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**GOVERNANCE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BARCELONA**
Community participation perspective

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ABSTRACT

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Sustainability in tourism and the approaches to support sustainable tourism development and growth have become particularly important concerns nowadays. This reflects in the spread of awareness of the notion of mass tourism and its negative impacts on local communities, the economy, and city living to begin with. Therefore, this thesis explores how tourism is managed effectively using appropriate governance and other approaches. The research topic is tourism governance and sustainable development in the tourism industry. More specifically, it focused on one geographical area, Barcelona, Spain, where the issue of overtourism and the need to manage it sustainably and with due concern is most prevalent. Barcelona was chosen as an interesting location because it represents the current challenge example of overtourism phenomena, which is important to investigate.

The methods of data analysis include documentary analysis of published articles in local Spain news channels. Three news channels were chosen to analyze written materials on sustainability, tourism, and governance. The news sites chosen were Barcelona Metropolitan, Spain in English, and El País. In summary, 15 articles were collected. Content analysis was the main strategy for data analysis. It elicited several key themes. These were sustainable solutions, conscious travellers, governmental initiatives, and post-covid sustainable Barcelona.

The results indicate that from a viewpoint of local news channels, Barcelona's government is well aware of the overtourism issue and is acting to support its city and residents. In turn, residents are too considering the issue of overtourism to be a serious challenge, yet it is seen as a mass-tourism issue that must be addressed. The industry has also been ultimately transformed by the global pandemic, which has left its remarks on it. It will be a journey to recovery, in which a new kind of traveller, conscious and responsible, will act towards a more sustainable future for all.

Keywords: governance, tourism, sustainability, sustainable development, popular destinations, overtourism, DMO, Barcelona.

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is a master's thesis on sustainable tourism governance. It aims to add to knowledge on the overtourism phenomena and measures that could decrease its negative impacts on city destinations. The study focuses on Barcelona, Spain where tourism has grown exponentially in recent years, thus requiring better coordination, governance, and new adaptive behaviours in tourists and residents alike. The research focuses on the role of governance and the opportunity of involving the local community in the co-governance of tourism to steer it towards a more sustainable future. Specifically, this research concentrates on how sustainable tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic is governed in the Barcelona region. The research objective is to understand how the local communities and ordinary citizens are approached as active actors in the sustainable development of the Barcelona region as a tourist destination.

1.1. Research background

Nowadays, there is a growing awareness of the need to optimize human activity to be able to successfully work with global sustainability issues and other challenges. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development sets a plan for the benefit of all humanity. (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020) It includes the target of working with people to end poverty, hunger, and inequalities, with a final goal to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential. This requires working towards preserving the Earth's liveable conditions for now and the future, working towards peace for all societies, and fostering partnerships between countries and societies for advancing towards sustainable development, which is beneficial and needed for all human beings. (United Nations in Ramakrishna et al., 2020) Therefore, 17 sustainable goals were designed, and they are shown below.

Figure 1. The 17 sustainable development goals from the United Nations, are depicted as icons. Reprinted from UNESCO, 2020. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>.



Global environmental change is one of the world’s many challenges to be worked upon. It relates to the changes occurring on the Earth, ranging from local and regional scale to larger global changes caused by societal activity. (Pyhälä et. al. 2016). In this respect, tourism represents one of several of the largest industries, which continues to grow globally and requires adaptive measures. Being one of the largest economic world sectors, it is crucial to continuously optimize tourism operations to support global sustainability. While generating many positive results, tourism also creates challenges for destinations. Therefore, the tourism industry recognizes that it must become more sustainable to support bigger sustainable development. As such, the phenomena of “sustainable tourism,” “responsible tourism,” and “inclusive tourism” reflect the increased effort and awareness of industry expert representatives to the need to alter the tourism industry to make it more sustainable.

Overtourism is one of the current issues in the tourism industry, having implications for sustainable development. Overtourism requires a comprehensive strategy and concrete actions to lessen the associated negative effects of tourism. Overtourism can be compared to a “wicked problem” that is a complex issue and has no one possible final solution. For example, economic benefits generated by tourism may go along with polarized attitudes of residents, who are irritated by unfamiliar tourist behaviour, the commodification of local culture, excessive use of public facilities, and other influences on customs and traditions. For instance, in Dubai, the residents have a combination of positive, neutral, and negative perceptions of visitors and their activities in general. As such, the population may feel that travellers have a lack of respect for the local culture by behaving in a way that is not acceptable to local people. These and other side-effects of tourism cause tension

between tourists and destination hosts. To summarize, although the economic benefits are crucial for destinations that rely on tourism, the costs of managing tourism are there too, which require governance to step in. Noise, congestion, and pollution are invisible costs, which nevertheless affect the quality of life of the population. Odeh. (2010)

Similarly, destinations such as Dubrovnik, Machu Picchu, Santorini, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Venice, Iceland, and several US national parks have struggled with excessive tourist arrivals over recent years. (Birtles, 2022b) Shortly, overtourism represents a real threat to many popular cities and rural sites in the world. For these and other reasons it requires further investigation into its causes and possible measures to lessen its impacts. For instance, effective governance and changes in tourists' and residents' behaviour are potential paths to make the issue of overtourism less severe and progress towards the goals of sustainable development when applied to tourism. In the end, to ensure decent progress in implementing sustainable development initiatives, an effective governance system must be applied also to the tourism industry. Therefore, a study into the issue of overtourism and its governance is important for ensuring the liveability of many cities struggling with overtourism. Barcelona is one of such cities, where overtourism has grown to be a critical concern and therefore it is a good case to research ways to mitigate the issue here and beyond.

1.2. Thesis structure

This thesis follows a traditional thesis structure. First, it sets the research questions, which are based on the readings of current documents, academic articles, and the author's knowledge about the tourism field, its sustainability challenges as excessive energy and water consumption, emissions, loss of biodiversity, disturbance of residents and threats to cultural customs and artefacts, governance, and social encounters. Then, the discussion introduces important concepts of the study. These are tourism destination, destination governance and its models, stakeholders, destination management organization, overtourism, transitions and social learning, and representations. The methodology parts outline chosen documentary review approach to data gathering and the created plan for choosing appropriate documents, and the analysis methods, which are content and thematic analysis. Finally, the results part shows results and outlines suggestions on how to improve tourism governance to accommodate sustainable development.

1.2.1. Research aims and questions

The research explores how the governance process is currently supporting the sustainability of tourism and city living, and whether it can utilize its population in participating in sustainable initiatives. The study focuses on Barcelona, Spain where the issue of overtourism has become a critical concern due to tourism's exponential growth in recent years and the global popularity of Barcelona as a tourism destination.

The research focuses on the role of governance and the opportunity of involving the local community in the co-governance of tourism to steer it towards a more sustainable future. As such, overtourism is a concern in Barcelona which requires attention from a range of different actors, such as the government, residents, and tourists and collaboration between them. Therefore, citizen participation and community involvement in work towards sustainable tourism development are studied. The goals aim at supporting better coordination between the interests of stakeholders as well as finding solutions to better involve the local communities to collaborate on actions toward sustainable tourism to support the city's responsible growth.

Respectively, effective governance procedures and changes in tourists' and residents' behaviours are necessary to support responsible tourism development in destinations. Therefore, the overall aim of the research is to shed light on the issue of overtourism and how, for example, more involvement on the part of the local population could support responsible governance of tourism destinations. Citizen participation in work towards more sustainable tourism is a potential method to help lessen negative industry effects. Equally, research into ways of changing tourists' behaviour could help with lessening overtourism impacts and consequences. (Benner, 2019). Therefore, this research objective is to find measures to improve overall tourism governance through community participation, citizen participation, and destination governance. The subgoal is to evaluate how effective the governance for sustainability has been so far and what actions were taken to move the desired direction. The research question is: How does destination governance address the issue of sustainable tourism and its development in Barcelona to mitigate the negative impacts? I created the following table to have a visual picture of the main concepts of the study, the factors involved, and the questions created.

Table 1. Research instrument

To “transform post-pandemic tourism in a way that satisfies both residents and visitors.” (Nugent, 2021)

Research instrument		
Topic	Factor	Question
1. Sustainability initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability • Sustainability transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What initiatives are done in Barcelona to support sustainable tourism?
2. Community participation, sustainable transitions	<p>Change in societal systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community participation • Citizen participation • Empowerment of actors • Social learning • Work on Social representations • Raising awareness of tourism benefits citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does destination governance involve the population in supporting sustainable tourism growth? • How could governance change the perception of residents about tourism in a positive direction?
3. Overtourism, tourismphobia, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular destination • Limited information available to citizens of tourism benefits • Negative appraisals • Tourismphobia • Sea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to achieve a more equal distribution of tourists in the city? • Is there a need to educate citizens on why tourism is important and what they can do to support sustainability?

2. CASE OF BARCELONA

Management of tourism in Barcelona is the responsibility of the City Council. Also, the objectives of the organization that promotes the city of Barcelona include two public policy objectives: a social and institutional responsibility to achieve a balance between tourist activity and everyday life in this city and encourage the wider geographic distribution of tourism in the city. Barcelona residents consider tourism to be a severe problem, yet they acknowledge the economic benefits. There has been developed a strategic plan for tourism in the city based on five key objectives to promote sustainability. These were sustainability redistribution, innovation, cohesion, responsibility, ethical individual behaviour, and collective action framework committed to minimizing the environmental and social impact while ensuring the economic activities do not operate at the expense of the population's peaceful living in the city. (Goodwin, 2019, p 25 in Goodwin, 2021)

Figure 1

The City and Tourism Council



Note. The council integrates several actors in its work.

In Spain, there is the City and Tourism Council, which is an open citizen participation body, where citizens negotiate, which city they want and how tourism shall be managed. Here, public bodies, associations, and political representatives can share and discuss their ideas and make suggestions about the development of tourism in Barcelona and the needed programmes and activities. The organization includes representatives from district bodies, experts, academics, associations and organizations, municipal groups, and City Council technical representatives.

2.1. Tourism in Catalonia

Catalonia region, which includes Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona has set the Catalan Tourist Board, responsible for managing and promoting tourism in the area. There, tourism constitutes one of the leading economic forces, representing 12% of GDP and nearly 14% of employment in the region. The board's responsibilities are the implementation of the government's promotion policies regarding tourism, to promote Catalonia as a leading destination based on the quality, social and economic profitability of the tourism field. In so doing, the private sector is involved in tourism promotion around the world. (Generalitat de Catalunya gencat.cat) "Tourism is one of the sectors hardest hit by the effects of Covid-19, with a drastic and involuntary reduction in turnover. As a result, various lines direct of financial support have been set up, to guarantee the sector's continuation." (Annual report, 2020; Neupane, 2021)

At the same time, tourism traffic has been increasing exponentially in Barcelona over the years. For example, there were 572,000 cruise passengers in Barcelona in 2000 compared to 2,540,000 in 2015. (Goodwin, 2018) Then, the 2010-2015 strategy for managing tourism in Barcelona found 4 key challenges, all requiring stakeholder cooperation to be improved. One of them concerned governance: "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." (Catalan Tourist board, 2020, p 37; Goodwin, 2018)

Catalan region took on many initiatives already, for example, the publication of the manual Tourism for everybody, the publication of Catalonia, sustainable destination, created a new sustainability strategy 2020-2023, published educative videos of destination's tourism for outbound markets and others. (Annual report, 2020, p37)

"The history of tourism in Barcelona has been relatively brief. In the 1960s tourism developed on the coast of Catalunya. The staging of the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 drew the world's attention to the dramatic and photogenic architecture of the city. A tired provincial, heavy industrial,

port city was transformed, through a major urban renewal plan, into a cosmopolitan city with Mediterranean beaches, a city open to the sea. Barcelona was introduced 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.” (Goodwin, 2021)

Then, the city council is responsible for managing tourism in the city. Turisme de Barcelona, the public-private partnership company outlined four policies to focus on:

1. boost the financial impact of the sector and attract tourists with high spending power
2. promote its own identity as a tourist attraction
3. reconcile tourists/local community
4. ensure the geographical and multi-sectorial distribution of tourism
5. strengthen the public-private promotional model.” (Goodwin, 2016)

These policies are interconnected, and they supplement each other in achieving better and sustainable tourism at the destination. For Spain in particular, policies 3 and 4 are the most important at the moment. Creating a bond between citizens and travellers is essential for enhancing the positive impact of tourism activity in Barcelona, and Spain in general. Then, since travellers mostly occupy the popular regions of the country, the rural areas are left unexplored, and their potential is not used. Of course, other policies are important too. For example, policy 2. Is worth working for because the current identity of popular mass tourism locations is not conducive to sustainable travel?

