Managing Tourism in Barcelona

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There is much to learn from Barcelona. Barcelona is using a wider range of mechanisms to address the challenge of overtourism than any other destination; their experience is important as others rise to the challenge.
Responsible Tourism is about using tourism to make better places for people to live in, first; and second, better places for people to visit. The aspiration is to use tourism rather than to be used by it.

Barcelona had over 30 million visitors in 2017; the city receives many day excursionists in addition to the 20 million overnight tourists spending 48 million bednights in the destination. Rapid growth and the sheer mass of visitors through most of the year has resulted in a backlash against tourism by many residents. Barcelona is an important case study because of its early recognition of the problem, the range of ways in which the city has sought to manage tourism, the transparency of its multistakeholder approach and its determination not to scapegoat tourists and tourism.

The city has consistently sought to ensure that tourism is sustainable addressing the environment, cultural diversity and social responsibility. There have been two interrelated strands of work as the city has pursued its goals to:

- make tourist activities more sustainable, increasing their positive impact on the city and managing any possible negative effects;
- facilitate the integration of visitors, by fostering the necessary coexistence with residents and preserving the values of identity and social harmony.

This Working Paper chronicles the early recognition of the problem in 2004 and the various efforts to make tourism better in Barcelona since then. The history is important not least because it reveals the growing awareness of the diverse issues which have arisen and the continuities in the way in which the issues have been addressed. This third edition of the Working Paper documents and provides access to the developments since October 2018.

Barcelona has experienced very rapid growth since the 1992 Olympics. Tourism grew rapidly from 2 million in 1990 to 7.5 million staying in hotels in the city for an average stay of over two nights in 2013. Barcelona came fourth, with over 6 million overnight stays by international tourists in the ranking of European cities, behind London, Paris and Rome. London grew by 16% between 2005 and 2013 Barcelona grew by more than 54% in eight years. In 2012 the city attracted 24.5 million visitors (temporary citizens); 12 million stayed overnight, 12.5 million were day visitors. Of the day visitors, 52% were Catalans, 48% were Spanish or international. Of the 12 million who stayed within the city only 54% stayed in hotels, 21% were VFR, 8% were in holiday rentals, 6% in pensions and 11% in hostels and similar accommodations. Barcelona has a very wide range of accommodation, a diverse market and relatively low seasonality. Close to 50% of those staying in hotels have been before, more than 28% are visiting for the third time or more. Only just over 50% of hotel guests are on holiday. The University of Girona estimates that the aggregate turnover for tourism lies between

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2 https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/en/presentation
3 Ajuntament de Barcelona & Barcelona Activa (2014) Barcelona’s tourism activity development and management:27
4 ibid 30-31 & 33.
8 billion euros and 9.7 billion euros, representing between 10% and 12% of the city's GNP, and generating between 96,000 and 120,000 jobs, around 14% of total employment in the city.

The history of tourism development, the policy changes which have occurred in this century and the data on tourism in the city is both very detailed and readily available online. Barcelona publishes a very extensive range of data, analysis and policy – an invaluable resource for teaching and research on destination management.

The issue of overtourism has been a concern since 2004, and the Ajuntament de Barcelona has sought to manage it since 2008. Barcelona initially divided the DMO functions; the management of tourism in the city became the responsibility of the Ajuntament de Barcelona, marketing was the responsibility of Turisme de Barcelona. Two of the characteristics of the development of tourism policy in Barcelona are unusual, even rare. The first is the determination to engage widely in discussions about the issues and to base those discussions on published evidence and data. And second, the continuity of policy and implementation which follows from building a widely shared understanding of the issues and through discussion achieving broad agreement on appropriate and effective ways of tackling the issues.

The history of tourism in Barcelona has been relatively brief. In the 1960s tourism developed on the coast of Catalunya rather than in the city. The staging of the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 drew to the world’s attention the dramatic and photogenic architecture of the city. A tired provincial, heavy industrial, port city was transformed, through a major urban renewal programme, into a cosmopolitan city with Mediterranean beaches, a city open to the sea. Barcelona was launched by the Games as a major European destination – the city was transformed by the Olympic Games, it became a great place to live and work and to visit.

The redevelopment of the city for the Olympics created a new Barcelona oberta a la mar, a Barcelona open to the sea. The old docks were torn down, and tons of sand was brought to create miles of sandy beaches which now stretch from Barceloneta to the Port Olimpic, crowds of tourists, day visitors and locals come to enjoy the city’s Mediterranean beaches. The importance of the transformation of the city for residents cannot be overstated. The architect Josep Martorell described the transformation as a “great urban adventure of rebuilding the Barcelona of 1992 to put it at the service of the people of Barcelona and so that in future we shall all be able to enjoy a city open to the sea...”

Josep Ramoneda, writing in 2011 as director of the Barcelona Contemporary Culture Centre, argued, in an article Barcelona, open city, that to be successful Barcelona needed to be pluricultural, to be in the world, a Cosmopolitan Barcelona. Cultural space open to everyone a

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5 Tourism Department, Ajuntament de Barcelona (2016) Barcelona Strategic Tourism Plan for 2020 Strategic Diagnosis: 43
6 http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/en/documents
9 There is a brief but comprehensive outline history of the development of tourism in Barcelona from 1888 in Ajuntament de Barcelona & Barcelona Activa (2014) Barcelona’s tourism activity development and management:20-24
City of free, open culture.\textsuperscript{11} “Barcelona is a modern, cosmopolitan and open city that is proud of its diversity.”\textsuperscript{12} Barcelona’s open city identity is also used to attract skilled labour: “Barcelona is one of the world’s most dynamic, cosmopolitan cities, figuring among the top European cities in quality of life rankings. It is a modern, tolerant and open city, offering a wide range of cultural and tourist attractions.”\textsuperscript{13} Tourism to Barcelona, the capital of Catalunya, has also been used “as a platform for projecting Barcelona and Catalunya to the world.”\textsuperscript{14}

Barcelona’s open aspect, open to the sea and open to pluri-culturalism is widely felt and contributes to the city’s success as a tourism destination. Barcelona has been very successfully developed as a major tourist destination in Europe. Tourism is one of the City Council’s priorities because of the economic value it generates, the employment it creates, and the contribution it makes to building Barcelona’s international image.\textsuperscript{15} Nor have the city authorities neglected the challenge of sustainability, in 2011 Barcelona was the first city in the world to be awarded Biosphere Destination certification.\textsuperscript{16}

The issue of managing the impact of the cruise lines on Barcelona is more difficult for the city to manage as the port is answerable only to the central government. In 2000 there were 572,000 cruise passengers in Barcelona; this had risen fivefold to 2,540,000 in 2015. In 2014 only 24% of cruise passengers spent a night or more in the city, and only 57% were day excursionists in Barcelona.\textsuperscript{17}

One of the reasons why Barcelona has become a world leader in managing overtourism was that the issues were recognised early, and the challenge of sustainability was addressed rather than denied. The early history and the first Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015 is included here at length because one of the reasons that Barcelona is having success in managing overtourism is the continuity of management approach. Regrettably, in many destinations, there is little continuity of management, limited learning from experience and in consequence little progress in tackling the issues.

#Coping with success

As early as 2004, during the Forum of Cultures held in Barcelona, there were critical comments about tourism and sustainability in the city.\textsuperscript{18} By 2008 adverse comment was being voiced more regularly in mainstream and social media, about stag parties and drug dealing; drunken tourists, “desperate prostitutes and petty crooks” were reported to have rendered Las Ramblas “charmless, tawdry and dangerous”.\textsuperscript{19} During 2009 that negative reports about the tourist experience of Barcelona and the experience of being visited increased in frequency.\textsuperscript{20} In December 2009 residents

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\item\textsuperscript{12} http://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/1763/100-reasons.html
\item\textsuperscript{13} https://www.irbbarcelona.org/en/phd-and-postdocs/irb-barcelona-international-postdoctoral-programme/living-barcelona
\item\textsuperscript{14} http://rtd7.org/home/declaration
\item\textsuperscript{15} #\textsuperscript{15} On the reimaging of Barcelona see Smith, A., 2005. Conceptualizing city image change: The ‘re-imaging’of Barcelona. Tourism Geographies, 7(4), pp.398-423.
\item\textsuperscript{16} https://www.biospheretourism.com/en/entity/catalunya/142
\item\textsuperscript{17} Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística:12-13
\item\textsuperscript{18} http://rtd7.org/home/declaration
\item\textsuperscript{20} For references see http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/overtourism/
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and traders in Raval sent over 500 Christmas cards to city officials with candid photographs of prostitutes, drug dealers, and tourists using the street as a toilet and having sex in public. Banners appeared on balconies with a single phrase in Catalan: "Volem un barri dign!" (We want a dignified district!) The previous year the city authorities had begun to consider how tourism in the city might better be managed.

Turisme de Barcelona is the public-private consortium comprising the Chamber of Commerce and the City Council established in 1993, just after the Olympics. It has been responsible for very successfully promoting the city for close to 25 years.

The city of Barcelona has been actively implementing environmental and social sustainability policies, reducing noise, water consumption, making public transport more accessible and working to create “high levels of social cohesion and quality of life.” These policies have been pursued to make Barcelona a better place to live in; the same policies enhance its attractiveness for visitors. As in other cities, initiatives taken to make urban life more sustainable for residents make tourism more sustainable. Barcelona adopted an Agenda 21 plan after Rio in 1992 and followed this with a Citizen Commitment to Sustainability plan for 2012-2022. The ten goals of this plan included moving “from the consumer society to responsible consumption” and “from a welcoming city to a cohesive society.” Objective 8.7 in the plan defines clear goals for tourism:

“To advance sustainable tourism in harmony with the region and with positive effects on local communities. To work towards the joint responsibility of institutions, the tourist industry and visitors in the efficient use of natural resources, the maintenance of

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8427888.stm
In 2008 the City Council approved a Municipal Action Plan (PAM) which committed the City to develop a Strategic Plan of Tourism. This Strategic Plan was developed with Turisme de Barcelona between 2008 and 2010; it was intended “to promote a tourism model” which would “strengthen the balance between local residents and tourists while preserving the identity values of the city.” The purpose was to foster improvements in tourist activity in the city and to “ensure that tourism fitted better with the needs of the city.”

