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**The connection between increased tourism and locals' quality of life in  
Barcelona**

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<p>The tourism growth has been alarming in Barcelona since the Olympics (1992). Since then, the tourism impacts have been positive and negative: the city has become untidy with increased crime levels, but tourism has also brought huge economical revenues and multiculturalism there. The aim was to find out sustainable development solutions to preserve and create city where tourists and residents can live in harmony. Therefore, this thesis has examined the connection between locals' quality of life and tourism: economically, environmentally, culturally, and socially in the context of sustainability.</p> <p>This research was approached by using an interview between March and September 2020 to understand the dynamics between the residents' attitudes, behavioural changes, and concerns towards tourism. All the ten interviewees were aged between 19 and 35, living in the centrum, and had already experience from the tourism industry. Due to the covid-19 lockdown, video interview was chosen as the safest option to carry out this research.</p> <p>Reviewing the results, increased number of international workers and illegal immigrants has led to locals' high unemployment levels and lost of authenticity within the city. Also, high cost of living, inefficient authorities, and city council's inhumane business strategy are forcing local people to move away. Therefore, the illegal residents should be evicted, the overall security planning must be improved, and the locals need to be primary priorities in the city development planning to improve their quality of life. The tourism products and services need to be planned to attract different type of tourism sectors, not only party tourism, to decrease congestion, dirtiness, and noise pollution in the Ciutat Vella region.</p>	
<b>Keywords:</b> Barcelona, quality of living, responsible tourism, sustainable tourism, overtourism and tourism impacts	

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# 1 The introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world (UNWTO 2020). In 1992, the Olympic Games were organized in Barcelona. Ever since then, there have been an increment in populations in that region and the tourism carrying capacity is alarming (Olympic 2017). Since then, Barcelona has become one of the top tourism destinations all year round and tourism keeps growing rapidly there. 5,5 million people are living in Barcelona and six times more, 32 million tourists visit yearly. There are 1.7 million residents living within the administrative limits and the rest live in the suburbs: Mataro, Badalona, Terrasa, Sabadell, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Santa coloma de Gramanet, Cornellà de Llobregat (World population review 2020). I lived there in 2019 for six months. Being stuck in traffic, living in a noisy environment and the fear of getting robbed every day made me realize that a change was needed.

Barcelona has hit the global headlines due to residents' demonstrations and actions against tourism (Harold Goodwin 2016). Overtourism has transformed the environment, mobility, social atmosphere and the number of economic activities in Barcelona, as well as the daily life of many neighbourhoods (Barcelona tourism for 2020).

This thesis is a qualitative interview research project which examines the negative and positive consequences of overtourism growth in Barcelona. The research question "How tourism impacts to residents' quality of living In Barcelona?" is answered through Barcelona residents' interviews following sustainable and responsible travelling instructions. This proposition of sustainable tourism behaviour in Barcelona is done by combining the theoretical framework with the interview from locals' aspects. The priority is to improve the residents' quality of life via increased knowledge about the growing phenomenon of overtourism, travelling and tourism.

The interview is carried out during May 2020. Barcelona has been under the covid-19 lockdown since March 13, 2020 (U.S. Embassy and consulate in Spain and Andorra 2020) which is considered in the research. Participants are asked to answer the questions how they felt before the lockdown and how the new measurements and rules have affected their quality of life. Ten residents living in Barcelona have taken part in the interviews. The interviewees shared thoughts about their quality of life and behavioural changes as a result of overtourism in Barcelona. The participants' age range is 19-35 and each one has lived in Barcelona for a minimum of two years for the research

problems to be perceptible and quantifiable. The interviewees need to be capable to describe their living condition changes. Each interviewee has studied tourism or has someone close to them working or studying in the tourism industry. This is a purposeful limitation due to fact: interviewees who have knowledge of the research subject will potentially have creative improvement ideas as well (Substance abuse and mental health administration 1997). However, the research is limited on its scale. Due to the narrow number of interview participants, the research can not fully represent the tourism situation in Barcelona.

This research is specifically focused on the residents' opinions, who are living in the busiest district in Barcelona called Ciutat Vella. This district contains areas of El Raval, El Gòtic, La Barceloneta, Sant Pere and Santa Caterina i la Ribera (Barcelona turisme 2020). Barcelona residents were asked in 2018 at the hands of Barcelona City Council, if there is too much tourism accommodation in their districts (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018). As a result, Ciutat Vella received the highest percentage of affirmative responses: 64,7% Ciutat Vella residents answered yes (figure 1).

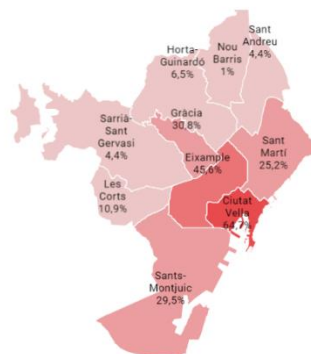


Figure 1. Survey on Perception of Tourism in Barcelona (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018)

The goal of this thesis is to examine residents' behavioural changes as a result of massive tourism flows in Barcelona within two years or more and find the equality between the right to travel and residents' rights.

The more people are aware of the impacts of tourism, the more effectively the negative ones can be reduced, and the locals' quality of life improved. The theoretical framework provides a full understanding of overtourism linked to sustainable and responsible tourism. Also, it recommends practical examples which help reduce the negative

impacts of overtourism in Barcelona. Long-term behavioural changes made now give the opportunity for future generations visit Barcelona as well.

### **1.1 Aim and research problems**

The aim of this thesis is: how residents' behaviour has changed in Barcelona as a result of the growing phenomenon of overtourism? What kind of changes have they been forced to do? It will also be answered what have been the main factors driving away local people from Barcelona and vice versa examined how this could be stopped.

The interview examines solutions towards responsible and sustainable tourism model: how to maintain the good quality of living and authenticity in Barcelona at the same time prioritizing the locals' needs and desires. It is discussing about the improvement suggestions according locals' quality of living improvement ideas in Barcelona and the strategies to minimize the need of their behavioural changes.

After reviewing news, articles and literature there's a need for research to improve the quality of locals' life in Barcelona at the same time keeping it as a dream holiday destination (Barcelona tourism for 2020): how to improve residents' quality of living in the middle of millions of visitors without changing their behaviour habits. Furthermore, the residents' physical and social well-being will allow their everyday activities (Gotay and Moore 1992).

