

A methodological proposal for public responses to overtourism and its integration in urban destinations' policies

Núria GUITART and Ramon SERRAT

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In a context where overtourism has become the subject of a considerable volume of research, this study provides insight into the best-rated management tools and measures for improving urban tourism management. Indeed, based on an extensive literature review, together with 22 in-depth interviews with key representatives of the sector, the research provides and analyses a set of the most-effective implemented measures. These results have contributed to subsequently formulating a list of 11 strategies and 21 actions, which advocate for cooperation, debate and governance as a step forward for the development of urban tourism policies.

Keywords: *best practices, effectiveness, tourism conflicts, tourism measures, overtourism.*

A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC RESPONSES TO OVERTOURISM AND ITS INTEGRATION IN URBAN DESTINATIONS' POLICIES. En un contexto donde el *overtourism* se ha convertido en el tema central de un volumen considerable de investigaciones, este estudio proporciona información sobre las herramientas y medidas de gestión mejor calificadas para la mejora de la gestión del turismo urbano. De hecho, basándose en una extensa revisión bibliográfica t junto con la realización de 22 entrevistas en profundidad, a representantes clave del sector, el estudio presenta y analiza el conjunto de las medidas aplicadas más efectivas. Estos resultados han contribuido a la posterior formulación de un listado de 11 estrategias y 21 acciones que abogan por la cooperación, el debate y la gobernanza como un paso indispensable para el desarrollo de políticas de turismo urbano.

Palabras clave: *buenas prácticas, conflictos turísticos efectividad, medidas turísticas, overtourism.*

Núria GUITART, nuria.guitart@cett.cat; Ramon SERRAT, ramon.serrat@cett.cat; Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy, CETT – UB. Av. Can Marçet 36-38, 08035, Barcelona.

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Introduction

The exponential growth of urban tourism at a global level causes several challenges to affect the management of destinations and the coexistence between tourists and residents (Exceltur, 2017; World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2018). Despite working to make city models compatible with aspirations and social functions, local administrations have historically lagged behind in including these new challenges in their agendas (Hospers, 2019).

The acceleration of processes and the continuous adaptation of public bodies to the ever-changing tourism scenario include the introduction of horizontal and participatory management models. Additionally, many context-specific measures have been implemented, reaching different degrees of effectiveness and acceptance among the actors involved.

Faced with this challenge of tourism management, various approaches to and progress in examining and implementing tactics to mitigate the effects of overtourism are apparent. As Papathanassis (2017) stated, commonly implemented measures are mainly focused on visible externalities and aimed at restricting tourism flows and activities. Nonetheless, new approaches towards metropolitan and regional redistributions of tourist flows and techniques to educate tourists are being implemented to reduce problems associated with overtourism (González *et al.*, 2018; Veiga *et al.*, 2018).

According to different authors (Koens *et al.*, 2018; Perkumienė and Pranskūnienė, 2019), the term overtourism has turned into a buzzword that has been intensively mediated during the last three years. Although not representing a new phenomenon but referring to “the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and quality of visitors experiences in a negative way” (UNWTO, 2018, p. 4), the frequency of the term’s use has sharply increased in academic papers tackling the issue (Capocchi *et al.*, 2019; Koens *et al.*, 2018).

There are, however, many approaches towards understanding the origin of the overtourism phenomenon and, as stated by Milano *et al.* (2019), “coming to terms with overtourism remains a work in progress”. Those approaches focus their attention on the excessive tourism growth, the development of new technologies, the concentration patterns of tourists’ visits to destinations, or the social perceptions of unbalanced distributions of benefits and costs. However, most literature converges on recognising the lack of regulations and leadership (Jamieson and Jamieson, 2019), territorial governments (UNWTO, 2018), and poor knowledge of the extent of the effectiveness of local tourism policies (Koens *et al.*, 2018).

Overtourism relates to the same concerns that arose at the beginning of the 1960s and that have evolved according to perceptions of sustainability dimensions and the risk of uncontrolled unbalance. It is argued, consequently, that the neologism has become a hot topic due to the recent demonstrations led by residents’ associations, assemblies and social movements as well as being a response to the inadequacy of the term tourism-phobia (Milano, 2018; Guitart *et al.*, 2018).

In this context and in line with a growing number of studies tackling municipal responses to overtourism, the present research aims to investigate the application and effectiveness of frequently recommended actions, culminating with the formulation of a set of best practices likely to be undertaken by different urban realities.

To achieve these goals, two methodologies have been implemented. Firstly, an extensive revision of the previous bibliography has been conducted, leading to the identification of a series of 41 reactive and proactive measures commonly tested and implemented in internationally visited urban tourism destinations. Secondly, conducting 22 in-depth interviews with carefully selected major stakeholders in the tourism arena of Barcelona (including tourism, urbanism and geography academics, representatives from the public administration, the private sector and residents’ associations), has helped the

researchers identify the most prominent actions for the agents of this case study, as well as propose 11 strategies and 21 actions for suitable tourist management.