This involved:

- planning the city’s capacity “for hosting tourists and guarantee[ing] the quality and sustainability” of the sector;
- planning the city’s capacity for hosting tourists “in accordance with the characteristics of the public space and with regard to the impact of tourism”;
- promoting cultural tourism based on the role of Barcelona as the Catalan capital, with its architectural heritage and Catalan language and cuisine; and
- promoting tourism “that includes civic-minded attitudes as a value for coexistence”

From the outset it was recognised that the community had to be “successfully involved” in developing the plan in order to “lay the foundations for a tourism model that [would] strengthen the balance between residents and visitors, preserving the city’s values identity and coexistence.” From the beginning both the City Council and Turisme de Barcelona have consistently avoided negative and divisive language in discussing the impact of tourism and tourist behaviours in Barcelona emphasising “identity and coexistence”. The imperatives to manage tourism better and conceptualise tourists as temporary residents have framed the discourse since 2008. From the outset the development of new policy and approaches to tourism management has been based on reflection, dialogue and debate; contrasting different views of tourism in the city and accepting that tourism and the city are “constructed mutually”. Tourism cannot be understood merely as an economic sector “closed and independent”. Rather tourism is perceived by the City and Turisme de Barcelona as “embedded in the different economic, territorial, social and cultural facets of the city.” Visitors to “great urban centres such as Barcelona” do not fit the classic tourist stereotype. Tours come for business, to study, for meetings, conferences and exhibitions and for leisure, and leisure forms part of the city experience for many of those not coming as holidaymakers.

The people of Barcelona are considered “active participants and creators of the city”, they use the same leisure facilities and tourism services as the tourists. There is an echo of one of the central tenets of Responsible Tourism that it is about using tourism to create better places for people to live in: “The health of the city’s tourist activity stems from the well-being of its population, which must be cause and effect of the successful development of Barcelona as a tourist destination.”

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22 http://lameva.barcelona.cat/barcelonasostenible/ca
23 Economic Promotion Department of the City of Barcelona (2010) Tourism Strategic Plan 2015:9
24 Ajuntament de Barcelona and Barcelona Turisme (2010) City of Barcelona Strategic Plan, Diagnosis and strategic proposal Executive Summary:5
Strategic Tourism Plan was from 2008 benchmarked against the Municipal Strategic Plan. There was a marked rebalancing from an emphasis on promotion and marketing through Turisme de Barcelona to placing considerably more emphasis on managing tourism by the municipal government.

Working commissions were established to “create dialogue and shared analysis about the way tourism fits in with the needs of the city.” In June 2009, by mayoral decree, the Tourism and City Technical Committee was established chaired by the municipal manager, and coordinated by the Economic Promotion Department. Its members include representatives from the different municipal departments: Municipal Management; Economic Promotion, Environment; Prevention, Mobility and Safety; General Services and Territorial Coordination; Urban Planning and Infrastructures; Education, Culture and Welfare; and the Ciutat Vella District Council. It is rare for a municipal government to take a “whole of government approach” and create a tourism committee which brings together so many departments to co-ordinate action to manage tourism.

The 2010-2015 Plan

The city council and the tourism promotion agency had jointly identified both the challenge and the agenda for change by 2010. Barcelona acknowledges that tourism is an important part of the “tertiarisation processes” being experienced in many cities around the world and that it is fundamental to the life of the modern city: “...it would be hard to imagine Barcelona without tourism...” In 2010 the authorities recognised that tourism was having both positive and negative impacts on the city: “some effects of tourism are often a nuisance and inconvenience to the local community, making it difficult for the tourist phenomenon to be understood and viewed positively.” The new strategy, explicitly recognised that some of the negative effects of tourism were creating an anti-tourism discourse.

“The inconvenience experienced by some local residents, which creates a feeling of unease and anti-tourist sentiments, ends up converging on and having feedback in certain discourses and public (and/or published) opinions by journalists, intellectuals and professionals who can make their opinions heard, thereby constructing a social discourse which is sceptical about or against tourism.”

So in 2010 the authorities in Barcelona began “a deep reflection process” which involved “adopting a new approach ... to the type of growth and tourism management model, the territorial boundaries of the destination, the extent and consequences of the impact and effect of tourism and the modes of coexistence between local residents and visitors.”

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25 ibid. 8-9
26 ibid. 12
27 ibid. 12
28 ibid. 3 tertiarisation refers to the growth of the third sector, of which tourism is a major part.
29 ibid. 4
30 ibid. 4
31 ibid. 4
The 2010-2015 plan saw the introduction of “a new approach to ... tourism management, [recognition of] the importance of education and a search for complicities\textsuperscript{32}, the opportunities for territorial deconcentration, adaptation to demand ... in an increasingly changing and competitive environment ...”\textsuperscript{33} The 2010-2015 Strategic Tourism Plan\textsuperscript{34} recognised the success of Turisme de Barcelona in promoting the city as a tourist destination, making it the European city with the ‘greatest proportional growth’ in the scale of the tourism sector, and making Barcelona one of the world’s main urban tourism destinations.\textsuperscript{35} Barcelona’s status as a tourist city had led “to a series of functional and social adaptations” which meant that “over a relatively short space of time, its inhabitants ... had to learn to live with the new “\textit{temporary citizens}” who choose Barcelona to do business, experience culture, undergo training and enjoy themselves.”\textsuperscript{36}

The authorities in Barcelona have consistently recognised the diversity of reasons for people to visit the city attracted for business, recreation, training, shopping, culture and sport. Tourism is not just about leisure visitors. The “high profile” of the city is seen as an asset contributing to “its dynamism as a financial and business centre” and the growth in its diversity of employment and the “revitalisation of cultural, recreational and leisure”\textsuperscript{37} facilities and services.

The authorities of Barcelona were concerned that negative attitudes towards tourism would diminish Barcelona’s reputation. The 2010-2015 Strategic Tourism Plan accepted that in recent years the growth in tourism had led to “a certain unease among the community” as a consequence of the significant change in the “social, retail and urbanistic network of the city”: “opinions had emerged that are critical towards tourism, reflecting a disapproval, not so much of tourism itself, but the lack of management of its impact or simply a feeling of abandonment.”\textsuperscript{38} The 2010-15 plan recognised that more active management of tourism was necessary where “the processes of transformation in retail activities or the problems of coexistence and cohabitation” made it “difficult for tourism to fit in with the city” mainly at the Sagrada Familia, the Park Guell and parts of the Ciutat Vella. “Certain prejudices and stereotypes” had “emerged about tourists as a result of this unease ...”. Tourism was “identified as responsible for some of the city’s problems.”\textsuperscript{39}

The strategy recognised that “the massification and standardisation” of the tourism offer, and the negative impacts associated with it, risked becoming “a contributing factor to the deterioration of Barcelona” negatively impacting on the “quality of life the local community and spoiling the visitors’ experience.” The 2010-15 strategy explicitly recognised that the image of Barcelona “is prone to be undermined if the visitors themselves start to have bad experiences.” Ignorance of the positive effects of tourism in the city was identified as one of the causes of the “polarised opinions between praise and criticism” resulting in a discourse in the media fluctuating between “self-satisfaction and rejection.” The global economic crisis of 2008 was identified as a further cause for concern. The 2010-15 strategy asserted that tourism “must be everyone’s concern” because the whole population

\textsuperscript{32} Complicities here means synergies
\textsuperscript{33} ibid. 18
\textsuperscript{34} Ajuntament de Barcelona and Barcelona Turisme (2010) City of Barcelona Strategic Tourism Plan Diagnosis and strategic proposal, the report and many documents are available online \url{www.turismebcn2015.cat}
\textsuperscript{35} ibid. 3
\textsuperscript{36} ibid. 3 emphasis in the original
\textsuperscript{37} ibid. 3
\textsuperscript{38} ibid. 17
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid 17
of the city receives both the positive and negative impacts, tourism had to become “a shared, not-sectorial, project” requiring a new approach to urban tourism “with the greatest possible involvement of the community and institutions.”

The 2010-15 strategy developed a vision for tourism in Barcelona through to 2020 as the “most vibrant and dynamic tourist destination in the Mediterranean” a city driven forward by culture, creativity and knowledge, “distinguished by its environmental sustainability”. The vision is both ambitious and groundbreaking, it envisaged a city where:

“...the community recognises all kinds of visitors as other (temporary) citizens. The hospitable character of the locals makes it a friendly, different city that people are fond of.”

“...there is no room for ‘ghettos’ or neighbourhoods that cater exclusively to tourists.”

“Tourist activity continues to contribute to Barcelona’s success by fostering the improvement of the quality of life and social cohesion of its community, to the upkeep and creation of new amenities, and the success of other economic sectors and the dissemination of Barcelona around the world.”

The vision required a “desired tourism model” founded on three core principles: (i) coherence with the city model; (ii) a synergic relationship between visitors and residents; (iii) economic, social, environmental and heritage sustainability.

Four of the “substantial traits” of Barcelona’s desired city model are that: it should be “heterogeneous and diverse... plac[ing] the emphasis on people”; “tolerant and civic-minded”; “inclusive, and committed to social cohesion”; with “an open attitude to welcoming visitors”.

In the full strategic plan, the ambition is to have visitors as temporary citizens, “beyond the traditional concept of the tourist”, a city with “stories that can be shared between the community and visitors” and an inclusive form of tourism, one “which is respectful and has rights and duties.”

Barcelona has clearly understood the need for a whole of city government approach to managing tourism and implemented the approach. In 2010 the city created a Directorate for Tourism and Events with responsibility for managing tourism in the city to maintain its economic importance while improving the quality of life for citizens. In the same year, Barcelona City Council established the Technical Council for Tourism and the City which sought to coordinate the management of tourism across the different functions of the council and answered to the Chief Executive Officer. The Municipal Council for Tourism and the City, involving all the stakeholders, envisaged in the strategy to recommend policy to the City Council was not established until 2016.