Research questions are the following:

1. How is increasing tourism affecting the environment, economics and socio-culture in Barcelona?
2. What kind of consequences have tourism for residents in Barcelona?
3. How have residents' behaviour changed in Barcelona because of the growing phenomenon of tourism?
4. How residents' quality of life can be improved in Barcelona?

### **1.2 Limitations**

This research describes challenges of overtourism from only locals' perspective in Barcelona. The interviewees are aged between 19-35 and are living in the busiest district in Barcelona called Ciutat Vella and Placa de Catalunya. The age distribution, target group and research region are purposefully limited following because of the

participants' living habits and investigational benefits: they have some sort of experience from the hospitality and tourism industry beforehand.

In this research, the interview model is following qualitative research guidelines excluding quantitative research model. Due to quantitative interview model does not give the opportunity for the interviewer to ask for clarification or review answers more detailed with the participants (Md Shidur Rahman 2016). For example, additional questions are not acceptable. Secondly, the quantitative interview model does not enable access to specific feedback. Therefore, some answers might be misleading because of lack of participants' freedom when answering the questions (Balnaves and Caputi 2001).

This thesis takes in account social-cultural, economic, and environmental perspectives of tourism impacts. Furthermore, the discussion part provides solutions to negative environmental and socio-cultural tourism consequences. The positive consequences found in the research will help to understand the outline of what kind of actions are potential for the local development.

### **1.3 Definitions of important terms**

The subject of this research, tourism, is related to sustainability and responsible travelling. Therefore, the main used terms are tourism, tourism carrying capacity, sustainable and responsible tourism, quality of living and overtourism. The used terms in this thesis have been listed and defined below to facilitate one's reading experience.

Tourism is the principal term in this research. According to Statistics (2019), tourism is travelling for pleasure or business outside of home. Tourism is found in some form in every country of the world and consists wide range of different activities: from regular family or school tourism getaways to scientific exploring and religious pilgrimages (Lück and Robinson 2013, 24-31)

The tourism carrying capacity describes the limits to tourism development or tourism usage of a resource. Usually when the tourism carrying capacity has been exceeded it affects straight to the expulsion of residents. The expulsion of residents' part is related to falling availability of housing when local apartments are turned into tourist accommodations (The Ostelea school of tourism and hospitality 2017). Contemporary tourism typically exists in developed countries boosting their economic and environmental development (Cooper and Hall 2007, p. 111-117).



Responsible and sustainable tourism are related to each other. Responsible tourism is focused on making sustainable tourism actions. Actions, which create economic benefits for locals for example (Responsible tourism partnership 2020). Sustainability is the overall goal, which can only be achieved by people and business units such as operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists taking responsibility (Sustainable tourism 2020). Sustainable tourism should respect the social authenticity, ensure long-term economic operations and make optimal use of environmental resources (UNWTO 2019). The responsible tourism minimises negative tourism consequences and protects nature and culture heritage. The goal of responsible tourism is to make better places for people to live in and visit (Harold Goodwin 2016).

Mass tourism and overtourism are related to the growing evolution of unsustainable mass tourism practices (The Ostelea school of tourism and hospitality 2017). Mass tourism consists (figure 2) travellers for leisure, education, business or travellers visiting their friends and relatives (Harrison and Sharpley 2017, 1-3). Overtourism becomes apparent when hosts, guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors. Also, the quality of life in the certain area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably (Responsible travel partnership 2019).

Quality of living (QOL) defines the individuals' perception of their positions in life in the context of culture, value systems, expectations and concerns in which they live. In addition, the QOL examines the satisfaction of an individual's goals and needs through the actualization of their lifestyle or abilities (Emerson 1985). The quality of life definition takes in account people's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs and environment as well (World Health Organization 2020). Reviewing literature, the quality of life defines the good and satisfactory characters of life (Haes and Knippenberg 1988).

This research considers also tourism management, DMO, the expulsion of residents, contemporary tourism and tourism carrying capacity terms. Tourism management includes all the factors related to the tourism and hospitality industries (Andrades, Dimanche, Vapnyarskaya and Kharitonova 2015). Instead each destination has its own DMO, destination management organization, which is focused in the long-term travel and tourism strategy development (UNWTO 2020). Tourism carrying capacity defines the maximum number of people that may visit destination at the same time, without causing negative physical, economic, socio-cultural impacts (World Trade Organization 2020).

## 2 Sustainable tourism

According to Sustainable tourism (2020) sustainability is the overall goal, which can only be achieved by people and business units taking responsibility for making sustainable tourism actions. These responsible tourism actions provided by operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists can benefit the local people economically, create connections between residents and visitors, minimize negative tourism consequences and protect cultural heritage (Responsible tourism partnership 2020).

The aim of sustainable tourism is the focus on what people, businesses and governments can do to maximise the positive economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. It is about identifying the local issues and suggesting actions towards sustainable tourism development (Harold Goodwin 2016). According to UNWTO, sustainable tourism should respect the social authenticity, ensure long-term economic operations and make optimal use of environmental resources (UNWTO 2019).

Responsible tourism is about people taking responsibility for making sustainable tourism actions. In addition, it is about making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit (Harold Goodwin 2016). The definition of responsible tourism was first defined in Cape Town in 2002 alongside the world summit on sustainable development (Responsible tourism partnership 2020). The definition of responsible tourism has been adopted by the World Travel Market in 2007 for World Responsible Tourism Day (Harold Goodwin 2016).

Sitra, which is building well-being and sustainable future has researched that destination's competitiveness must be linked to the criteria of sustainability and responsibility (Sitra 2020). However, responsible and sustainable tourism do have a difference.

The Responsible tourism partnership (2020) gives practical examples of responsible tourism behaviour. Actions which create economic benefits for local people and involve their aspects in decision making are characteristics for responsible tourism. Also, responsible tourism shows respect between tourists and hosts: more meaningful connections between tourists and locals are made which helps the understanding of local culture, social and environmental issues within the country. The most importantly, responsible tourism minimises negative tourism consequences and protects nature and culture heritage (Responsible tourism partnership 2020).