Regardless of whether the proposed strategies and techniques prove to be successful, the aim is not to come up with a perfect model, but to help in the identification and selection of the best formula according to the acceptability generated by current measures and instruments. The research, therefore, adopts a problem-solving perspective, filling the existing gap in the revision of tourism management and evaluation instruments.

Approaches to the tourism management of urban destinations

At the global level, urban tourism is intrinsically linked to the territory, the city model and its economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors. Additionally, it is framed in a situation where the combination of low-cost flights and the concept of city break as a travel style, along with the ease of change, define a complex and uncertain context for urban policy development (Clavé and González, 2007).

Although its significant economic benefit is not disputed, tourism is no longer considered only a source of profit, and both citizens and administrations have begun to identify negative impacts. This social unrest is born, according to Arteaga and Hernández (2017), when there is a disconnect between the municipal strategy and the residents' vision of their own city. Therefore, any management strategy must be sensitive to the impacts detected by the society and address sustainable tourism goals (UNWTO *et al.*, 2018).

The factors that determine urban and tourism conflicts are, as Koens *et al.* (2018) have claimed, diverse, complex and multifaceted, arising from the unequal distribution of benefits, together with the perception of overcrowding or overtourism. Consequently, tourism's effects on the use of public space, the socio-cultural impacts and the pressure on infrastructure and mobility, among other factors, generate changes in the economic, social and physical structure of the territory.

However, because of the existence of other activities that affect the dynamics and the use of urban infrastructure, effective destination management requires that both diagnosis and planning stages begin with the coordination of governmental and non-governmental structures belonging to various sectors and territorial levels in an attempt to cooperatively face the need to revise the tourism and urban management model (Hall and Page, 2003).

Thus, as Arevalo (2015) has stated, the existing influence and institutional relationships between actors with various perspectives on the tourism system have an impact on local agendas' design and integration of concrete actions and strategies for the enhancement of an environmentally conscious model and the implementation of governance processes as a mechanism for participation, democracy and coexistence (Diputació de Barcelona, 2009).

In an attempt to define the types of organisations and agents involved, studies have come together and defined four complementary, overlapping and opposed stakeholders: the municipal administration as the dominant actor; tourism companies; non-productive groups, such as residents' associations with common interests; and single-interest groups (Farsari *et al.*, 2011).

In fact, as to the organisational structures, Hall (2000) emphasised the need for extended interrelationships between the various layers of the planning and achievement stages, as well as the requirement of public-private partnerships and participation networks of organisational and representative complexity.

In terms of the historical dimension of tourism management policies, social and environmental considerations were eclipsed by the generation of economic benefits between the 60s and 70s. Later, those considerations arose in the 80s when the concept of sustainable development was introduced by management bodies with the aim of establishing tourism load capacities. It would not be until the year 2000 that this perspective on governmental responsibility towards tourism would focus on governance as a management method, a concept that defends the idea of establishing coordination mechanisms for political debate and social participation (Jamal and Camargo, 2018; Velasco, 2014).

According to Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehanl (2010), although numerous studies have proposed different strategies and guidelines to combat tourism's effects, the lack of methodologies revising the context in which tourism policies are developed contributes to impeding efficient management.

Although there is no single appropriate strategy for destination management, Hall (2000) and Logar (2010) defined a number of criteria for the evaluation of governance tools and processes aimed at ensuring the social well-being of the communities, emphasising (1) the capacity to compensate for the sector's negative impacts, (2) the ability to adapt to different circumstances, (3) the level of acceptance, (4) the technical and economic feasibility or (5) the degree of compatibility with other approaches and instruments.

Therefore, and considering the stated by Becken and Simmons (2019), analysing the impressions, interests and goals of the agents currently involved in Barcelona's tourism management arena seems to be the starting point for analysing the effectiveness of implemented measures and policies, and it must allow for finding out which actions are considered more useful and generate greater consensus or satisfaction. Indeed, in line with Luo (2018), effectiveness is regarded, in terms of management, as a qualitative dimension measuring the performance results and outcomes achieved by destinations regarding their development goals.

Methodology

With the aim of transferring the best practices being developed and introducing new recommendations, two methodologies have been implemented: firstly, a literature review to identify frequently implemented measures, and secondly, 22 in-depth interviews to determine which measures are the most effective.

Literature Review

A significant examination of the literature has been undertaken to synthesise and summarise previous sources reviewing management strategies and recommendations as well as tackling the sudden growth of studies concerning local responses to overtourism.

In total, the overview of 109 papers allowed for collecting a wide range of local responses to overtourism but, from which only five, were aimed or resulted in a set of proposed strategies (European Commission, 2015; McKinsey & Company and World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017; Peeters *et al.*, 2018; World Tourism Organization *et al.*, 2019; World Travel and Tourism Council and JLL, 2019).

