

Article

The Problems of Tourist Sustainability in Cultural Cities: Socio-Political Perceptions and Interests Management

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse the social and political capacity of cities affected by cultural tourism. An investigation is carried out into the state of the situation in saturated destinations, the problems this poses to tourist sustainability and the positions of the various different interest groups. In Europe, many cultural cities-cum-tourist hotspots have reached such high levels of socio-political saturation that the resident population's capacity for carrying tourism has become overstretched. This has led to a state of irritation among the local population. Social movements now include this on their agenda but the various different interest groups (residents, political groups, entrepreneurs, management bodies) all react differently. We present data relating to the case of Barcelona, with analyses of residents' and tourists' opinions, the actions of social mobilization carried out by pressure groups, media repercussion and the reactions of the business sector and political groups. We examine data collected from surveys and opinions carried in the media. The sustainability and management of interests indicate changes in both the number and the type of tourists, the occupation of public spaces, the distribution of profit among entrepreneurs, residents and the political and economic model of society in the future.

Keywords: carrying capacity; anti-tourism; tourism-phobia; interest groups; sustainable planning; grounded theory

1. Introduction

Tourism sustainability and carrying capacity are linked in a number of ways: ecological/environmental, physical, economic, socio-perceptual and policy/management [1]. In this paper, we will refer to the socio-perceptual aspect and policy/management. We will focus on areas affected by cultural tourism and specifically on the striking case of one of the most touristic cities in the world: Barcelona.

In the summer of 2017 the media in different countries reported that tourism was the subject of acts of vandalism. This alerted the different groups operating in the tourist industry to the need to crack down on such attacks and implement a plan for sustainable tourism, as it was becoming clear that behind the attacks lay problems that had been simmering for years.

The questions we pose in this study address, on the one hand, the scale of the problem felt by the population of Barcelona and on the other, the problems that existed for such discontent to erupt. To measure the scale of the problem, we asked: What percentage of Barcelona's population expresses dissatisfaction with tourists and the way tourism is managed? Is it the same across the city or is it higher in the more touristic areas? What percentage of tourists consider that the carrying capacity has been exceeded?

To identify the problems fuelling the discontent we ask the locals two types of questions: One, what makes them dissatisfied with tourists or the way tourism is managed? And two, which are the

problems reported in the media that relate to tourism? Which actors bring them on? We asked tourists if they consider there are too many tourists in the city and about the price-quality relationship.

For the analysis we divided the article into five major sections: In the introduction, we pose the research questions; in the section named 'current state of the research', we present the stance of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the interests that should be taken into account at tourism destinations, the theories of various authors on the possible irritation of the local population caused by the eruption of tourism, as well as the participation of citizens and other actors that may enable tourism to be sustainable from a complex systemic point of view; in the third section, 'methodology and sources of data,' we begin with a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. For the quantitative, we explain the source of the data used to analyse the opinions of residents and tourists, providing details of the sample of the two surveys and the type of questions asked. For the qualitative, we explain the source of the data (newspaper articles) and the methodology used, combining the phases of the grounded theory with the programme Atlas.ti and the specific functions for each task—quotations, coding, conceptualization (families), relationships (super family)—all the way to the global view, which is represented graphically; we divided the 'results and discussion' section into two major sections—in the first we perform the quantitative analysis of the opinions of citizens and of tourists and then move on to the qualitative analysis of opinions published in the media; finally, we finish with our conclusions.

2. The Current State of the Research

Tourism sustainability means exercising control over a destination's carrying capacity. As a subject, carrying capacity has earned the attention of both academics [2] and the political institutions responsible for implementing tourism planning, which in our case means in compliance with the criteria of the European Union [3]. The perceptions of the inhabitants of tourist destinations and the way their places of residence are managed lie at the core of any research into carrying capacity. In addition to classical studies on the subject [4–6], in Europe we are currently witnessing a need to address not only the social and managerial aspects of carrying capacity but also a whole range of other related aspects [3].

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) in its Global Code of Ethics for Tourism [7] considers that the various actors in tourism should not only watch over their own agenda but also take into consideration the interests of the community as well as a place's cultural heritage and natural environment. If the ethical code is broken, problems arise because some actors impose their interests on others and confrontation ensues. If tourists disregard the ethical code they may annoy the local population; if entrepreneurs do not share their profits with workers and the community at large, there will be protests.

Tourist behaviour has a direct bearing on the host population's reception of visitors. Some tourists view their trip as an excuse to break with the constraints of day-to-day life. Jafari [8] explains very well the different phases this sort of tourist goes through before, during and after their trip and their subsequent return to everyday life. The journey sees the tourist step outside the social norms of co-existence and into a simulated world, where they stay, as if suspended in mid-air, until they land back into ordinary life. But the way this 'trip' happens varies, with some types being more prone to breaking society's rules than others.

Locals' predisposition to tourists also has to do with the tourism life cycle of a destination [9]. When tourism starts to develop, the locals may find it fun and attractive but as time passes, this ideal image wears thin and what they want is that tourists bring positive aspects to their community and not negative ones. Doxey developed an index to measure residents' attitudes to tourists—the "Irridex". He identifies four stages: Euphoria, Apathy, Annoyance and Antagonism [10]. His theory can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Index of irritation towards tourists (IRRIDEX).

IRRIDEX. Index of Irritation			
Stage	Name	Attitudes	Planning
One	Euphoria	“Associated with the initial phase of the development of the industry and visitors and investors are welcomed”	“There is usually little planning or control mechanism.”
Two	Apathy	“Tourists are taken for granted and contacts between residents and outsiders become more formal.”	“Most planning will be concerned with marketing.”
Three	Annoyance	“As saturation points are approached, residents begin to show misgivings about the tourist industry.”	“Policy makers tend to see solutions in increasing infrastructure rather than through setting limits to growth.”
Four	Antagonism	“This stage is reached when irritations are overtly expressed verbally and physically. Mutual politeness gives way to mutual antagonism and the outsider is seen as the cause of all problems, personal and societal.”	“Planning will now have to be remedial but is usually preceded by the simple expedient of increasing promotion to offset the deteriorating reputation of the destination.”

Source: This author’s own schema based on Doxey’s theory [10] (pp. 196–197).

What happens in mature tourist destinations [11] where the social carrying capacity has been exceeded, is that a group of people show their discontent with tourism and accuse it of all their ills, personal and societal, even when some are not the fault of tourism. This leads to a state of irritation, expressed verbally (accusations) and physically (acts of violence). However much the destination is further promoted, its image with tourists is tarnished and drastic measures become necessary to bring about a change in the type of tourism it receives.

What state is Barcelona’s tourism sector in? Mitchell [12–14] describes five different phases in the creative destruction process applicable to tourism destinations, which are: early commodification; advanced commodification; early destruction; advanced destruction; and post-destruction. He likewise considers that “As a community progresses through these stages, increases occur in investment levels, visitor numbers and negative attitudes towards tourism. This evolution is often inevitable, for in a society driven to accumulate capital, limiting investment is ‘counter-intuitive to the entrepreneurial mindset’” [14] (p. 287). Presently there is a preservationist ideology based on post-productivism but the question is “Can a preservationist ideology halt the process of creative destruction?” [12]. Mitchell’s final answer is that the course the situation takes will depend on the response of the local stakeholders.

What level of participation do citizens have in the process? Arnstein [15] developed a theory to explain citizen participation, which in the case at hand is quite useful for analysing participation in tourism planning and management and is it is also being applied to this subject area by other authors [16,17]. Arnstein describes a ladder with eight rungs, at the bottom of which the citizen participation processes can be classified, ranging from lesser to higher and more credible: 1 Manipulation; 2 Therapy; 3 Informing; 4 Consultation; 5 Placation; 6 Partnership; 7 Delegated power; 8 Citizen control. These assets need to be analysed from objective and subjective perspectives. That is to say, tourism may be contributing positively to the various assets from an objective perspective but residents need to perceive this as positive. A society’s carrying capacity is not measured purely in terms of the co-existence between locals and visitors but also by how locals perceive the effects of tourism on the different assets of their social space.

3. Methodology and Data Sources

3.1. Combination of Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies

The data used to carry out this investigation come from two types of sources, which correspond to quantitative and qualitative methodologies. We analyse on the one hand the survey data provided by the residents of Barcelona and on the other, the opinions carried in the press.

Quantitative methodology is used initially and serves to provide an overview of the community's dissatisfaction with tourists and tourism management regarding the carrying capacity perceived through the opinion of the host community, as well as that of the guest community. Asking open questions, we obtain an initial idea of the problems that citizens have with tourists and the administration.

The qualitative methodology we use follows the grounded theory model [18] with the support of the Atlas.ti programme. Our objective is to identify the main issues responsible for the breakdown of the social and political carrying capacity and which have led to the actions taken.

3.2. Quantitative Methodology

In the quantitative part, we analysed the data from the two surveys carried out by the Barcelona City Council, one to the host community and the other to the guest community (We would like to thank the people in charge of the statistics service at the Barcelona City Council for sending us the databases for these two surveys free of charge).

The survey, "Perception of tourism in Barcelona," was conducted between 1 and 29 March 2016, on a sample of 4959 residents of Barcelona, with a confidence level of 95.5%, (2σ) $P = Q$ and an error of $\pm 1.6\%$. Promoted by the Operational Directorate of Tourism and Events of Barcelona City Council, it was put out to public tender and awarded to and carried out by Opinòmetre, S.L. For our study, we asked questions that were directly related to residents' perceptions regarding the carrying capacity of the city's infrastructure and their discontent towards tourists and tourism management. The questions addressing each of these topics were as follows:

- Residents' perceptions regarding the carrying capacity of the city's infrastructure. Question: "Which of these two opinions do you agree with most? (Read the possibilities, choose only one answer): Barcelona should continue to attract more tourists; Barcelona has reached the limit of its capacity to serve tourists; Do not know, do not answer."
- To know residents' opinions about tourists' behaviour, two questions were asked: a first, to ascertain whether their behaviour was considered good or bad and a second, to know the reason why it was considered bad.
 - To ascertain whether their behaviour is considered good or bad. Question: "Judging by what you have seen, would you say that tourists' behaviour in the city is: (Read possibilities, only one answer allowed): Very good, Good, (do not read) Neither good nor bad, Bad, Very bad, Do not know, Do not answer"
 - Reasons why tourists' behaviour is considered bad. Question following on from the previous. "If you consider it to be bad or very bad, what are your reasons?" (Spontaneous, no suggestions. Write answers down word for word and with maximum detail).
- To know residents' opinions about the council's management of tourism, two questions were asked: a first to know if they considered it positive or negative and a second to know the reasons for their negative opinions.
 - To know whether residents' opinion was positive or negative. Question "In general, do you rate the Council's management of tourism in Barcelona positively or negatively? (Only one answer): Positively, Negatively, (Do not read) Neither positively nor negatively."