In 2012 the regional Government of Catalonia introduced a Tax on Stays at Tourist Establishments with effect from November 1st. The purpose of the tax is to fund the promotion, creation and improvement of

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40 ibid. 17
41 ibid. 18
42 ibid. 20-21
43 ibid. 19. There are 20 substantial traits.
44 Economic Promotion Department (2010) City of Barcelona Tourism Strategic Plan 2015:29
45 Ajuntament de Barcelona & Barcelona Activa (2014) Barcelona’s tourism activity development and management: 8-9
46 Law 5/2017, in Title I, Chapter VI.
touristic products and the control and inspection services; to develop tourism infrastructure and the promotion of sustainable, responsible and quality tourism, and the protection, preservation, recovery and improvement of tourism resources across Catalunya, including Barcelona.

The 2010-2015 strategy identified four key challenges for the management of tourism in the city each of which would require the engagement of the “broader possible range of agents” and involve “agreements, commitments, and shared actions.” These key challenges continue to drive tourism policy and management.

1. **Territorial deconcentration** of tourist activity, extending the destination of the metropolitan area, creating new economic attractions and managing tourism in the neighbourhoods “giving them greater protagonism” in order “to foster a more equitable distribution of the economic and social effects caused by tourism” to produce a “territorial re-equilibrium, releasing the pressure on some zones of the city.”

2. **Governance** of tourism, from promotion to governance, from the generation of data to the generation of shared knowledge to facilitate management and moving from managing tourists to managing visitors.

3. **Generation of synergies** with the society and institutions, moving from indifference to involving the community, from competition with, to developing synergies with, Catalonia. The ambition is to integrate tourism “naturally” into the city and Catalonia, both the territory and the culture, “fostering hospitality, extending a warm welcome to visitors, coexistence and reciprocal exchanges”, and “reinforcing Barcelona’s role as the Catalan capital and raising the profile of Catalonia.”

4. **Competitive improvements**, moving from accelerated growth to the “consolidation of sustainable growth ‘post-crisis’” and from being a tourist city to “leadership in tourism in the city.” In the strategic plan, the link between competitiveness and sustainability is clearly and firmly asserted: “There can be no long-term success without sustainability, and there is no sustainability without the ability to be competitive.”

At the 7th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in October 2013 there were discussions and debates with contributors from Australia, Canada, the Gambia, South Africa and UNWTO from the public and privates sector with professionals from the industry and government in Catalunya. The conference declaration reflected the changing priorities in Barcelona: reducing tourism “concentration in specific locations and spreading the benefits across the territory, promoting sustainability and local community participation.” There was increasing “recognition that less emphasis needs to be placed on increasing the number of arrivals and a

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47 A multi-stakeholder dialogue and action.
48 Scope to engage and make change.
49 Ajuntament de Barcelona and Barcelona Turisme (2010) City of Barcelona Strategic Plan, Diagnosis and strategic proposal Executive Summary: 20.
50 Complicities in the original.
51 This is a reference to the global financial crisis of 2008.
52 ibid. 21
53 [http://rtd7.org/conference-program](http://rtd7.org/conference-program) Declaration:
greater emphasis put on the management of tourism; reducing seasonality and increasing the yield, along with a more equitable distribution of the impacts of tourism, both positive and negative.”

The declaration reaffirmed the city’s commitment to sustainability, to balancing the relationship between residents and visitors and changing “the priority from marketing and promotion to governance.” Reflecting on the challenge for Catalunya the declaration pointed to the principle that

“What is good for citizens is good for the tourist. Places that are good to live in are also good to visit. Efforts will be made to improve the quality of life for local people by managing the friction between residents and visitors and to improve the interaction between hosts and guests.....” and that the “tourist that Catalunya wants to attract is the one who will respect the environment, the society and the local culture, eager to discover and share experiences.”

By 2014 the city was reporting 27 million visitors per year, around 13.5 million of whom stayed at least one night as tourists. There were 360 hotels and around 10,000 registered tourism apartments. The city’s tourism is international, de-seasonalised and fuelled by a variety of motivations. The city authorities see Barcelona as “a creative, diverse and cosmopolitan city that has become an indisputable icon in contemporary urban tourism, enjoying undeniable international prestige with a well-known, firmly-established image. Barcelona is Mediterranean and European, traditional and modern.” The city’s authorities recognised that they had a “proactive role” to play in “establishing the necessary tools and measures to ensure the sector develops correctly.” The city authorities recognised that they had a dual responsibility for tourism and that they needed to develop an “innovative and pioneering new tourism policy model.” The city had recognised that the “maturity of any tourist destination depends on the provision of management and planning tools, as well as tools for promotion.” The new policy model was based on a “commitment to sustainable tourism... improving relations between tourism and the city, and a “new system of finance and redistribution of tourism activity throughout the territory.” The city moved from a model based on promotion to “a new paradigm that integrates promotion and management” to deliver “sustained growth, maintaining the destination’s competitiveness and internationalisation.” The new model was based on a commitment to

- “economic, environmental, territorial, social and cultural sustainability”,
- “social responsibility and concern for the interests of citizens”,
- the protection of cultural resources and values,
- integration between tourism and city management,

54 http://rtd7.org/home/declaration 1.4 & 1.5
55 http://rtd7.org/home/declaration 2.1 & 2.2
56 http://rtd7.org/home/declaration 2.3 a & c
57 Ajuntament de Barcelona & Barcelona Activa (2014) Barcelona’s tourism activity development and management: 4
58 ibid:5
continuing public-private sector partnership and the development of tourism intelligence and data not just for promotion, but also for planning, action and evaluation.\footnote{ibid:6. Barcelona is beginning to develop the use of big and real time data for the management of tourism concentrations and flows in the city.}

The 2014 report detailed the city’s approach to decongestion of tourism activity, district tourism plans, an enlarged destination Barcelona, tourist mobility, safety and security, management of accommodation and sites, industry support and the development of tourism intelligence and the management of events.\footnote{ibid: 12-19} It is important to note that before the elections in 2015, and international awareness of the tourism issues in Barcelona, the city authorities had been analysing the challenges and identifying ways of improving the management of tourism – they were already moving from a primary focus on promotion to management. In the first quarter of 2015, the city had undertaken a major consultation process to determine the basis for a “local agreement on the management and promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism.”\footnote{Ajuntament de Barcelona (2015) Barcelona, City and Tourism Dialogue for Sustainable Tourism, Basics for a Local Agreement for the management and promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/documents/150409_barcelona_city_and_tourism_-_executive_summary_eng.pdf}

Positive and negative impacts were recorded, amongst the negative impacts were: “overcrowding, high concentration and tension in certain areas and spaces”; “loss of identity, trivialisation and uniformity of the city”; “a rise in anti-social behaviours and coexistence conflicts”; “inconvenience and side effects of tourism experienced by residents; “a negative perception of tourism among residents, ‘tourist phobia’”; “poor redistribution of the wealth generated and poor-quality jobs”; and “fraud and underground economy.”\footnote{ibid.18} The agenda for change, and the proposed actions developed by the previous administration, and the work done in the city government since 2008, meant that there was considerable continuity when the ruling group changed following the elections in May 2015. For the incoming administration, there was a substantial body of technical and policy-making work to build on. Amongst the 35 proposed actions were many that would be implemented by the new administration: the creation and promotion of new focal points and landmarks; measures to tackle the most significant problems that cause tension (Barceloneta, the Boqueria market, the Sagrada Familia, the Ramblas; the concentrations of tourist coaches; illegal tourist accommodation, anti-social behaviours, and safety; improving infrastructure;and managing negative impacts). Managing tourism in the city with a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach; redefining Barcelona’s tourism model and creating a comprehensive smart tourism system in Barcelona; strengthening the control of public spaces and reinforcing control processes and penalties for breaches in tourism activities.\footnote{ibid. 29-35}

The May 2015 election

The election of Ada Colau on the Barcelona en Comú (Barcelona in Common) citizen platform with 25% of the vote and as the largest party brought international attention to the ‘new’ tourism agenda in the city; although, as we have seen, there were strong antecedents in the development of policy back to 2008. Barcelona en Comú, launched in June 2014, grew out of the anti-austerity movement against austerity, inequality and corruption in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. Barcelona
en Comú governed with the support of Podemos, the Initiative for Catalonia Greens-United and Alternative Left (ICV-EUiA) and Constituent Process (PC). Barcelona en Comú’s broad policy agenda included defending social justice and community rights, promoting participatory democracy, introducing mechanisms to tackle corruption, and developing a new model of tourism for Barcelona.

Tourism emerged as a major issue in the 2015 election. In August 2014 there were a series of protests about the negative impacts of tourism, dubbed the “Barceloneta Crisis”, some protests attracting over a thousand participants. Barcelona’s Mayor promised an inspection and crackdown on illegal holiday apartments in La Barceloneta and 24 holiday apartments were closed down. The demonstrations were not so much anti-tourist as demanding a new model of tourism. Ada Colau drew parallels with the fate of Venice: “Any city that sacrifices itself on the altar of mass tourism will be abandoned by its people when they can no longer afford the cost of housing, food, and basic everyday necessities.” Colau argued that the scale of visitor numbers is “affecting not only residents’ quality of life, but their very ability to live in the area.” She went on to argue that the “... tourism crisis in Barcelona is further proof of the emptiness of the promises of neoliberalism that deregulation and privatisation will allow us all to prosper.”

“Of course, the answer is not to attack tourism. Everyone is a tourist at some point in their life. Rather, we have to regulate the sector, return to the traditions of local urban planning, and put the rights of residents before those of big business.

The way of life for all Barcelonans is seriously under threat. And the only solution is to win back democracy for the city. This is precisely what the residents of La Barceloneta are doing – defending their neighbourhood, their city, from the free market and from the political elites that are putting our home up for sale.”