According to destination management research articles and researches it's examined that tourism destination management controls many impacts of tourism to ensure better sustainability in the destination. The economic, social and environmental aspects are under the management control. The different planning tools, policies and concepts all together allow the workable management of tourism related activities (Andrades, Dimanche, Vapnyarskaya and Kharitonova 2015).

In addition, sustainable tourism management invests wisely visitor incomes into the city development (World Trade organization 2020): into different nature conservations and building programs. For example, different water and recycle projects are sustainable tourism management actions within the destination. The aim of these projects is to create awareness for the waste reduction and reuse (Biosphere tourism 2015).

The goal of sustainable tourism management is to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and residents, including culture and identity as well. On the other hand, the goal is to maximize the generation of income, health, education, employment and protection of ecosystems. Therefore, there are ecofriendly villas in the Maldives, eco-luxury resorts in Brazil, sustainable ecolodges in Jordan and bio hotels in Columbia (Biosphere tourism 2015). The ideal situation would be no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being statistics, gender equality, economic growth and innovative infrastructure in the destination. As a result, the destination will welcome future visitors also (WTO 2020).

Reviewing literature (Beech and Chadwick 2005) sustainable management is managed economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way. The sustainable tourism management plays an important role in the destination's tourism development and oversees its biodiversity. As an example, Naval DC and Soel Yachts have developed a range of carbon neutral solar electric vessels to decrease CO2 footprints and to offer more sustainable option to nowadays fossil fuel powered boats (Biosphere tourism 2015).

## **2.1 Overtourism**

According to the United World Tourism Organization, overtourism is the result of the growing phenomenon and trend of tourism, development of technology and imbalanced distribution. Tourism is good for the economy but overtourism causes problems.

Overtourism occurs when too many tourists visit a destination: there are more people in

one place than host destination facilities. This reflects challenges of managing tourism flows and the impacts of tourism on cities and its residents (UNWTO 2018).

Reviewing literature and Butler (2019), the growth of overtourism is quickly becoming a worldwide problem. The mass tourism causes negative consequences such as: expulsion of residents, high rental prices and overall cost of living, prioritised touristic substitution, mobility and accessibility problems of mass-tourism, noise, pollution, increased amount of waste, loss of public spaces and also over-specialization (Butler and Dodds 2019,125-128).

UNWTO has examined that year by year the growing number of tourists increase the use of natural resources, causes socio-cultural impacts and exerts pressure on infrastructure, mobility and other facilities (UNWTO 2018). Destinations, such as Barcelona, are in a risk to lose what made them special in the first place, the authenticity (Butler and Dodds 2019, 129).

## **2.2 Consequences of tourism**

Tourism impacts are in the first level divided into positive and negative consequences. These impacts are later divided into three other dimensions which are environmental, economic, and social ones. The economic impacts of these three dimensions were studied first in the 1960s. During the 1970s more attention was given to socio-cultural and environmental impacts (Gursoy and Nunkoo 2019, 18-20).

### **2.2.1 Environmental impacts of tourism**

According to European commission (2013) environmental impacts specify the relationships between environmental pressures resulting from changes in production and consumption activities. Impacts of human activities can be both harmful and favourable for the natural environment. Four categories of environmental pressures are considered the most important: materials, water, land and carbon (European commission 2013). As a term, negative consequences are unwanted impacts caused by overtourism and positive ones are vice versa beneficial for the country itself (The world counts 2020).

Problems with solid waste removal, noise, overuse of resources and pollution are common examples of negative environmental consequences of tourism (MDPI 2019). N. Cianca and V. Sorocovschi (2017) add that uncontrolled tourist traffic damages the soil,

vegetation, the disturb the fauna and flora. On the other hand, the positive environmental impacts are improved nature protection and improved infrastructure, where visitors are not allowed to get too close to protected landmarks. Alejandro Filloy (2018) argues, how destination's infrastructure is improved as a positive environmental impact: new facilities, such as roads are built (BBC 2017) and washrooms and garbage disposals are constructed.

### **2.2.2 Social and cultural impacts of tourism**

The social impacts are related to the influence that tourism has on the traditional livelihood of inhabitants (N. Cianca and V. Sorocovschi 2017): 'human impacts' of the tourism industry which are contributing change in value systems, individual behaviour, family relationships, lifestyles, traditions and community structures (Gursoy and Nunkoo 2019, 29-32). OECD (2009) examines that cultural tourism impacts describes the relationship between culture and tourism. It is defined that tourism has an influence on the locals' culture, social habits, customs, values, beliefs, and lifestyles at a tourist destination (Sustainability 2019).

Alejandro Filloy (2018) explains that the increase of tourism products and difficulties for the local community are negative social impacts of tourism. In addition, N. Cianca and V. Sorocovschi (2017) argue that destruction of traditional lifestyles, the migration of old people and the change of local apartments into tourist resorts and rooms are negative social impacts of tourism. On the other hand, N. Cianca and V. Sorocovschi (2017) explain that the maintain of local traditions to attract tourists, creation of new seasonal or permanent jobs, development of social progresses, increasement of cleanliness and public hygiene are positive social impacts of tourism.

Beside social impacts, the tourism cultural impacts are defined by the relationship between tourists and local population, which is not always beneficial for the locals. Greg Richards examines (2010) that the change of mind-sets is an example of negative cultural tourism impact. For example, when customs and traditions are kept up only for tourist. Then positive cultural impacts are the development and sustaining cultural and religious traditions, the increase of local people interest in maintaining and preserving natural and cultural tourist objectives.

### **2.2.3 Economic impacts of tourism**

The economic impacts of tourism are the most valued ones for the community (Gursoy and Nunkoo, 2019, 24) because of those reach virtually everyone in the specific region in one way or another. The strong economic performance in the travel and tourism industry generates new employment, businesses, and investment opportunities in the destination: from accommodation and transportation to food and beverage, retail, culture, and sports.

According to Daniel Stynes (1997) tourism activities overall involve economic costs, government costs for infrastructure to better serve tourists, as well as congestion and related costs borne by individuals in the community. The revenues can be used to improve destination's roads, airports, overall protection, parks, and other facilities.