- If you value it negatively, to know the reasons. Question following on from the previous “If you value it negatively, what are your reasons?” (Spontaneous, no suggestions. Write answers down word for word and with maximum detail).

For future surveys, we intend to suggest that modifications be made to the questionnaire. With the categories drawn from this survey on why tourists are considered to behave badly, it would be pertinent to ask one question for each category, with possible answers based on a Likert scale. This would allow us to carry out analyses using more complex techniques, such as the confirmatory factor analysis. The possibility of allowing the interviewee to cite other reasons not yet mentioned can be left until the end of the battery of questions. The same should apply to the question about the reasons why the council’s management is considered negative.

The tourism survey titled “Turistes Barcelona 2016” was performed between 22 February and 22 December 2016 on a sample of 6032 tourists aged 15 and above who stayed between 1 and 28 nights in Barcelona. The interview was performed using the CAPI computer system. The interviews were distributed by month, day and place of interview, which consisted of places of tourist interest (museums, monuments, trade shows and congress venues, crowded places, etc.), city entrance and exit points and hotels. The level of confidence is of 95.5%, (2σ) $P = Q$, the error being $\pm 1.3\%$ for the sample as a whole. The questions we used to measure tourists’ perception on carrying capacity are 38_2 (Level of agreement of disagreement with “Barcelona is too crowded for tourism”) and 38_3 (Level of agreement of disagreement with “In Barcelona prices are higher than the quality offered”). The data analysis was performed with the SPSS programme.

3.3. Qualitative Methodology

The data for the qualitative part have been taken from articles published in newspapers on Barcelona’s tourism problems. To select the newspaper articles, we began with a two-word Google search: “Tourism” and “Barcelona.” We began the search with Spain’s two main newspapers: El País (which according to the General Media Survey (GMS) has 1,862,000 daily readers) and Catalonia’s La Vanguardia, (which, according to the GMS, has 790,000 daily readers). From the articles in these newspapers that had the top hits, other articles were chosen from those newspapers that appeared lower down in the list. When we began the analysis, specific issues arose to which we assigned a code and to round off the information until the ideas were saturated, in some cases the search was performed without including the title of the newspaper and the article was taken from other papers. Citation and code selection were applied to the articles. When no new ideas came up, no new articles were introduced. The list of articles introduced was extensive but the basic articles are listed in Table 2, with bibliographical references that provide the URL, so that readers can click on it and be redirected to the article.

For the data analysis, we followed the process of grounded theory with stages of data collecting, coding, conceptualisation and categorisation that shaped the resulting theoretical explanation. To summarise, the process can be simplified into 3 phases following the Cartesian model of analysis: incidents and open or initial coding, conceptualization and theorization.

Incidents and open or initial coding separates the data into conceptual components. There are three sections: (a) information gathering from mainstream media; (b) choice of incidents (photos or fragments) that were significant of concrete problems; (c) codes, derived directly from the incidents.

Conceptualisation is divided into three sections: (a) concepts that designate a problem in which sets of codes can be summarized; (b) the search for information on codes relating to the concept up until the point when the information produced no longer adds to opinions, positions (different interest groups can manifest varying interests and standpoints in relation to a code) and ideas; (c) these concepts are already fairly abstract and occur in the context under analysis but they can be extrapolated, so we provide an explanation of them. This explanation covers both what happens in our context of analysis and what other authors who have worked on the subject have described.

Notes (observations, perspectives) taken during the process are included, which also help to shape the commentary. Without interrupting the chain of the analysis (incidents and codes), we start to see a certain level of abstraction, of theoretical construction.

Theorization is divided into two sections: (a) substantive theory: a reflection on the concepts and development of categories that make up these concepts at a broader level of abstraction, prior to an intermediate range substantive theory and possible hypothetical derivations; (b) formal theory: the proposal of a formal theory, a central theory that holds together all the categories and explain and relate the various categories defined in the substantive theory.

The programme Atlas.ti was used for the data analysis. A combination of the Atlas.ti functions with the grounded theory phases was performed as is described below [19,20]. Incidents and open or initial coding: what we did in Atlas.ti was to introduce the Primary docs which is the information published in the newspaper articles, open coding of that information consisting of a detailed examination of the data, identifying citations (Quotes, Quotations, New from selection), to which we associated codes derived in an indicative manner from what the citations say (Cite selection, Coding, Enter code name (the first time, then Select Code from list)).

Conceptualization: we reflected on the codes entered, looking for relationships between them, their properties and bringing them together under one concept that gives them a global meaning, which is also known as axial coding. We studied the information on each code in depth until no new ideas came up and we reflected on it, noting down each reflection in Memos. These concepts are more abstract than the codes and they were collected in Atlas.ti creating code families. Progress was made with these families to more abstract levels than the codes, this time beginning with an interpretation and analysis of the data (Codes, Families, Open Family Manager, Assigning of codes to families). The ideas from the quotes were collected, as well as the codes and memos to provide a specific explanation of each of the families.

Theorization: we reflected on the different concepts, looking for a relationship between them and therefore a higher level of abstraction. In Atlas.ti it was represented through the super family (Codes, Families, Open Super Family Tool, assignation of families to the super family, Create Super Family). This is how that which we refer to as categories (Table 3) was created, which constitute the substantive theory. We provide an explanation for each of these categories. But in the end, it is necessary to make progress in a central category that gives meaning to all the previous categories. A major super family that in a couple of words—conceptual unit—groups together the different families. We refer to this latter process as formal theory. The global vision is represented in Figure 9, for at this moment it is necessary to have a “clear and graphic description of the theory that synthesises the main concepts and their connections” [20] (p. 112).

4. Results and Discussion

First, under the heading “Citizens’ opinions”, we present quantitative results that indicate the scale of the problem in Barcelona and list the open questions that helped us to identify the issues bothering residents. Subsequently, under the heading “The opinions expressed in the media”, we analyse newspapers applying the grounded theory methodology.

4.1. Citizens’ Opinions

The citizens of Barcelona were asked about the capacity of the city’s infrastructures to provide for tourists in the future; tourist behaviour; and the council’s management of tourism. More than half the population of Barcelona considers that tourist behaviour is good (see Figure 1); 29.3% consider it neither good nor bad and 14.5% consider it to be bad or very bad. But there are differences of opinion depending on where the interviewees lived. Figure 2 shows that in the neighbourhood of La Barceloneta, 49% of its residents described tourist behaviour as bad or very bad, in the Gothic Quarter, 37% described it as such, and in other districts 13.8% of residents did.

The interviewees who thought the behaviour bad or very bad were asked to explain their reasons. Some gave up to five reasons. If we add up the numbers next to each reason from first to fifth place, we get the total and then the percentage of the total. The reasons given are that tourists (see Figure 3) are inconsiderate or rude (37.5%), drunk (19.21%), noisy (10.6%), dirty (8.95%), vandalism, a nuisance; they are here only to party, there are too many of them (crowds, overcrowding), they spend too little, they are behind an increase in crime and insecurity.

43.9% of interviewees valued positively the council’s tourism management; 23.6% valued it negatively; 24.4% did not value it positively or negatively and 8.1% did not know or did not answer (see Figure 4).

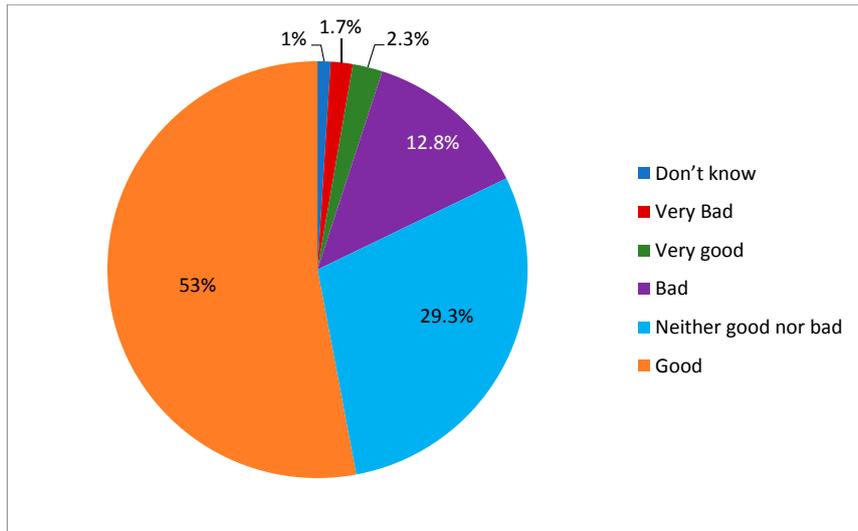


Figure 1. Tourist behaviour rating. Source: Author’s representation according to a survey undertaken by the City Council.

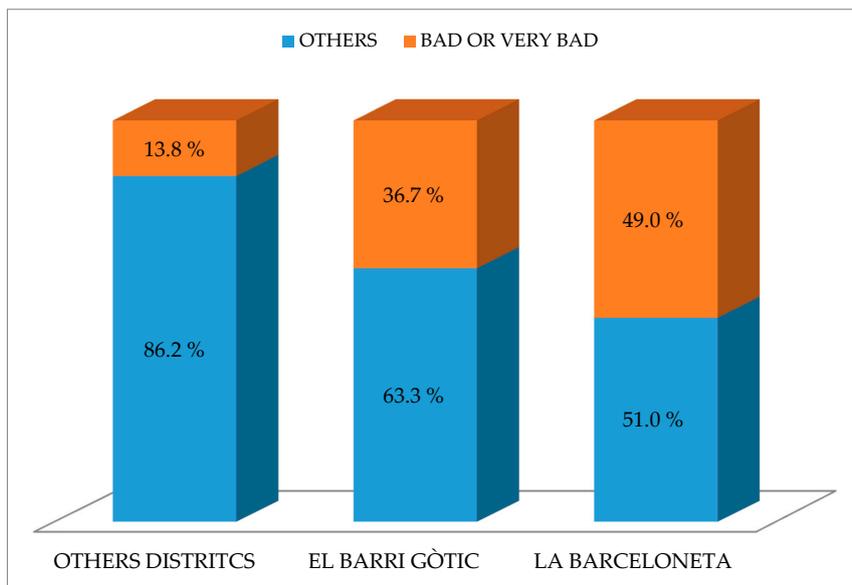


Figure 2. Tourist behaviour rating in the most touristic areas of Barcelona. Source: Author’s representation according to a survey undertaken by the City Council.