2.2. Overtourism and phobia

The issue of over-tourism started in 2004 and it was addressed first by the Ajuntament de Barcelona in 2008. The 2 features describing tourism policy in Barcelona were 1. Determination to engage widely in discussions about the issues and to base discussions on the published information. And 2. The feature was the continuity of policy and implementation stemming from a widespread understanding of the issues and thoroughly discussing and reaching an agreement most suitable. (Goodwin, 2021) “The history of tourism in Barcelona has been relatively brief. In the 1960s tourism developed on the coast of Catalunya. The staging of the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 drew the world’s attention to the dramatic and photogenic architecture of the city. A tired provincial, heavy industrial, port city was transformed, through a major urban renewal program, into a cosmopolitan city with Mediterranean beaches, a city open to the sea. Barcelona was launched by the Games as a major European destination.” (Goodwin, 2021; Goodwin, 2018)

Hall, C. M. (2013) discusses that for tourism to reduce its strains on natural resources it must become a part of a circular economy, where the inputs of raw materials and energy will result in fewer emissions and waste needing management. An idea of the policy-action gap is about climate change and emissions reduction and sustainable tourism consumption and mobility. A gap refers to the fundamental framing of policy problems where emissions reduction in tourism is seen as a wicked problem. That is, how an issue is framed predicts the range of possible solutions. (Hall, 2011a in Goodwin, 2021). A gap between what is planned to do, and how well has it been implemented in practice, is an important concern.

Concepts related to climate change and tourism steering to sustainable development generally cover an individual's capacity to act. These ideas concern both behaviours and governance, with a range of policy measures by a state, that achieves its goals, based on assumptions about individual and collective behaviour. Respectively, consumer behaviour can be affected in several ways. For example, the nudging can be used to make the right choice to encourage decision-making by consumers example resulting in reductions in emissions. The goal of public policymaking should be to steer citizens toward making positive decisions as individuals and for society while preserving one's will. (Hall, 2013)

The issue of tourismphobia relates to Barcelona. It can be defined as a dislike or hatred against tourists independently of their ethnic or social origin, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other discrimination. As the paper mentions, the rapid growth of the tourism sector affects destinations in many ways and may produce economic inequalities and environmental degradation without proper governance. The strategic tourism plan in Barcelona somehow failed most in implementing the program related to "Governance," failing in creating institutions that would focus on managing and coordinating the tourist activity and its relationships with and within the city. (Martins, 2018)

The tourismphobia is a very interesting issue to consider because although not appearing to be on the surface of the main events existing in tourism in Barcelona both in research articles and online news channels, it is still there and its impacts on an overall view about whether tourism is good or bad, may have quite direct impacts on the attitudes, behaviour, willingness to collaborate to help with having more sustainable, better tourism for all.

Tourismphobia is important to recognise when analysing newspaper articles related to Barcelona because this phenomenon may have a serious negative effect on perceptions of tourism, when, in most cases, it still has more positives than negatives. A policy-action gap may be present in the ability of the government to affect the perceptions of locals about the use of tourism and make it hard to involve locals in collaboration for sustainable progress.

2.3. Pandemic consequences

The situation in Barcelona can be viewed from two historic points of view: one before the global pandemic and the other after it. It may be argued that the year 2020 was a retreat moment for the city and its residents to reconsider their relationships with the tourism industry. As such, “In Barcelona, officials have launched a strategy to transform post-pandemic tourism in a way that satisfies both residents and visitors.” (Nugent, 2021) Still, the local people may be hesitant regarding returning tourists. Nevertheless, the city has relied quite a lot on the hospitality sector to produce jobs for locals. Due to pandemics, “Lots of people fell into unemployment, and families are suffering because of the lack of income,” Recovery of the industry will support the local economy, yet balance must be sought. (Gómez, M. in Nugent, 2021) “The locals who criticize tourism don’t seem to understand that the people who are working in the industry are not foreigners, nor tourists. They eat, drink, go to school, and support businesses, local non-tourist businesses. They’re locals too.” (Lahad, A. in Nugent, 2021)

Barcelona has created a 2020 Strategic tourism plan, in which tourism is dealt with from a comprehensive perspective, in other words, as an inherent and inseparable part of the city. The plan had 3 goals: to prepare a map for tourism policies in Barcelona over the 5 coming years, to make a public debate and share knowledge on tourism, and its effects, and to integrate the approaches to tourism into various alliances. Barcelona has always promoted itself abroad as a desirable city. Further, the paper highlighted that “If tourism is a collective issue, it must be governed through public leaders to ensure the city’s well-being. Governing tourism implies building a strategy that establishes action frameworks to respond to the challenges and goals shared by the largest possible number of players.” (Catalan Tourist board, 2020)

Barcelona administrators want to reinvent the residents’ bond with the city and its visitors. For example, it administrated a fifth of the city’s recovery funds to “diversify and balance” neighborhoods, buying rent spaces for local-friendly companies at low market rates. The city as well wants to attract more generous paying travelers, and the ones enjoying the city’s cultural heritage. Moreover, “*officials in Spain, Italy, and Greece say they will use the recovery to make tourism more environmentally and socially sustainable.*” At a local level, the key to transforming tourism is a more equal distribution of the industry, not just geographically, but also of the wealth it creates, says Marcé, the Barcelona tourism councilor. (Nugent, 2021)

2.4. A new model of tourism

The global pandemic had affected the tourism sector as much as other industries. In the post-Covid-19 era, tourism will have to not only recover but adopt new measures to thrive in a changing world. In this respect, a form of tourism governance will play a critical role in destination recovery and prosperity for future generations. In a new normal, the effective model of tourism governance will include effective integration and active participation of people who live in the destination with aerial intervention in the decisions that affect tourism development in the corresponding territory. Tourism consumption patterns will change as tourists adapt to the changing environment of coexistence with the coronavirus and possibly other circumstances. The traditional roles of destination management organizations will also expand to include, for example, management of a destination, where a DMO may need to evolve from solely destination marketing to destination management. (Vargas, 2020; Bernet, E., 2010 in Vargas, 2020). As such, DMOs will need to increase the participation of people and communities in decision-making processes together with infrastructures to facilitate and speed collective responses.

Stakeholder engagement is also crucial for the tourism industry because good stakeholder relations support tourism destinations, and their strategic goals will improve as bonding and bridging social capital intensifies. (Soulard et al., 2018 in Vargas, 2020). Yet it is a challenging process, due to stakeholders having their own goals, views, and priorities. Vargas, (2020) proposes that one way to improve stakeholder engagement could be a more open and inclusive governance model, that could account for the interest of diversified stakeholders. For example, the local communities, are many times dismissed in tourism planning.

Sera, Font & Ivanova, (2017) conducted a study to find out, how one possible model, shared value creation could help Barcelona to recover and meet its goals regarding sustainable tourism management and to explore how CSV could be utilized by companies to respond to societal expectations. The study found that incorporating a mode of CSV – creating shared value would be rather difficult due to the need to navigate and reach harmony in, for example, public-private partnerships, and change organizational mandates. “CSV involves businesses connecting company success with social progress as an essential driver for long-term economic value creation.” (Serra et al., 2017) At the same time, the growing demands on DMOs are consistent with society’s increasing expectations for inclusive governance. (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003 in Sera, Font & Ivanova, 2017) “Shared value involves creating economic value in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges”. (Serra et al., 2017)

Creating shared value means closely addressing the linkages between economic and social progress and viewing social progress as a key driver of the long-term creation of economic value.

Porter & Kramer (2011, p.4 in Sera, Font & Ivanova, 2017) CSV could be useful for the tourism industry in several ways: for instance, promoting a wealthy tourism industry, improving the locals' quality of life, and preserving the quality of the environment – all at the same time and with minimum trade-offs.

DMOs need stronger links with authorities and the private sector, hence the creation of public-private consortiums. (Socher, 2000). Destination governance follows a model of corporate governance based on a stakeholder-oriented view, defined as “the sum of all institutions (rules, routines, and organizations) governing the relations between the stakeholders and the management of a company – particularly in the context of decision-making and control” (Pechlaner, Volgger, & Herntrey, 2012, p. 156 in Sera, Font & Ivanova,2017)

In summary, a new 4Ps model would consist of including public-private partnerships and people. That will be a chance for adoption and value generation, particularly in periods of crisis. In summary, destination management should adapt to include the selection of stakeholders and their interdependencies seeking a balance between competition and cooperation. (Gajdosik et al., 2017 in Vargas, 2020) As a result, tourism governance can benefit from crowd intelligence which can play a vital role in driving tourism, which shall be done in cooperation with local communities, not for them.

In the end, the author is hoping to find out, how the tourism industry has been adapting to the current realities, what measures are evident in the articles, how the Barcelona government decided to address the challenges, and what residents themselves think about the current situation with tourism in their city. A sustainable change is complex and non-linear so requiring reviewing many perspectives on the issue. As well as the nature of the industry including stakeholder relations of businesses, government, travellers, and citizens collaboration.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter summarises the main constructs regarding this thesis. These concern tourism and destination governance, overtourism, and managing societal change. First, it summarises the concept of a tourism destination, its stakeholders, and approaches to governing a destination. Then it describes overtourism issues and ways to manage societal change in a sustainable direction.

3.1. A tourism destination

A tourist destination is a network of key stakeholders, directly or indirectly, involved in the co-design and co-production of goals and services. These stakeholders include public administration, firms, non-profit organizations, etc. The actions of stakeholders affect each other, meaning that common goals must be defined and reached in an organized way. (Dredge, 2006; Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009; Kenis & Provan, 2009; Paget, Dimmanche, & Mounet, 2010; Lkijin, Steijn, & Edelenbos, 2010). It is also a network of relations between all the actors both public and private that are involved in it. It can be argued that effective destinations are in a way strong public-private partnerships where the public administrations, in terms of public governance, serve the leading role in the process of steering the processes of development of regions. (Madanipour, Hull, & Healey, 2001; Rigall-Torrent, 2008; Shaw & Williams, 2004 in Franzoni, 2015)

“Consequently, the tourism industry requires a model of governance where there is a system of decisions and actions aimed at consolidating and growing the sustainability of the territory and its destination by defining clear and shared goals, actions, and results for the progress between the private and public operators involved.” (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2015) These include travel agencies and tour operators, local public authorities, tourism companies, and cultural associations. In summary, the competitiveness of a destination is based on the ability of its actors to combine their efforts and coherent work at the destination level. Therefore, noting a concept of a tourism destination as a network of stakeholders, and key actors involved in the tourism industry is important for this thesis, which relates to how sustainable governance is done in Barcelona, and Spain in general.

3.2. Overtourism

Overtourism is «the phenomenon whereby certain places of interest are visited by excessive numbers of tourists, causing undesirable effects for the places visited. » (Lexico) To mitigate the effects of overtourism, one approach could be the introduction of more effective tourism governance, planned change initiatives, and exercising leadership to achieve behavioural changes. Overtourism is an issue faced by tourism and it has negative consequences for the environment and society. In this

respect, a comprehensive governance strategy should be applied to tourism to steer it towards being more sustainable and having a higher contribution to sustainable development. The strategy must consider the complexity of the industry, and external environment, and facilitate collaboration between diverse stakeholders.