However, the disparity of approaches and goals encountered between each study, made it necessary to search for a general and new classification criterion, enabling to process the information for the purposes of the research. Therefore, in accordance with the stated by

Rodríguez *et al.* (2014) and Gravari-Barbas (2019), the researchers considered to organise the inputs by reactive and proactive measures, responding to the administrations' classical strategic positioning towards management.

In fact, the classification of measures by their reactive and proactive nature distinguishes between the need to respond with provisional remedial actions, which are conditional and limited – the symptom-centred approach – and the ability to anticipate conflicts and make decisions beyond the circumstances of the moment – cause-centred actions (Roland Berger, 2018). Nevertheless, both categories involve the assumption of responsibilities by the local administration. Consequently, actions were classified, within these two groups, according to the general scope of action, including the restriction of access, accommodation control and tax measures within the reactive approach and the improvement of governance, offer diversification and communication and promotion measures within the proactive or preventive approach.

After this process, the analysis resulting from the preliminary review was completed with frequently implemented measures between cosmopolitan cities where various manifestations against the effects of tourism have appeared and caused the administration's active response. Thus, the literature review was complemented by the emptying of institutional reports, statistical sources and newspaper articles, allowing the analysis of different tourism policy approaches, conflicts, strategic lines and areas of action. Additionally, this step has enabled the definition of broader actions implemented when coping with overtourism and is a means to improve tourism's fit in cities.

For this purpose, an analysis sheet was adopted to systematically collect the objectives and conflicts to which each identified measure responded, as well as the actors involved in its implementation. This instrument, used to collect information and adapted from that of UNWTO (2018); gave support to determine different approaches, implications and solutions that could be adopted (Postma and Schmuecker, 2017), by regarding different fields of conflict and related measures.

In total, considering that, the intention is not to exhaustively collect all the measures implemented in the sector or with influence in tourism, but to highlight those frequently mentioned, the literature review has led to the identification of a series of 41 types of reactive and proactive measures commonly tested and implemented in internationally visited urban tourism destinations. These actions, in accordance to the criteria stated above, (Table 1) were included in the held questionnaire, encoded with its statistical exploitation and classification maintained in order to facilitate the detection of best practices, which is understood as those actions, procedures, structures and tools that prove their suitability and generate consensus and satisfaction.

In-depth interviews

After obtaining the previous list and responding to the intention to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions detected, 22 personal interviews were held with actors involved in the tourism sector, including members of public bodies of tourism promotion and management (7), members of the private sector (6), researchers and academics from tourism management, sustainability and geography fields (5) and residents' associations (4).

The in-depth interviews were posed through a managed and semi-structured questionnaire, combining a qualitative and quantitative method. The interview primarily

REACTIVE MEASURES	
RESTRICTION OF ACCESS AND ORDINANCE	
MR1	Creation of stricter rules regarding the opening hours of restaurants and bars
MR2	Creation of itineraries to concentrate leisure tourism mobility on specific routes
MR3	Limitation of tourist activities through licenses
MR4	Increasing the destination's capacity by better organising the traffic (traffic regulation, parking areas, areas for loading and unloading passengers, pedestrianisation)
MR5	Creation of bodies of inspectors and civic agents to ensure compliance with regulations and for tourist coexistence
MR6	Reduction of seasonality through regulations and incentives
MR7	Limited number of events in certain areas of the city in favour of less-visited places
MR8	Establishment of ticketing systems and slots to visit attractions where the load capacity is compromised
MR9	Limiting the number capacity of tours visiting the city centre via license requirements
MR10	Creation of specific transport facilities for tourists
ACCOMMODATION CONTROL	
MC1	Slow the development of tourism accommodation supply by zoning and setting land uses via laws and moratoriums
MC2	Prohibition of Airbnb's offerings in certain parts of the city
MC3	Negotiations with hosting platforms
MC4	Creation of spaces for citizens to collaborate and challenge flats operating without a tourist license
MC5	Detection and inspection measures
MC6	Collaboration between administrations to facilitate inspections and law compliance
TAX MEASURES	
MT1	Discourage certain profiles of visitors through higher rates and fees
MT2	Implementation of fees to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism
MT3	Creation of an investment plan for project financing using funds derived from tourist taxes and fees