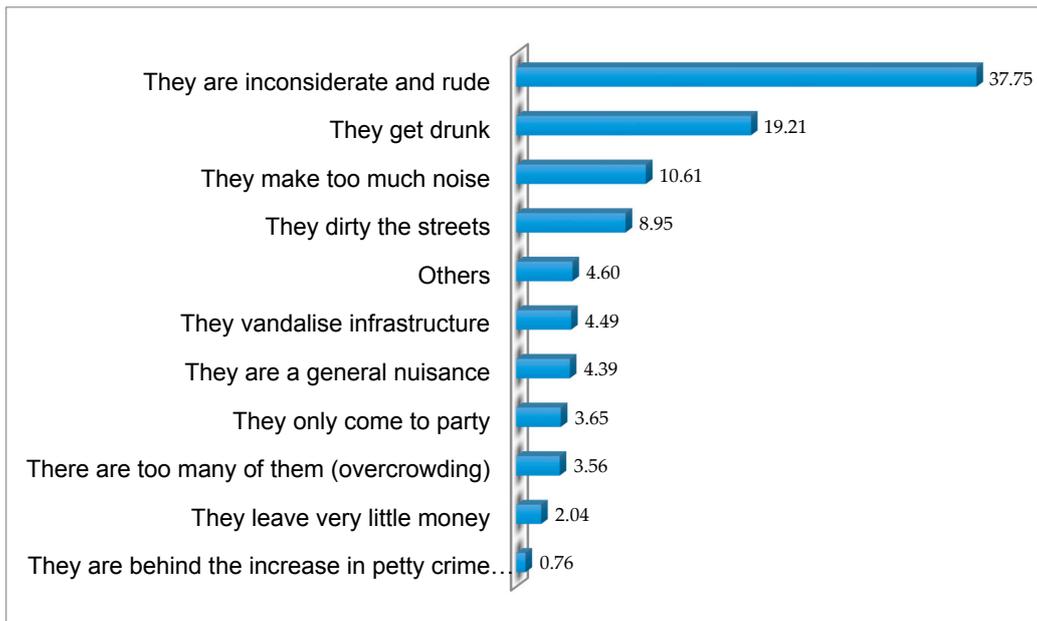


Figure 3. Examples of tourists’ bad behaviour. Source: Author’s representation according to a survey undertaken by the City Council.

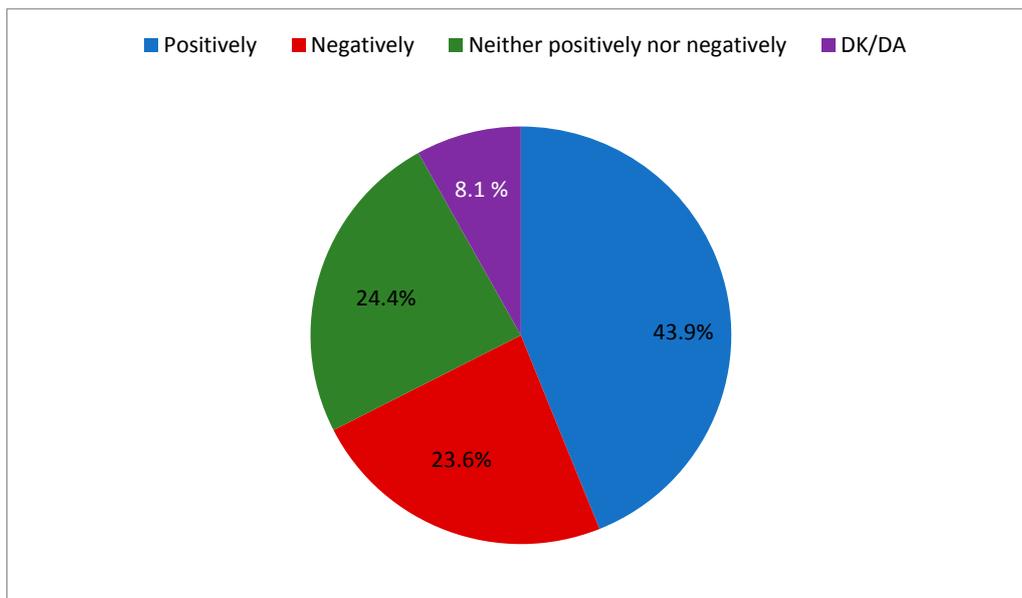


Figure 4. Assessment of tourism management. Source: Author’s representation according to a survey undertaken by the Council.

The management failings cited by residents (Figure 5) are: poor management of tourist apartments (14.48%), poor management in general (13.07%), over-permissiveness with tourists (11.87%), the suspension of hotel licenses and terraces (11.06%), the lack of suitable promotion to attract high-end tourism (10.04%), policies to reduce the number of tourists (8.71%), tourist overcrowding (6.56%), that the city caters more for tourists than for its residents (5.60%), disapproval of the council or Mayor (4.52%), insufficient vigilance for resident and tourist safety (3.46%), the city is increasingly expensive (3.06%), the massification of hotels has led to the wrong kind of model of tourist city leading to loss of

character (2.88%), mass tourism and non-organisation of flows (2.45%), poor management or lack of infrastructure and services (2.21%).

Governments' decisions regarding tourism are sometimes considered to be testimonial, or "tokenistic" to use Ruhanen's term [21]. But a time comes when a carrying capacity becomes overstretched and when this happens, more and more residents consider that the city can no longer provide for tourists. Public protests ensue, both verbal and sometimes physical and at that moment governments must intervene. It is stage four of Doxey's theory, and, as Ruhanen has described, "As the negative of tourism began to overshadow the positive in some destinations and as anti-tourism sentiments grew, government-led planning was instigated to control tourism development and attempt to mitigate undesirable socio-economic and environmental" [21] (p. 80).

If we look at Figures 6 and 7 we see how in Barcelona residents were clamouring for the council to intervene in a way that was not just "tokenistic" but which would change the repercussions of tourism and local opinion. When we asked residents for their opinions on the city's ability to cater for tourists, we see that year after year there was a growing perception that the limit of their carrying capacity had been reached (see Figure 6), going from 27.2% in 2013 to 35.8% in 2014, 43.1% in 2015 and 48.9% in 2016, overtaking the figure for those who thought that more had to be done to attract tourists (47.5%).

This must be seen in the light of the assessment of Barcelona council's management of tourism (see Figure 7). Residents are demanding a decisive change in this field and negative attitudes have grown from 10% in 2013 to 23.6% from 2013 in 2016. This helps us to understand the outbreak of 2017, which media all over the world, particularly in the European countries that supply millions of tourists each year to Barcelona, such as the United Kingdom, Germany and France, picked up on. There had been a year-on-year increase in numbers who felt that the city's carrying capacity had been exceeded and who were unhappy with the way the tourist influx was managed.

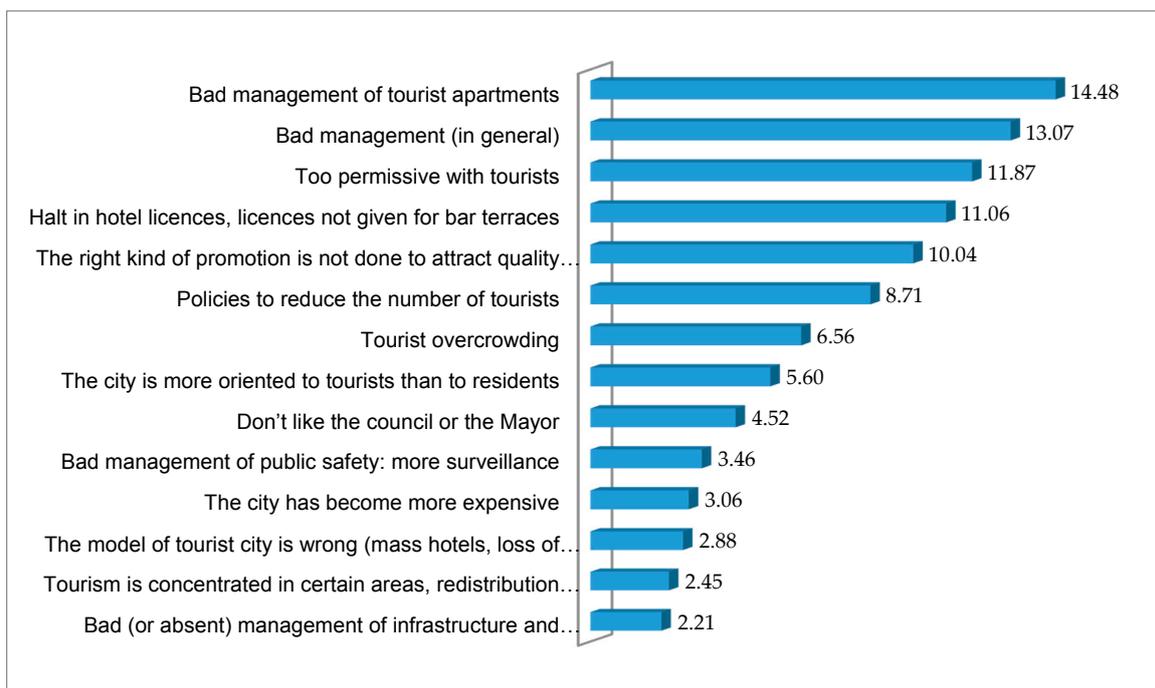


Figure 5. Management failings cited by the residents of Barcelona. Source: Author's representation according to a survey undertaken by the Council.