Furthermore, travellers coming for a brief time to a destination in big numbers represent a genuine issue for the city because its government cannot control the number of tourists arriving. Travellers use the city's public spaces while not offering anything in return. In 2008, the Barcelona City Council agreed on a Municipal Action Plan, which aimed at developing a Strategic Plan of Tourism "to promote a tourism model" which could "strengthen the balance between residents and tourists while preserving the identity values of the city". The next strategy of the years 2010-2015 focused on 4 main challenges. These were territorial deconcentration, the generation of synergies, competitive improvements, and governance. Goodwin, (2021)

Multilevel governance can be a necessary tool for managing sustainability transitions and ensuring progress towards more sustainable societies. Koen's et al (2021). Overtourism requires solutions based on a balance between the interests of stakeholders such as residents, travellers, local tourism, other local industries, and policymakers. Zemla, (2020) suggests that «the long-term aim of future research should be the establishment of a coherent theory of the development of tourism in contemporary cities, considering new phenomena such as overtourism, tourist phobia or wide-scale gentrification.» Tourism is a growing world industry requiring optimization to support its positive contribution to global sustainable development.

The knowledge gaps lie in the necessity to know more about overtourism, and the ways of changing tourist behaviour to more responsible, and effective governance for sustainability in tourism amongst other key factors. Overtourism is a relatively new occurrence that has developed with the recent growth of the tourism industry. As a result, future research could, for instance, help to develop a tourism policy adapted for contemporary cities, considering issues of growing traffic, what behaviour locals perceive as threatening, the acceptable congestion levels, and analysis of tourists changing identities.

3.3. Destination governance

Destination governance is a central concept in this research because it helps to appreciate the workings between the various actors in the tourism industry, as well as the planning and implementation of the sustainability agenda. Therefore, next will be discussed what governance is and how it may be understood within the hospitality industry. Governance has many definitions, for example, one definition states that it is “The totality of theoretical conceptions on governing.” (Kooiman 2003, 4 in Hall, 2011) and “...is used to describe contemporary state adaptation to its economic and political environment with respect to how it operates.” (Hall, 2011)

By another definition, destination governance is a – “diverse set of governing elements and modules acting together on different spatial levels, as well as the procedure of a collective agency coordinating stakeholders and organizations in order to achieve common objectives” (Strobl & Peters, 2013, p.60) Following this definition, governing a destination, implies a bundle of activities designed by the network for optimizing the outcomes and satisfying the different stakeholders’ requirements. While governance itself is “the exercise of a political, economic and administrative authority” (Scott & Marzano, 2015, p. 263).

Effective governance is crucial for the promotion of sustainable development in destinations, which are more likely to succeed if there is an effective governance approach. Furthermore, collective action and good coordination mechanisms are needed to further sustainability initiatives in destinations. Bramwell (2011). Governance is crucial for advancing the sustainability of operations and services in destinations, tourism companies, tourism agencies, the accommodation industry, and the aviation industry. While tourism’s impact on environmental changes expands, sustainable tourism development is a policy issue. Briefly, the governance challenge lies in choosing an ideal set of policies and implementation methods.

In that matter, the notion of policy problems is important for understanding the complexity of the topic. Policy problems are complicated issues due to their relation to sustainability dimensions such as temporality, the crossing of boundaries, limits on the exploitation of resources, irreversibility, complexity, connectivity, cumulation, and the needs order of changes related to the diverse types of learning types. (Greener, 2001, 137) One must acknowledge, that tourism grows globally and so does its contribution to environmental change. For instance, global changes occur in land cover and use, energy use, biotic exchange, the extension of some wildlife, the transmission of disease, and changes in societal perceptions of the environment. Hall, (2011)

However, governance in the tourism industry will inevitably lead to challenges due to the involvement of many policy areas, difficulties to influence the decision-making of the private sector,

and the need to integrate the interests of many diverse stakeholders. The difficulty for the governance of sustainable tourism lies in incorporating different sectors and policies such as planning, transport, climate change, employment, and regional development. Political context and other circumstances will affect tourism governance. Temporality in governance is important for sustainable development, the goals of which relate to long-term horizons. The growing emphasis on social learning and collaboration is a huge trend in tourism governance. (Koutsorius, 2009 in Bramwell & Lane, 2011)

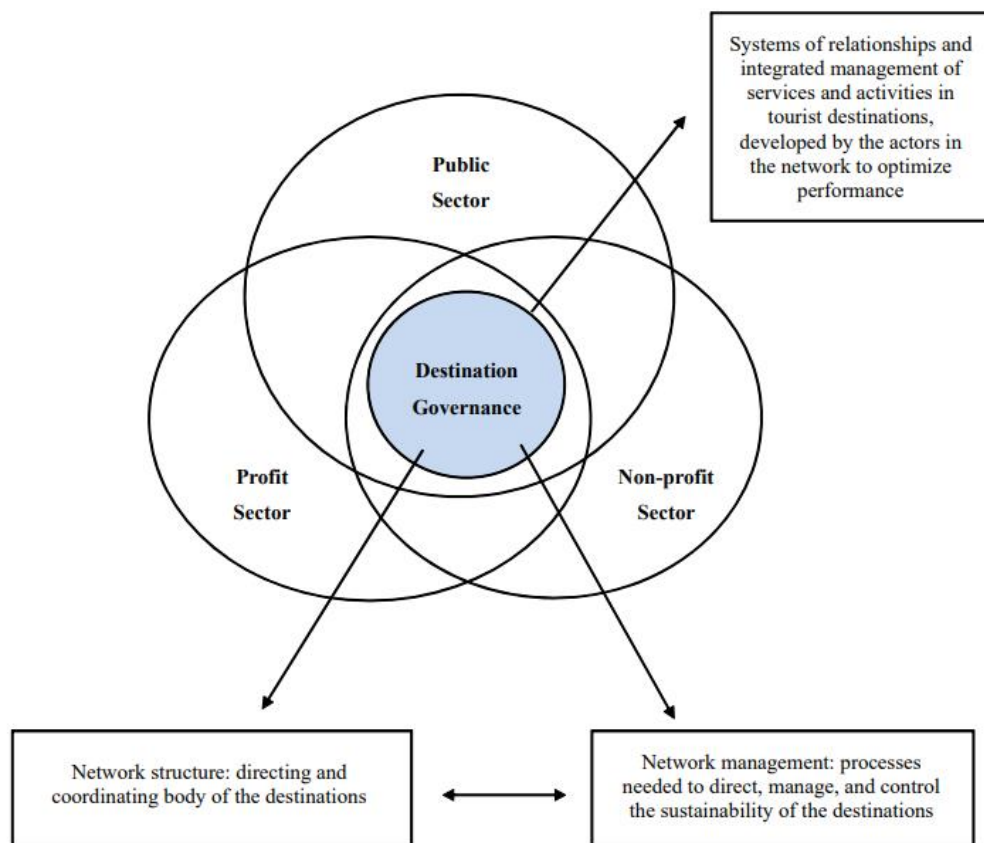
Tourism governance in the era of global environmental change must be a more regulative, long-term mood of governance of the public sector and public-private sector partnerships when considering local challenges and other factors. It is likely to include many tactics of governing, such as “steering,” regulating, and mobilizing action, such as institutions, decision-making rules, and established practices. This may include actions in hierarchical tiers of formal government, networks of actors beyond government, communities, and markets (Hall, 2011a in Bramwell & Lane, 2011) Effective governance usually will have appropriate institutions, decision-making rules, and established practices. Resultantly, there is a need for the development and utilization of suitable measures to implement sustainable tourism. (Bramwell & Lane, 2011, 412)

A governance system that unites the contributions and influences the behaviour of the different actors towards common goals will help to satisfy the key stakeholders' needs. Therefore, Franzoni (2015) develops a concept of destination governance incorporating the roles and interests of the public, private, and non-profit participants in offering tourism services. According to Franzoni, (2015), destination governance – is the system by which various organizations relate to each other and their stakeholders in a tourist destination. It is also integrated management of the services and the activities in the tourism sector developed by the actors of the network to optimize the sustainability of a region and the organizations involved. The integrated process of governance – planning, control, assessment, and accountability support the overall effectiveness of tourism services and destination management. In summary, destination governance involves the following: 1. The structural dimension: “the network structure”; 2. The process and result dimension: “network management”. (Franzoni, 2015)

Franzoni, (2015) proposes a conceptual framework of a governance model of the tourism system aimed at developing relationships with various crucial factors to achieve common goals based on sustainable performance and as a result, contribute to the development of sustainable tourism destinations. The tourism industry requires effective integration between public and private tourism organizations in the governance of a destination, simultaneously supporting sustainability goals, working relationships between the tourism industry actors, and consistency of destinations.

Figure 2

Destination governance.



Note. The profit sector, public sector, and non-profit sector work together in creating successful destination governance. Network structure and management are systems of relations aimed at optimizing performance. From “Destination Governance for Sustainable Tourism,” by S. Franzoni, 2015, *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 3, No. 11-12, p 215-223

Tourism governance practices may include hierarchical ties of official government, and networks of actors beyond government, communities, and markets. (Hall, 2011a). Also, there are power relations in tourism governance, where some social groups have a bigger influence on governance activities impacting tourism. Governance is very needed in steering sustainability in tourism. As such, the involvement of many actors in the decision-making of tourism may support the democratic processes and control sustainable development. Sustainable tourism itself needs effective governance agendas tailored to concrete purposes and contexts if it is to progress with sustainable development goals. Such governance would require *appropriate institutions, decision-making rules, and established practices.* (Bramwell & Lane, 2011)

The concept of destination governance and its importance for tourism destinations are discussed by Della Corte et al. (2018) as well as explored how two unique factors: trust and mistrust can affect the collaboration between the vital stakeholders. This research examined the main aspects of interfirm business relationships also in networks, referring to groups of firms. Increased network cooperation may support value creation. There may emerge initial distrust between the parties of emerging networks. Even more, “There is a complex set of multidirectional relationships to control and manage, each party shows a different approach and behaviour both concerning firm-to-firm relationships and with respect to the network.” (Della Corte et al., 2018)

Distrust may arise when incongruences are present between pivotal actors’ values and those of their partners or amongst the partners in the “community” contexts, and actors worry about sharing their strategic assets. When distrust is present, the role of the destination governance becomes even more important and can be strategic by favouring the awareness of subsidiarity of resources, competencies, and knowledge sharing, aimed at improving trust. To summarise, a well-developed approach to strategic governance of destination will be based on the DMO perspective and the network-based governance. (Della Corte et al., 2018)

3.3.1. Archetypes of destination governance

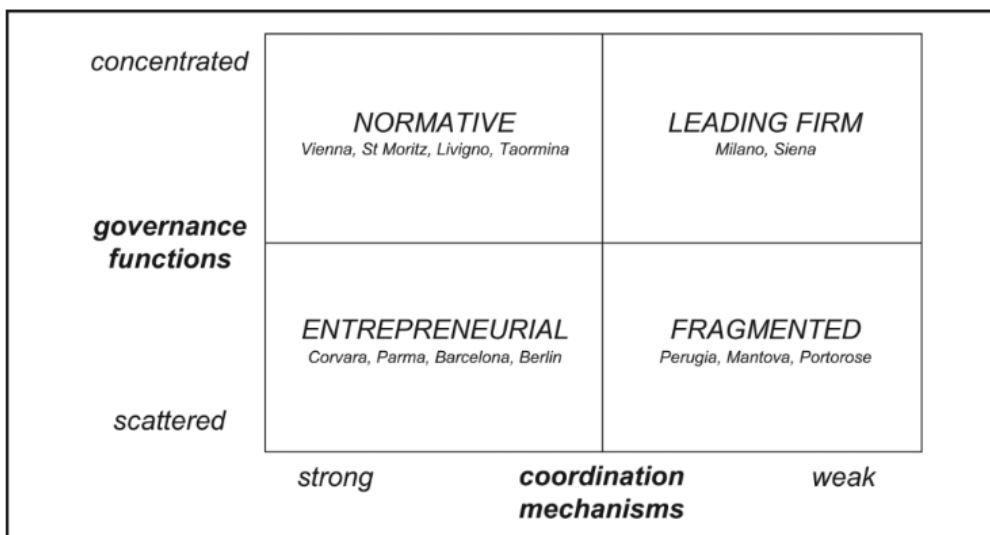
The authors propose to apply a model initially meant to analyse firms’ governance (Airoldi et al., 1994 in d’Angella, Carlo & Sainaghi, 2010) for analyzing a destination governance approach. Through this, the authors viewed a topic from a new perspective, which helped to understand who the stakeholders engage in the DMO and its workings. The tourism product necessitates a broad involvement of destination stakeholders in the destination management organization’s (DMO) activities and stresses the importance of destination governance. In this respect, DMO’s leading role is to enhance the development and management of tourism processes by enhancing coordination and collaboration between the stakeholders at all levels. (Dwyer & Kim, 2003) It is vital to mention that this variety of stakeholders involved in the creation of tourism products will inevitably create complexities in managing and promoting a destination, due to the presence of a variety of interests and different priorities of stakeholders. The desire for collaboration can improve the coordination of policies and other activities. (De Carlo & Sainaghi, 2010)

Corporate governance in a destination can be of several types. First, there can be one prevalent local agency – DMO, which is the main body for tourism. The relationships between a destination management organization and local firms can be regulated by laws and hierarchy or more casual

connections. Other places may have several local agencies, with less individual power, and resources related to destination management activities. Lastly, other destinations may not have a DMO in the first place, but instead have a leading company, which leads due to it being large and having substantial financial resources, and that can elicit important benefits for local firms. This diverse variety of actors involved, governance mechanisms, and structures can create a wild variety of arrangements. From it, four, archetypes can be distinguished by one. Combination of coordination mechanisms among stakeholders, and two. A different degree of concentration of government functions. (De Carlo & Sainaghi, 2010)

Figure 3

Destination governance archetypes.