The economic stability of the destination brings people together and supports communities through increased wealth within the destination (World travel and tourism council 2019). Tourism enables socio-economic and cultural interactions within the community through the creation of new jobs. Vice versa it can also be argued that jobs created by tourism can be considered bad because of the seasonality, poorly paid salaries and underemployment of them (Charles Hall 2006).

### **3 Barcelona as a mass tourism destination**

Barcelona is the fourth most visited European city with over 19 million overnight stays and 8 million day visitors yearly (Figure 6) by international tourists (Barcelona tourist activity report 2017). The establishment of the accommodation system can nowadays accommodate millions of tourists and do lasting changes to the Catalan urban landscape and its tourism model.

The Barcelona Turisme was found in 1992 for the Olympic Games. Since then, Barcelona city council has been following strategy where the main goal is to make Barcelona a festival and shopping city. It is focused in developing the attractiveness of Barcelona in different sectors: leisure, business, meetings, congress, conventions, trips, exhibitions, business, and new opportunities. Since the Barcelona Turisme was found, the growth of Barcelona tourism sector has been 54% during 2005-2013. Most of the visitors come from the US, UK, France, Italy, Germany, or Netherlands (Catalan 2019).

These days, the existing congestion is generating too much tourist pressure on heritage and artificial spaces. Especially in the old city center and its main road called La Rambla.

#### **3.1 The development of mass tourism in Barcelona**

Barcelona is the first destination of Mediterranean cruise ships, it has the seventh largest airport in Europe and has experienced extremely rapid growth since the 1992 Olympics (Stay grounded 2020). In 2019 around 32 million tourists visited Barcelona which is 20 times more when compared to the city's population of 1.6 million residents (Euronews 2019).

Nowadays Barcelona is known for its diverse range in accommodation and markets. According to statistics the rise of booking numbers has been from 3,7 million bookings in 1990 to over 31 million bookings in 2016 (Stay grounded 2020). The growth of the number of hotels in Barcelona (Figure 2) has grown from 118 hotels to 427 hotels during 1990-2018 (Statista 2019).

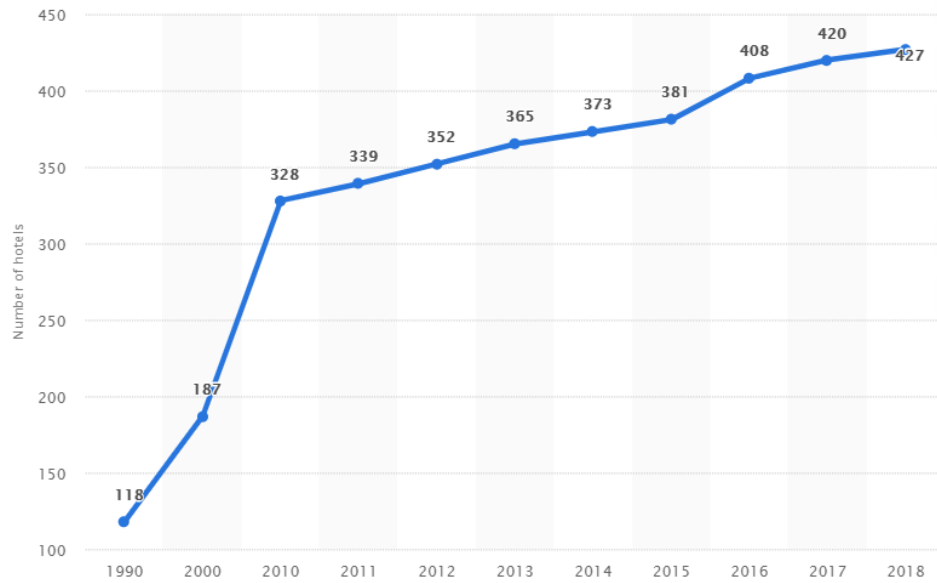


Figure 2: The growth of the numbers of hotels in Barcelona 1990-2018 (Statista 2019)

In August 2017, Airbnb listed a total of 17,369 tourist rooms and apartments (Figure 3) available for rent (Inside Airbnb 2017). The red spots on the map are describing the tourist rooms and apartments in Barcelona. As figure 3 shows the tourism apartments are located all around Barcelona.

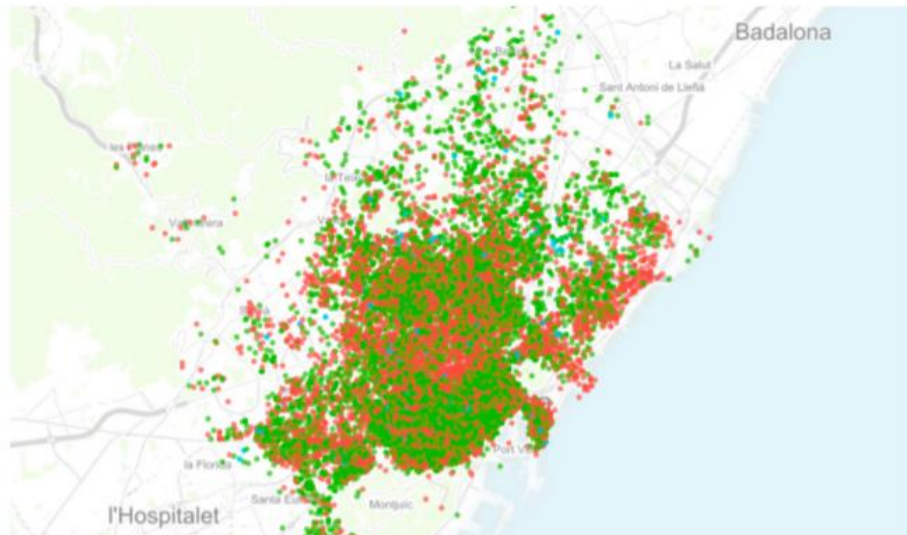


Figure 3: The number of tourist apartments and rooms available for rent in Barcelona 2017 (Inside Airbnb 2017).



According to Tim Marshall's (2004) research, Barcelona is one of the most touristic cities in Europe and its coastal location gives certain advantages: easy transportation of goods, leisure opportunities, wonderful climate, architecture and history. The growing tourism industry in Barcelona leads to very serious environmental and negative socio-cultural consequences. The main street called La Rambla was created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then it has been busy with hustlers, souvenir shops, promoters to parties and coffee shops, prostitution and thieves all year round. Every year more than 100 million people walk along La Rambla (Casellas 2009).