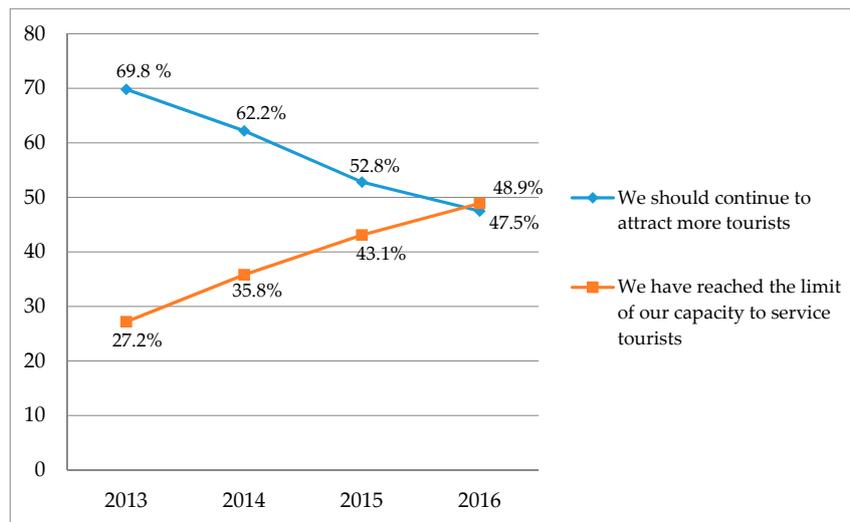


Figure 6. Opinion on whether to continue attracting tourists or whether the city has reached its limit in terms of providing for tourists. Source: Author's representation according to data provided by the City Council.

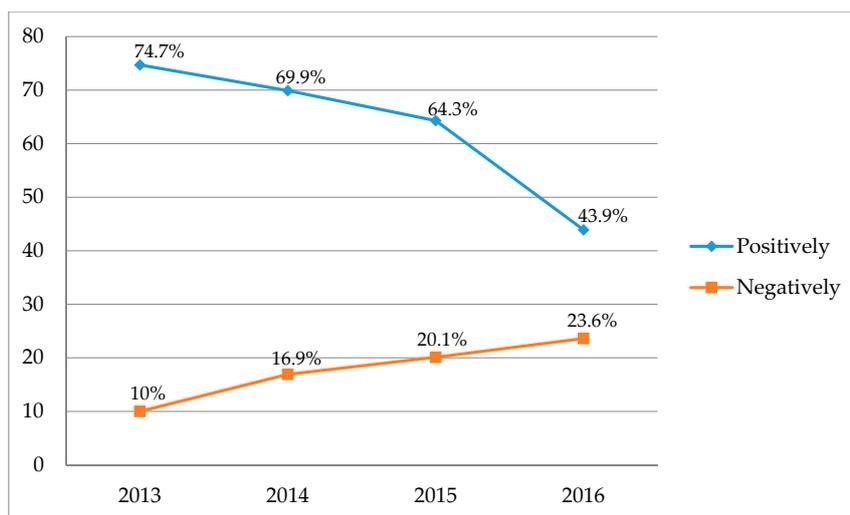


Figure 7. Assessment of the city's tourism management. Source: Author's representation according to data provided by the City Council.

4.2. Tourist Opinions

In a survey performed by the Barcelona City Council on 6032 tourists in 2016, they were asked about their level of agreement/disagreement with two statements: "Barcelona is too crowded for tourism" and "In Barcelona prices are higher than the quality offered."

The results, as shown in Figure 8, show that if we add up those who agree that it is too crowded, 40.3% of tourists (31.7 + 8.6) think it is too crowded and 40.3% (4.1 + 36.2) do not think it is too crowded. Summarising, the percentage that thinks it is too crowded is as high as the one who does not think so. With regard to the price-quality relationship, 27.9% of tourists think the price exceeds quality. This should lead to a reflection on the situation and to the adoption of decisions that are not only political but that also involve the businessmen in charge of marketing tourism in Barcelona, which includes local businessmen as well as the major tour operators that channel tourism towards Barcelona.

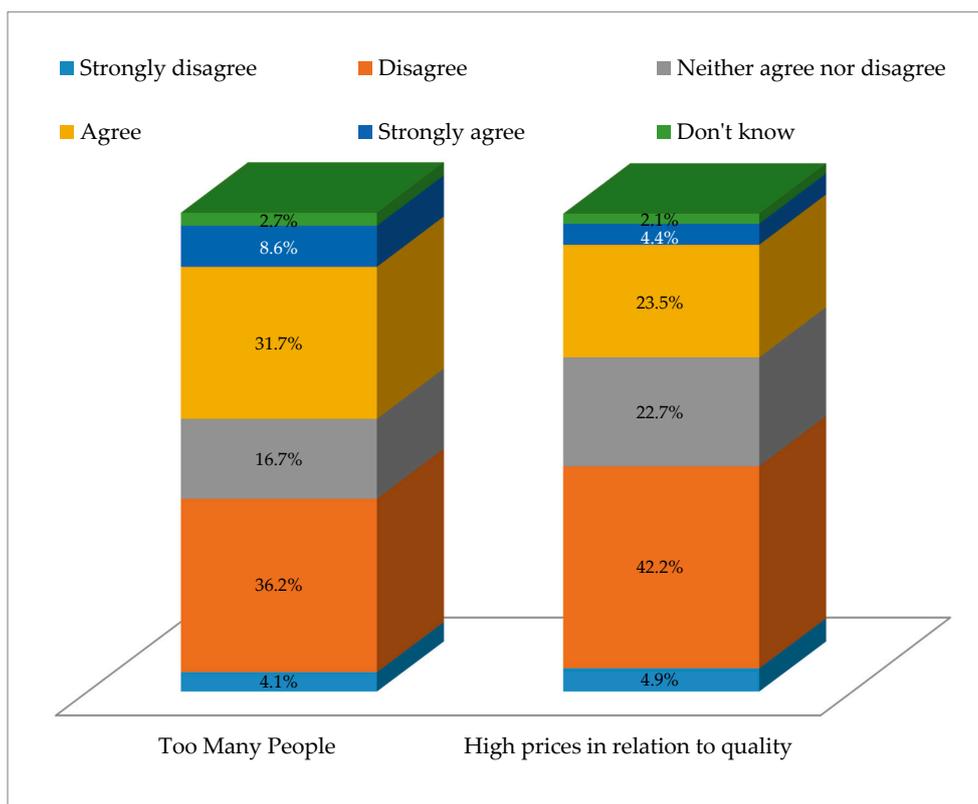


Figure 8. Tourist opinions on Barcelona: It is too crowded for tourism and prices exceed quality. Source: Author’s representation according to data provided by the City Council.

4.3. Opinions Published in the Media

An analysis of the news stories throws up a range of issues involving multiple actors. Continuing with the grounded theory methodology, we begin by exposing the ‘incidents,’ before deriving from them the codes and concepts that will serve as a basis for later developing the substantive theories and finally the formal theory.

4.3.1. Incidents, Codes and Concepts

In Table 2 we show some of the incidents. We cannot expand on them too much as we are limited by the space afforded by an article but the interested reader can find additional information via the links to the newspapers cited. Then we present the codes related to the type of incident and lastly, we show the concepts summarizing the codes in 13 groups (Table 2).

Table 2. Incidents, codes and concepts.

Incidents: Newspaper Fragments	Codes	
	Codes	Concepts
“‘Drunk tourism’: the path to alcohol-fuelled recklessness that Spain hides... We review the main tourist destinations where young foreigners live out their ‘rite of passage’ to maturity via alcohol-induced comas and mamading” [22].	Recklessness. Vandalism. Public insecurity. Health problems.	Drunken tourism and anomie
“‘Tourism-phobia: the ugly face of a million-dollar industry.’ “Barcelona passes a bill banning new hotels in the city centre. Colau and ERC’s town planning heralds a downturn for the city centre and casts new accommodation out to the periphery.” “Neighbourhoods with the most tourists must feel compensated.” “Colau abets the black market of hotel licences, as happened with the taxis” [23–26].	Too many tourists Coexistence is compromised Inflated prices Ban on new hotels Redistribution of flows Black market of licences. Stabilization Downturn	Mass tourism

Table 2. Cont.

