are defined. Firstly, there is an introductory phase with few tourists and texts, secondly a boom with an increase in tourists and texts, thirdly an unstable phase with a decrease in tourists and texts, and finally a renewed increase in tourist and texts.

### Media images of early destination development (1950-1959)

- 19 The newspapers' coverage on Majorca during the first period was fragmentary. A total number of eight articles were published, all in springtime, i.e. March and April. Three of the articles were found in the tabloid, and five in the national morning paper. The characteristic of the period is the lack of any news coverage on Majorca, and thus unambiguously positive media images of the island. The overall media image communicated is an image of the tourist paradise Majorca, a place where frozen Swedes enjoy sun and warmth, and where average people are able to live a luxurious life without spending a fortune. It is obvious that the media image in the 1950s has significant similarities to the induced and commercial information in tourism (Dann, 1996a; Gartner, 1993), however, one exception to the trend is the journey from Sweden to Majorca, which is claimed to be expensive as well as uncomfortable. Furthermore, the media images of the local inhabitants are significant for the period. In "the language of tourism", "us and them" is a core theme in the tourism discourse (Dann, 1996a). However, with the exception of the 1950s' images, this is not a salient feature in the newspapers' media images. In the early stage of Majorca's destination development, the newspapers dedicate significant space to the local inhabitants in a way that corresponds to the conflict perspective described by Dann (*ibid*). The local Majorcan people are described as overwhelmingly friendly and service-oriented. According to the media images, it seems that entertaining the foreign visitors with song and dance acts dressed up in traditional costumes is central in their everyday life.

### Media images of the "boom" (1960-1973)

- 20 At the same time as the boom in Majorca's tourism industry, there is a remarkable increase in space allocated to Majorca in the newspapers, above all from 1960-1965. At the end of the 1960s, there is a stabilisation, from now on the newspaper images of Majorca become more continuous than in the phase of early destination development. The media image changes from being homogenous to being more diversified with news coverage and consumer-oriented reports. Thus, the media image of the tourist destination Majorca is not necessarily a positive image of the tourist paradise, but a place where accidents happen, price levels are too high, and the sun does not always shine. In spite of the fact that Swedish tourists in Majorca have always represented a small share of the total number of visitors to the island (Swedish Civil Aviation Administration, 2001; cp. Sàlva Tomàs, 1997), the overall media image gives an impression of the opposite situation. This is above all evident in the newspaper images

during the period 1960-1973, when the theme “the Swedish Majorca” corresponds to more than thirty per cent of the newspaper articles (see table 1). The purpose of the 1960s’ images of the Swedish Majorca is to create a sense of safety and security and of being “home” even though you are in a foreign place with strange customs. The newspapers revolve around issues such as “the possibility of getting a decent Swedish meal”, “where to go for information in Swedish”, “the social work of the Swedish Church and the Swedish Consulate” and “the celebration of Swedish holidays” or “holidays in a Swedish style”. Above all, the Swedish Church plays a key role in the image of the Swedish Majorca. Furthermore, images of content Swedish tourists and residents serve as a guarantee for a successful holiday. An interesting observation in the media image from 1960-1973 is how the local inhabitants are no longer represented as exotic and friendly but as spoiled and inhospitable. Besides the fact that the inhabitants play a less important role in the media image, they are claimed to be conservative and just interested in making a good profit out of the visitors. As early as in 1962, the newspapers complain about the hostile Majorcan inhabitants.

### **Media images of the recovery and the bad reputation (1974-1988)**

- 21 The third unstable period in Majorca’s destination development is represented in the Swedish newspapers in several ways. First, a decline in the number of newspaper articles is shown. Furthermore, the newspapers begin to focus on Majorca’s bad reputation, yet the angle is not the environmental damage and the problematic situation in Majorca’s economy, but rather the island’s declining attractiveness to Swedish tourists. Frequently, it is claimed in the media image that Majorca has become a too touristy and polluted destination, and that visiting other less exploited destinations means more value for money. Characteristic of the period’s media images is nostalgia and reports on how the Swedes once explored Majorca and how the destination used to be. Despite the importance of negative media images during the period, images of the sunny and cheap destination still worth visiting frequently occur. It seems that a group of journalists regard Majorca as a favourite destination and are therefore loyal to the island over the years. Salient features in the media image from 1974-1988 are also the representation of different categories of tourism. The homogenous image of the sun and warmth tourist begins to loosen up as new alternative forms of tourism are represented in the newspapers, for example images of hiking, cycling and bird-watching in Majorca. Furthermore, the tourists in the media image no longer represent a single type of tourist, but instead are divided into categories such as families with children, the elderly, young people, singles etc. This means more specialised reports on Majorca as a tourist destination.