### **3.2 Tourism management in Barcelona**

Reviewing researches Barcelona is an ideal tourist city with its brand, culture and lifestyle (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2014). The city council needs to learn how to manage huge tourism flows better. Barcelona is a leading example of how tourism can be used to make Barcelona a better place to live in, and a better place to visit (Harold Goodwin 2016).

Tourism has become a daily part of Barcelona around the year during the new millennium. According to Ajuntament de Barcelona Direcció de Turisme (2017) there has been put together a collective project at the hands of over 200 representatives from local-resident associations, companies, trade unions, cultural and social organisations. The goal is to present ways to manage tourist city instead of managing tourism in the city from mobility, information distribution and economic aspects. The collective project examines that Barcelona is managed with innovation towards more sustainable tourism (Barcelona tourism for 2020). The Ajuntament de Barcelona and Barcelona Activa oversee the tourism management in Barcelona. On the other hand, Turisme de Barcelona maintains Barcelona marketing.

Harold Goodwin (2016) finds the biggest challenge in Barcelona, the city council's little influence over the airport and the port: both the airport and port are privately controlled. Barcelona city council doesn't control the number of arrivals and the new terminal creates new management challenges as well. Butler and Dodds (2017, 15-16) examine that Barcelona can't manage the growth of hotel accommodation there or along the coast. Likewise, the highways and roads are not municipally controlled and therefore Barcelona can't limit the amount of people driving into the city either

At the hands of Ajuntament de Barcelona (2020), the Barcelona management can be summarised with 7 focus points: sustainability, inclusive management, variable destination geometries, tourism as a common issue, wide tourism spectrum, collaboration between tourism and the city. As an example, Barcelona city council has set some entrance fees for the most popular attractions in Barcelona such as la Sagrada Familia and Park Güell. The incomes are invested into cover maintenance costs (Elgar 2004, 90-91) and other upcoming projects in Barcelona. Only, the Park Güell brings nearly 15 million euros a year for the city of Barcelona (Ballester 2018, 24-27).

Reviewing researches, Barcelona is an ideal tourist city with its brand, culture and lifestyle (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2014). The city council needs to learn how to manage huge tourism flows better. Barcelona is a leading example of how tourism can be used to make Barcelona a better place to live in, and a better place to visit (Harold Goodwin 2016).

Barcelona city council management plan needs to be based on attracting respectful tourists towards the society and the local culture. Therefore, the creation of new interests and relocation of museums and other cultural interests would decrease the congestion of the most popular areas in Barcelona. As a result, the tourism flows could be moved outside of the busiest districts in Barcelona. The Barcelona resident's quality of life can be improved with better interaction between locals and visitors (1st Barcelona Global Summit 2018). To get here, Barcelona management should create new areas of interest, reinforce the relationship between tourism and the city itself, change the image of the city and improve visitors experience.

Mr Weithorn, the former Commissioner of Miami Beach (1st Barcelona Global Summit 2018) examines how Barcelona city image could be changed from a party city into a more cultural one. As a result, there would be a bigger variety of main customer segments from nature enthusiasts to city breakers. Mrs Diaz, the President of Advanced Leisure Services in Barcelona (1st Barcelona Global Summit 2018) points out that with better control and bigger sanctions in safety policies the visitor experience can be improved.

The Barcelona management needs to consider more residents's opinions, genuine and authentic tourism experiences. Therefore, the promotion of stereotypes and narrow tourism products needs to be limited. Instead new areas of interest should be created, and tourism spread out more evenly Barcelona (1st Barcelona Global Summit 2018).

### **3.3 Environmental impacts of tourism in Barcelona**

According to literature overtourism leads to both negative and positive environmental impacts in Barcelona. It is important to highlight how overdevelopment may lead to a loss of natural quality in the destination, which threatens the sustainability of tourism (Holden 2016, 22-25).

Barcelona is one of Europe's most crowded cities, with over 15,800 inhabitants per square kilometre (World population review 2020). The researchers examine that this leads to serious overcrowding, destination quality, high generation of waste, noise, pollution and cohabitation problems (Cheer, Milano and Novelli 2018). As a result of huge tourism flows around the year, there is already loss of public spaces, natural and cultural identity in Barcelona (Harold Goodwin 2016).

According to statistics, in June 2019, Barcelona was named the number one most polluted port in Europe: it was estimated that 66% of people staying in Barcelona during the summer were affected by the excess ozone levels (Forbes 2019). Because of huge mass events, such as music festivals and conferences, the collapse of mobility and accessibility and waste generation has increased. Mostly because of tourism activities and nightlife over half of Barcelona's residents are subjected to noise levels over 75 decibels between 8am and 10pm (Guàrdia Urbana de Barcelona 2019). Normal conversation is around 60 decibels (Health Link BC 2018).

Butler and Dodds (2013) examine in their literature that Barcelona is about to lose its cultural heritage and identity as a result of loss of public spaces, over-specialization in tourism, concentration of tourism services and deterioration of residents' living conditions. These negative consequences have affected especially most popular districts in Barcelona: Placa Catalunya, Las Ramblas, La Barceloneta and Montjuic.

The scientific articles are talking about the positive impacts of tourism in Barcelona as well. Due to its overtourism management plan, Barcelona is a biosphere certificated destination nowadays (Turisme sostenible 2020). The city received the best tourism management award in the context of sustainability of the 'World Responsible Tourism Awards', granted at the European touristic congress World Travel Market in 2018 (Biosphere tourism 2019). Info Barcelona (2018) has researched that tourism activities and transportation have been developed in a more sustainable way due to tourism. In

addition, Barcelona offers green transportation and sightseeing methods for both residents and visitors: cycling, electric vehicles and public transportation.

The official site of the Olympic (2012) examines how the Olympic Games in 1992 changed the image of the city and led to its development as a tourist destination. The city council and society made an investment in infrastructure improvement concerning the coastal areas and port, building plans of new roads and constructing sports and cultural facilities. In addition, the study of Harold Goodwin (2016) researches that new airline roads found their way to Barcelona and restoration of some old buildings was done during the Olympics. The cathedral Sagrada Familia as an example. As a result of overcrowding there has also been creation and promotion of new focal points and landmarks (Harold Goodwin 2016).