Incidents: Newspaper Fragments	Codes	
	Codes	Concepts
<p>“Traditional establishments are losing ground and are being forced to close in the face of ‘the pressure exerted by the big commercial brands and franchises.’ From my point of view, the centre of Barcelona is completely depersonalized, it could be any city centre anywhere in the world.”</p> <p>“The authentic has been commodified by instant consumption, there are barely any traditional taverns with any character left, only franchises” [27].</p>	<p>Closure of traditional establishments</p> <p>Commercial brands</p> <p>Franchises</p> <p>Depersonalisation</p> <p>Cities all look the same</p> <p>Commodification of the authentic</p>	<p>Loss of character</p>
<p>“Colau revokes the licences for sun loungers on Barcelona’s beaches” “Barcelona City Council halts four licences for sun loungers and two for parasols ... As a result, users recover 1800 square metres of beach.”</p> <p>“Barcelona City Council has removed the terraces on Mandri Street ... The association of restaurant owners do not rule out initiating actions against the Council” [28,29].</p>	<p>Impossible to stroll</p> <p>Impossible to talk to neighbours</p> <p>Impossible to hold gatherings</p> <p>Impossible to carry out cultural activities</p> <p>Impossible to enjoy the beach</p>	<p>Invasion of public spaces by private commerce</p>
<p>“For example, in Gràcia, a very traditional neighbourhood of Barcelona, we have recently seen the proliferation of what are known as ‘slow’ establishments... but residents can’t afford to buy their products because of the increasingly high prices they charge.”</p> <p>“To the clamour of ‘we don’t want tourist apartments’ ... the proliferation of tourist properties that, according to reports, harm the lives of local residents because rents rise, traditional commerce is lost, the cost of living goes up and there are constant squabbles provoked by selfish tourists who show no consideration to residents’ need to rest” [27,30].</p>	<p>Tourism hikes up the prices of basic goods (housing, food ...)</p> <p>Tourism increases the prices of leisure venues (bars, concerts ...).</p>	<p>Inflation</p>
<p>“Official tour guides denounce the growing presence of foreign agents in the sector. Barcelona has become full of ‘hundreds’ of tourist guides that charge only tips, most of whom have no formal training. Guides have been seen hired by Russian, Chinese and Israeli tour operators that do not have the compulsory accreditation to work in certain specific monuments.”</p> <p>“Professional tour guides decry labour intrusion in Park Güell. The collective demands that the Generalitat and the Council crack down on guides without licences. The law requires that tour guides be accredited to explain the monuments that have been declared Cultural Assets of National Interest” [31,32].</p>	<p>Official guides</p> <p>Guides that charge only tips</p> <p>Guides without training</p> <p>Guides from other countries</p> <p>Guides operating without the official accreditation</p>	<p>Labour intrusion</p>
<p>“My children had to leave as they could no longer afford to pay the rent which is sky-high now. For a 30 metres squared ground floor flat with problems of damp, rats and cockroaches they were paying 750 Euros a month. They want to force us to leave to free up these flats for tourists” [30].</p>	<p>High rents</p> <p>We cannot pay these rents</p> <p>Our children have to look for somewhere else to live</p> <p>Vacate the flats for tourists.</p>	<p>Gentrification 2.0</p>
<p>“The hidden and precarious face of tourism... Businesses reduce costs by outsourcing and increasing working hours... Both the Kellys and CCOO and UGT have been flooded with complaints and work inspections and the courts are beginning to reap the first positive rewards of that strategy ... The unions denounce that the upsurge of precariousness is coinciding with a record high in profitability.”</p> <p>“More tourists catered for by the same number of workers.”</p> <p>“We must ask ourselves if we really want a service-based society where hotel entrepreneurs make huge profits off the backs of those lower down the ranks who are working in conditions of semi-slavery” [27,33,34].</p>	<p>Low salaries</p> <p>Temporary employment</p> <p>Long working hours</p> <p>Outsourcing</p> <p>Protests by the affected</p> <p>Protests by the unions</p> <p>Heavier work load</p> <p>Huge profits for business owners</p> <p>Work in conditions of semi-slavery</p> <p>Lower-ranking jobs</p>	<p>Precarious employment</p>
<p>“The neighbourhoods along the seafront denounce the prevalence of sun loungers and tourist apartments and the rise in behind-closed-doors evictions. The chronic battle against tourist apartments. Neighbourhood actions to combat tourist apartments remain firm but they are proving unable to win the battle: as soon as they have succeeded in closing one, another opens.”</p> <p>“Banner: ‘We do not want tourists in our buildings. This is not a beach resort.’ Of course it hurts to see how our neighbourhood has become degraded, how drunk tourists relieve themselves behind communal bins but it hurts even more to see our elders thrown out onto the streets. The main problem affecting the neighbourhood is real estate speculation and evictions,” (Neighbours’ statements, Barceloneta) [30,35].</p>	<p>Complaints</p> <p>Chronic battle</p> <p>Neighbourhood struggle</p> <p>Protest banners</p> <p>Beach recuperation</p> <p>Evictions</p> <p>Fight against tourist apartments</p> <p>Real estate speculation</p> <p>To win</p>	<p>Neighbourhood protests</p>

Table 2. Cont.

Incidents: Newspaper Fragments	Codes	
	Codes	Concepts
<p>“A group of left-wing pro-independence activists assaults a tourist bus in Barcelona, spraying ‘Tourism kills neighbourhoods’ on the front.”</p> <p>“We act in legitimate defence against a model that wants to turn us into slaves and our country into an amusement park that benefits only the bourgeoisie and capital” (Declarations Arran) [36,37].</p>	<p>Political ideologies</p> <p>Opposition to business owners</p> <p>Anti-system actions</p> <p>Fear among tourists</p> <p>News agencies</p>	<p>Violent attacks</p>
<p>“PDeCAT, Cs and PP criticise Colau’s government for its attacks on tourism.”</p> <p>“The opposition forces a debate in the City Council Presidency and Security Committee to address Arran’s attacks. CUP-Capgirem boycott the debate, defending the actions of its younger political faction. Arran says it is against the tourist model, not the tourists. The Catalan government and the CUP clash because of the attack on the tourist bus. In response to questions from the opposition, Colom guarantees that the Council will appear in court but adds that it will study the most appropriate legal form for this. He denied that the attack was an example of tourism-phobia and called it a ‘symbolic act,’ as did the CUP” [38].</p>	<p>The opposition criticises the government</p> <p>Political disagreement</p> <p>Back Criticise</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Proposals</p>	<p>Political discussion</p>
<p>“The flipside of the sharing economy ... The idea seems good because people on lower incomes are able to access tourist destinations but the controversy comes when sharing economy entrepreneurs do not pay their taxes and trade dishonestly with regard to the legal offer.”</p> <p>“Barcelona fines Airbnb and HomeAway 600,000 Euros for continuing to advertise unlicensed flats. The City Council has ordered the closure of 709 illegal tourist flats since August ... The Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, announced on Thursday that the Council will sanction Airbnb and HomeAway with 600,000 Euros each for continuing to advertise tourist flats without a license” [39,40].</p>	<p>Companies that do not pay their taxes</p> <p>Advertisements for unlicensed flats</p> <p>Illegal offer</p> <p>Fines</p>	<p>Unfair competition</p>
<p>“The German tour operator TUI warns that ‘Spain is already packed full with tourists.’ The group believes that high influx has hiked prices and this will open up new tourism possibilities in other countries” [41].</p>	<p>Warnings from tour operators.</p> <p>High prices</p> <p>Poor reception</p> <p>Tourists turn to other travel destinations</p>	<p>Oligopolistic structure of the tourist industry</p>

The concepts derived from combining the codes are drunken tourism and anomie, mass tourism, loss of identity, invasion of public spaces by private commerce, inflation, work intrusion, gentrification 2.0, precarious employment, neighbourhood protests, violent attacks, political debate, unfair competition, oligopolistic structure of the tourist market.

Drunken tourism and anomie. There is a type of tourism that basically consists of going to a destination with the intention of getting drunk and breaking all the rules. Called drunken tourism, it is the antithesis of sustainability and when a place witnesses this repeatedly, it leads to a state of anomie—a breakdown of the social structure [42]. Those who do this go about their normal daily lives, observing social norms but then see their holiday as an excuse to break all the rules of society and live out a situation of anomie. It is mainly young people who engage in this kind of behaviour, in their quest to free themselves of the shackles of parents and teachers [8,43]. It creates huge problems among local residents [44] and leads to verbal and in some cases, physical violence. The Mediterranean area attracts a lot of this type of tourism [45] and suffers not only real problems between tourists and local residents and authorities but also deterioration in the eyes of the wider world that places it at a disadvantage with regard to the rest of the market [46]. Once this negative image is created, it is difficult to shift, even if efforts are then made to attract better quality tourism. Destinations must be marketed so as to attract the right kind of tourist and those who engage in drunken tourism should be banished.

Mass tourism. Tourists may well behave in a civilised manner but because there are so many of them, their presence rubs with residents over matters such as traffic, public space, safety and sanitization, etc. Many residents consider that the city’s infrastructure cannot absorb any more tourists. It is therefore necessary to look for alternatives to mass tourism [47]. Things can go on as they are

but the consequence will be tensions between tourists, businesses and residents. Actions to curb and even decrease the number of hotel, restaurant and tourist outlets is the drastic stance adopted by the Mayor of Barcelona, which will not unfold without clashes between local authorities and owners of catering establishments, for it is entirely at odds with the ideology of capitalism and its prioritizing of economic movement, business activity and jobs. She has opted instead to cap the number of tourists and if necessary redistribute the flows [48] to other nearby places, even if this means jeopardising profits and jobs.

Unfair competition Conventional businesses are at a disadvantage compared to those of the sharing economy due to the disparity in the differences in infrastructure, delocalisation and tax. This produces unfair competition, which conventional or traditional businesses condemn [49] and insecurity for both the practitioners of this kind of economy and their clients. The mixed advantages and disadvantages [50] have led to clashes of interests among whole swathes of the population—conventional entrepreneurs, sharing economy entrepreneurs, property owners, annoyed neighbours, the Council of Barcelona, which imposed fines of 600,000 Euros on Airbnb, ombudsmen and national and international governments that have to legislate many new and complicated aspects of the sharing economy.

Gentrification 2.0. In some tourist neighbourhoods such as La Barceloneta a process of gentrification is under way [51–55], which in this case deserves the name of Gentrification 2.0. These areas have been taken over by people who have come here not to live but to spend a stint as part of their travels round the world, which they are able to do thanks to short-term rentals offered by sharing economy platforms, which are cheaper than the costs of a conventional hotel but unaffordable for much of the local population, who are forced out of the area because they cannot pay the new rents. Moreover, the few who do stay feel diminished and exasperated by certain behaviours of the new tenants that fly in the face of good neighbourly relations. So, expulsion plays out on several levels: the economic, the social and the co-existential. Residents enter into confrontation on all sides: with the ombudsman who receives the complaints, sharing economy businesses, the police, the social development agents [56], the city council (that already imposed sanctions on sharing economy companies), the national and European authorities whose task it is to legislate the sharing economy and even the WTO which is expected to make recommendations on this problem.

Loss of identity. Many places, for the sake of catering to tourists' tastes, lose their identity symbols, their cultural heritage. Traditional bars are reconditioned in the hallmark style of franchises; urban spaces are redeveloped to attract tourists, etc. All this leads to a loss of identity, to a community bereft of its history. When tourists leave, only the residues of the tourist industry remain. Longstanding shopkeepers, unable to withstand the pressure exerted by franchises, are forced to close and traditional festivities are replaced by commercial concerts. Instead of eroding identity, tourism should enhance it and, in turn, attract visitors interested in discovering the identity of the place [57].

Invasion of public spaces by private commerce. The function of public space is to serve the needs and interests of local residents [58–60]. When it is used as a place for commerce—to extend a bar out onto a square; hire out sun loungers on the beach which tourists may be able afford but which are out of reach for locals—then there is conflict. Public spaces should be places for relaxation, contemplation, strolling, social interaction, political debate, group activities and cultural exhibition. Financial gain should not be made from public spaces if in so doing the needs of the local population are ignored, because when this happens, conflict arises among neighbours, entrepreneurs and local managers.