PROACTIVE MEASURES	
GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT	
MG1	Creation of meeting spaces (on a regular basis) for the agents involved to discuss, evaluate and contribute to the good planning of tourist activities
MG2	Organisation of citizens and citizen discussions on the corresponding platforms
MG3	Review and adaptation of tourism management and promotion entities to the reality of the sector
MG4	Real-time monitoring of conflicting spaces
MG5	Creation of research and monitoring entities responsible for conducting studies on tourist activity and citizen perceptions
MG6	Search for alternative indicators and the incorporation of new sources of knowledge in the control panels for sound decision-making
MG7	Creation of a tourism city strategy for the balance between residents and visitors
MG8	Creation of a Tourism Mobility Plan to improve traffic management
MG9	Creation of contingency plans based on the data obtained from the monitoring
OFFER DIVERSIFICATION	
MD1	Dispersion of visitors to adjoining destinations in the city
MD2	Reduction of the seasonality of cruise ships through incentives
MD3	Renaming nearby attractions to encourage downtown decongestion
MD4	Territorially extending the validity of visitors' travel cards
MD5	Dispersion of visitors to new areas of the city through transport options, tours and promotion
MD6	Encouraging economic alternatives to be less dependent on tourism
COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION	
MI1	Only attract visitors of a certain profile and lifestyle: "quality tourists"
MI2	Stimulating green measures and certifications to promote a destination committed to sustainable development. Responsible commitment.
MI3	Establish good practices for groups that benefit from tourists arrivals, such as guides
MI4	Communication and awareness of visitors regarding how to behave in the city and respect the rules of coexistence
MI5	Communication of the measures taken to improve the management and coexistence of tourism in the city for the valorisation of tourism
MI6	Real-time communication with visitors for the best spatial distribution and improvement of the tourist experience; informing them about the congestion of certain areas of the city, transport options and alternate destinations
MI7	Reduction of the budget invested in promotion or promotion of alternative destinations
MI8	Tourism marketing strategy integrated with the metropolitan area or region

Table 1. Categorisation of proposed measures for effectiveness evaluation on a scale from 0 to 10. Source: own elaborated (2019)

Tabla 1. Categorización de medidas propuestas para la valoración de su efectividad en una escala del 0 al 10. Fuente: Elaboración propia (2019).

consisted of six preliminary, open-ended, qualitative questions that facilitated collecting the general perceptions of urban tourism's management and challenges. Among them, questions regarding arising tourism impacts, frequent coexistence conflicts, stakeholders' implication and tracking capacity in the implementation of measures, were posed.

Finally, table 2 was presented as one quantitative, closed-ended question intended to allow participants to score the effectiveness of the proposed measures. However, for a boarder understanding of the responses and approaches corresponding with the interests and knowledge of the participants, further nuances and commentaries regarding the effectiveness of measures were collected. Indeed, although a Delphi technique approach would seem more consistent for the purpose of the paper, in-depth interviews, with a quantitative component, were an appropriate to discuss the overtourism phenomenon and complex perspectives on the solutions identified in the literature.

Interviews were recorded and analysed after full transcription, identifying key points that were subsequently transferred to response matrices according to the profiles of the interviewees. In fact, this classification among members of the public administration, residents' associations, private-sector representatives and academics has made it possible to detect, compare and contrast the perceptions of the main players that manage, promote and coexist with tourist activity, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends among each group of actors.

As for the closed question, which requested the evaluation of the list of 41 detected actions on a scale of 0 to 10 depending on their effectiveness at managing overtourism, the responses have been analysed though univariate data analysis, revising both the general results and the specificities of each profile group.

Regarding the selection criteria for the interviewees, a non-probabilistic method was used, according to the author's judgment, as the interviews covered specific subjects far from general knowledge. In fact, the selection of acknowledged profiles regarding perceptions of the tourism sector and instruments available for the proper management of the activity was prioritised, considering that the in-depth interviews were the main tool for enriching the literature review.

However, the network of participants in the Tourism Council and the City of Barcelona was employed to guarantee the representation and participation of the main relevant and involved agents in the process of tourism planning and development. This is a consultative and advisory participatory body of heterogeneous and diverse composition, represented by the government, elected municipal politicians, local promotional and tourism management technicians, commercial organisations, non-profit organisations and residents' associations.

Accordingly, the choice of interviewees was not random, but the interlocutors were selected carefully and according to Gorden's (1975) recommendation to consider profiles that possess relevant information, are physically and socially accessible and are willing to communicate decisively. Thus, although literature revision has not focused on one particular destination, stakeholders correspond fully to Barcelona's tourism arena.

The selection resulted in a total of 22 participants interviewed in person (18) and by telephone (4) when meeting was not possible. In addition, interviews took place between

July 4th and 24th of 2019, lasting between 45 and 60 minutes each, and were conducted by a single interviewer, ensuring a common interview style regardless of whether Catalan or Spanish was used.

Results

Effectiveness of assessed tourism management measures

Concerning the professional profiles of the respondents, members of the public administration lead slightly, representing 31.8% of the total, followed by 27.3% representing private-sector collaborators, 22.7% representing researchers and 18.2% representing residents' associations.

In terms of assessing the effectiveness of the proposed measures, nearly identical values were obtained from the exploitation of data from the questionnaire, with averages of 6.96 for reactive measures and 6.93 for proactive measures on a scale of 0 to 10.