Images of three naked Italian tourists frolicking through the La Barceloneta neighbourhood in August were carried in the mainstream media. The number of complaints about noise, nudity, public drunkenness and littering rocketed. One resident was quoted as saying "Imagine that you’re in a tiny house, with three children, unemployed with no money for vacations and you have to put up with the screams and fiesta of tourists next door. It’s unbearable...” Protesters were seeking out the owners of tourism lets in Barconeleta urging them to close their businesses, there was under-recording by the city authorities of the numbers of tourism flats with 72 licensed tourism rentals in La Barconeleta but “a quick search of online rental portals like Airbnb show[ed] more than 600 tourists lets available in the area.”

66 https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/02/mass-tourism-kill-city-barcelona
67 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/02/mass-tourism-kill-city-barcelona
68 Bloomberg carried an article in September 2015 which reflected
the crude tone of much international media coverage of the new mayor, and the city council and its policies: Barcelona’s New Mayor Wants to Send Tourists Packing. In July the Mayor halted further licensing and development of accommodation while a new plan was discussed and developed.

The 2016-2020 Plan

There are considerable continuities in policy development over successive administrations. In September 2016 the Ajuntament de Barcelona published its Strategic Tourism Plan for 2020. The 2020 Plan acknowledged that the 2015 Plan had two main goals: helping to improve tourist activities in Barcelona and ensuring tourism fitted in better with the city and that these goals were based on “criteria that were pretty novel in their time and which have proved to be essential today.” They developed the two goals further:

1. “a single concept was proposed for the terms "tourism and city"”, “the one was inconceivable without the other” if followed that “the health of tourist activities in the city extends to the well-being of its population and has to be the cause and effect of the proper development of tourism in Barcelona”
2. “tourism was not just an economic sector, an industry, closed and independent, but that it was also part of a multiple and cross-cutting reality affecting "the whole of society and its economic, social, cultural and territorial life".

The 2016 Plan recognised that “many of the 150 aspects, trends and dynamics noted in 2009, after considerable analytical work, are just as valid today and can be completely integrated into the current diagnosis.” The 2016 Plan also quotes with approval part of the Barcelona Declaration developed by the 7th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in 2013

“What is good for the citizen is good for tourism. The places that are good for living in are good for visiting. Efforts will focus on improving the quality of life of citizens, managing friction between residents and visitors and promoting dialogue and interaction between visitors and residents.”

The 2013 conference declaration recognised that “the governance of destinations ... should ... involve all relevant stakeholders working collaboratively, transparently and in the spirit of shared responsibility for creating better places to live in and to visit.” Creating better places for people to live in and to visit is at the heart of a Responsible Tourism approach.

70 The plan’s web page is http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/en/strategic-plan
71 Tourism Department, Ajuntament de Barcelona (2016) Barcelona Strategic Tourism Plan for 2020 Strategic Diagnosis: 13
72 ibid: 13
73 ibid: 13
74 ibid: 18
75 https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/documents/the_catalunya_2020_vision_for_responsible_tourism_-_the_barcelona_declaration_eng.pdf §3.2
The 2016 Plan reaffirms many of the conclusions of previous work including the conceptual shift from tourist to visitors reflecting and respecting the diversity of travel motivations and activities in the destination, the need for comprehensive management, and the “inseparable pairing” between sustainability and competitiveness. The 2016-2020 Plan is based on five criteria - sustainability, responsibility, redistribution, cohesion and innovation – and it asserts that

“If we are to ensure the success of destinations, maintain their uniqueness, endow every value chain with added value, guarantee and promote new experiences and turn tourism into an innovative activity with added value; we need to ratify the commitments to sustainability and responsibility signed by the city and, more importantly, have them implemented through specific and courageous action proposals.”

The Tourism Management Strategy in Barcelona

In many places around the world there is confusion about the roles of DMOs. The same acronym is used for both Destination Management Organisations and Destination Marketing Organisations. The latter are bodies composed primarily of private sector representatives spending private sector and public money on destination promotion.

The management of tourism in Barcelona is unequivocally the responsibility of the city council. Significantly, the “objectives and strategic lines” of Turisme de Barcelona, the public-private partnership organisation which markets the city include two public policy objectives in bold below. Turisme de Barcelona recognises its “social and institutional responsibility” to “achieve a balance between tourist activity and everyday life in the city” and encouraging the wider geographic distribution of tourism in the city.

a) To boost the financial impact of the sector and to attract tourists with high spending power;

b) To promote its own identity as a tourist attraction;

c) To reconcile tourists/local community;

d) To ensure the geographical and multi-sectorial distribution of tourism;

e) To strengthen the public-private promotional model.”

The City Council has pointed out that although citizens perceive the economic benefits of tourism as something positive, they also see tourism as the fourth most serious problem in the city. “It’s imperative for tourism in Barcelona and the various realities of the city to be able to live side by side”.

1. The knowledge base

Barcelona has had its own tourism statistics for many years, now comprising an annual tourist profile, a periodic citizen perception survey recently improved to give greater detail on those neighbourhoods with a larger tourist-activity presence. The tourist mobility plan and big data analysis using sensors and mobile phone data will provide more tourism management information. A Tourist Activity Observatory is being developed with the Barcelona Provincial Council and the

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76 ibid: 23
77 ibid 25
78 ibid 27, 26
80 http://professional.barcelonaturisme.com/Professionals/corporatiu/corporatiu-Objectius-i-linies-estrategiques/Objectives-and-Strategic-lines/_fRw6AmMgtpesWY3fBcy95STDceGxkITsiPllulLGE
82 The idea of setting up of a comprehensive, smart and innovative system improving both public and private tourist planning and management, eventually becoming international benchmarks in urban-tourism know-how was included in the Strategic Tourism Plan 2010-2015.
Turisme de Barcelona Consortium. The City is investing in establishing the data resources it needs to develop and implement an effective tourist management system.\textsuperscript{83} The city is now able to forecast tourism activity on a monthly basis, based on data from the airport, the port, municipal services and the police, warning anyone who cares to check on the council website about the peak days and crowded locations.\textsuperscript{84} The range and depth of data on tourism in Barcelona to be found on http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/ is excellent, a valuable resource for understanding tourism development in Barcelona and for case study work with students.

In 2015, 91.5\% of the residents surveyed thought tourism was beneficial to Barcelona. 79.6\% stated that they liked having contact with tourists. When asked whether they wanted their neighbourhood to have more or fewer tourists, most (71.6\%) answered that they were happy with the current number of tourists. However, 15.1\% of Barcelona’s residents considered that their neighbourhood had too much tourist accommodation (hotels, youth hostels, tourist flats, etc.), and 38.9\% stated they lived in a neighbourhood where there were lots of tourists. Nearly half (42.4\%) had put up a relative or friend who had come to visit the city in the previous year. The average number of visitors put up in Barcelona homes was 4.1. 87.7\% of the surveyed residents agreed that Barcelona’s future lay in “attracting more high-quality tourism”, 79.1\% in “promoting a debate on tourism between city residents, institutions and the economic sector” and 73.9\% in “a better distribution of tourism to include more of the city’s neighbourhoods”.

However, 43\% considered tourism to be reaching its limits in terms of the city’s capacity to provide services for tourists, in Ciutat Vella and Eixample, both heavily impacted by tourism, this figure was higher. Close to half of the residents surveyed (47\%) expressed the opinion that there was no need to continue attracting further tourists. The May 2016 Barcelona barometer put tourism as the city’s fourth-biggest problem, 6.6\%, mentioned it unprompted.\textsuperscript{85} In 2015 it was 6.4\% and in 2014 3.8\% - between 2006 and 2013 it hovered between 0.5\% and 1.7\%.\textsuperscript{86} When asked in 2015 what citizens would most like the council to do for the city, reducing tourism and improving its quality came 9\textsuperscript{th}, although amongst respondents in the Gothic Quarter it came first, in other old town neighbourhoods like Barceloneta it came 3\textsuperscript{rd}. Tourism is seen as the gravest problem that Ciutat Vella currently had in 2015 by 15.4\% of respondents, in Eixample by 7.3\%, and in Gracia by 9.8\%.\textsuperscript{87}

The city also has comprehensive data\textsuperscript{88} from 2015 on what concerns citizens have about tourism. 43\% are concerned about the poor behaviour of some uncivilised tourists and want the city to address the issue, 39.8\% are concerned about tourist accommodation, 40.8\% about noise in the street, 23\% about spreading tourism more evenly across the city and 22\% about safety.\textsuperscript{89}

Barcelona has high levels of repeat visiting, and its data on visitor satisfaction suggests that the visitor experience is improving for the large majority of tourists. Barcelona City Council conducts a tourist survey every year to build up profiles of the people who visit the city. It also evaluates their level of satisfaction with their visits. The 2015 survey showed that, on a scale from 0 to 10, tourists gave the city a score of 8.6, a 0.2 increase compared over 2014. The aspects tourists valued most

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{83} ibid 28-31
  \item \textsuperscript{84} https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/informe_sigt_09_.setembre_2019_v1_0.pdf
  \item \textsuperscript{85} ibid 46
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística:56
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística:56-58
  \item \textsuperscript{88} The Perception of Tourism in Barcelona data 2012-2015 is available on-line http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/en/documents#estadistiques_enquestes
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística:65
\end{itemize}
were architecture (9.1), the city's cultural offer (8.8), entertainment (8.5) and public transport (8.4). The city's beaches received a score of 7.9, as did cleanliness in general, while accessibility for people with reduced mobility received 7.8, air quality 7.6 and noise levels 6.8.

Policymaking in Barcelona is based on a body of shared knowledge and developed through discussion and debates. The development of a strong base of robust shared information and knowledge about tourism trends in urban tourism as well as data specific to Barcelona is critical to developing policies which can be successfully implemented to achieve agreed objectives. The process of discussion and debate between citizens, institutions and the business sector develops consensus and helps to explain the continuity between administrations in Barcelona. Strategic Tourism Plans are developed through analysis of the current situation and future scenarios based on data and analysis of trends and through discussions and debates with all the players involved. In this way, plans are developed and implemented based on shared knowledge and agreed policy and actions. The tourism plans are integrated with the other city plans, most importantly the Municipal Action Plan (PAM).