Inflation. Tourist areas have a very high rate of inflation—tourists are only there for a few days and can pay but residents are there all year round and generally have lower salaries and cannot pay for the goods and services sold at tourists' prices. Basic needs become pricey and leisure activities out of bounds. This objective reality, together with the subjective experience of comparing themselves with tourists, leads to resentment. Sometimes there is also a communication problem and residents do not perceive the positive impacts tourism brings because they have no one to explain them to them. One proposal is "to achieve a more equitable distribution of the benefits that tourism brings to the city

and to explain it in such a way that we, the citizens of Barcelona, understand and recognise that it is a source of economic wealth from which we can all reap benefits" [61].

Neighbourhood protests. Neighbours come together and carry out different actions [62], including protests against the more negative repercussions of tourism. They say they do not see the money tourism makes, only the negative consequences: "They talk about the millions left by visitors and maybe they are right but that money, in whose hands is it now? We see only job insecurity in the sector. Garbage contracts that pay a pittance" (statement by a neighbourhood association spokesperson) [35]. They complain about the degradation of the neighbourhood, the tourists' uncivilised behaviour, that their public space has been eaten up, that they cannot afford the higher prices for basic commodities. And so, they take to the streets or the beach, peacefully holding up placards that give voice to their problems and demands. These protests are different from those carried out by more radical social movements that use violent attacks. *Violent attacks.* Social movements address issues concerning the population. They seek to change a situation by carrying out visible actions that attract media attention. These actions are met with different political responses, depending on the various ideologies informing them [63–66]. There had already been clashes among political parties in Barcelona's City Council over various issues related to tourism, such as the withdrawal of licences for hotels and terraces. But when Arran carried out its attacks on tourist infrastructure (bicycle and bus tyre punctures, spray messages ordering tourists to leave), we saw the different positions along the ideological spectrum: there were those that condemned the attacks and those that condoned them, calling them 'symbolic' acts. In any case, the international press referred to them as acts of violence and this forced some political parties in government to take a condemnatory stand. The affected businesses sued for damages.

Job insecurity. Tourism is a very strong sector but the type of employment it generates is associated with precariousness [67,68]. This precariousness entails situations of insecurity and uncertainty, so that continuity in the workplace is not guaranteed. At the same time, it is also associated with low incomes and, often, working hours that exceed what is established by law.

Labour intrusion. In Spain, certain jobs in tourism are required by law to be carried out by fully trained and qualified people and this is true of the tourist guides explaining monuments that have been declared Cultural Assets of National Interest. Furthermore, the tourist's attitude towards the destination, its local population, the people who attended to them, will also depend on the treatment received and the degree of professionalism they encounter. However, although there is currently in Spain a wide range of tourism studies available offering different levels (undergraduate, master's and doctorate), the truth is there is still a significant problem of labour intrusion, which harms the sector in general and the people who studied tourism in particular. Indeed, the situation is so serious that jobs are usurped not only by people from Spain who have no training but also by people from abroad who do not have the qualifications or the knowledge to work as guides in our country. Something similar happens in other areas, such as hotel management and destination management.

Political debate. The function of politics is to govern and spread understanding among citizens but sometimes it misinforms and infuses tension in social relations instead [69]. This is happening with the issue of tourism in Barcelona: sometimes it is used as an arena for struggle and confrontation rather than as an opportunity for consensus on sustainable planning and management. A change in tourism policy is imperative so that decisions are reached involving all the different actors and their interests.

Oligopolistic structure of the tourist market. The tourist industry is operated by oligopolies [70–72]; that is, a handful of large companies dominate the world market [70] in an exercise of oligopoly that potentially endangers tourism and the business climate of destinations if the big wholesalers so decide. This happens if tourists are disappointed or if their profit structure is altered. Following the protests in Barcelona, TUI declared that Spain is already a saturated market in terms of tourism which, in their view, accounts for the protests and the rise in prices and threatened to take tourists elsewhere. This can cause huge problems in tourist destinations as local businesses may go under. Let us remember that the statements we conveyed in the 'Incidents' section were made by TUI, a tour operator that occupies first place in the European wholesale market.

4.3.2. Substantive and Formal Theory to Explain the Problems of Tourism in Barcelona

Applying grounded theory, we see that there are two types of emerging theory: the substantive and the formal [73]. The substantive explains unique realities and draws directly from data to find concepts that explain the facts. An identification of the central categories within the substantive theory leads us on to the formal theory, which is more abstract and must give meaning to the different explanations put forward by the substantive theory via a process of abstraction.

Categories of Concepts and Substantive Theories

Grouping the concepts yielded a total of five categories: Touristic quality, authenticity, political confrontation, poverty and social exclusion, status and disruptive innovation (Table 3).

Table 3. Concepts and categories.

Concepts	Categories
Drunken tourism and anomie Mass tourism	Quality tourism
Loss of identity Invasion of public space by private commerce	Authenticity
Neighbourhood protests Violent attacks Political debate	Political confrontation
Job insecurity Inflation Work intrusion Gentrification 2.0	Poverty and social exclusion
Unfair competition Oligopoly in the structure of the tourist market	Status and disruptive innovation

Quality tourism. Drunken tourism and mass tourism are incompatible with quality tourism, especially when conflicts arise and environment, culture, infrastructure and human relations are degraded, as has occurred in Barcelona. We must work to raise the quality of destinations [74], both local and national and this quality must be in step with sustainable practices and competitiveness [75].

Authenticity. This category covers the concepts of loss of identity and the invasion of public spaces for private commerce, which are the antithesis of authenticity. The issue of identity loss and authenticity in tourism is a classic theme in social sciences [45,76]. Tourism should preserve the culture and identity of host destinations and not turn them into stage sets to please tourists and pander to their needs. Throughout history societies have developed their own ways of being, behaving, relaxing and equipping spaces that have together forged their identities and they should not be altered by tourism. On the contrary, with well-managed tourism, authenticity attracts tourists [77,78].

Status and disruptive innovation. This category combines the concepts of unfair competition and an oligopolistic structure of the tourism market. Those at the top are against innovation as they see it as a threat to the established order that has worked so well for them [79]. Locals and hoteliers are unhappy with the introduction of new forms of the sharing economy, which is based on disruptive innovation. To borrow Merton's terms [79], the strategy of the sharing economy rests on a type of disruptive innovation that breaks with the means and ends of conventional economy and implants its own, different means and ends. *Poverty and social exclusion.* This category combines the concepts of inflation, job insecurity, work intrusion and gentrification 2.0. Although tourism generates wealth, it also has negative repercussions on the local economy due to higher inflation and on workers in the sector due to the type of jobs offered. Although tourism is commonly considered to be a ticket to prosperity, it can also cause impoverishment if the profits are not well distributed. Indeed, the role of tourism is currently the subject of debate [80,81]. Impoverishment may be due to two factors:

the inequitable distribution of income (employers abuse workers, student degrees are not recognised and so workers are not paid as they should be) and the scarcity of goods and services catering to the needs of the population.

Political confrontation. This category combines the concepts of neighbourhood protests, violent attacks perpetrated by social movements and political debate. Tourism is a very interesting sector because it has multiple ramifications that are felt in society, which is why it is the subject of political confrontation [82,83]. Social activism shines a light on the problems of tourism and has brought them onto news desks around the world [84]. So, it has become a sphere in which, sometimes, real issues have to be addressed by the various parties, with their different ideologies and ways of seeing the world and other times it serves as a symbolic stage providing visibility for political parties [85]. Sometimes certain parties and groups adopt a populist agenda [86] and set out symbolic problems but behind these problems there is always a reality affecting individuals and social groups.

Formal Theory: Tourism Sustainability and Social Conflict

The analyses carried out reveal “Tourism Sustainability and Social Conflict” as the formal explanation that lies behind all the problems reported in the media and the open questions posed to residents. All aspects of tourism must be assessed within a social system of which the field of tourism is but a part, in mutual interaction with other fields. Tourism cannot be understood outside the social system [87,88], for it is in the interaction of tourists and locals, through the dispensing of services, that the practical aspects of the problems it poses are played out. But nor can tourism operate outside politics and the influence of the media. The relationship among all parts of the system can be seen in Figure 9.

Stephen Robbins believes that social conflict arises when one party perceives that they—or an interest of theirs—have suffered detriment at the hands of another [89]. It is not necessary for actual detriment to exist; it is enough that has been perceived. As Beck points out, it is not the fact itself so much as the fear of it happening, stirred up by the media. “Risks do not allude to actual damage . . . However, risks threaten to bring on destruction. The discourse of risk starts when confidence in our safety dries up and ceases to be relevant when a potential catastrophe presents itself” [90] (p. 10). Complementing our understanding of Robbins’s theory, we can draw from Coser’s definition [91], according to which social conflict occurs when there is a struggle for limited resources, whether power, values, or status. In this struggle, one interest group attempts to neutralize the power of action of another group, if necessary by attacking them physically and even banishing them—in this case, from the city, as tourists and businesses try to expel residents and residents and activists try to expel tourists and businesses.

To understand how conflict between individuals or small groups can balloon into a social conflict affecting an entire society and jeopardising its structure and operations, we must refer to the theory of the social construction of reality and the media that activists know so well. Activism has a very high impact on the social construction of reality, through headline-grabbing actions that step outside conventional limits to attract the attention of the media and reach the wider society.

Different views exist of what our cities should be and of what true sustainability [92] should look like. Even among the different interest groups there can be some discrepancy [93] and it befalls to the municipal authorities in charge of planning that must decide what tops the list. Some groups defend intensifying tourism to increase business and jobs, while others argue that the opposite is what is necessary to make life more pleasant for locals and house prices and products and services more affordable. Some favour a consensual approach within the established norms to achieve their goals, while others consider that it is legitimate to act outside the law if necessary.



Figure 9. Schema showing the relationship between codes, concepts, categories and formal theory.

Tourism is a sector in which multiple conflicts can play out. They can be generic [94,95], or they can arise from a number of more specific areas, such as public interests [96]; residents vs. tourist activities [97]; residents vs. entrepreneurs of the tourist industry [98]; relations among entrepreneurs due to the varying amounts of power they have and the distribution of profits among them [99]; residents vs. those tourist practices that kill local culture in the sole pursuit of financial gain [94]; symbolic conflicts arising from actions carried out by social movements to spotlight an issue [100]; the conflicts between different interest groups requiring government intervention [101], largely on the part of local authorities [21].