Note. The diagram summarizes four types of destination governance archetypes. From “Archetypes of destination governance: A comparison of international destinations” by F. D’Angella, M. De Carlo, and R. Sainaghi, 2010, *Tourism Review*, 65(4), p 61-73.

These destination governance archetypes include normative, leading firm, entrepreneurial, and fragmented types. Such categorizations and their analysis are important because they allow us to understand the level of destination governance, the existence of coordination mechanisms, and how they function. The first archetype, normative emphasizes a top-down approach, where policymakers and public bodies have a crucial role. Here companies participate in the strategic decision-making process. (De Carlo & Sainaghi, 2010)

The second, entrepreneurial archetype consists of either private or public actors, who are involved in destination work. They are the agents of destination development, whose participation is

impulsive. This archetype is exhibited in the city of Barcelona, which has both private and public actors, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce and local policy members have worked on destination growth. The main actor is, however, a consortium of Turisme de Barcelona.

Third, the leading firm type is known for having a leading firm, covering a key role in DMO both in the strategic and financial areas. Finally, the fragmented archetype can originate in destinations that have spontaneous tourist flows. The weakness of this model is that it lacks a strategic and marketing process.

This research found that a lack of a pivotal actor generates an anti-collaborative climate. When there is no leadership and uniting actor, it results in members' individualism and defence of their assets like resources and interests. Then, strong leadership can effectively contribute to the generation of appropriate destination governance. Shared leadership is thought of when there already exists a state of cooperation. The primary features of collaboration must be transparency, the capability of coordinating, local resources' enhancement, the promotion of entrepreneurial initiatives on the territory, and diffusion of trust and a cooperative atmosphere. (Corte, Aria, Gaudio, 2018)

To summarise, the process of governance is complex given the presence of multiple actors who must work together, while their sole objectives may compete. The analysis of archetypes allows greater insights into problems of governance and constructive information for the design of destination management structures. Also, it becomes difficult to govern destinations due to the need to minimize free-riding behaviours awarded in the short-term timeframe. A problem of short-term financing of whole destination management is present until the conditions are available for the destination management organization to finance itself. Likewise, the criteria for appointing DMO administrators emphasize political skills rather than technical competence. The brief duration of public positions affecting the appointment of these national administrators is often inconsistent with the longer time needed to relieve the effects of these management actions. (De Carlo & Sainaghi, 2010)

3.3.2. Network governance

Network governance has different forms, depending on the actors involved. The types are 1. Shared governance form, where multiple actors work collectively; 2. Lead organization form, which is a lead company, provides administration for the network and facilitates the members' activities to pursue common goals; 3. Network administrative form: where is a network administrative organization, working alone in coordination, management, and network maintenance. (Franzoni, 2014; Provan & Milward, 2001; Provan and Kenis 2008, 2009) and 4. The "network management

organization” (NMO) (Franzoni, 2013). Then, for tourism, a DMO – destination management organization serves a key role in managing a destination with a focus on cooperation and integration and developing a network by coordinating services and interventions to achieve the sustainability of the tourist destination.

“The management of the tourist destination is present in a centralized form with an integrated hierarchy and can benefit from the unity of command and rapid decision making as well as a defined strategy.” (Franzoni, 2015) In short, it is the improvement of the link and working between the DMO and the autonomous organizations, which is most vital for the future development of the governance of the destinations. Network management can be defined as processes of governance and the main objectives which are: the formulation of strategy and territory, the development of integrated marketing plans, the development of sustainable services, and the management of network performance to achieve the final goals of the territory through the single tourist destination. (Franzoni, 2015)

To summarise, the tourism stakeholders need to apply a broader approach that is increasingly oriented towards integration in contexts where tourism organizations operate. Progression towards sustainability in tourism will require the adoption of an effective governance model focused on sustainable development and performance evaluation. (Franzoni, 2015)

3.4. Stakeholders in tourism development

Timur, & Getz, (2008) conducted a study to analyse the working relationship between various stakeholders, such as the government, the local community, and tourism industry operations in destination development, which are the critical stakeholders. They used a network analysis that identified the relations between stakeholders, and the stakeholder approach to finding relevant stakeholders in a few destinations. Three urban cities were studied, Calgary, Vitoria, and San Francisco. In each case, destination management organizations and local governments had the most power, legitimacy, and resources and were thus the central stakeholders followed by other parties in these urban cities.

The steering of tourism towards a sustainable course, meaning the protection of the environment, conservation of heritage, preservation of local identities, and cultural values, and supporting the desired quality of life of residents is not an easy task. The implementation of such sustainable tourism would require the engagement of multiple actors, while at the same time, this collaboration between many stakeholders is complicated and hard to achieve. (Pasekeleva-Shapira,

2001 in Timur & Getz, 2008) Operating sustainable tourism needs interactions among the public sector including government bodies, the private sector including tourism companies, and the locals.

For tourism, the stakeholder framework allows to consider of a bigger range of actors in the urban tourism policy and thus supports sustainability aspirations. A lot of sustainable development settings, and the tourism industry, have a complex grid of interests and trade-offs between communicating stakeholders. Similarly, the network perspective is well sustainable to the analysis of the tourism industry because it considers that destinations are systems, consisting of many contacts and exchanges that tend to affect the opportunities, constraints, behaviour, or values of destination stakeholders. Timur, & Getz, (2008)

However, the study suggests that the key destination stakeholders can be different in each city and there is no single network structure for destinations. And since stakeholders can vary from destination to destination, the patterns of interaction between actors will also change. In summary, sustainable tourism development will be unique in each case. As a result, destinations are challenged to make a more participative model for destinations. According to network theory, there should be more contacts in the environment to enhance collective actions. As such, sustainability networks would be needed. Networks theory argues that structural position in the networks determines stakeholders' status or influence in the system. Timur, & Getz, (2008)

3.4.1. Destination management organization

A Destination Management Organization is of control in four areas of activities: marketing activities (strategic and operational processes), organization of the production chain, and management of the entire destination offer (Van Niekerk, 2017) protection of the environmental resources, and relationships management with local systems, with the focus on the residential community. (Martini, 2005; Sainaghi, 2006)

“The management of the tourist destination is present in a centralized form with an integrated hierarchy and can benefit from the unity of command and rapid decision making as well as a defined strategy.” (Franzoni, 2015) In short, it is the improvement of the link and working between the DMO and the autonomous organizations, which is most vital for the future development of the governance of the destinations. Network management can be defined as processes of governance and the main objectives which are: the formulation of strategy and territory, the development of integrated marketing plans, the development of sustainable services, and the management of network performance to achieve the final goals of the territory through the single tourist destination. To

summarise, the tourism stakeholders need to apply a broader approach that is increasingly oriented towards integration in contexts where tourism organizations operate. Progression towards sustainability in tourism will require the adoption of an effective governance model focused on sustainable development and performance evaluation. Franzoni (2015)

Goodwin, (2021) further considered the topics of city destinations, over-tourism, and governance. Sustainability and its development imply a holistic approach, directed by the holist that needs to address different dimensions of sustainability, including economic, environmental, and social dimensions. As a result, multiple goals make create tension and inconsistencies may arise between the goals. The Cape Town Declaration accepted that tourism can only be managed for sustainability at the local, destination level and that it requires “dialogue, partnerships and multistakeholder processes – involving government, business, and local communities – to make better places for hosts and guests;” “stakeholders have different, albeit interdependent responsibilities.” The declaration also mentioned that “the interest of residents is put before those of the visitors, recognizing that places belong to those who live there.” DMOs are increasingly public-private partnerships that organize jointly funded marketing initiatives. Furthermore, with the rapid growth of modern online booking channels, affordable airlines, travel bloggers, and influences, Airbnb provides serious challenges for the cities’ capacity to control tourism and its impacts.

3.4.2. Tourism planning models

Then, the 5 traditions of tourism planning are 1. Boosterism – where tourism is an effective use of cultural and physical resources. 2. Economic – tourism can be used like other industries to generate revenue and employment, 3. Physical/spatial – tourism can be controlled through a consideration of its social and environmental features., 4. Community – the need for local control and balanced development., 5. Sustainability – integration of social, economic, and environmental aspects into planning systems. (Hall, 2005 in Moscardo, 2011)

Hall’s (2005) of Moscardo (2011) description of tourism planning traditions suggests that in the first, residents are most likely to be seen as an element of destination attractiveness, while in the second they are a labour pool or a resource to be exploited for tourism. Only in 2, the last 5 traditions did residents are seen as part of the planning and control process.

3.5. Managing societal change

The following chapter will discuss the topic of transition management and how it applies to sustainable changes. First, it discusses what transition management is, how social learning plays a key role in successful transitions, and what is the role of social representations in this context. It also introduces the role of governance in the change process.

3.5.1. Transitions and social learning

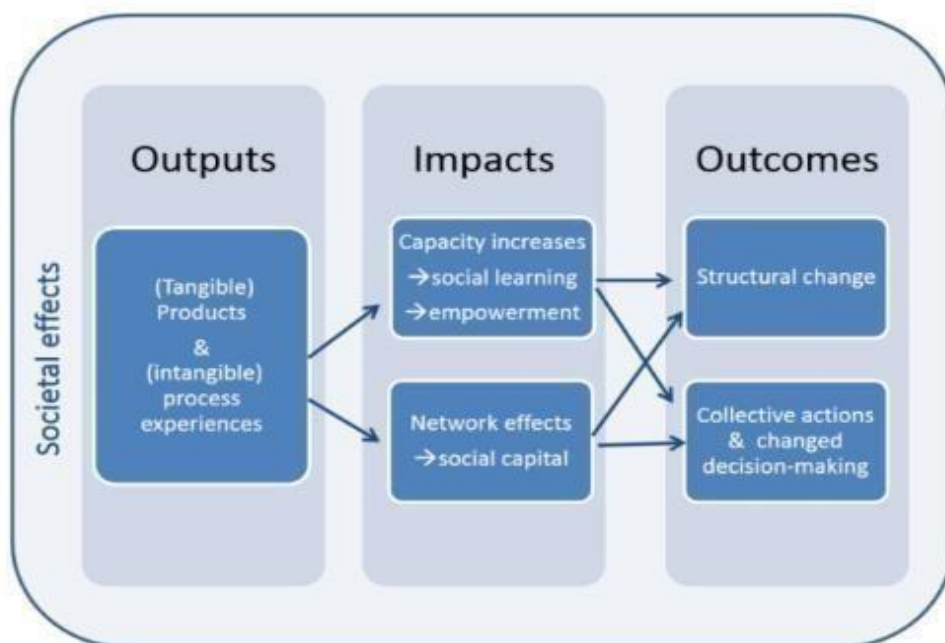
Omann et al. (2017) explored the topic of transition management and its relation to sustainability transitions. Sustainability transitions are open-ended, non-linear, and uncertain, and require reflective and explorative strategies. Solving them requires a fundamental change in the structures, culture, and practices of a societal system. A lack of understanding and a transition framework for assessment characterizes how core societal effects of transition management relate to sustainability. Transition management can be put into practice in the form of a transdisciplinary research approach. The aim of transition management is a “*sustainability transition as societal change.*” – focusing on social learning and empowerment of actors.