Engagement in the decim.barcelona participatory process
Barcelona has an extensive range of mechanisms linking participation in person to neighbourhoods through face-to-face meetings, discussions and debates and proposal collection trolleys; with digital participation through the decim.barcelona platform and other social media networks. Tourism was included in the decim.barcelona which ran in February and March 2016 to establish the Municipal Action Plan for 2015-2019. There was strong support for the Strategic Tourism Plan, a Master Plan for Park Güell, protecting local commerce against the negative effects of tourism, the Special Urban-Development Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT), boosting sustainable and Responsible Tourism, mitigating the negative impacts of tourism, controlling and closing down illegal tourist flats and reclaiming the Rambla for Barcelona’s residents. It is noteworthy that tourism is part of the participatory processes which Barcelona has developed to engage with its citizens in decision making through Open Government, rather than to create its separate processes for public consultation on tourism. The city regularly asks residents about their valuation of Barcelona’s management of tourism, it has averaged 64.3% positive since 2009, it peaked at 74.7% in 2013, across the city only Ciutat Vella, at 54.5%, differed much from the average. The city authorities are working with local neighbourhood associations to develop local tourism management priorities and plans.

2. Governance
With Barcelona’s strong, post-Franco, public participation processes and recognition of the importance of tourism to the city, it became a priority to establish public participation structures for the tourism sector. Asked in 2015 about whether or not there should be more debate about tourism between citizens, the institutions and the business sector, 79% said yes and only 5.8% disagreed. Since 2009 over 75% have consistently supported more debate about the impacts of tourism and how to manage them.

90 Data available at http://www.observatoriturisme.barcelona/
92 http://decim.barcelona platform
93 ibid 31-36
94 ibid 34-35 – there are 38 proposals in the list that was voted on.
96 Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística: 63-64
97 Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística: 66
In May 2016 there was a formal agreement to set up the City and Tourism Council as a standing body that will participate in developing tourism policies and strategies, maintain the quality of city residents’ lives and ensure visitors to the city enjoy their experience. In July 2016 the Full Council Meeting approved the establishment of a Tourism Council which aims to represent the general public as a whole as well as the sector. It is chaired by the Mayor and composed of representatives from the general public and neighbourhood sector, the tourist sector, the commerce and catering sector, culture and sport, trade unions, environmental, social and territorial groups, experts and municipal professionals, as well as representatives from each of the municipal political groups. The Tourism Council a participatory body designed to enable the new tourism model to be debated and approved by consensus, allowing the general public to become involved in tourist-activity governance and collaborate in government actions on tourism policies, strategic lines and initiatives. The Tourism Council is a place where public bodies, associations and political representatives can share ideas and information and suggest ways of improving Barcelona’s tourist sector.

The City and Tourism Council, often referred to as the Tourism Council, is a standing advisory body with four functions:

i. “Advising the municipal government on municipal initiatives, policies and strategic lines of action in the area of tourism, from a global perspective;

ii. proposing policies on tourism and to ensure its sustainability;

iii. producing studies and opinions on issues concerning its sector, at the request of the Mayor;

iv. producing an annual report on tourism in Barcelona that should include, among other things, impact assessment, proposals for improvements, municipal lines of action and the main actions carried out in this area, as well as warnings that enable appropriate steps to be taken in terms of conflict prevention.”

The City and Tourism Council can produce reports, opinions, proposals and suggestions as recommendations to City Council bodies, but they are not in any way binding. It is recognised that the horizontal and transversal impacts, positive and negative, of tourism require inter-departmental co-ordination to co-ordinate and periodically evaluate the management of tourism by the municipality. This is achieved through the Tourism and City Council, the Tourism and City Municipal Working Group, a municipal interdepartmental working group. There is also a Tourist-Management Work Group which coordinates municipal-service initiatives.

### 3. Accommodation

Barcelona has a wide variety of tourist accommodation, which makes the city attractive and available to a broad range of market segments. Hotels are concentrated in Ciutat Vella, Eixample and Sant Marti, pensions and hostels in Ciutat Vella, Eixample and Montjuic, and tourist apartments in Eixample. In Ciutat Vella 54.7% of respondents felt that there were too many tourist accommodations in their neighbourhood, in Eixample it was 27%, in Gracia 21.9% and Sant Marti, where there are many new hotels, 15.1%.

The growth of new forms of accommodation – less than half of all overnight visitors (tourists) to Barcelona stay in hotels – creates regulation and management challenges. The new municipal

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102 ibid 29-31

103 Consell Turisme i Ciutat (2016) Informe activitat turística: 62
tourism management model has had to find ways of effectively managing and taxing the new forms of accommodation and disintermediation. These new forms of accommodation provision, marketing and distribution have facilitated spectacular growth: “the city authorities are aware of the need to regulate tourist facilities in the city, in terms of both their growth and specialisation and with regard to legal matters and territorial distribution issues.”

Two sets of issues arise around tourism accommodation. There is a general set of issues which relate to over development of tourism in particular areas, hotels, hostels, licensed apartments and unlicensed apartments all contribute to the feeling of social fragmentation, negative impacts on community life and the quality of people’s lives. The second set of issues arise around unlicensed tourism accommodation; this has grown dramatically in recent years, facilitated by the growth of social media and disintermediation websites like Airbnb and which raises additional issues of health, safety and taxation.

Following the election in July 2015, the municipal government suspended the processing of new permits for tourist-accommodation, student-residences and youth-hostel establishments, to analyse the impact of tourist-accommodation activities in all its aspects and to draft a special urban-development plan to regulate it. This involved using a snapshot of the city’s tourist accommodation, to evaluate and examine the existing range on offer and its economic and social impacts on access to housing, use of public areas, mobility, diversity of uses and waste production and management. The city has taken a holistic view of the issues which arise in the planning and management of tourism accommodation and has developed an interdepartmental approach to management and regulation. Ciutat Vella now has a Usage Plan designed to restrict the growth of tourist accommodation, whether hotels or apartments. A Tourist Accommodation Working Group has been tasked to complement municipal efforts to reduce the numbers of unlicensed apartments, and a parallel group is working to prevent the spread of souvenir shops in Ciutat Vella, Sagrada Familia, and Park Güell.

There is a substantial amount of illegal accommodation on offer in Barcelona that not only creates speculation and a black economy but also undermines positive coexistence in local communities, in addition to changing housing uses and displacing residential activities, causing residents to move out. In July 2016 an Emergency Inspection Plan against Illegal Tourist Flats was launched designed to eliminate existing illegal accommodation in the city, with a budget of €1,350,000

The emergency plan included measures that attempt to tighten the net around illegal tourist flats through various means. These include:

- Detection measures: the creation of a new team of viewers, for greater efficiency in identifying illegal activities and facilitating collaboration with local residents, there is an online complaint form at barcelona.cat/incidències/habitatgesturistics
- Measures for carrying out inspections and issuing fines: These include reinforcing the team of inspectors, more pressure on digital platforms and maximum fines for repeat-offender platforms.

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104 Ajuntament de Barcelona & Barcelona Activa (2014) Barcelona’s tourism activity development and management: 15-16
105 http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/en/documents#normativa
106 Ibid. 16
107 Ibid 16
The city council provides to the tax office information on detected illegal homes for tourist use. The Tax Agency carried out inspections (3,000 more or less) by tracking bank payments and claimed to the owners of tourist accommodation the declaration of income from personal income tax (IRPF)

- Inter-authority collaboration measures: an agreement with the Generalitat to extend the use of web crawlers, spiders, and data sharing with Spain’s Tax Authority.
- Regulatory measures: Working bilaterally with the Generalitat to ensure the new Tourism Regulations facilitate inspection work and, among other things, allow a quicker implementation of legal procedures to stop illegal activities.
- Awareness-raising measures: a new website for checking whether or not a tourist flat has a permit, and a communication campaign to foster positive coexistence, with special emphasis on tourist accommodation.

The city is raising awareness amongst visitors of the problems caused by illegal accommodation and enlisting their support in identifying the apartments; it is now easy for a tourist to check whether the apartment they plan to rent is illegal or not and to report illegal unlicensed properties.\(^{108}\)

One of the tools used during the inspection campaign is the Call Reception Centre (CRT), which gives priority to complaints from the general public concerning any problems caused by tourists staying in tourist flats. The centre receives all 010 and 092 calls concerning tourist flats, and it then contacts the accommodation’s owner by phone to ensure they take immediate action to resolve the problem.

4. Overcrowding and Deconcentration

The honeypot ticketed attractions are the Sagrada Familia with 4.5m visitors in 2017 and Park Guell with 3.1m. 2002 was Gaudi’s year of commemoration, but it was only in 2006 that the increase in visitors numbers accelerated. The city is pioneering the use of big data to aid its management of visitor movements and concentrations. The concentration of visitor pressure is clear from data collected from Twitter.\(^{109}\)

Since 2013 District Tourism Plans have been developed designed to encourage residents of Barcelona and its hinterland and visitors, over half of whom have previously visited Barcelona, to discover the “ten Barcelonas” through more than 500 points of interest in the city’s districts.\(^{110}\)


\(^{109}\) ibid:23

work is linked with the development of a Tourist Mobility Plan designed to enable visitors to move around the city between the tourist nodes in ways that are compatible with ordinary mobility in the city and which improves, or at least preserves, the quality of mobility services for residents, making the city more enjoyable. The Barcelona is Much More\textsuperscript{111} campaign is encouraging international and domestic visitors and locals to enjoy what the 311 municipalities of the province of Barcelona have to offer beyond the city and ensuring that information about how to travel by public transport is available.\textsuperscript{112}