### **Media images of the development of a “new” tourist paradise (1989-2000)**

- 22 Once again, the space allocated to Majorca in the Swedish newspapers is increasing. This is mainly a result of the increase in news coverage and a trend towards more critical reports on Majorca. One important reason for the diversification of Majorca’s media image is the newspapers’ focus on the island’s environmental situation. One example of this is a number of comprehensive reports on “Majorca’s intolerable environmental situation” published in the national morning paper. At the end of the period, the newspaper reports revolve around the plans for an eco-tourist tax. It is evident that Majorca’s refurbishment programme has an impact on the media image

(Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Batle, 2000). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that journalists specialised in environmental issues now pay attention to Majorca. There is a significant change in the way the local inhabitants are represented in the newspapers' images of Majorca. The media focus on the re-branding of the island corresponds to a new and active participation by the local people in the media image of Majorca. Local politicians, local experts on environmental issues, and representatives of the Majorcan Tourist Board comment and discuss the refurbishing programme. Finally, there is an interesting shift in the meaning attached to the theme the extraordinary tourist destination (see table 1). Until the media images of the 1980s, the extraordinary Majorca represents an aspect of the familiar Majorca, i.e. as an "authentic" attraction the tourists are recommended to visit during their stay in the familiar tourist bubble. However, in the 1980s and, above all, in the media images of the 1990s, the extraordinary become the familiar. In Majorca's media image, 1989-2000, the extraordinary, outside the exploited tourist space, stands for itself. The newspapers report on how to experience the real Majorca and how to avoid the touristy parts of the island, e.g. newspaper articles about how tourists rent cars or houses in villages in the interior of Majorca, and how to travel on your own in Majorca.

**Table 3. Summary of salient features in Majorca's media images, 1950-2000.**

	Space	Content
1950-1959	Fragmented publishing Lack of news coverage	Tourist paradise Exotic local inhabitants
1960-1973	Heavy increase	The Swedish Majorca Inhospitable local inhabitants
1974-1988	Decrease	Bad reputation Nostalgia Different forms of tourism Tourist typologies
1989-2000	Critical newspaper articles Increase in news coverage	Environmental hazard and control The extraordinary becomes the familiar Local inhabitants play an active role

## Conclusion

- 23 This article has dealt with the mass media and its relationship to the tourism industry in terms of the production of media destination images. It pinpoints some relevant issues that should be further developed in an attempt to understand the involvement of the mass media industries in tourism. Firstly, the theoretical assumption concerning the mass media industries, as autonomous image formation agents in tourism, must be questioned (Gartner, 1993). As the mass media industries become commercialised, the complexity in their relationship with the tourism industry increases. The empirical study that forms the basis for this article confirms this as it implies that the existence (or lack) of links between journalists and various commercial actors in the tourism industry are of vital importance for how tourist destinations are portrayed by the mass media. Nevertheless, it is not possible to fully prove the existence of such relationships by analysing media content, yet the study implies relations concerning factors

influencing mass media's production processes. One such implication is that the media images of Majorca are partly the result of public relations efforts made by international actors, e.g. tour operators, but also in recent years by the tourism industry in Majorca. The newspapers' writings about Majorca's refurbishing programme might be an example of this. Furthermore, the study shows that the media destination image is dependent on the attitudes and motives of single journalists (Holland and Huggan, 1998; Avraham, 2000). Over the years, a group of journalists have regarded Majorca as a favourite destination and their loyalty to the island has a clear impact on the media destination image, even in times of mainly negative images.