### 3.4 Social impacts of tourism in Barcelona

According to statistics, the evolution of the accommodation business in Barcelona has grown from 3,7 million bookings in 1990 to more than 31 million bookings in 2016 (Stay grounded 2020). Figure 4 visualizes the growth of the number of tourist beds (concerning hotels, tourist apartments, hostels, guest houses, residential tourism properties, campsites and rural tourist accommodation) between 1990 and 2016 in Barcelona. The increase has been from (Figure 4) 18,569 to 67,640 beds (Barcelona turisme 2017). Specifically, Cole and Morgan (2010) have researched that the growth of budget tourism leads to serious impacts and conflicts for the local society: tourism brings little economic benefit compared to big social harms. Locals feel they're about to lose their identity because of the mass tourism flows and consequently unrespectful tourism behaviours.

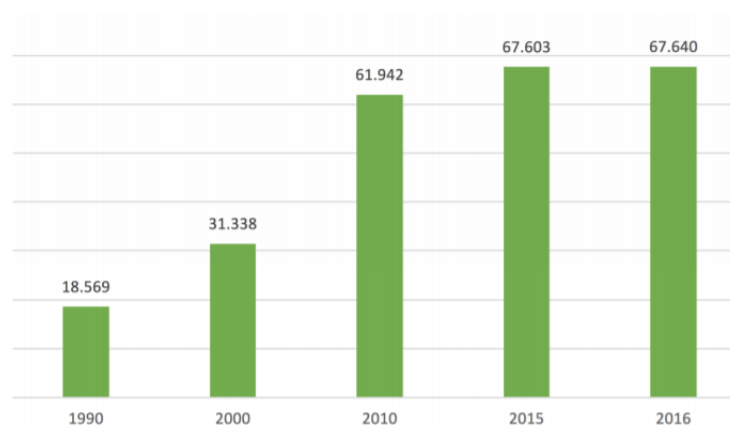


Figure 4: Evolution of the number of tourist beds in the city of Barcelona, 1990-2016 (Barcelona turisme 2017)

Reviewing articles, the balance between tourists and locals has become absurd. During the new millennium locals compare their living conditions in apartment buildings like living in Youth Hostels (Vice 2015). This is due to the rise of fake illegal tourism accommodation listings in Barcelona. As an example, in 2018, the Barcelona city council shut down over 2000 apartments which were operating without legal licences (The guardian 2018).

What comes to Harold Goodwin research (2016) the most remarkable negative socio-cultural impact of overtourism is the deterioration of the residents' living conditions and health in Barcelona. Nowadays the busy districts, La Ciutat Vella and Placa de Catalunya, are filled with unpleasant and unattractive activities, which make residents feel unsafe: streets are used as public toilets, for prostitution, drug dealing spots at the hands of drunken tourists (Harold Goodwin 2016). In addition, Metropolitan Barcelona magazine examines that due to bad living conditions, high rental prices and old local apartments which are turned into tourist accommodations are affecting the expulsion of residents (Metropolitan Barcelona 2009).

The following researchers examine the inequality between Barcelona wages and economic growth within the city. The wages have not increased on the same level than the economic improvement in Barcelona (Harold Goodwin 2016): prices are higher than salaries. Figure 7 visualizes the minimal average monthly wage increase in Barcelona between 2017-2020. Based on the Trade Economic statistic the salaries in Barcelona have only increased by 2.7 percent on average since 2017 (Figure 8). Whereas rent prices have shot up by 50 percent (Barcelona data sheet 2018). As a result, 42% of tenants in Barcelona spent 40% of their wage on rent (The local 2019).

On a bigger scale, the growth concerning the price of housing per square metre since 2014 has led to population displacement in Barcelona. Harold Goodwin (2016) examines that a lot of the new jobs are generated in the Barcelona tourism sector, which mostly employ overqualified people. Reviewing Barcelona data sheet (2018) there are more than 518,000 overqualified people for the jobs they do in Catalonia, while almost 29,000 jobless people have given up looking for work.

Buffering and Gaulfield (2012) literature emphasise the positive socio-cultural tourism impacts to Barcelona. In the 1920s, the district of El Raval was inhabited by brothels,

prostitutes, transvestites, lower-class society, criminals, and drug dealers. In addition, the news and articles have nicknamed El Raval as "*El Chino or Old Barrio Chino*" because of the 20's century similarities to Chinatown located in Los Angeles (Barcelona 2016). Harold Goodwin (2016) states that two years before the Olympic games (1992) El Raval was cleaned of prostitution and drug dealing shops. Nowadays the streets of El Raval are filled with multiculturalism. However, crime, theft and prostitution are still existing but more hidden compared to the old times (Buffering and Gaulfield 2012, 173-175).

The research papers investigate how tourism flows have brought cultural exchange and multiculturalism to Barcelona. From Harold Goodwin's (2016) aspect millions of visitors yearly attract new temporary citizens to settle down in Barcelona to do business, experience cultures, learn new languages, enjoy ethnic facilities and people. Therefore, the streets of Barcelona offer Catalan souvenirs, language and cuisine as a result of tourism growth. On the other hand, from Catalan journalist Roig's point of view tourism services uphold and support Catalonian heritage as well despite the business owner's personal background (Academia 2011).

### **3.5 Residents' behaviour in Barcelona**

According to scientific researches the growth of tourist traffic, overcrowding issues, over advertising, degradation of natural and cultural resources has affected residents' behaviour significantly in Barcelona between the years 1990-2020 (Hughes 2018). The atmosphere of La Barceloneta fisherman district has changed to touristic district full of party tourism and so-called drunken tourists. Since the 1992 Olympic Games Barcelona has been compared to tourism success (Gravari-Barbas 2000, 223-247).

Hughes (2018) examines how one of the most remarkable social impacts of overtourism in Barcelona is the change in attitude among residents towards tourists: due to the amount of negative effects of tourism (MPDI 2019). Tourism has worsened the locals' quality of living from safety and cost of living perspectives. Therefore, residents target their anger towards visitors. The massive tourism flows and huge demand in trade has increased the cost of living what comes to services and rental fees as an example in Barcelona (Hughes 2018).