All of Park Güell is open and freely accessible to Barcelona residents, but since 2013, entrance to part of the monumental area is restricted, to avoid overcrowding by tourists. The primary objective of the visitor management strategy is conservation, and half of the revenue funds the maintenance and conservation of the Park. At Park Güell\textsuperscript{113} access to the Monument Area (7.9\% of its area) has been regulated. In 2013 an €8 entry fee was imposed, now €10 for adults.\textsuperscript{114} This reduced visitor numbers from 9 million to 2.3 million, with 5.6\% of visits being by locals. Before the ticketing system was introduced as many as 1,200 people were entering the monument area every 15 minutes.\textsuperscript{115} The number of people visiting the Monument Area at any given time is limited to 800 per hour. The average dwell time is between 45 and 60 minutes. 90\% of tickets are sold online. Local residents have unrestricted and free access; a mobility plan has been implemented in the surrounding area to manage the flow of tourists through four entry and five exit points. Heritage-friendly regulations have been imposed inside the Zona Regulada. The management plan was designed to reclaim the area for its everyday uses and reduce the negative effects of overcrowding, ensuring both the quality of the tourists’ experiences of the place and the leisure opportunities for local residents and the city’s residents in general. The revenues from the visitor fees to enter the Zona Regulada is used to carry out improvement work, both inside Park Güell and in the surrounding area.\textsuperscript{116} In 2017 Barcelona City Council invested €25m to make the remainder of the park more appealing for residents.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{111} http://www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat/en/
\textsuperscript{113} The prices can be found here https://parkguell.barcelona/en/planning-your-visit/prices-and-times with a Gaudí Més pass entrance is free.
\textsuperscript{114} https://www.thelocal.es/20141024/entry-fee-sees-numbers-slashed-at-barcelonas-park-guell
\textsuperscript{115} Local residents registered as living in the neighbourhoods of La Salut, Vallcarca i els Penitents, El Coll, Can Baró and El Carmel also have the right to apply for a free-access card.
\textsuperscript{116} https://parkguell.barcelona/en/planning-your-visit/the-restricted-area
Since April 2019, there is a free shuttle bus to Park Guell from Alfons X metro station, it is included in the price of an entrance ticket. The ’Park Güell and schools’ programme enables all Spanish and EU schools with an educational interest in the site designed by Antoni Gaudí to visit the restricted monumental area.

The Sagrada Familia church is a major honeypot, a must-see for first-time visitors. Tourism at the Sagrada Familia has been reorganised (increased advanced bookings, revised opening hours, more ticket offices, extra access-point control staff); an improved system for parking coaches; the drafting of a Tourism Plan for the Eixample; an information service on unoccupied parking places for coaches; the cancellation of the stop on C/ Sardenya, transferred to the Mallorca-Marina chamfer. A regular inspection programme for bar terraces and souvenir shops has also been launched and a Special Plan for Regulating Tourist Accommodation has been approved. Sagrada Familia introduced online ticket sales in 2010 and visitor numbers have been limited to 1500 per hour, less than the maximum capacity estimated to be 2000. In the Sagrada Familia area, pavements have been cleared and bar terraces moved to wooden platforms erected in the adjacent street parking spaces.

In October 2018 the City Council and the Sagrada Familia reached an historic agreement to regularise the relationship between the Sagrada Familia and the city. The church will contribute €2.2m per year for 10 years to help fund better public transport access and to maintain the public space around the

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118 https://parkguell.barcelona/en/planning-your-visit/bus-guell
Sagrada Familia. There are an estimated 20m tourists who visit the Sagrada Familia but do not enter.  

The Plaça de les Glòries and the Modernista Sant Pau art nouveau complex are being redeveloped to make them more attractive for tourists to spread, and potentially dilute the impacts of tourism in the city. In April 2016 larger tour parties were barred from La Boqueria the very popular food market on La Rambla.

Why is Barcelona a leader?

The multi-stakeholder partnerships which have been created by the City Council in Barcelona over the last 10 years have produced some innovative work on tourism management as the citizens and the industry work together to make tourism work better in Barcelona. The development of new institutions; the harnessing of participative processes long established in Barcelona to develop consensual solutions to tourism management; the creation of interdepartmental groups in the municipality to manage tourism; the determination to balance promotion with management; and the understanding that using tourism for sustainable development of the city is about more than just having more tourists every year, is very unusual and probably unique. Barcelona is a leader amongst destinations in managing tourism and addressing the challenges of ‘overtourism’ in a city where tourists are everywhere every day, an invading group that arrives from the port and airport, by rail and by car.

Besides being one of the world’s leading tourist destinations, Barcelona is a leading centre for mobile technology. There are three pillars in Barcelona’s digital strategy: transformation; innovation and empowerment. Barcelona’s Mobile World Capital (MWCapital) is working with the Barcelona Hotel Guild to boost innovation in the tourism sector. They have pioneered the use of Big Dat to manage tourism within the Sagrada Familia in partnership with Barcelona City Hall, Eurecat and Orange with the support of GSMA. The applied Big Data and Internet of Things to analyse tourist flows around the church to understand tourism flows around the building and in the neighbourhood to understand the visitor impacts and their use of public transport.

The Barcelona Tourism Observatory shares the work done by Barcelona City Council, Barcelona Provincial Council and the Barcelona Tourist Consortium to inform decision making. As the City Council Tourism Directorate has pointed out: “The more data we have, the better we can act to balance and redistribute the social and economic wealth generated by tourism”, “a “...tool to serve citizens.” The city is developing a Set of Tourism Indicators (SIT-BCN) and an Index of Tourism Sustainability The Observatory uses open data; anyone can access it, the public and private sectors can collaborate

121 https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/premsa/2018/10/18/acord-historic-entre-la-juntament-i-la-sagrada-familia-per-regularitzar-la-lllicencia-dobres-i-contribuir-economicament-en-la-urbanitzacio-la-mobilitat-i-el-manteniment-de-lentorn/
123 https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/digital/en
124 https://mobileworldcapital.com/about-mwcapital/#foundation
125 https://mobileworldcapital.com/?s=tourism
There are 95 indicators applicable at the city level and 32 at the district level. The index uses 17 indicators balanced across economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts.

The CETT-UB have developed *The ISOST index: A tool for studying sustainable tourism* and the city is looking at using this approach to track the sector’s sustainability performance.

**A Note on Cruise**

Barcelona has little influence over arrivals, whether they arrive by plane, train, cars or coaches. Neither does the city have much influence over cruise arrivals. When the cruise excursionists arrive in La Rambla after breakfast aboard it can feel like a tidal wave – as many as 35,000 people arriving on foot at the Mirador de Colon, to walk up La Rambla. Some residents undoubtedly feel that they are losing their place, their Barcelona – there is nostalgia for a past which may, or may not, be misremembered; there is a demographic life-cycle dimension to the issue. The issue is about the way the city is used by citizens and visitors – but the problem is not necessarily tourism, the beer terraces are used by citizens and visitors, international students come to study, invite their families to visit and stay to start businesses. The initiatives being taken in Barcelona are groundbreaking, the city is determined to remain an open Mediterranean city and a tourism city – tourism, they acknowledge, has to be managed better.

Currently the priorities of the new government in Barcelona are to address inequality and the management of tourism – and of course, the two are not unrelated. The First Deputy Mayor, Jaume Collboni, highlighting the need for Barcelona to handle 100% of its tourist tax to tackle the impact of tourism in the city; asserted that: “Tourism has to serve the city and not the other way around”.

There are many challenges, the city has little influence over the development of the airport and the port, it does not control arrivals, a new terminal is being built in the port, and the development of new forms of the sharing economy creates new management challenges. Barcelona is a small city of 1.6m, and it is a well-connected city – 30 million visitors only half of whom sleep in the city as tourists, and only half of Barcelona’s tourists stay in the hotels. L’Hospitalet de Llobregat, often shortened to L’Hospitalet, is a municipality to the immediate southwest of Barcelona with a population of 260,000 - many hotels in that municipality are marketed as though it were a suburb of Barcelona, it is seamlessly connected to Barcelona, but Barcelona cannot manage the growth of hotel

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128 Journal of Destination Marketing & ManagementVolume 8, June 2018, Pages 281-289  https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.05.005

129 Those cruise passengers who sleep overnight on the ship in the port pay the tourism tax (between 2.5 and 0.70€ depending on the grade of accommodation), the day excursionists, the vast majority of those walking about the city, pay only 1USD.

130 Barden R (2011) Sensing our way to a better “Old Town” to live in and visit unpublished MSc Report.

131 Since November 2012 there has been a Tax on Stays at Tourist Establishments (IEET), a tax that is levied by the Government of Catalonia. Barcelona receives 34% of the tax revenues collected. In 2013 Barcelona City Council’s Executive decided to transfer 50% of this revenue to Turisme de Barcelona and to directly manage the other 50%.
accommodation there or along the coast. In 2019 L-Hospitalet began to develop policies to manage tourism.

Barcelona is a tourist city, it’s a brand with a culture and lifestyle created and shared by citizens and tourists, it has to learn to manage tourism better and it is a leading example of how tourism can be used to make Barcelona a better place to live in, and a better place to visit.

**Barcelona Tourism for 2020**

In March 2017, the Directorate of Tourism in the Ajuntament de Barcelona published a new “collective strategy for sustainable tourism”: *Barcelona Tourism for 2020*[^132] The new strategy has developed from the previous years of work and there are with many continuities. As Ada Colau points out in the Mayor’s foreword, the new strategy recognised that Barcelona has evolved into a “tourist city”.

“The sustained increase in visitors has transformed the city’s urban fabric, mobility and economic activities, as well as the daily life of many neighbourhoods. Tourism has become an inherent and integral part of the city, and that requires a change in perspective regarding tourism policy, which can no longer be merely a strategy for that sector; it must become a collective project.”[^133]

There had been a transition from managing tourism in the city to managing a tourist city. This requires “strategies based on a need to reinforce the public leadership of tourism governance.” Tourism can no longer be managed as a discrete sector; public debate was required to determine the “collective interests inherent in Destination Barcelona.”