With regards to results for each categorisation, the research shows that the most-appreciated reactive measures receiving the higher scores fell into the category of tax measures via the implementation of taxes to offset the negative impacts of tourism (MT2 – 8.32) and the creation of an investment plan for the funds obtained (MT3 – 8.08).

However, within the category of restriction and ordinance ordering, the greatest effectiveness was given to the establishment of ticketing systems to visit popular attractions (MR8 – 8.08), followed by limiting the numbers and capacity of guided tours (MR9 – 7.24).

For the category of accommodation control, the interviewees highlighted the importance of collaborations between administrations to facilitate inspections and regulatory compliance, as well as detection and inspection measures (MC6 and MC5 – 8.4).

Not all groups of profiles interviewed, however, unanimously agreed on the valuation of these packages of measures, with typical deviations being quite high and scattered among them, standing between 1.20 and 3.11. However, it is interesting to note that despite the heterogeneity of the answers and the perceived differences between the sectors, the actions with higher scores also generated more consensus.

In fact, Figure 1 illustrates the percentages of participants ranking each reactive measure with averages above eight, and exhibits how the most effective measures, belonging to accommodation control and tax measures, generated agreement between 72% to 80% of the respondents.

In order to compile the percentage of participants ranking each measure as very effective, and in view of the large number of possible answers on a scale from 0 to 10, the researchers chose to set the intervals shown below (Table 2), turning quantitative metrics into their ordinal equivalents and stabilising the concept of effectiveness within averages between 8 and 10.

Quantitative evaluation figures	Ordinal equivalent classification
8-10	Very effective
6-7	Effective
5	Neither effective nor ineffective
3-4	Ineffective
0-2	Very ineffective

Table 2. Table of equivalences between quantitative evaluation figures and their ordinal qualitative equivalents. Source: own elaborated (2019)

Tabla 2. Tabla de equivalencias entre las cifras de valoración cuantitativas y su clasificación cualitativa ordinal. Fuente: Elaboración propia (2019)

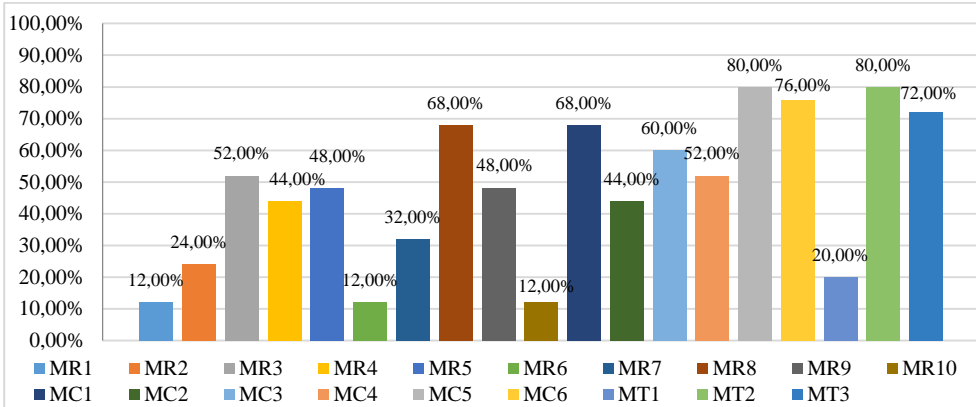


Fig. 1. Interview preferences regarding the effectiveness of reactive measures. Source: own elaborated (2019).

Fig. 1. *Preferencia de los entrevistados respecto la efectividad de las medidas reactivas. Fuente: Elaboración propia (2019).*

If we analyse the proactive subcategories, the measures that suggest an improvement in tourism governance stand out by almost a point, with a score of 7.72. These are followed by scores of 6.83 for measures aimed at information, communication and promotion, together with those focused on offer diversification, which obtained a 6.54. Within these results, only specific measures sorted in the category of improvement of governance reached averages above 8, with the incorporation of alternative indicators and new sources of knowledge (MG6 – 8.44), together with the creation of research bodies responsible for their analysis and monitoring (MG5 – 8).

In relation to actions aimed at offer diversification, the importance of measures that stimulate economic alternatives (MD6 – 7.2) and the territorial extension of visitor cards (MD4 – 6.44) were highlighted. Finally, within the category of communication and promotion, the creation of marketing strategies integrated with the metropolitan area (MI8 – 7.56) and the stimulation of green measures and certifications (MI2 – 7) were positively evaluated.

As previously stated, Fig. 2 demonstrates the consensus among interviewees and reveals how greater consensus can be identified when it comes to highlighting the best actions, whereas actions belonging to the offer diversification category and less-valued measures present a greater dispersion of answers.