Finally, transition management aims for transformational change in societal systems through a process of searching, learning, and experimenting. (Omann et al., 2017, 4) Transition management is centred around participatory spaces such as transition arenas, which bring together a diversity of change agents for joint envisioning and collective action. (Omann et al., 2017, 5- 16)

Social learning is believed to be a prerequisite of change in transition management. It is reflective learning, going beyond individual opinions to combine different actors’ views which may lead to the development of an innovative solution to complex issues. In transition management, social learning helps to deal with complexity and uncertainty. (Omann et al., 2017,7) Research on governance in tourism may benefit from the use of social theories because they provide a better understanding, transfer of concepts, and interpretations.

Figure 4

Effects of transdisciplinary transition management processes



Note. The figure shows how outputs, impacts, and outcomes work together to create societal effects and produce change. Outputs are tangible or intangible factors affecting the changes in social learning, empowerment, and capital, which all contributes to certain outcomes, as for example, structural change and collective actions. From “Linking Transitions to Sustainability: A Study of the Societal Effects of Transition Management,” by N. Schöpke, I. Omann et al, 2017, Sustainability 9(737), p 1-36

A study by Kankare et al., (2018) explored how environmental changes produce costs and benefits in the tourism industry in Arctic Finland and other industries outside of tourism. Adaptive measures were needed as climate change progressed. The benefits of adaptation to environmental change surpass the costs of local scales. Tourism contributes significantly to environmental change, producing social-cultural and economic implications. Yet, it is much dependent on the ecological conditions. (Gössling & Hall, 2006 in Kankare et al., 2018)

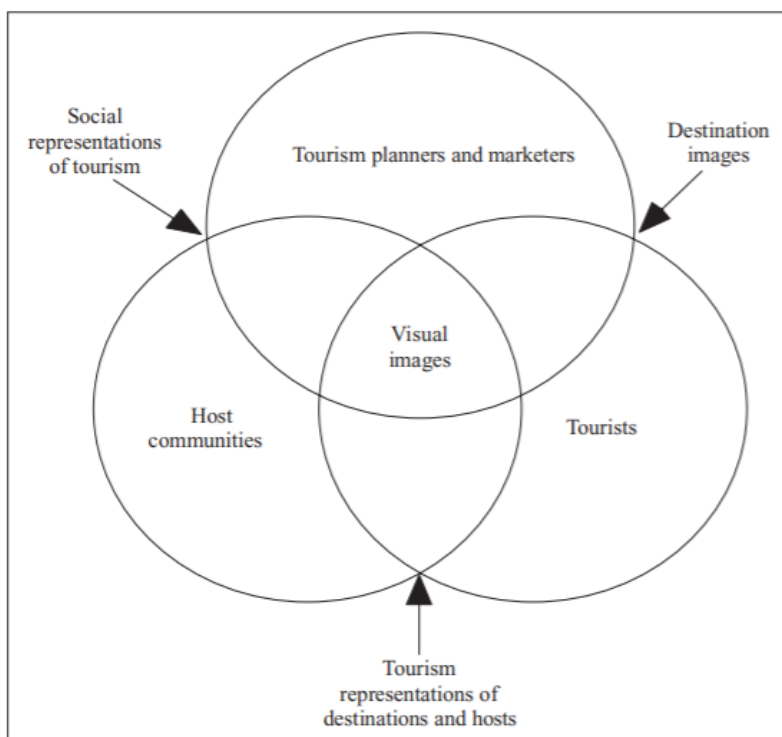
Nowadays, governing structures progressively integrate “a range of interests drawn from the private sector.” Therefore decision – making and responsibility for adaption are handed to markets, and private-sector local operators. (Amore & Hall, 2016, p.2 in Kankare et al., 2018, Kankare et al., 2018) One challenge in climate change adaptation and mitigation plans is that future resources and structures available for change cannot be known, which can result in a “time horizon problem”. This issue describes a tendency of society to focus on solving the near future problems rather than addressing more long-term challenges. (Kankare et al., Orlove, 2019).

3.5.2. Social representations

Social representations – are mental constructs that guide us and define reality. The world is organized, understood, and mediated through these basic cognitive units. Social representations consist of both concrete images and abstract concepts, organized around figurative nuclei which are a complex of images. They allow groups to construct and share a common social reality (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003) and provide guidelines to individuals for how they should react to the phenomenon. Social representations of tourism planning and development are linked to community understanding of tourism and control over tourism development changes have limited understanding of tourism. Representation theory suggested they can either develop their social presentation or adopt an existing one. Destination communities can lose control over tourism development by accepting a social presentation of tourism held by external agents that would limit the local population’s role in tourism. (Moscardo, 2011)

Figure 5

A preliminary social representations framework for tourism.



Note. Host communities, tourists, planners, and marketers together create a certain destination images and representations of tourism. From “Exploring social representations of tourism planning: Issues for governance,” by G. Moscardo, 2011, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 19(4-5), p 423-436

The analysis of tourism planning models indicates the existence of a leading social representation fixed into a business approach that does not connect well to sustainability issues. According to it, the destination's population plays only a minor role, and its views are typically excluded from tourism governance. Instead, there prevail dominant views of external agents from private and public sectors and the opinions of travellers about what is important for a particular destination. (Moscardo, 2011)

However, there also exist other development models, which pay more attention to the well-being of communities living in an area of development. The paper mentions how social representation turns into the social construction of knowledge about tourism and its impacts. It argues that empowering resident communities to develop and present their descriptions of tourism in a city is a necessity for the governance of more sustainable tourism. Moscardo (2011) concludes that improving locals' knowledge of tourism's forms, and positive and negative contributions will help to create more balanced social representations of how tourism can coexist best with them and their interests.

The alarming implication is that when locals are given a limited or no role in the tourism planning and governance process, the residents' lack of knowledge of tourism is used to support opinions that effective development of tourism must be done by external parties, including foreign tour agents, domestic yet distant government department or foreign/domestic DMOs. Moscardo's (2011) Social representation theory argues that with limited knowledge of tourism destination community must either develop its social representation of tourism or adopt an existing one. Citizens can lose control over tourism development in 2 ways. The first is giving ownership of resources such as land and infrastructure to external businesses and the second is a lack of democratic government procedures as well as reliance on external consultants and organizations to develop tourism plans and a lack of community understanding of tourism and its consequences. (Moscardo, 2011)

To emphasize, when external agents such as consultants, international investors, and tourism businesses, contribute greatly to the planning models, mostly in the evaluation and strategy development stages, it gives the external agents greater power to choose the content of the strategic plans. In this way, external agents may impose their views on what is the "right" forms of tourism for a city under consideration. (Moscardo, 2011)

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore the topic of sustainable tourism governance, the measures taken to enhance sustainable tourism, possible barriers to implementation, and what is done to involve citizens in collaborative activities for sustainable tourism. The following paragraphs will discuss the methods for this study in detail. Firstly, it outlines the qualitative research and why it is relevant to the study, then introduces documentary analysis and the methods used to analyse documents. Documentary analysis is the main approach to researching this thesis.

4.1. Qualitative research

The appropriate research methods for any study can be decided upon an individual researcher's understanding of a suitable philosophical belief for his research. Any research must be based on an underlying belief about what is "valid" research and which methods suit it the best. In qualitative research, these underlying paradigms can be positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 in Myers, 2013, 37) Or, as put by (Orlikowski & Baroudi 1991 in Myers, 2013, 37) there are three categories – positivist, interpretive, and critical.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term and a research strategy focused on examining a phenomenon through words, meanings, and deeper characteristics of its parts. Qualitative social sciences research can reveal the intentions, interpretations, and understandings of human experiences of life and its features. (Bryman 2008a: 366; Sandelowski 2004: 893 in Hammersley, 2013) In qualitative research, there are many different opportunities for data collection, such as individual interviews, focus groups discussions, questionnaires with open-ended questions, observations, case studies etc. (Houston, 2022) This study uses a singular case study method because it is focused in one dataset, the newspaper articles.

As such, "*Social life consists of a process of communication and interpretation regarding the definition of the situation.*" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1967 et al. in Altheide & Schneider (2013) The symbolic nature of things and rules of life shape a child's life from the very beginning, affecting an individual's self-view, view of others and shaping the future. Altheide & Schneider (2013). One's activities are a part of this social world; one wishes to study and one's actions are reflexive of what has happened before in the social world. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983 in Altheide & Schneider (2013) Finally, the idea of all being proves and constantly changing is of crucial importance.

Qualitative research allows us to study social realities by understanding fellow human beings "from the inside" – through empathy, shared experience, and culture in contrast to how phenomena

in natural and hard sciences. This is justifiable because humans are conscious beings, with underlying histories, motives etc. that guide their actions, while chemicals and atoms are not. Many factors, such as culture, heritage, education, political histories, and experiences shape human behaviour, so an interpretivist would need to collect that information and access it. In interpretivism, a researcher adopts an exploratory orientation, to find out the individuals' motives and how they tend to behave in a real-life context. The research stays objective on the opinions and does not evaluate them. Hammersley. (2013)

This research is interpretive and critical for several reasons. It considers how external factors, health pandemics, political tensions, globalization, and the availability of cheap travelling options and similar affect sustainable tourism and governance. Access to the phenomenon can be possible only by identifying social constructs, such as language, consciousness, shared meaning, and tools. They focus on the complexity of human sense-making as the process emerges Hammersley. (2013) attempting to understand the study topic through meanings that people create for each issue. (Boland, 1991; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). The context of a phenomenon is important because context influences the phenomenon a lot. For example, the meaning of a word will depend upon its context in a sentence, paragraph, or culture. Likewise, the meaning of a social phenomenon depends on its context, which is a socially constructed reality of the social realities.

In comparison, critical research assumes that history shapes present social reality, and people produce and reproduce it. People's ability to influence their environment is limited by various social, cultural, and political realities. As a result, some interpretations may be given more weight. A critical researcher's task is therefore to challenge the prevailing beliefs, values, and assumptions that may be taken for granted. (Myers, 2019, 43) Here, the existent social conditions are important to take into consideration, which can inhibit the reach of insight, justice, and freedom. Finally, a researcher plays an active role and can as well offer suggestions for improvement of the situation. A critical researcher stands for certain ethical values open democracy, equal opportunity, and environmental sustainability. (Myers, 2019, p 44)

4.2. Document analysis as an approach to research

This thesis is based on document analysis, a qualitative research approach, that uses a systematic strategy to analyse documentary evidence and answer one's research questions. It requires planning, collection of data, repeated review, analysis, and interpretation of textual information to elicit meaning and empirical knowledge of the study phenomenon. (Gross, 2018) In this regard, a document is "any symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis" and may be used to

study culture and history very well in modern times due to rapid technological progress. (Althede, 1996 in Myers, 2019, 152) There are all kinds of documents, for example, in written formats are texts, blog posts, personal diaries, diagrams, books and articles. There are also videos, pictures, and photographs, as well as all kinds of TV programs.

Documents are sources of information that are as good as more traditional data collection methods such as interviews, surveys, observations, and experiments. Documents are crucial means of recording and transmitting speech, which are applied also in social contexts. They can also have an active role in some contexts, for example, when a data source is a contract. (Prior, 2003 in Myers, 2019, 151) There are private, personal, and public documents. The first category can be used in companies for internal use, for instance as a budget or a strategy, while public documents are annual reports, media statements, articles, or newspapers available for review by all who need them. Personal documents include, for example, letters and diaries. There is a distinction between written documents and records. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Myers, 2019, 153.) The former is prepared for personal usage, compared to records that may attest to the formal transaction, such as bank statements, and marriage certificates.