Consequently, over 200 representatives from local-resident associations, companies, trade unions, cultural and social organisations have been involved in developing the strategy. The Strategic Plan identifies ways in which tourism can contribute to local development and “seeks to foster the participation of key tourism players and to promote their co-responsibility in seeking formulas that compensate for the undeniable cost that tourism also... “ brings. The plan recognises that tourism competes “for basic resources, like housing and urban space, which the plan aims to tackle, to ensure conciliation with the lives of local residents.” Therefore the plan explicitly recognises that “sustainability is an essential, unavoidable objective.”[^134]

The City Council stressed “the importance of governing tourism to guarantee the city’s general interests”. Visits and tourist practices have to be reconciled with everyday life in the city. Tourism needs to be governed by “laying down rules of the game that allow[s] a balance to be found in the city, by promoting certain practices and restricting others.” Better quality tourism jobs, part of an “unequivocal political aim to turn tourism into a lever of change for launching other non-extractive activities that benefit from the constant influx of people visiting Barcelona every year.”[^135]

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[^133]: Ibid p.4
[^134]: Ibid p. 4
[^135]: Ibid p. 5
Barcelona’s strategy is now based on two explicit and fundamental understandings, understandings which are not widely shared in other destinations.

1. Destinations have two dimensions. Destinations are built through image and narratives; they are virtual as well as territorial. The hopes and expectations of visitors are formed through images and narratives. The visits, activities and interactions with the place and people (residents and visitors) are experienced in particular places. Communication, promotion and management strategies need to be developed and managed in an integrated way.\(^{136}\)

2. Successful destinations must be both competitive and sustainable, they have to be feasible in time and space.

“To ensure a destination’s success, maintain its uniqueness, add value to the whole value chain, guarantee and promote new experiences, and turn tourism into an innovative activity with added value, the commitments to sustainability and responsibility signed by the city need to be ratified and, most important of all, conveyed through bold, specific proposals for action.”\(^{137}\)

Barcelona is a city which takes sustainable tourism seriously; it is an aspiration backed by resources and management engagement across the council.

“To sustainability is no longer an option or brand attribute but rather an absolute commitment. The quality of tourist experiences depends on guaranteeing the well-being of the people who live in the city, ensuring a balance between the tourist city and the many other ways of experiencing it.”\(^{138}\)

The Strategic Plan is based on five key objectives:

“SUSTAINABILITY. The policies, programmes, economic activities and relationships between players that ensure the future well-being of destinations, without compromising the basic resources of the area or resident and visiting populations: environment, housing, public spaces, etc.

RESPONSIBILITY. The ethical individual and collective action framework that is committed to minimising the environmental and social impact while ensuring that economic activities do not occur at the expense of resident and visiting populations’ rights.

REDISTRIBUTION. The public and private mechanisms that ensure a fair distribution of the wealth generated by economic activities, through revenue from work, taxation and the area’s economic, social and business relations.

COHESION. Strengthening tourist activity links to the destination’s players and population, as a means of implementing collective projects that look after the city, in all its complexity, as a common space and take into account the plurality of its voices and needs.

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136 Executive Summary p.9 available online

137 Ibid. p. 9

138 Executive Summary p.16
INNOVATION. The impetus behind new forms of economic and social management and organisation that create shared value and help to multiply and strengthen links between economic, social and cultural players for their mutual benefit.¹³⁹

The Strategic Plan runs to 144 pages and contains 80 strategic challenges in five areas: Governance, Tourism Management, Territorial Strategy, Jobs and Enterprise, and Promotion and Marketing. There are 10 strategic programmes with 30 lines of action and 100 measures. It is only possible here to provide a summary of the Strategic Plan, referenced to the Executive Summary.¹⁴⁰ The 10 strategic programmes are:

The Plan was developed through a highly participatory process. The various groups involved are detailed on the Strategic Plan’s website¹⁴¹ and the calendar describes the drafting process.¹⁴² The minutes of the working groups are also available on the website, a remarkable resource for teaching and research.¹⁴³ The city’s Tourist Mobility Strategy published in 2017 is also available online.¹⁴⁴ Barcelona has published its evaluation of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan for Tourism,¹⁴⁵ and details of the measure which the city took to increase participation in the management of tourism in the city.¹⁴⁶ The previous plan had proposed the formation of a City and Tourism Council to create a space for “for shared discussion, debate and reflection between all the players involved, to have a large space for participating in, comparing, monitoring and assessing the Plan....”¹⁴⁷ That has now been established.

The Tourism Council is a debating forum, where public bodies, associations and political representatives can share their thoughts and put forward proposals for improving the development of Barcelona's tourist sector, its resolutions are not binding, but they serve as a basis for decisions.

¹³⁹ Executive Summary pp.9-10
¹⁴⁵ https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/documents/avaluacio_pet15_versio_final_1.pdf - available only in Catalan
¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p.11
taken at Full City Council meetings. In addition to debating the future shape of tourism in Barcelona, the Tourism Council has made a number of recommendations which were subsequently agreed by the City Council and implemented. For example, a study of tourist taxation, the development of sustainability indicators, the establishment of a working group on Public Space to look at managing tourists and rationalising, and greening, public transport to move tourists around the city.

Barcelona has understood that shared knowledge is fundamental to inform debate and ensure that debate is evidence-based. The knowledge and documents sections of the website provide time-series comprehensive data on seasonality, accommodation occupancy, arrivals by air and see, the volume of available accommodation, the opinion of residents by districts, trends in retail prices and salaries in the sector (prices are increasing faster than salaries), and the volume and character of employment contracts (~85% are temporary). There are also reports on tourist activity, tourism statistics, and surveys of residents’ perceptions of tourism in the city.

**Implementing the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan**

The city has developed an integrated approach to tourism management to implement the plan.

In August 2018 Joan Torrella moved from the City Council, where he was Director of the Tourism Management section. In September 2018 he moved to become Managing Director of Turisme de Barcelona.

In 2019 Turisme de Barcelona extended its role from that of a Destination Marketing Organisation to include Management. As Barcelona’s DMMO, it is now a Destination Marketing & Management Organization charged with implementing the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan by promoting integrated management. The DMMO is at the heart of the management process coordinating the work of the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Province. There is a road map for the ten districts of the city with management and marketing integrated across the city by Turisme de Barcelona.

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The number of visitors in the city gives a sense of the scale of the challenge. The City Council estimates that on average in 2019 there are 154,000 visitors per day, but with events, day trips and cruise passengers in the city it can reach 220,000 visitors making 850,000 journeys within the city, some 30% of all journeys resulting in significant overcrowding.

Barcelona’s tourism marketing strategy now extends to encouraging tourists to visit Girona, Tarragona and Lleida as well as less-visited parts of the city.
Action Programmes:

1. **Governance**
   
   The municipal government recognises that there needs to be “public leadership of tourism management through coordination and participation with other players” to “ensure the city’s general interest.” This requires communication with a “plurality of voices” and using open, participatory processes. Barcelona is also keen to establish networks with other cities internationally “for sharing challenges, strategies, tools and criteria on the governance and management of tourist cities.”

2. **Knowledge**
   
   Barcelona recognises that data and shared knowledge is essential to managing tourism and to share it to inform a wide participatory debate. They have committed to “generating, sharing, spreading and transferring knowledge of tourist activity in destination Barcelona, to support the decision-making process, examine strategic issues and enrich public debate.” They have established a Destination Barcelona Observatory, established partnerships to develop research and technology and for education and dissemination of information to facilitate informed debate.

3. **Destination Barcelona**
   
   The objective is to build a triple bottom line sustainable destination which goes beyond the City limits and to develop a destination which “is dynamic, welcoming, open, innovative and desirable, which guarantees the quality of life of its citizens and a balanced territorial development, where the real city and its identity are the main attractions for visitors.”

   There are five objectives in Barcelona’s Tourism Marketing Strategy to
   1. guarantee the sustainability of the destination
   2. boost the multiplier effect of tourism in strategic economic sectors
   3. engage the different destination stakeholders and the community
   4. promote the integrated management of the destination
   5. reinforce the competitiveness of tourism and ensure the greatest possible social return.

   To achieve this balanced set of objectives it follows that
   a. marketing has to be turned into a management tool;
   b. it is necessary to stop promoting neighbourhoods, and rather to highlight events, and “distinct itineraries and non-residential spaces as recipients of temporary activity;

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151  Ibid p. 19
152  Ibid. p.20
153  Ibid.p.22
c. it is necessary to expand and diversify the promotion of tourist attractions and products which meet sustainability criteria, ensure a social return and contribute to the local regeneration; and

d. to market the extended destination including the Province of Barcelona and its coast. 154

4. Mobility

Barcelona is addressing internal and external mobility to manage tourism flows. “Reasons for stays, seasonal variations, temporary visits, means of transport, the state of transport network infrastructures and the most popular itineraries are among the parameters that determine tourist uses of mobility in the city.155

The city has tracked the movement of tourists around the city and identified where the congestion is greatest.

154 Ibid. p. 22
155 Ibid. p. 25
Congestion affects different parts of the city at different times of the day.

These graphic representations show that the “hot spots” move around the city. There are plans to reorganise the tourist bus service, the coach arrival points and to undertake a study of cruise passenger movements through the city and to create management plans for the overcrowded places.

5. Accommodation

Here Barcelona is aligning the various regulatory instruments which they have available to the City Council. They are using planning regulations to control building and working with the internet intermediaries to encourage them to take responsibility and to comply with regulations to promote and “supply legal, quality accommodation.”

The graph below shows the dramatic growth in tourist accommodation, which contributed to the public backlash against it. Citizens began to complain in 2013-14, in 2014 these complaints were aggregated and there was recognition of the scale of the problem.

The PEUAT regulates the development of new tourism accommodation, including youth hostels and Habitatge d’Ús Turístic (HUT) licences. Zero growth in HUTs has been established; new licensed ones can only be opened as others close. In February 2018 the city council supported the building of additional public rental housing.

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156 See above Special Urban Development Plan for Tourist Accommodation
157 Ibid. p. 7
Legal accommodation is unevenly distributed across the city. The objective of the Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT) is to facilitate sustainable urban development improving the quality of life for residents.

**Legal accommodation supply**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establiment existent segons tipologies</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>67.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guesthouses and Inns</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>6.332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apart-hotels</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacational housing</td>
<td>9.658</td>
<td>58.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth hostels</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>9.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student residencies</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10.587</td>
<td>148.552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Barcelona City Council*
Illegal, unregistered and unregulated accommodation is still more concentrated. In 2016 there were estimated to be ~6,000 illegal lets operating.