The theory of social conflict also accounts for action proposals seeking change. Dahrendorf says, “Conflict is ... the creative energy and driving force of all change” [102] (p. 205). Among the proposals for change we have to differentiate between those pursuing change from within the system and those seeking to change the system [103]. The anti-system activist groups clearly want a change of system but other groups want to bring about change from within the system—even the residents of La Barceloneta say they do not support radical protest actions. Compared with those who want a change of society, most people advocate change from within the system, reached by the consensus of governance. A social adjustment is necessary which allows conflict to lead to consensus through governance.

There are 13 interest groups that clash with tourism, as represented in Table 4. Each of these interest groups is in conflict with other groups. The relation between the discussion on interest groups and the databases can be gleaned from fragments of newspaper articles. Although it is impossible to refer to all of them in detail in the space of an article, we can comment on some, as examples, specifically the clashes between residents and other actors, for example the administrations for not defending the residents’ habitat in the face of speculators operating tourist flats:

“Esther Jorquera, from the pressure group defending La Barceloneta ... ‘The problem is speculation. Every month, dozens of people living in rented accommodation are evicted ... 80% of my acquaintances have been forced out so that their flats can be turned over to tourism,’ she says. She criticizes the administrations for ‘not having done anything, only token gestures’”. [104]

Residents clash with tourists who display uncivilised behaviour (public nudity, sexual acts in public, noise, etc.).

“‘They came running into the supermarket naked ... they had to be forcibly removed’, Forner explains to BBC Mundo ...

‘They come here and do what they can’t do at home,’ Forner complains. Residents say that tourists party well into the early hours of the morning, making noise and not showing respect for even the most basic social norms.

Antonio Heras, 70, has seen tourists having sex through doors and windows left open. ‘Opposite where I live there are two tourist blocks. I have often had to go out and have a word’”. [105]

Table 4. Social space, field of tourism, interest groups and intergroup/intragroup conflicts.

		Social			Economic			Managerial			Political		
		Residents and Residents' Associations	Tourists	Workers Tourist Industry	Specialised and Licenced Workers' Collectives (Guides)	Conventional Entrepreneurs	Shared Economy Entrepreneurs and Disruptive Innovation	Large Tour Operators	Ombudsmen	Tourism Management Bodies	Local/Autonomous Government	National and European Governance	Political Parties
Social	Residents and residents' associations	*	*		*	*		*	*	*			
	Tourists			*	*	*			*	*			
	Workers tourist industry				*	*				*			
	Specialised and licenced workers' collectives (guides)				*	*	*		*	*			
Economic	Conventional entrepreneurs					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Shared economy entrepreneurs and disruptive innovation						*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Large tour operators									*	*	*	*
Managerial	Ombudsmen									*	*	*	*
	Tourism management bodies										*		*
	Local/autonomous government											*	*
	National and European governance											*	*
Political	Political parties											*	*
	Activist groups												*

* Conflicts between different interest groups.

Residents clash with traditional businesses over problems such as the proliferation of sun loungers and parasols on the beach reserved for tourists and of café tables spilling out onto public squares. The issue creates further confrontation among the different political parties that may each have a different position regarding the plight of residents and businesses in the sector.

“Barcelona Council has not renewed four sun lounge and two parasol licences ... According to sources close to Colau’s cabinet, this is the last summer that our beaches will be financially exploited through this type of agreement, which is a legacy from the Trias government”. [28]

Residents and entrepreneurs of the sharing economy clash because of the way the latter distort the habitat, causing the former to be expelled from their environment. To do business, these companies advertise apartments for use by tourists that are not licensed by the council for tourist activity. This divides the residents of Barcelona, as some are in favour of doing business with these companies (Airbnb, Homeaway, etc.) and have no qualms about renting out their homes, sometimes illegally, while others want nothing to do with it and lodge protests.

“Residents of the Casc Antic (old city) uncover a network of illegal tourist apartments and the manager openly challenges them.

Activists draw up a comprehensive report that debunks the myth that Airbnb apartments provide a lifeline for families struggling because of the crisis.

There have been insults and pushes. Accompanied by two people, Serra personally ripped the banner off. Inside the apartment, however, the police and municipal inspectors were already there”. [106]

Residents who wish to rent out their flats protest against the measures pursued through official organisms by other residents who do not want tourist flats in their neighbourhoods:

“Users in Barcelona of electronic platforms such as Airbnb or HomeAway are hitting back. The group has launched a campaign of mailing leaflets to counter the council’s initiative of fining owners of illegal tourist flats in Barcelona, which has so far resulted in some 1200 disciplinary proceedings. In the leaflet sent out to thousands of blocks of flats in the Catalan capital since Monday, activists contest a letter sent by the council, urging residents to report illegal tourists’ flats”. [107]

They ultimately seek the assistance of the Ombudsman to intervene on their behalf before the administration and get their demands heard.

“Complaints to the Ombudsman of Barcelona, Maria Assumpció Vilà, relating to tourism quadrupled last year compared to the year before. There was a total of 123 in 2016, while in 2015 there were 28.

Vilà gave this figure on Monday during the presentation of the 2016 annual complaints report, which shows that of the 123 concerning tourism, 108 were for disagreeing with the council’s campaign urging citizens to denounce illegal tourist flats. Those who complained consider the initiative to be a violation of the right to privacy and to be responsible for a number of false denunciations as well as distrust among residents”. [108]

In summary, those residents and neighbourhood associations that condemn tourist behaviour and the introduction of more infrastructure enter into external conflict with tourists, tourism entrepreneurs, ombudsmen seeking greater protection, tourism management bodies demanding a style of management more focused on residents, local and regional governments pursuing other measures that will not put tourists off, that will not cause flat prices to rise, will not permit tables to spill out onto public squares and sun loungers to occupy the beaches.

Tourists come into conflict with residents because of their disorderly behaviour and lack of respect for any social norms. But they also come into conflict with workers, groups of specialised workers, conventional entrepreneurs trying to provide services to workers and entrepreneurs working outside legality but whose services they use because they are cheaper and more permissive. This brings them into direct confrontation with tourism managers and local authorities that do try to apply the rules.

Workers in tourism clash with employers who bypass the law and require their staff to work longer hours and for lower wages. Employers outsource services and engage in other sorts of formula that border on illegality. Workers are forced to resort to labour associations and unions to get their rights protected by the local and regional governments.

The groups of specialised workers perform tasks for which training is mandatory, as in the case of tour guides. They are supplanted by people without training or licences from other countries even, who set themselves up as tour guides through tour operators and work for no salary as such, pocketing only the tips left by tourists. Supplanted by others who have no training, they are discredited by tourists who accuse them of giving a bad service and see how their profession is degraded.

Conventional tourism organisers clash with those dealing in the sharing economy because the disruptive innovation on which it is based gives rise to dishonest competition. They accuse them of being able to provide cheaper services only because they do not maintain standards of quality or offer adequate infrastructure or pay tax. They argue that the sharing economy adversely affects them and society generally, as undeclared wealth remains in the hands of the few. They also come into conflict with the great tour operators that leave them scarce profit margins; with ombudsmen demanding profits, with tourism managers and local governments that place on them increasingly tougher conditions in order to operate. They were also recently targeted by activist groups, whose actions caused some damage.

Sharing economy entrepreneurs. As well as clashing with conventional entrepreneurs and residents, these people have problems with an administration that is cracking down on their operations and imposing fines. For example, in Barcelona, offering illegal flats is sanctioned. They are currently the subject of scrutiny by national and EU governments aiming to tighten legislation.

There is another group whose battle to eliminate or neutralize the adversary is waged in silence. They are the big businesses in the oligopoly. They have the power to alter the flow of tourism and impoverish not just individuals but entire regions that largely depend on the GDP and tourism workers.

Management entities, whether working inside tourism or in the field of citizens' rights and governance, have no economic interests but conflict arises when they have to plan, regulate and manage. In such situations, they take measures that may be more favourable to some groups than to others, as it is sometimes impossible to act entirely impartially. Depending on who governs them, they carry out one type or another of planning and management that favours or harms the interest groups.

Political parties, activist groups are all groups that obviously seek to defend social interests. Their grassroots members may be the community in general or certain specific interest groups such as entrepreneurs. Their modus operandi is sometimes associated with the symbolic function of acts and they take tourism as a springboard to influence other different ones.

These interest groups can be divided into four major types: *social interest groups*, *economic interest groups*, *management interest groups* and *political interest groups* (Figure 10). But they do not operate independently: competing in the social space as they do, each group's agenda and rules influences those of the others in a mutually inclusive way. The decisions that one makes conditions those made by all the others, while simultaneously being conditioned in turn. Conflict has an origin and paths and effects. To paraphrase Bourdieu, structuralism has a genesis; it obeys actors with interests that have been defined in certain ways and must be understood relationally [109]. Merton [79], in his explanation of the theory of action, considers it necessary to take into account the ends and the means used to achieve them.

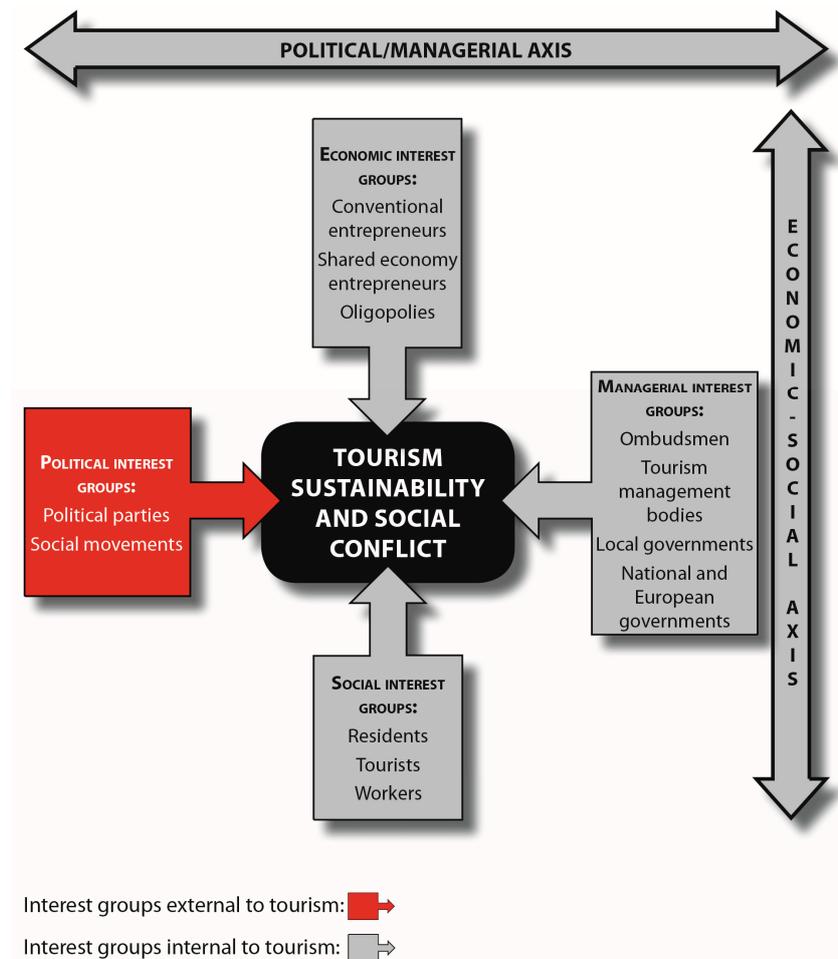


Figure 10. Types of interest groups that clash in tourism.