In this thesis, all information collected for the research purpose is public documents. The chosen online news channels are up-to-date online sources, informing about many topics related to Spain, and Barcelona. The news chosen was related to tourism, sustainability, and tourism governance in Spain. Most articles were chosen from Barcelona Metropolitan since the study focuses most on sustainable tourism in Barcelona. The other articles were from Spain in English and El País, which are other big online news sources about Spain.

Documents can be used as the main data source or as supplementary sources. To ensure the trustworthiness of documents, they must be accessed against the 4 criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Finally, it is important to pay attention to the writer and access the quality of the text sources he used. The advantage of using documents is that they are visual, transparent, traceable, and easier to get data from, compared to, for example, interviews or experiments. If a researcher can find many needed documents, it is easy to cross-check them, triangulate them with other data, and study the over-time development of phenomena. It is even possible to come across unique archival data. However, it can be still challenging to access some types of documents, such as, for example, emails as well as check documents' originality and credibility. (Myers, 2019, 156-159)

4.3. Data collection and analysis procedure

Documentary analysis was chosen as the data collection method. For a document review, several online newspapers were chosen to describe events in Spain. Mostly, the author searched for news regarding Barcelona, yet additional pieces of information were also included if they were relevant to the study topic. So, the channels news were El País, Spain in English, and Barcelona Metropolitan. More specifically, content analysis is used as a data collection and analysis method, which will help to grasp the meaning, message, and context of the phenomenon.

Before looking for documents, I outlined a list of questions, items, and categories, that were used in collecting data. This approach to data collection is relevant to the writer because it allows using one's knowledge about the tourism field and other spheres in preparing data collection and analysing information. By using such an approach, qualitative document analysis relies most on text, narrative, and descriptions. Moreover, while using a few pre-coded items for relevant categories, most are coded and refined after more data are collected. Finally, a data collection instrument should allow capturing needed information, meaning features of social action – “What or how is it done? Where and when was it done? Who did it? With what rationale? Were any motives apparent?” Altheide & Schneider (2013)

Meaning and emphasis are essential categories in a majority of qualitative document studies. Frame, theme, and discourse help to catch the emphasis and meaning of a document. They refer too to the communication formats. For example, in mass media, communication format is communicated through the selection, organization, and presentation of information. Formats refer to the primary ordering and traditions of time – flow and rhythm, space means how place and visual editing are used, and manner or style of experience. (Snow, 1983 in Altheide & Schneider, 2013) That is, “communication and media formats enable us to recognize various frames that give a general definition of what is before us”. (ibid. 2013).

Documents can be analysed by a variety of strategies, but this research will use content and thematic analysis strategies. The choice is based on the researcher's goal to find out what is done and talked about on the topics of sustainability and sustainable tourism in Barcelona and Spain in general. Sustainable tourism management requires the participation of many actors, so it would benefit of getting a real picture of how sustainability actions undertaken in the city are portrayed in news. As products of social interaction, documents can be examined reflexively by looking at one feature and how it compares to others and its insights, following constant comparison between the elements. In this respect, *qualitative* content analysis is different from conventional *quantitative* content analysis, in that the latter emerged from the positivist belief of objectivity and measurement of phenomenon. Nevertheless, the advantage of quantitative content analysis lies in its ability to verify or confirm

hypothesised relationships rather than discover new or emergent patterns. Altheide & Schneider (2013)

In this research, the documentary analysis proceeds as follows. Firstly, the code book approach is used for data analysis. When designing the plan for data collection, several themes related to the study topic were chosen – the data item would need to relate to sustainable activities present in Barcelona and Spain overall, sustainability challenges, ways to get involved, description of how sustainable activities work. Codebook thematic analysis is located between “coding reliability” and “reflexive” thematic analysis. It involves the structured approach to coding and the qualitative philosophy of reflexive thematic analysis. (Braun et al, 2019) The approach allows having themes both from the data collection tool and the ones naturally emerging from the data itself.

4.4. Content and theme analysis

Thematic analysis is an umbrella term, encompassing a variety of approaches to discovering patterns or themes within qualitative data. Thematic analysis and content analysis have been often used interchangeably, as well as there also was used term “thematic content analysis.” (Braun et al, 2019; Brewster et al.2014 in Braun et al, 2019) As such, themes reflect a pattern of shared meaning, organized around a core concept or idea. (Braun et al, 2019) Through this definition, themes capture the message of the text, and how the meaning is spread along the text. Themes help to make sense of the information collected into a logical whole. Alternatively, a theme may mean what participants talked about a certain topic. (Braun et al, 2019)

Content analysis can be applied to any form of quantitative data, and it is well suited to help analyse the opinions of participants. A researcher can study published books, articles and reports, online blogs, as well as letters from individuals and organizations. In content analysis, themes are created from data, and the relations between them are elaborated to create a story. Themes can emerge from data, or the researcher can apply prepared themes to the data. In this study, themes will emerge as they are and later be compared to check their relation to the literature review. Gill, R. (2000, 172-179).

For document review, crucial factors are *context*, *process*, and *emergence*. For example, a researcher must understand the context of a social situation in which a document is located to understand what it fully means. *Context* and *process* help to communicate the message and meaning of a document. The meaning and patterns in the document often emerge over some time and require continuous comparison. Documents help to notice how the process emerges over time. Here,

emergence is the gradual creation of meaning through insight and interpretation. As such, documents are used to help understand the process and meaning of social activities. Altheide & Schneider (2013)

Next, a data collection plan was created following a defined trajectory. A piece of information was chosen accounting for the following details. First, I created searching keywords such as “sustainability and Barcelona,” “sustainable tourism and Barcelona,” “tourism governance and Barcelona,” and “citizen participation and Barcelona.” Then, I searched the news channels in Spain in English, El Pais, and Barcelona metropolitan to collect the relevant information for my thesis with the keywords and generally by visiting certain news categories. After careful consideration of news available in Barcelona metropolitan, Spain In English and El Pais, I chose several documents for analysis. Also, I paid attention to the source of a document, its format, summary, and predefined themes. The collected data is 15 pieces of news about sustainability and travel in Spain. Most articles concern Barcelona and are from Barcelona Metropolitan web magazine. The rest is from Spain in English and El Pais. The articles were published between 07.07.2017 – 11.08.2022.

To conclude, in this thesis I use the methods of documentary analysis and content and thematic analysis strategies, which helped me to locate relevant information about topics of sustainable management in Barcelona. The content and thematic analysis strategy allowed us to make sense of relevant information and understand the main concerns when it comes to sustainability in Barcelona.

4.5. Data analysis

During the data analysis, the goal was to understand what major themes were present, in what was the sustainable governance of tourism in Barcelona, Spain. In addition, the author wanted to form a big picture of the data, because the topic of sustainable governance encompasses a lot of pieces described in the theoretical part of the report. For the data source, online news media were chosen as the main starting point.

In total, fifteen news articles were collected based on their content and suitability for the study topic. In total, there are nine articles from Barcelona Metropolitan, two articles from Spain in English, and four articles from El Pais. The first article was published on July 7th, 2017, and the last article was published on August 11th, 2022. Most of the articles were from the years 2022 and 2021. Since the study focused on the overtourism issue in Barcelona, most articles were collected from there. However, several articles were chosen from Spain in English and El Pais, because they stood for insightful pieces of information related to sustainability in general. In all three data sources, there are countless articles, from which one can search for the ones that are interested the most.

The data analysis was done manually by the author. First, the articles were read several times, and codes were written down, to later form major themes appearing from the data. They probably first had too many themes, but these were merged too into bigger ones, which proved to be crucial in the author's judgement. So, the following themes were created.

- Sustainable solutions
- A conscious traveller
- Governmental Initiatives tackling mass tourism and city living
- Post-covid sustainable Barcelona.

The next results chapter will describe the findings according to these 4 themes created. As well as provide detailed descriptions of each theme, and direct quotations describing the citizens' and expert perspectives. Afterwards, conclusions are created in the chapter 6.

4.6. Sampling strategy and limitations

In a qualitative study, the challenge is whether the data collected is rich enough to characterize the phenomenon or experience in detail. The purposive choice of where to obtain data depends on where, according to a researcher's opinion, is most crucial and remarkable data is hidden. So-called "information-rich cases" are those, using which a researcher can learn a lot about topics of importance to the research goals and questions. (Polkinghorne, 2005; Patton, 1990, 169 in Polkinghorne, 2005) Online news sources are a current and reliable source of information, written by persons knowledgeable about a location or otherwise living there. As such, El País's headquarters are located in Madrid, Barcelona metropolitan and Spain in English headquarters are in located in Barcelona. Then, non-probability sampling is used in qualitative research, where study subjects are chosen based on some pre-defined characteristics to include certain aspects or groups in the sampled population. Therefore, the sampling units are chosen on purpose to include mostly participants from a specific geographical area, Barcelona, Spain. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2011, 77-78)

Then, since the study captures qualitative data from newspaper articles, it has certain limitations. One's experience cannot be directly observed, and therefore its understanding will be unique to each individual and will depend on how one chooses to present their opinion. The research was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic which produced certain limitations to the data collection. First, it was rather challenging to find reliable data source in sufficient amount and of needed quality. People were preoccupied with other relevant such as, first, a global virus pandemic, and then rather serious

global political conflict. Nevertheless, another plan was created that worked successfully and produced meaningful results. It was a document analysis, which would require a researcher's willingness to get needed data as well as an opportunity to try an original approach to data gathering.

5. RESULTS

After going through the collected articles, a lot of codes representing interesting information were found. These codes and topics were grouped to be themes relevant to sustainability subjects in travel and tourism. The themes related to topics of “sustainable solutions,” “a conscious traveller,” “initiatives tackling mass tourism and city living,” examples of “pioneer responsible businesses,” “plastic challenge”, and “Post covid sustainable Barcelona”.

To begin with, in all collected articles it was evident that the issue of sustainability in tourism is well acknowledged by the Barcelona government, businesses and its residents. This means that all kinds of work were done towards more responsible production and operation. For example, there were found to be sustainable fashion brands, companies producing sustainable gifts and other merchandise, a governmental plan to support the development of Spain’s rural locations, for example by attracting international travellers to less popular parts of Spain, embracing measures to preserve Barcelona’s architectural heritage and improve city living. For example, a tourist tax and certain rules inhibiting inappropriate tourist behaviour were adopted in Spain as measures to address the industry’s adverse effects. In addition, the Barcelona government is constantly working to improve the lives of city residents and optimize their existence with incoming international guests. This is reflected in the city’s decision to put more green areas in public spaces.

Overall, most city residents agree that tourism is beneficial for their city and supports it in numerous ways. However, there were a couple of times when the issue was found to be the enormous number of visitors in certain locations and at certain times of the year. At the same time, another reference was made about the issue of overcrowding on the Barcelona’s most popular historical locations such as La Sagrada Família, Casa Vicens, Park Güell and how it is important to take diligent care of these buildings so that future generations could enjoy them too. This is too important because, international travellers were attracted to Barcelona by these beautiful heritage sites.

Little data showed examples of tourismphobia, which was not a stand-alone issue after all. On the other hand, it seemed to be connected to the issue of mass tourism and how mass tourism causes disturbances to locals, which in turn, may produce certain “fears” or “concerns” when it comes to international guests and how they may behave in public space or otherwise produce too much noise and overcrowding on popular busy city streets. These was shown by few protests against mass tourism and its impacts on the local communities, and public services. For example, mentioned were made about the strain on heritage sites and overcrowding on popular streets. Occasional hostility outbreaks were not a commonality and were not directed to particular individuals but rather against overall mainstream trends and consumerism. That is, “The occasional outbreaks of hostility toward tourists in some locations is a symptom of ill-feeling that needs to be nipped in the bud before it is too late.