Illegal tourist accommodation is now addressed by teams of inspectors working closely with the tax authorities. Residents and tourists alike can check online whether or not an accommodation is licensed and report it online or by phone. In May 2018 Barcelona secured access to all data from Airbnb adverts. Between July 2016 and July 2018, 2,355 tourism flats have been closed and a further 1,800 are in the process of being closed. In April 2019 some 246 accommodation units listed on platforms in the city are unlocated. A team of close to 100 is continuing to check that flats which have been closed down don’t re-offend, to detect new cases and go after organised networks operating more than one property. Some 400 to 500 properties are listed each month on the various platforms. The regulatory framework always takes time to adjust to new forms of business and this has been the case in Barcelona too. Barcelona has, as have other cities, had to rely on existing housing and tourism regulations.

In 2012 Madrid devolved the regulation of holiday

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161 Personal communication.

162 32 inspectors, 6 housing officers, 10 administrators, 7 lawyers and 40 visualisers identifying the properties from photos on the platforms.


Regulation, inspection and enforcement have borne fruit. Airbnb now takes down those illegally letting tourism accommodation.  

However, there are still flats where all the rooms are let as holiday rentals to different tourists, and there are mafias exploiting the sharing economy. In April the advocate general of the European court of justice found in a non-binding opinion that under EU law Airbnb should be considered a digital information provider rather than a traditional agent. If that decision were upheld platforms like Airbnb would be able to operate freely through the EU and they could not be required to ensure that landlords comply with local rules aimed at

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166 Since September 2018
167 Under the E-commerce Directive of the European Union
regulating holiday lets. Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Brussels, Krakow, Munich, Paris, Valencia and Vienna and working together to lobby the EU. In their letter the cities argue that

“….homes should be used first and foremost for living in. Many cities suffer from a serious housing shortage. Where homes can be used more lucratively for renting out to tourists, they disappear from the traditional housing market, prices are driven up even further and housing of citizens who live and work in our cities is hampered.

Cities must protect the public interest and eliminate the adverse effects of short term holiday rental in various ways. More nuisances, feelings of insecurity and a ‘touristification’ of their neighbourhoods is not what our residents want. Therefore (local) governments should have the possibility to introduce their own regulations depending on the local situation.

For this, we need strong legal obligations for platforms to cooperate with us in registration-schemes and in supplying rental-data per house that is advertised on their platforms.169

6. Managing Spaces

The city has also sought to promote co-existence between tourists and residents, working with communities and those directly affected. They advise on the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The city does this by

- providing information about the current regulations and the main legal and technical aspects of legal tourist accommodation;
- empowering the neighbourhood and strengthening its community dynamics;
- where necessary, providing mediation to achieve a better coexistence by developing dialogue and trust.

The city deploys teams of lawyers, psychologists and social mediators to intervenes and seek solutions to facilitate coexistence.

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implementing policies to counteract pressure on the property market.

The city publishes monthly forecasts of volumes of visitor numbers for each day reporting all events or activities which involve 10,000 or more people. This information is provided as a service for tour operators and to inform the logistics of municipal services. It is published to satisfy the principle of transparency. In September 2018 there were three days over 200,000, one of which was close to 300,000. Visitor flows and personal mobility vehicles are managed and the use of the terraces (pavements) is regulated to ensure that the pavements can be used by all. In Sant Felip Neri the square is closed at school break times to allow the school children to have sole use of it. In La Boqueria, regulations have been introduced to create coexistence between residents and tourists in their use of the market space by banning large groups from entering.

The city has developed a territorial strategy to assist in developing the best possible relationship between the tourist activity and the district which hosts it. This strategy is based on integrated management across the public sector and engaging the private sector as a collaborating partner. In 2013 the city developed Tourism District Plans. Recognising that each of the ten districts faces different challenges depending upon the degree of urban complexity, the concentration of tourism icons and the different situations, needs and aspirations in each district, the city has stepped up its local management effort.

In each district, the plan was developed and implemented tailored to local needs and aspirations. For example, in Ciutat Vella a balanced coexistence plan is being developed and there are labour rights initiatives. In Eixample, the city is pacifying roads adjacent to the Sagrada Familia and enhancing security. An art galleries route was developed as an alternative cultural offer. In Sarria – Saint Gervasi a scientific and technological tourism route was constructed. There are grants available to create local socio-economic benefits

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172 Up to 80% of the project cost, limited to 50,000€
in neighbourhoods and districts, by promoting economic activity, entrepreneurship, responsible business and the creation and promotion of quality employment.\textsuperscript{173}

At the JAM Hostel refugees have provided gastronomic workshops for tourists and locals and a catalogue\textsuperscript{174} of job profiles in the hotel sector that can be filled by people with mental disabilities has been published. There have been a series of publications on, for example, sustainability in the MICE sector, sustainable sourcing, green bites and analysis of labour conditions in the tourism sector. Barcelona has benchmarked its work on overcrowding internationally and in March 2019 published Overcrowded Spaces in Barcelona: Best Practices.\textsuperscript{175}

The city has also mounted some campaigns to encourage “civic behaviour,” echoing the travel with respect theme of Responsible Tourism.

7. Economic Development
Barcelona is seeking to “turn tourism into a lever for change, for economic development and social well-being” by “foster[ing] the greatest possible social return on tourist activities” and to do this by encouraging activities which through the creation of shared value contribute to the redistribution of economic benefits to improve the living conditions of city residents and workers. This involves
a. developing district level development plans and strategies and developing co-responsibility with visitors;
b. developing “quality, inclusive, innovative and competitive employment” through seals and certificates and encouraging the introduction of new employment policies;
c. encouraging and raising awareness of responsible tourism practices, generating shared value and quality, inclusive, innovative and competitive employment; and

\textsuperscript{173} https://empreses.barcelonactiva.cat/ca/web/es/impulsem-el-que-fas
\textsuperscript{174} Les Cortis Barris Inclusius
\textsuperscript{175} Gestio d’Espais de Gran Afluencia (EGA)
d. making the most of the opportunities that come with the large number of meetings held in Barcelona. 176

8. **Communication and Reception**
   Barcelona is developing more diverse narratives to engage residents and visitors in the discovery of other realities and improving their experience of the city. Communication not only determines “visitors’ expectations at source but also potentially shapes flows and practices at the destination.” Offering “visitors a broader range of possibilities than overcrowded icons,” improving visitor reception and information services, “to improve their experience while reducing the pressure on over-visited spaces.” 177

9. **Taxation and Funding**
   Designing “new tax measures to achieve the right balance between the costs and economic gains of tourist activities” to address the externalities of tourism.

   “Tax charges need to affect above all those activities that cause greater externalities and compete directly with everyday life in the city: intensive use of public spaces, property pressure and environmental issues, among other things. In short, the idea is to explore new tax calculations, formulas and tools to ensure a fairer redistribution and turn them into computer tools.” A Tourist Establishment Stay Tax (IEET) is being considered to ensure the provision of funds for the proposals in the Strategic Tourism Plan that require funding. 178

10. **Regulation and Planning**
   Barcelona recognises that the regulatory and planning instruments need to be adapted to minimise the negative effects of tourist practices and the “new disruptive phenomena not covered by current bylaws have to be regulated, especially about tourist accommodation and competition between economic activities and basic shared resources.” New bylaws and urban planning tools authorised by the General Plan and the Special Urban Development Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT) and “specific regulations for economic activities in areas with the biggest concentration of visitors in the public space.” This will also require more “inspections of the supply of illegal tourist accommodation” and more collaboration in enforcement across the city government.”

**Guiding**
In 2019 the Ajuntament de Barcelona published good practice guidelines179 for guiding on the streets of the city. The city government’s purpose was to improve the quality of the visitor experience and the image of the city for residents and visitors, to encourage a more harmonious coexistence with residents and businesses inconvenienced by the presence of large groups on the streets and to conserve the city’s public spaces. The city government also wanted to recognize the importance of

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176 Ibid. p 33
177 Ibid. p 34
178 Ibid p.36
the tour guides as “advocates for Barcelona’s image, culture and territory.”

The guidelines

1. Keep group sizes small and appropriate to the place and local activity; and avoid causing congestion, suggest unaccompanied visits and reduce the length of explanations.
2. Use audio guides and reduce noise pollution.
3. Respect children’s privacy and safety, do not make contact and avoid stops at locations where there are large numbers of children.
4. Give tour groups free time in places where they are least likely to cause annoyance and disruption and where possible use spaces designed for tourist use;
5. Discourage graffiti and climbing on sculptures and monuments.
6. Discourage littering and encourage the correct sorting and disposal of waste.
7. Plan tour itineraries to causing congestion by avoiding busy areas and busy times. Pay special attention to the needs of people with reduced mobility.
8. Only call the driver to pick up when the group is assembled.
9. Guiding inside buses, trams and other forms of public transport is prohibited except with explicit permission granted by the city’s transport operators.
10. Encourage the use of pre-purchased timed tickets; if tickets are purchased on arrival, then the group must join the queue.
11. Guides are advocates and ambassadors for Barcelona’s story, culture, territory and heritage and they must both display knowledge of and respect for the police and civic agents and be kept informed of new rules, signs and transportation routes.
12. Guides must Maintain up-to-date, objective and extensive knowledge of the tourism resources and public spaces they visit and present to groups, without communicating prejudices. “Explaining the local culture and habits can help visitors to understand the behaviour and way of life of Barcelona’s residents.”
13. Guides must pay taxes and fiscal, administrative and labour fees;
14. Respect the Tourism Law and comply with it
15. Display “Tolerance, education, co-existence and cordiality with the rest of the industry, groups and local residents. The tour guide’s behaviour during the activity can influence the conduct and social and environmental attitudes of visitors after the visit.”
16. Join the communication/coordination channels available between the municipality and professional tour guides:

This Working Paper will continue to be updated to provide an accessible resource for those interested in how Barcelona is tackling the challenge of overtourism.