The news describes how around the clock partying, fights, violence on the streets, prostitution, noise pollution, drug dealing and around 50 or more drug dealing apartments are all together making residents' quality of living unpleasant (Traveller 2018). Residents are having trouble in sleeping and the streets of Barcelona are full of tourism products and sellers, which raise anger among locals. According to statistics of Ajuntament de Barcelona in 2018: 58,6% of residents thought Barcelona is reaching the limit to its capacity for providing tourist services and 68,8% would prefer to have less tourists in their neighbourhoods. From the locals' point of view tourism activities are put before their well-being. Therefore, the strategic tourism plan for 2020 was made because of the lack of social return of tourism activities for citizens (Strategic tourism plan for 2020).

During these past 10 years the news has written a lot about the locals' anti-social behaviour towards tourists. Related to Euronews (2014) the residents are doing protests, taking social distance from visitors and trying to make stop for the tourism growth, violence and illegal apartments. In 2017 the biggest attack and protest was made at the hands of youth people called the radical CUP party. The target was one sightseeing bus close to the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona. The message of this protest was that "mass tourism kills the neighbourhoods, destroys the territory and condemns the working class to misery" (The Guardian 2017).

Additionally, according to literature Barcelona neighbourhood citizens have been campaigning against the negative impacts of the tourism industry via demonstrations. Colomb and Novy (2016) examine how the campaigns have been towards the increased number of short-term rentals, the residents' rights before big businesses, noise pollution, anti-social behaviour, occupation and loss of public places.

Bellester (2018) adds that the most common demonstration subject in Barcelona is the illegal apartment renting business: multiple residents are sharing their messages via (Figure 10) huge blankets and signs hanging on their balconies (Responsible tourism partnership 2017). According to Responsible tourism partnership (2017) Barcelona residents impress their will towards more educated and averagely older tourists to Barcelona, who have less interest in parties and drugs. Visitors who are respectful towards Catalonia values. Shortly, the responsible tourism partnership (2017) examines how the culture of Barcelona has become a product or an attraction there.

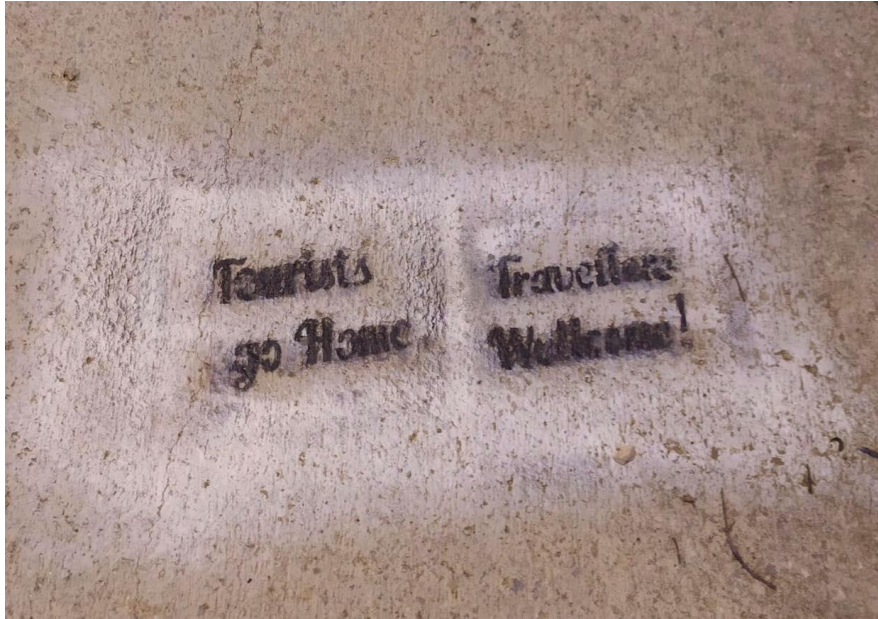


Figure 5: The illegal tourism rentals in Barcelona (Karoliina Rautio 2020)

Nowadays the locals' behaviour is based on the aim to raise tourists' awareness concerning tourism impacts for the local population. The local people pursue to improve their quality of life and well-being (Hughes 2018).

### 3.6 Tourist phobia

Reviewing literature, tourist phobia became a buzzword in social media in 2017 impressing the overtourism impacts from local people' point of view (Koens, Postma, & Papp 2018, 4383-4398). Milano (2018) examines the purpose of the tourist phobia term is to increase the number of practitioners' and decision makers' attention in social media and literature.

The articles define that tourist phobia has its beginning of unsustainable tourism practices and activities within the destination's urban, rural and coastal areas. According to Harold Goodwin (2016) the unhappy residents start easily rising anti-social behaviours which result in so called tourist phobia among residents. In addition, Catalan anthropologist Manuel Delgado in 2008 has defined that tourist phobia is impact of the working-class replacement in Barcelona into new touristic classes (Geography review magazine 2018, 11)



The news has written about the tourist phenomenon in Barcelona through conflicts between residents and tourists. Local people in Barcelona are doing demonstrations towards anti-tourism and tourists' behaviour. The purpose of demonstrations is to spoil visitors' experience. For example, in 2014 Barcelona residents protested about the title of their anti-social behaviour and drunken tourists (Vice 2015).

### **3.7. Economic importance of tourism in Barcelona**

According to Port de Barcelona (2011) travel and tourism industry play an important role in Barcelona's economy. The tourism growth results in economic growth and employment in Barcelona as a result. Port de Barcelona (2011) examines that the economic impact of tourism in Barcelona is calculated at 22 million euros per day (Port de Barcelona 2011). Holden (2016) investigates how Barcelona has changed from being a poverty city to an international tourist destination since the post-second world war decades. Secondly, tourism develops new businesses and investment opportunities in Barcelona and therefore the economic impacts of tourism are overall the most valued elements there (Holden 2016, 22-25).

On the other hand, the researchers are more focused on statistics. Harold Goodwin (2016) examines how the entire tourism industry generates 12% of Catalunya's GDP and creates roughly 400 000 jobs which is 9% of the city's jobs (Harold Goodwin 2016). Relating to Barcelona Active research (2016) there are over 35 000 contracts in food and drink services, 22 000 in accommodation services and 5000 travel agencies and tour operators in the end of 2019 (Figure 6).