Other implications of assessed tourism management measures

This section examines and interprets additional results of the research, comparing the interviewees’ shared insights and approaches during the qualitative open-ended questions and the nuances exposed when scoring the proposed management measures. These implications have contributed to generate broader understanding of how urban destinations should be managed in an integrated manner and have helped to define the series of proposals presented in the next subsection.

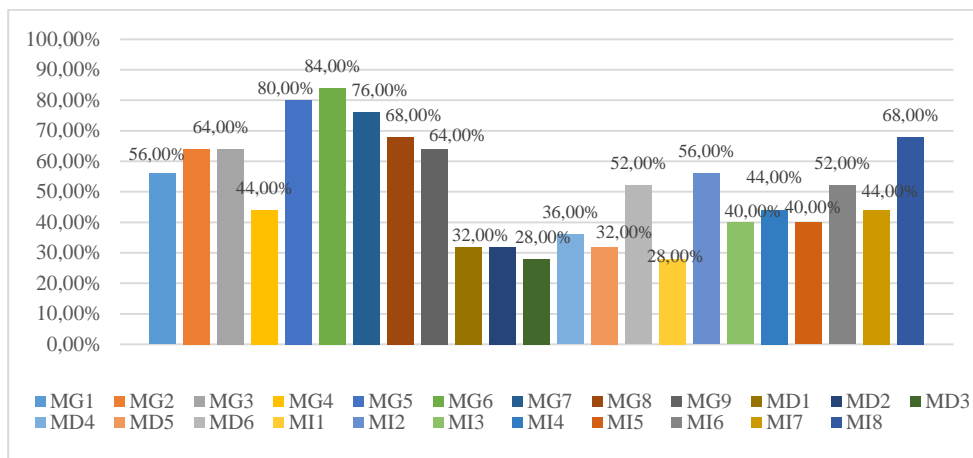


Fig. 2. Interview preferences regarding the effectiveness of proactive measures. Source: own elaborated (2019).

Fig. 2. Preferencia de los entrevistados respecto la efectividad de las medidas proactivas. Fuente: Elaboración propia (2019).

In addition to the results of the questionnaire, although interviewees did not agree unanimously in their assessments of tourism polices, they did recognise the lack of measures that help to improve coexistence between tourists and residents. Therefore, despite the administration's acceptance of responsibilities and the recognised decline of street demonstrations, there does not seem to be any connection with the implementation of a specific measure. Accordingly, respondents agreed to confirm that there is no proof of the effectiveness of managing tourism flows as a sole measure.

In fact, when assessing the measures proposed on a scale of 0 to 10, the interviewees highlighted the importance of nuances and the necessity of combining concentration, dispersion, reactive and proactive measures according to specific needs as well as the necessity of evaluating them jointly, according to different contexts. Beyond the evolution towards management systems, however, the slowness of data interpretation, the lack of knowledge of the social return of the activity and a bureaucratic administration are some factors that make it difficult to monitor the effects of the measures implemented. Therefore, the gap existing between knowledge and how to effectively implement it was recognized to be key for an integrated management approach.

The interviews thus suggest that neglecting to monitor and evaluate the implemented policies prevents the plans' main objectives from being achieved. Given that one of the preconditions for the correct application of any policy is the possibility of monitoring its effects on a temporary basis, the lack of indicators seems to be the biggest drawback for the continuation of tourism management strategies.

Additionally, according to those interviewed, decision-making tourism technicians are constrained by political interests and limited information, leading to decisions which, while based on benchmarking studies, are too closely linked to institutional interests. Furthermore, although the need to redefine the parameters of success, there is an admitted lack of available and concrete data on tourism's contributions to territorial and social

benefits together with a clear complexity of moving from quantitative to qualitative evaluation approaches.

In this context, the interviewees considered the search for alternative indicators, the incorporation of new sources of knowledge into the control panels and the creation of research entities to be best practices, but at the same time, the goals to be achieved, identifying still a low implementation level.

Proposal of a model of best practices

From this discussion and with the contributions of the interviewees, a total of 11 strategies and 21 actions are proposed as a model of best practices for urban tourism destinations management, being a set of the initiatives proven to be more effective and that generate greater consensus.

By no means, however, is the intent to prescribe a roadmap to follow. In fact, beyond any model of good practices, the crux of the debate is recognising the need for integrated management that must be context-specific. This proposal is, therefore, just a set of coherent and complementary strategies and actions that, together with boarder perspectives should help to achieve and integrated management.

The management strategies presented below, however, may not be easy to follow in all urban contexts with different degrees of competence in tourism management. In addition, the proposed measures involve the intervention and cooperation of different departments and stakeholders, meaning that each of the proposals involves different regulations, political decisions and actions. For this reason, upcoming results shows that any attempt to combat overtourism should adopt a horizontal view of the sector.