It is possible to differentiate two *main axes structuring the interests* of the different groups: the socioeconomic axis, which would cover the economic interest groups of businesses and the social interest group made up of citizens, workers and tourists. Then there is the political-managerial axis, which gives rise to political interest groups, which covers parties, movements and the managerial interest groups, made up of ombudsmen, tourism managers and local, national and European governments that establish the rules.

By being reported in the media, the problem is globalized and causes real effects on the people of Barcelona, as well as on potential tourists from around the world, especially in countries that are main suppliers of the kind of tourism analysed here: United Kingdom, France and Germany. Thomas's paradox, as expanded upon by Merton [110], of the self-fulfilling prophecy applies here: if people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.

But tourism is not always a source of conflict: when the process has matured and tourists are no longer seen as an asset but as the perpetrators of ills in society. Doxey's theory [10] explaining this change is apposite. Barcelonans' feelings can be accurately summed up in comments to the press: "Before, when we saw a group of young people with their wheelie suitcases, waiting at the door of a house for the person with the keys to open up the tourist apartment for them, we felt sympathy and even compassion ("Poor kids," we'd think, "look at them, looking for fun in Barcelona"). But now when we see them we feel repulsion: "Go away, assholes, it's because of you my rent's gone up!" [111]. The social and political carrying capacity of the tourist space must be analysed from the perspective of interest groups [112]. A society's carrying capacity is considered saturated when locals feel that tourists are a nuisance rather than a benefit. When the mark has been overstepped, the tourist space

becomes a sphere of conflict [94,98], of combat among the various actors representing the different interest groups, each of which has a different take on the impact of tourism [113] because of their varying interests. Social resistance and confrontation emerges between tourists and residents, tourists and workers, entrepreneurs and workers, neighbours and entrepreneurs and between conventional entrepreneurs and new sharing economy entrepreneurs and their disruptive innovations. In turn, the political component—which has the power over planning and management—comes into play, keen to be seen as effective by the community but colliding with all the different ideologies. It has thus become a space of macro-complexities in which the ecological and cultural environment also has to be taken into account: the erosion of the quality of life in the neighbourhood, the destruction of lifestyles, to the point that sometimes it becomes unbearable and residents move elsewhere because the ‘colonizers’ make it impossible for anyone to sleep, the lack for social decorum which they want to protect their children from . . . They fall into poverty because they are unable to match the tourists’ level of consumption or to pay for things that they could before, because now with tourism the prices have gone up.

The ways to resolve conflicts vary according to the model of meta-governance [114] in place. Regarding the concept of sustainability, a range of policies, some softer and others harder, has been implemented. Some have been articulated within the capitalist system, where capital must prevail over all other aspects [115]. Others are critical of this narrow conception and consider that sustainability has to bring about change on a much deeper level so that alterations and even alternatives to tourism, as a form of capitalism [116,117], can be made. They condemn the conceptual and instrumental narrowness of certain policies [118] and seek to direct the system towards a form of post-capitalism [119].

Under a governance model, the interests of all these groups would be taken into account but under a meta-governance model, these interests are observed from a superior pattern that allows us to assess the goodness of the interests, conflicts and solution strategies. What models of tourism do we want a city to have, bearing in mind the repercussions on the residents, entrepreneurs and on the model of society? What protests are valid and which are outside the law? What types of tourist behaviour are allowed and which are not? In general, the best position is to take as the yardstick for goodness the proposals of a paradigm of post-sustainability that illustrates the huge complexity of tourism’s various interests [120], without failing to overlook the erosion of cultures and lifestyles, the lifestyles of people who cannot risk being impoverished by tourism for the benefit of a few entrepreneurs. In this process governments in general and local governments in particular have a great responsibility [21].

After analysing the situation, if we apply the creative destruction model [12–14], in Barcelona they appear to be in an advanced state of destruction, which is recognisable through the opinion of the residents, the opinion of tourists and through the protest actions carried out by residents in the areas that are most affected by tourism, through political pressure groups, through conventional businessmen against those in favour of collaborative economy, by the authorities against certain business practices that privatize public spaces and by decisions regarding decrease in growth, as well as through advertising by the major tour operators to redirect the flow to other destinations. We have to wait until the Tourism Board, along with citizens, businessmen and political participation continue to take decisions that are heeded by leaders—for as we saw, they are not binding—and change the present-day situation, seeking a state of balance where tourist preferences, businesses and local residents can coexist.

And to what extent are citizens being taken into consideration for the adoption of decisions? In Barcelona, the Tourism Board was created, which is “A citizen participation organ created for organisations, associations and political representatives to exchange views and put forward ideas on improving the implementation and development of tourism in Barcelona” [121].

On a structural level, this body’s resolutions are not binding, they simply “serve as a basis for the adoption of political decisions in the City Council Plenary Meeting” (<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/es/consejo-de-turismo/que-es>). Therefore, within the Arnstein model [15], in the best-case scenario they would be at level 4—consultation—on the ladder. For now, due to its recent creation,

we still have no data or opinions from citizens to be able to evaluate whether it is in fact at level 4, which is the highest possible one due to its structure, or if it is a strategy located at a lower level, for the citizen demands have not as yet been formally collected. It is necessary to pay close attention to its development and in due course measure where it stands based on this theory.

5. Conclusions

Mass tourism destinations need to have a system for collecting information on their social carrying capacity. When conflict breaks out and is reported by the mass media, the many problems associated with tourism affecting the population become common knowledge: the drunken tourists' bad behaviour that provokes a situation of social anomie in the community; the overcrowding that smothers the environment and collapses basic services; the community's loss of identity and its traditional way of life; the invasion of public spaces—plazas, beaches—for private commerce; precarious jobs with outsourced employees bypassing labour standards; inflation caused by tourist consumption that affects basic commodities as much as leisure activities and makes it impossible for locals to access essential goods; and in extreme cases it affects the housing market, as gentrification 2.0 takes hold; labour intrusion that sees qualified workers supplanted by unlicensed people taking over jobs for which qualifications are necessary; the unfair competition of the sharing economy that up-end conventional companies, largely because they can charge lower prices for services they do not declare and so the infrastructure they offer is not subject to the same standards; the oligopoly exercised by big wholesalers that allows no margin for negotiation and imposes their rules on the market . . . All this leads to local discontent and moderately violent protests by social activists, which attract international attention and create a bad image of the destination. Political confrontation ensues and an inconsistent image of the destination that sometimes responds to different models of society sets in.

Converging on this knot of problems are a number of actors, all clashing with one another and using the strategies of confrontation available to them. The actors we have discussed represent four types: social, economic, managerial and of political. Making up the social type are residents and residents' associations, tourists, workers, the tourism sector. The economic type consists of conventional entrepreneurs, sharing economy entrepreneurs and disruptive innovation and the big tour operators. The managerial type is made up of tourism organisers, ombudsmen, the local or autonomous government and the national and European governments. Belonging to the political one are political parties, activist groups, terrorist groups and intergovernmental organisations. Concord among the different groups is not easy. Their diverse interests and strategies respond to various concerns that group into two main axes: the socio-economic and the political/managerial.

The responsibility to intervene in each group's problems varies. If we analyse the situation of the different actors, without a doubt the most affected are local governments, which are in conflict with all the other actors and even within itself there are further different political groups. This confirms the importance that other studies have given to local government as a central actor in this problem [21].

The theory of social conflict is shown to be the most apposite when analysing the various problems that emerge with social and political sustainability in mature tourist destinations. In most cases, the conflicts are inter-group but there are also intra-group conflicts [98] in the case of political parties, given that different visions, diagnoses and proposals for solution strategies exist depending on the political group to which they belong. Something similar happens in the case of residents, because although some back the removal of cafeteria terraces in open spaces and the freezing of new hotel licenses, others criticise the town council precisely for having adopted these measures. This leads to a confrontation among residents and fractures the peace of the neighbourhood.

Doxey's theory [10] of the different stages in the relationship between tourists and visitors is thus demonstrated, especially the final stage, where tourists are blamed for all the things that have gone wrong. Verbal and symbolic confrontation takes place, as well as physical attacks on tourist infrastructures. This is what is called anti-tourism or tourism-phobia.

The problem in Barcelona reported in the press also exists in other over-crowded mass tourism destinations in Spain and around the world. There is an urgent need to engage the response of governments at different levels, although certainly local governments to begin with, since they are closest to communities and they are the first to detect their complaints. Sustainable tourism planning must be carried out before conflicts and violence arise, as we saw in Barcelona—before, as Ruhanen says, “the negative impacts of tourism begin to overshadow the positive ... and ... anti-tourism sentiments grow” [21] (p. 80).

But this planning and management requires the participation of the different actors and specifically citizen participation, where the Arnstein [15] and Tosun [16,17] typology is very useful for seeing (a) the possibilities provided by the government structure and (b) what the level they are at during a specific moment. Mitchell’s creative destruction theory [12–14] is also very useful for appreciating what state the conflict is at during a specific moment and what the actions for intervening are. This intervention needs to be considered for a complex context and therefore it has to be approached from the suggested systems theory [87] with multiple problems, actors and interests.

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