- 24 Secondly, it is evident that the mass media's social and political environment determines the representation of destinations in the news media (Avraham, 2000). Majorca's media image changes in accordance with the island's popularity and establishment on the Swedish market, but also in accordance with the evolution of the Swedish society. This raises questions concerning the possibilities to create media destination images that are not considered to be relevant issues on the public agenda of the tourist generating country. A third key finding concerns the trend towards homogenous media destination images that is noted in the newspapers. In spite of the fact that Majorca's media images during the period 1950-2000 coincide with the island's destination development and its function as a Swedish tourist destination, the way Majorca is represented in the newspapers changes remarkably little between 1950-2000. That is, the newspapers tend to invent new angles of traditional themes. It is evident that Majorca serves a specific purpose in the news media, in news coverage as well as in travel writing, and by doing so the media image of the island becomes a stereotype (Shields, 1991; Avraham, 2000). However, unlike Avraham's (*ibid.*) observations, Majorca's media image is not determined by the island's population size but rather by the number of Swedish tourists visiting it. In terms of important institutions and people, it is evident that these are brought to notice when Swedish. Hence, ethical questions can be raised concerning the lack of local perspective in the mass media's destination images, based on the obvious orientation towards placeless media destination images in which the tourist bubble dominates and Majorca's local physical and human landscape play secondary roles. However, in spite of the fact that the newspapers' representations of the tourist destination tend to be homogenous, it is evident that the general content and media logic of the news media contributes to a more diversified media destination image than commercial information, i.e. negative and critical images. The newspaper's different sections, in this study above all, news and travel writing, and the fact that mass media serves other institutions than the tourism industry, are important explanatory factors. Here, I would like to argue that the characteristics of the news media possess huge potential in terms of preventing the representation of place as spectacular, exotic and extraordinary (Harvey, 2000). However, for some reason this potential is not fully utilised.
- 25 Finally, it is important to consider to what extent it is possible to draw general conclusions from this unique case. Through the media images, it is evident that Majorca plays an extraordinary role as a Swedish tourist destination, both in terms of age and popularity. Very few tourist destinations can compete with Majorca's popularity over the years, and Majorca has become both a positive and a negative symbol of mass tourism in the Swedish mass media's images (and in the minds of the Swedish people). In spite of this, it can be argued that the study reveals more general

trends about how the mass media industries work in their multiple coding of place (Crang, 1998). Furthermore, as this study has dealt with the evolution of a destination's media image, conclusions concerning observations as to how a destination's media image emerges could be expected. However, the observations of the emergence of Majorca's media image is representative of the period of time (i.e. the 1950s) rather than being a general and still valid trend. One could possibly argue that media images of tourist destinations in third world countries are still treated as Majorca was fifty years ago as a result of the news media's dependence on proximity to place. As the world is "shrinking" (Harvey, 1989; Giddens, 1990; Janelle, 1991), places move closer to the Swedish media audience and tourists, and hence, Majorca used to be portrayed as a distant destination in the same way as destinations in the third world are portrayed today (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998).

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## NOTES

1. The article is based on an extensive study of Majorca's destination image (Lindström, 2002).
2. One page in the tabloid is equivalent to half a page in the national morning paper.
3. In accordance with Buswell's (1996) grouping of Majorca's destination development, four comprehensive stages of approximately ten years are used in the analysis. See further in the section about salient features in the newspapers' images of Majorca, 1950-2000.



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## ABSTRACTS

This article deals with mass media's role as producers of images of tourist destinations, and the extent to which mass media can be viewed as external actors in connection to the tourism industry. The aim is to describe and analyse the media images applied to one tourist destination in a selection of Swedish newspapers during the period 1950-2000, in terms of amount of space, media content and evolution over time. In spite of the fact that the production of media images has an impact on geographical phenomena such as human mobility and geographical consciousness, little direct work on the media has been conducted in human geography. In the tourism industry, media images of places influence tourist decision-making and thereby global travel patterns as well as local tourist-destination development. That is, both in terms of being efficient destination marketing tools and in terms of being conducive to negative effects on places. Hence, in order to understand the power of the production of media imagery in tourism and its geographical implications it is of relevance to study mass media's creation of destination images within the field of human geography.

Cet article traite du rôle des mass-médias comme producteurs d'images de destinations touristiques et de la mesure dans laquelle les mass-médias peuvent être vus comme des acteurs externes liés à l'industrie du tourisme. Il a pour but de décrire et d'analyser les images des médias appliquées à une destination touristique dans une sélection de journaux suédois d'entre 1950 et 2000, en termes de quantité d'espace, contenu des médias et évolution dans le temps. Bien que la production d'images des médias ait une influence sur des phénomènes géographiques comme la mobilité humaine et la conscience géographique, peu de travail direct sur les médias a été réalisé en géographie humaine. Dans l'industrie du tourisme, les images des lieux fournies par les médias influencent la prise de décision des touristes et, par conséquent, le modèle global des voyages ainsi que le développement des destinations touristiques locales. C'est-à-dire qu'ils sont aussi bien des instruments efficaces de promotion des lieux que des créateurs d'effets négatifs sur ceux-ci. Donc, pour comprendre le pouvoir de la production d'images dans le tourisme par les médias et son implication géographique, il est important d'étudier la création d'images des destinations des mass-médias dans le domaine de la géographie humaine.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** géographie des médias, tourisme de masse, mass-médias, agents de formation d'images, Majorque

**Keywords:** media geography, mass tourism, mass media, image formation agents, Majorca

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