Consequently, the following (*Table 4*) is a summary of proposals for best practices, not being structured following any type of temporal, cost or time prioritization and keeping their classification as reactive and proactive measures. However, both of these categories imply the assumption of municipal administrations' public responsibilities, being complex to define adequate terms to be used and to differentiate the extent to which each measure belongs to one of the categorizations

Within reactive best practices nine actions are proposed, including special consideration for restriction of access ones as being the best rated reactive subcategory. Indeed, the four actions of the subcategory are carrying capacity related and advocate, from price management, licencing, booking systems and monitoring perspectives, to relieve pressure from public spaces and private tourism sites. However, each action present downsides as dynamic prices and booking engines do not prevent tourists to concentrate around major tourism attractions and restrictions on guided tours participants account only to a limited number of visitors' displacement.

Regarding proposed measures for tourism control, the complexity of regulating new forms of tourist accommodation lead to consider the need for broad perspectives and instruments. Among them, zoning and land uses plans are considered effective to deal with the concentration on the tourism activity, as are directly linked to the qualification of the public space. Nevertheless, effectiveness of zoning plans depends on a strong supply continuous inspection to avoid illegal loopholes and prevent tourism conflicts to extend to other parts of the city. For this reason, the use of computer systems integrated to traditional inspections procedures is also proposed in order to gain agility in accommodation control.

REACTIVE BEST PRACTICES	
STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
RESTRICTION OF ACTIONS AND ORDINANCE	
Address integrally and transversally the management of the resources and tourist attractions with respect to carrying capacity	To jointly implement online booking systems for main tourist attractions
	To dynamically manage prices and to communicate the degree of crowdedness of attractions
To reduce the congestion from public spaces throughout the limitation of the numeric capacity of tours	To establish licenses to carry out the guidance activity
	To set a limit on the number of participants in guided tours
ACCOMMODATION CONTROL	
To design a coherent set of normative tools, mechanisms and meeting spaces to control the accommodations offered	To consider territory and tourism activities development specifications to formulate zoning and land uses plans
	To boost online detection systems along with inspection services
	To create governance and debate spaces at the supramunicipal level focused on sharing experiences in the collaborative economy
TAX MEASURES	
To reinforce the local economic return derived from tourism activities	To implement a progressive tourism tax linked to establishments' accommodation rates
	To draft financing plans for the funds obtained from the tourist tax that establish criteria for project financing

PROACTIVE BEST PRACTICES	
STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT	
To generate and reinforce the monitoring systems of internal evaluation based on the coordination and participation of agents	To create committees with joint responsibility for the execution and monitoring of strategic plans
	To establish a technical team within a broad concept of experts, new procedures and indicators
	To develop regional observatories linked to the academy
To formalise mechanisms of collaboration when collecting data, implementing new indicators and generating knowledge	To design the balance between ad-hoc and internal indicators, focusing on environmental impacts and social return
	To establish and maintain regular contact with working groups between urban tourist destinations
To extend the concept of sustainability as a mechanism to revise the effectiveness of measures and processes	To boost the adherence to and compliance with green certifications, management systems and good environmental practices
To consider urban specificities in order to manage the most congested areas	To specifically identify and manage places of great tourist influxes
To generate a new management model based on scenario planning	To establish action protocols based on saturation thresholds
	To diagnose and forecast scenarios based on the identification of factors determining the tourism sector
To reinforce tourism management strategies at a metropolitan level	To foster territorial and departmental alliances to strengthen the logic of local tourism development
	To extend the validity of visitor cards according to the deconcentration strategy
To revise and recognise the need for integrating tourism activities in the urban reality	To define mobility plans that take into account both the tourist and the urban reality

Table 3. Summary tables of proposed reactive and proactive best practices, strategies and actions. Source: own elaboration (2019)

Tabla 3. Resumen de la propuesta de prácticas reactivas y proactivas, estrategias y acciones. Fuente: Elaboración propia (2019)

Finally, in relation to tax measures, actions for local economic return generated greater consensus because of their social, residents' awareness, promotion and management improvement connotations. However, the re-investment of visitor's economy collected taxes in cultural dynamization, parks conservation or public transport financing should respond to previously drafted financing plans, ensuring proper distribution, transparency and commitment as well as enabling the establishment of social and environmental criteria.

On the other hand, twelve proactive actions are proposed within the subcategory of governance improvement. Among them different monitoring mechanisms such as the creation of coordinated committees, observatories and management systems are regarded in order to collect data, generate knowledge, revise processes and boost regulation's compliance.

Moreover, planning by forecasting scenarios and considering urban specificities to manage highly congested places recognizes the existence of various tourism realities, conflicts and differentiated identity and needs. These proposed strategies must enable the definition of appropriate solutions, tools and instruments that respond to heterogeneous, centralized and potential coexistence problems with a strong territorial component.

Although advocating for a wider and integrated management approach, communication and offer diversification strategies and actions were not included in the final set as a separated category as both subcategories should be regarded within broader concept of tourism governance. Thus, dispersion of visitors remaining necessary, territorial alliances at different administrative levels and between tourist promotion offices seem key to boost a coordinated offer diversification and to extend tourism development from a local and logic perspective.