In reality, such hostility is not directed toward individual tourists, so much as a rejection of mass tourism.” (El País, 2017, July 7)

Table 2

Mass tourism consequences in Spain

Mass tourism consequences in Spain
Depleted water resources
The pressure of climate change
Uneven coastal development
Seasonal, low-wage work
Rural locations challenge
Mass tourism protests

Table 2 summarises the main mass tourism consequences in Spain. All these are equally important, and they all add to a common issue, overtourism impacts. The pressure of climate change and depleted water resources could be the most pressuring issues at the moment, followed by the disproportional coastal development, wherein most tourists tend to spend their vacations near the beach. Then, congestion in the public spaces, noise, and other behaviour cause disturbance to locals, which result in indignation and occasional acts of protest by locals. Finally, a lot of jobs at the industry is seasonal and the wages are a rather modest salary.

The following quote exemplifies well the contradicting nature of the city’s relationship with travel industry and its impact on society. “Residents of Barcelona see tourism as the city’s main problem, even though 83% recognize that it provides benefits. Barcelona cannot turn its back on a sector that provides 20% of its GDP. But it needs to manage it well, just as Madrid and other Spanish cities.” EL PAÍS, 2017. So, the challenge is in a well-managed, sustainable approach to tourism governance, where a lot will depend not only on governmental and stakeholders’ interests, but also if traveller and locals will take more responsibility in their relation towards travelling and supporting the city and it’s competitive industry.

5.1. Sustainable solutions

Sustainable solutions have rather a big share within the collected news articles. For example, sustainable fashion and gifts are recurring examples of the measures taken to support tourism's sustainability. By any means, sustainable fashion follows some sort of core guidelines. These include but are not limited to circulatory recycling, local production, innovation, and transparency. As well, as local workshops, longevity focus, recycled cotton, or usage of certified organic Fairtrade cotton in clothes.

One solution is the emergence and prosperity of pioneer responsible businesses, which places their core value of sustainability as a guiding principle. In Barcelona, a traveller can always opt for sustainable gifts, be it clothing or home décor, such brands use low-impact fibres, certified organic and fair-trade cotton, recycled polyester or cotton, wool, and denim. InfitDenim is a brand selling upcycled clothing and accessories made by Back to Eco, a non-profit organization recycling old denim. It recycled already 20 tonnes of denim. Its guiding values are circulatory recycling, local production, innovation, and transparency.

To illustrate, "Back to Eco's focus on sustainability extends to its workshop where local workers at risk of social exclusion are hired through social and labour insertion programs." (Shain & Perales, 2022b) Another outstanding example is Bonito. It has a clear sustainability strategy at its core, which is exemplified by the following remark. "Founded in Barcelona, BONITO is a unisex surf clothing brand with sustainability as its core value, placing it at the centre of every decision. All its clothing is made in or near Barcelona at local workshops using either recycled or GOTS-certified organic cotton." (Shain & Perales, 2022b) Similarly, "Nudie Jeans – is a women's and men's clothing line that started with passion for dry denim and a focus on sustainability and longevity." (Shain & Perales, 2022b)

When it comes to gift production and various merchandise, the brands in Barcelona focus on that too. Their brands are SKFK, using low-impact fibres such as certified organic and Fair-Trade cotton, recycled polyester or cotton, wool, and denim. For example, "Orígens Craft & Design stocks well-made, original goods from local or national designers and craftspeople working in traditional crafts or innovative techniques with a commitment to sustainability and social equality. They also emphasize fair working conditions for employees involved in production." (Williams, 2021b)

These are just a few examples of the ways brands move towards sustainable production. There are a lot of more responsible brands in Barcelona, producing merchandise locally or otherwise within European Union. They are all united by a common goal to make a change toward a more sustainable fashion industry. SKFK brands sell all kinds of goods aimed at responsible persons, be they local residents or travellers or anyone wanting to lead a responsible lifestyle.

Green city initiatives are another solution for increasing the quality of life of all people of Barcelona’s destination both for locals and visiting tourists as depicted in table 3. The city of Barcelona pioneered the superblocks concept, which allows traffic to be restricted to major roads around the superblocks, leaving the streets inside for pedestrians and cyclists. (Nanda, 2021b) Having more green spaces benefits all. Below is a summary of a few benefits of green areas.

Table 3

Green city benefits

Green city benefits
Improved air quality
Less road traffic emissions
Reduced noise level
Improved mental health
Reduced risk of obesity and diabetes

Still, locals must become more aware of the benefits of green living, and with their support and collaboration, there will be a positive shift. Already now, “Green city initiatives need to be long-term—and created with the support of local people. Recognition of the benefits of green living and informed support of developments will result in positive behaviour changes by the citizens.” (Nanda, 2021b) Having more green areas and being in nature has a positive effect on people in general. Especially in big cities, struggling with huge populations, cars, and buildings there is a need to have more parks and forests massive also in terms of having better air to breathe and live longer lives. However, the excessive laying of green areas too may produce somewhat undesirable consequences, for example, the skyrocketing prices of housing.

“A particular negative impact of green zones could be a high demand for housing, leading to subsequent rises in property prices. This can lead to gentrification and displacement of local residents and businesses.” (Nanda, 2021b) Similarly, “The COVID-19 lockdowns highlighted the difference in living conditions faced by city dwellers. Green initiatives must work for all socio-economic groups and must not exacerbate existing inequalities.” (Nanda, 2021b)

Then, circular business models are another opportunity that is used to move in a sustainable direction. In Barcelona, there is Swapfiets renting bike model. It is a unique service available in Barcelona. The model is unique in that it recirculates their resources, thereof reducing or cutting waste. The bikes are given to clients for a subscription, and they are not there for sale. Instead, Swapfiets company aims at supplying sustainable vehicles and not producing more wasted resources.

That is, as Swapfiets tells, “*We need to consume less and enjoy more. The world has enough stuff.*” (Swapfiets Brings a Cycling Revolution to Barcelona, 2022c)

Having more of such businesses would be beneficial, because “A circular economy is the opposite of excess consumerism and is a tool with which to address social concerns (such as mobility) as well as environmental concerns (like our carbon footprint).” (Swapfiets Brings a Cycling Revolution to Barcelona, 2022c)

Finally, careful consideration should be paid to the way plastics are produced and consumed. Greenpeace made a detailed investigation and found that only 25.4 % of the plastic that ends up in the yellow recycle bin gets recycled. The rest is incinerated, exported to poorer countries, for example, Malaysia or ends up in landfills. (Greenpeace, n.d.) Yet, there is also another issue with microplastic is that “currently, we can do nothing to remove microplastic from the bottom of the sea, and it will continue to damage marine life for years to come.” (Chaplain, 2022b)

When it comes to plastic, a lot of products need new material to be created and that is the main issue. Recycled plastic is usually of lower quality, and only a truly little part of it can be made into the same product. That is because polymers in which plastic is made, degrade, and become of lower quality during the recycling process. Moreover, recycling plastic is not cost-effective, it often costs more to recycle plastic than to make it new. Therefore, the demand for recycled plastic is exceptionally low when it is considered to be too costly to recycle.

When it comes to bioplastic, there are certain disadvantages of it. First, bioplastic has a remarkably high carbon footprint, it needs extra land for production and requires a lot of water. It does not biodegrade easily. To be precise, “The transformation of plant matter into bioplastic requires 2.7 times more energy than traditional plastic.” (Eco enclose) So, it requires further consideration. For instance, using more paper instead of plastic can be seen as an alternative, but paper has a bigger carbon footprint compared to plastic. Making a paper bag requires 3 to 4 times as much energy and water as a plastic bag. Paper production makes higher concentrations of toxic chemicals. Above all, paper bags are heavier, take more time to transfer and their transportation is more costly.

5.2. A conscious traveller

A couple of news pieces encouraged the reader to be a more responsible, conscious traveller. The economic impact of Covid on tourism was stressed at least a couple of times. However, now sustainability and consideration of mass tourism impacts must go hand in hand with the need to balance the effects caused by covid on the tourism industry. It is worth remembering that a sustainable transition change requires a change of societal beliefs, culture, and ways of doing things. It is also a

nonlinear and uncertain process. Adopting the “Slow travel mindset” is a needed change on an individual level, that could benefit societies if practised commonly by many.

It that sense, “Slow travel is a mindset. Rather than pursuing Instagram-worthy photos and trying to squeeze as many attractions into your trip as possible, leave your phone at home and explore each destination at your own pace.” (Boluk & Paddison, 2020)

So, a traveller is encouraged to be present in his surroundings, leaving gadgets at home and having one or two activities to engage in, but doing them in a calm, purposeful manner. A shift should start on an individual level. The traveller is invited to travel more purposefully. It is possible by choosing a destination that was not weakened by mass tourism. Travelling during the off-peak season is a conscious choice. Finally, travel slowly to minimize the environmental impact.

For example, “Keeping sustainability in mind, it’s also worth considering opportunities that allow you to slowly experience a certain city, country or region while supporting local projects.” (Boluk & Paddison, 2020) Third, a traveller must plan how to spend finances, preferably choosing local providers. As such, “Wherever you go, make sure you seek out local initiatives including local guides and local accommodation providers.” (Boluk & Paddison, 2020)

For example, you could visit a local street market selling souvenirs or other small pieces from local sellers. In the city of Tordera, located 64 km from Barcelona, is located a traditional Sunday market, offering traditional food and crafts. This market has been a Catalan tradition since 1853 and is a wonderful opportunity to familiarize yourself with local culture and support local communities. Fourth, consume locally produced food. For comparison, “Food accounts for over a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions, so it lies at the heart of tackling climate change, reducing water stress, pollution and restoring land.” (Boluk & Paddison, 2020) Finally, immerse yourself in the travel experience. “An immersive type of travel prioritises people over places and avoids overcrowded spaces. This allows you to make real connections and can also help you gain insights about local traditions, cultures, and history.” (Boluk & Paddison, 2020)

5.3. Governmental initiatives

Barcelona's government is well aware of the city’s pressures of mass tourism and created a lot of strategies to lessen its impact, improve the lives of citizens and optimize travelling for tourists. The articles collected, had a lot of mentions of examples of the city’s actions to improve travel. Below are a few examples. A “Slow Travel Spain” campaign was launched by Spanish officials to encourage tourists to travel in a new, more responsible way. The campaign encourages travellers to visit Spain considering its customs, rules, and own behaviour, and ways to form connections with people and

local cultures. Finally, the campaign focuses on geographical diversification and low-impact activities, lessening harmful effects on communities and the environment. In a way, the campaign speaks for itself. It invites the traveller to make more thoughtful choices when travelling.

Second, Slow Food, is an international movement that is practiced also in Spain. It focuses on traditional culinary rituals, connection to the local economy, and responsible production. Therefore, slow food acknowledges social issues such as good labour conditions, balanced economies, and respect for cultures and traditions. These 30 slow food restaurants in Barcelona. Slow Food should be "good, clean and fair" – Chiara Bombardi, president of Slow Food Barcelona

"The goal of the Slow Food movement is to promote a balanced, well-rounded consumption ecosystem that involves everyone in the supply chain—from the chefs and restaurateurs to the farmers and distributors. The Slow Food statute encourages eco-friendly producing, distribution, and consumption methods to promote the idea that food sustainability starts at the root and should be maintained throughout." (Domeyko & Shain, 2021b) Here, good criterion means that food has natural flavour and is tasty. Clean means that all parts of the production process are done with consideration of the environment. To be precise, "Farming practices, animal husbandry, processing, marketing and consumption should protect ecosystems and promote biodiversity." (Domeyko & Shain, 2021b)

Finally, fair means that social issues are considered. These are labour conditions, balanced economies and respect for cultures and traditions. "We want to promote restaurants that embody the spirit of the city so that both tourists and locals can learn about them and support them," (Bombardi in Domeyko & Shain, 2021b) For example, In Catalunya, "most Slow Food restaurants here serve meat and fish. However, because the farmers use environmentally-friendly practices, the meat you are eating comes with a smaller carbon footprint than meat sourced from a producer that does not adhere to sustainable methods." (Domeyko & Shain, 2021b)

One important takeaway from this news piece is an acknowledgement that Slow Food or otherwise sustainable products are often more expensive compared to other, cheaper alternatives, that are of the same quality of taste. For example, "So, although our food appears to have never been cheaper, when we look beneath the surface, we have been paying more for it than we might possibly imagine." (Domeyko & Shain, 2021b) Clearly, at this point in its development, the slow food concept may not be available to all due to its cost. However, it is still a step toward a more responsible way of consuming food. In general, if sustainable food or other pieces cost less, they would receive higher distribution to society.