Conclusions and discussion

Having reached this point, the investigation has led to deducing various conclusions and considerations regarding, on the one hand, the effectiveness of the implemented initiatives and, on the other hand, the complexity and limitations when proposing a model of best practices.

According to the participants, the best-valued measures belong to the category of tax measures, together with the improvement of governance as a response to the need to assess the real costs and impacts of tourism by compensating for social and environmental consequences, including residents' and stakeholders' different concerns. However, the wide variety of reactive and proactive measures available is generally recognised.

On the one hand, it is argued that management must be based on the review and adaptation of management bodies to the reality of the sector with consideration for the limitations shown by restrictive and regulatory measures when adapting to context changes. At the same time, the interviewees agreed that measures to limit tourism activities are, to a certain point, indispensable, as they are almost fully and directly applicable by local administrations. Therefore, while acknowledging that restrictions present downsides, it is argued that in the current capitalist economic context, they are key to grant city planning. Consequently, it makes sense to state that reactive measures, with a coercive and ordinance component, are more context-specific

In addition, despite the heterogeneity of the responses obtained, a greater consensus is identified when pointing out the best actions, as opposed to the dispersion reached with less-popular measures, belonging to the categories of restriction and diversification.

Nevertheless, regardless of the individual assessment of actions, and despite the recent application of public responses to tackling overtourism, the slow collection and interpretation of data, the lack of knowledge of the social return of the activity and the bureaucratic administration complicate the evaluations of tourism policies' effectiveness. Therefore, the interviewees recognised the lack of measures that grant an immediate improvement of tourism's coexistence.

Moreover, in agreement with previous studies and in light of the obtained results, the authors reaffirm that in the face of common conflicts, there is no single solution. Therefore, cited strategies can only be considered in similar contexts as long as they are discussed and fit into the context of each destination.

On the other hand, from the assessment of commonly implemented measures, the interviewees remarked that measures cannot be categorised in a unique or static way, as their repercussions are wide and exceed the tourist scope. Moreover, in light of the increment of tourist influxes, which are concentrated in time and space, it will be necessary to revise measures' effectiveness jointly and to combine actions according to specific needs. As the participants stated, public administrations should forecast and mitigate the discomfort that limitation measures may have in terms of concentrated negative effects and repercussions of dispersing tourism flows towards unprepared and new tourism destinations.

In fact, the authors recognise that the methodology used to classify measures between reactive and proactive actions and within them, according to the general scope of action, is not perfect or exclusive, as evidenced by the great diversity of categorisation of the strategies perceived between the strategic plans analysed. However, identifying significant and valuable profiles and developing in-depth interviews and questionnaires is regarded as a suitable tool for policy analysis, collecting metric assessments, reflections and perceptions as well as closing the existing gap between implementing measures and monitoring their suitability.

Another of the limitations is that the proposed model focuses uniquely on effective measures to tackle urban destinations under high levels of concentration and irritability. For this reason, it would be appropriate to study concrete, heterogeneous and specific case studies, but not necessarily those of overcrowded destinations, in order to develop a broader model of best practices.

Additionally, despite the fact that the list of best practices has been elaborated from the dialogue with various stakeholders from Barcelona's tourism scene, another future line of research includes validating the proposed model by reviewing how these actions respond to current urban tourism challenges and conflicts. Further investigation is needed to determine if the proposals of the present paper could be scaled up.

Indeed, the existing perceptions regarding tourism management, which differ between heterogeneous communities of interest groups, show the urgency of setting up interdepartmental and global spaces for discussion and of intensifying the development of studies that bring together, through focus groups, a heterogeneous tourism sector in which generating proposals and debates strengthens and endorses public management responses to overtourism.

In addition, it would be interesting to extend the administered questionnaires to a significant number of residents in order to be aware of their perceptions of the measures and connotations these may have in the territory.

Regarding the academic contributions, regardless of the proposal of proactive and reactive practices, the study provides insight into the best-rated management tools, challenges and opportunities for improvement, offering a presumably non-conditioned view on the effectiveness and suitability of the instruments applied thus far. In fact, this project has reviewed the current tourism management frameworks, offering a reasoned vision of the most effective practices that could potentially be considered in similar urban contexts.

These strategies, which are more or less structural and with different degrees of depth, include actions already implemented and others that will require a review of skills, competences and feasibility, being strategies that involve modifying existing processes. In fact, most of the proposed measures advocate for cooperation, debate and governance connotations.

Thus, with all its limitations and conditions, this research reflects, in a context of accelerated growth, the need to proactively manage destinations. This requires a holistic view of physical assets, capital and social perception, together with a joint review of policies' impacts, in an attempt to secure the steps taken towards adequate management of a sector that has become structural for urban destinations.

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