Another governmental initiative is to address the demographic challenge of rural Spain. Spain's rural locations currently struggle with a lack of population due to people migrating to cities. Rural locations became isolated, having low incomes and economic activity, and fewer jobs. Thereof, the Spanish government launched a new plan to support rural areas. The goal is to attract international

tourism to rural locations in Spain. For this, digital connectivity too must be improved. Rural locations are a major source of opportunity for tourism. As Sanchez stresses "...each of them represents what we want Spain to be. Our identity, our strength, and our possibility for the future." (Osborn, 2021b)

The plan of supporting Spain's rural locations defined 10 lines of action. These are ecological and digital transition, territorial innovation, sustainable tourism, equal rights, the promotion of entrepreneurship and culture, public services, and social welfare.

Table 4

Actions needed to address rural locations' challenge. Summarised from Osborn, (2021b)

Actions needed to address rural locations' challenge
Support growth and social living
Bring social cohesion
Improve urban and rural connection
Enhance dialogue between urban and rural locations
Attract international tourism to rural locations

Note. Rural locations challenge has emerged over a period of time, so it will be a gradual recovery process, where multiple actions will improve the rural locations' position. Improving urban and rural connection, enhancing dialogue between territories, supporting living, and attracting international tourism will serve this purpose.

Then, as an example, the government made a campaign "**Andalusia, the natural choice**" to attract tourists to less travelled, unexplored rural areas. The campaign targets a traveller, who after the covid pandemic, seeks a safe, pure location to explore. The focus is on nature, inland municipalities, and healthy outdoor activities.

Andalusia is described as having an "extraordinary richness in its interior... more than 30% of the territory is protected", and also provides "a network of medium-sized cities" offering an abundance of culture, heritage, and traditions. The campaign focuses on four areas of tourism. These are "Naturally close," a theme focusing on gastronomy, highlighting local raw materials and local products such as authentic crafts, and traditional trade of the interior Andalusian towns. The "Naturally active" theme highlights the best of active tourism in rural areas, including equestrian activities, and cycling tourism. The 'Naturally Magical' theme focuses on the location's historic heritage, for example, archaeological sites, landscapes recreated by Andalusian writers and artists, charming towns, unique forests, and distinctive rural accommodations. Finally, 'Naturally

Responsible' emphasizes ecotourism, biodiversity, agrotourism, and the landscapes of the Andalusian olive groves.

5.4. Post covid sustainable Barcelona

“Protecting Barcelona’s precious urban plan is one of the main issues the city faces today. So, to assess Barcelona’s present, we must look to how it is maintaining its past.” (Stott Harry, Barcelona Metropolitan, 2019.)

The city is attractive for tourists because of its streets, “millennium-old buildings” of the Barri Gotic, The Old Town, and architectural masterpieces. More, “it is the breath-taking pieces of modernism dotted around the city, the jewels in Barcelona’s architectural crown, that really get the tourists in.” Barcelona City Hall takes care of the city heritage, planning also for the future. It restores Antoni Gaudi’s modernist masterpieces.

“Barcelona’s modernist trend began as a process of beautification to attract tourists to the city and foster Catalan civic pride. However, its buildings are now under threat from the very people they were built to impress. The city’s urban planners and local government are trying to tackle a tourism problem which is plaguing locals, preventing them from going to the most iconic places in their own town. But it is not the tourists themselves who are the issue, it’s their sheer number, and the inadequacy of systems in place to deal with them.” (Stott, 2019b)

The Barcelona city hall has worked on the mass tourism issue since 2015. As Xavier Font, a tourism expert noticed, “the objective should be that Barcelona benefits from tourism, not that tourism benefits from Barcelona.” The PEUAT programme and other government measures aimed at supporting sustainable tourism and city living in Barcelona and Spain in general all contribute to a more responsible and sustainable world. In this respect, preserving historical monuments is of foremost importance. Park Guell is one of Barcelona’s heritage sites struggling with overcrowding. It is popular and is an example of a “microcosm of the problems that huge popularity can cause.”

Anyhow, “there is one big issue that you can’t miss on a trip there today: overcrowding. It’s impossible not to feel like herded sheep, and there’s no doubt it’s putting locals off visiting the public space”. (Stott Harry, Barcelona Metropolitan, 2019)

In 2013, the city Hall took a few actions to combat the overcrowding issues at Park Guell. First, it introduced a fee of 8 euros to lessen the overcrowding of the “monumental zone” for tourists. It also limited the number of tourists in the main area to 800 per hour, hoping that locals will visit too. “So, how do you solve a problem like Park Güell? It’s a tricky conundrum and managing visitor numbers is certainly a step in the right direction. However, policing the behaviour of tourists is another matter altogether.”

Another location, Casa Vicens is in better condition than Park Guell for several reasons. First, it is on the lesser travelled north end of Vila de Gracia. Second, it is less popular. Third, it lacks the commercialism that abounds elsewhere. “Casa Vicens, then, should stand as a testament to how these jewels can be managed properly, and how important it is to maintain the original elements of the city. While they are in a much better position to do so than somewhere like Park Güell (or indeed the building we’ll be getting on to next), the project is a great example of how tourism doesn’t have to come without integrity.” (Stott Harry, Barcelona Metropolitan, 2019b)

Finally, La Sagrada Familia is probably the most popular location when visiting Barcelona. Nevertheless, it too suffered from over-tourism issues. The building is still under construction. It got a building permit only in 2019, which will allow it to be completed by 2026. The permit comes at a price. “Construction on the Sagrada Familia is set to be completed by 2026”. (Stott, 2019b)

The governance of sustainable tourism in Barcelona and Spain, in general, has a certain direction where it goes and must do so to improve and prosper. As has been noted in one of the articles, “the Spanish model is clearly inefficient. It requires an enormous volume of demand, which in itself has a set of costs that are externalized socially and environmentally.” (Pulido, Juan , Jaén University) In this respect, one must remember that because a leading social representation of tourism is fixed on a business approach, this has serious tensions with sustainability issues. (Sera, Font & Ivanova, 2017) Similarly, “The problem is that we keep measuring success in terms of visitor numbers” (Pulido, Juan, Jaén University) In summary, Barcelona’s rich historic heritage requires the efforts and efforts put into maintaining it now and also for future travellers and residents. Sustainable tourism exists along this process and must be accounted for, the process of social change towards more sustainable tourism will be open and long-term, requiring actions both on individual and governmental levels.

The issue of protests about mass tourism is viewed as a problem by some people. In June 2017, a survey by Barcelona City Hall found that 19% of the respondents think that tourism is the Catalan capital’s biggest problem. Also, since the travellers tend to move to certain locations mostly in Spain, with the Balearic Islands having the biggest share, then the Canary Islands, Barcelona, and Catalonia, it will take time and prolong efforts to direct the wave of tourists to less travelled destinations, for example, Andalusia.

The findings confirm that the global tourism industry was forever affected by the global virus situation and needed to produce new solutions as well as it needs time to recover from this event and also stand the impacts of today’s war conflict. In this respect, using a model of CSV, creating shared value, would allow focusing on the needs of communities and people, by addressing their needs and challenges. Giving more voice to communities will make them accountable for their role in sustaining their city’s sustainable growth.

6. CONCLUSION

A brief, but skyrocketing growth of tourism in Barcelona can be traced back to the Olympic games in 1992 when the city's architecture attracted so much attention from all around the world. This again emphasizes that the city's historic heritage is its advantage which must be protected if it is to be enjoyed by future generations. As noted by Hall, C. M. (2013), for the tourism industry to reduce its pressure on natural resources, it must be a part of the circular economy. This is supported by data found, wherein in one instance there was an example of a circular business model, and in another example, there was a bioplastic challenge, where it requires consideration as to whether bioplastic, paper production or traditional plastic is a needed justifiable option for a particular situation.

Overall, the current significant issues when it comes to sustainable tourism in Barcelona and Spain in general, deals with governmental initiatives, sustainable solutions, supporting rural areas, focus on the being a more conscious traveller, and initiatives to support post-Covid sustainable Barcelona to support the sustainable tourism and city living in the area. Overall, the articles collected show a positive and future oriented mindset on the issues of sustainability and tourism. It is clear that Barcelona government is well aware of the overtourism issue present in the city as well as how tourism has potential for more rural areas of Spain overall. Tourism industry represents both an advantage and a topic of concern and careful consideration when it comes to Spain. However, it is also the traveller, who must become more conscious and purposeful when it comes to visiting other countries. One must be aware of how one's actions including choice of a destination, appropriate or less so behaviour, spending habits, can affect the local society and the environment. Specifically, one should respect the heritage sites of a visiting location.

The local community was present in local businesses working with national and original goods to support the local economy. For example, the Slow food international movement was adopted in Barcelona to be 30 restaurants practicing the concept. In Catalunya, small local fishers and farmers are a big part of the agricultural community, their products feature in traditional cuisine. Another initiative, Slow Food Barcelona does educational events for clients as farm visit and school gardens. Finally, many goods such as souvenirs, furniture, clothes, etc produced locally from sustainable materials.

Then, coming back to the research instrument, which was created with the aim to get understanding about how to "transform post-pandemic tourism in a way that satisfies both residents and visitors." Nugent, C. (2021) The topics of these study to investigate were 1. Sustainability initiatives, 2. Community participation, and sustainable transitions, and 3. Overtourism and tourismphobia. First, almost all newspaper articles collected described sustainability initiatives implemented or planned to be implemented in one way or another. It was the running theme through

the articles and there were plenty of examples of actions taken and available. For example, consuming sustainable fashion and other locally produced goods, spending on buying locally or nationally created goods, adhering to responsible production from certified materials and ensuring good labour conditions.

Then, the sustainable transitions theme too, was stressed in the articles as an opportunity for good transformation to a more sustainable travel and city Barcelona, which must be worked by both Barcelona government, local businesses, and travellers. Sustainable transitions, as an opportunity for conscious development, was highlighted by the launch of “Slow Travel Spain” campaign in 2022, which promotes sustainable forms of travel in Spain, concentrating on low-impact activities, journeys fitting slow travel theme, forming connection with locals, being gracious of the destination and its traditions, supporting it by spending on local purchases. Then, promoting geographical diversification of tourism and rural Spanish locations is another example. A part of the governmental initiative was to help struggling rural locations in Spain by attracting international tourism, increasing digital connectivity between rural and city locations, improve the attractiveness of the regions. Finally, the growth of the internationally popular Slow Food movement in Barcelona strengthens the traditional cuisine, connection to the local economy, fair criteria, and biodiversity.

Mass tourism concerns and tourismphobia were evident in some instances, which seem to be rather manageable at this time. Hopefully, governmental, businesses, and travellers’ joint efforts will stabilize the situation in the future. Still, it seems the hat community could still participate more and take a more active role in supporting the city on its journey to well-managed tourism and living for all. In the chosen articles, the issue of tourismphobia was almost non-existent on its own. Rather, it was related to mass tourism concerns, which were more evident. However, both themes were not constantly mentioned, yet mass tourism concern was still taken seriously by the speeches in articles.

One factor, affecting the content of the news chosen was that they were written in English, for English-speaking individuals. Moreover, the articles’ authors were all of different origins, not necessarily Spanish born. Therefore, it may be so, that the later would have other views or place accent on different things. Nevertheless, the views collected align with the research articles and opinions there. In summary, the Barcelona’s attractiveness as a tourism destination began already in the medieval era and survived present days. Currently, Barcelona is the only one Mediterranean city that maintained a place on the European market since the 1500s and will, hopefully, remain in a decent shape with the joint efforts of various societal groups, including the government, stakeholders, local communities, and travellers alike.

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