The Barcelona Activa (2016) demonstrates that if there were no tourism purchases, 19% of the businesses in Barcelona centrum would have had to close. This would result in the closure of 1 200 shops in total (Barcelona Activa 2016). Additionally, as a direct result of the 32 million tourists yearly in Barcelona, the city receives around 2000 million euros. Only the amount of income received from the paid overnight taxes was 43,5 million euros (Barcelona Activa 2016).

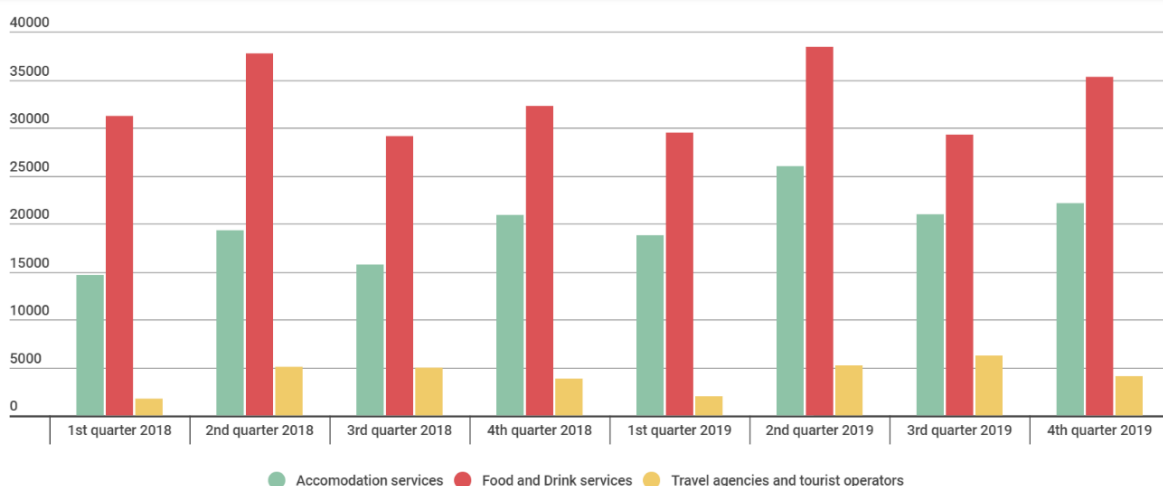


Figure 6: Number of contracts in tourist activities in Barcelona 2018-2019 (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020)

Related to Pla Estratègic Metropolità de Barcelona (PEMB 2016) the economic growth is supported by existing connections between Barcelona's different economic and tourism sectors. The Business Support office (The OAE) is led by Barcelona City Council and the support is provided by the creation of tourism sector companies: areas of economy, enterprise and employment through Barcelona Activa. The OAE responds to the needs of local community and international businesses to facilitate business sector guidelines in Barcelona (PEMB 2015).

## 4 Residents' quality of living in Barcelona research

The core of this thesis is to research mass tourism consequences in Barcelona from residents' point of view. In addition, the aim of this research is to gain information how to improve residents' quality of life in practice there. The final aim is to generate more information of sustainable and responsible tourism behaviour actions in Barcelona. Ten people living in Barcelona will be interviewed and asked seventeen questions.

More specifically the research questions are the following:

1. How is increasing tourism affecting the environment, economics, and socio-culture in Barcelona?
2. What kind of consequences have tourism for residents in Barcelona?
3. How have residents' behaviour changed in Barcelona because of the growing phenomenon of tourism?
4. How residents' quality of life can be improved in Barcelona?

Question one is based on the theoretical framework of this thesis and has been already discussed in the chapter 3 and through the interviews with ten different participants. Barcelona as a mass tourism destination. Questions two, three and four are based on the residents' quality of life interview and the results of it.

This interview is following a semi-structured qualitative research model and the received results will examine the negative and positive consequences affected by overtourism in Barcelona. The interview design is based on both experimental and historical models with the aim to find contemporary solutions based on the interviewers' experiences. As a result, the goal is to help one's knowledge about responsible tourism behaviour and improve the residents' quality of living.

In the beginning of 2020, the covid-19 pandemic has had a huge effect in Barcelona causing different new lockdown measurements and rules. Spain has been under the lockdown since March 13, 2020 until May 2, 2020. Residents have not been allowed to leave their home during that timing without essential medical, work, groceries or health reasons. The penalties of misbehaving are from 100 euros to a prison sentence (U.S. Embassy and consulate in Spain and Andorra 2020). Therefore, interviewees are asked to answer the following questions how they felt before the lockdown.

#### **4.1 Choosing the research method and target group**

The aim of this thesis is to understand how tourism has impacted the residents' quality of living in Barcelona. To support the aim of this research it has been chosen to use a qualitative interview research method. The qualitative research method helps to understand human experiences via providing detailed description of participants' feelings, opinions and experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 2002). Due to additional questions, the interview questions will be deeply discussed and answered (McNamara 2001). As a result, the qualitative interview supports the findings of motivations behind some sort of behaviours (Brinkman 2013, 83-86). It is the basis for this experimental research. Also, the target group has been chosen specifically which fits to qualitative research criteria (Griffie 2005).

Interview is a suitable method when there is a need to collect thorough information (Kvale 2008, 67-68) on Barcelona residents' opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings about their quality of living. The interviews will be done via skype instead of traditional face-to-face meetings in this research. In face-to-face interviews people are present not only talking way (Brinkman 2013, p.25-28), but as body language and facial impressions as well. Related to the lockdown situation and covid-19 pandemic measures, Skype interview was chosen as the safest option to carry out this research.

The focus point to be analysed will be residents' thoughts how mass tourism is affecting their daily behaviour in Barcelona. Therefore, the qualitative interview part will examine locals' recommendations towards future behaviour and actions which would provide better quality of living for them. There will be a personal details section, which will examine closely answerers backgrounds. Robert's (1997) examine that it's a significant factor to know if the participants can be related to research problem: people who are capable to connect with the research subject, will also have previous knowledge about it. In this case the answerers will have experience of tourism studies or someone close to them does have similar experience from the field.

The interview design is based on both experimental and historical models with the aim to find contemporary solutions based on the interviewers' past. Salgado (1990) researched that experience-based questions bring a remarkable advantage into research. These chosen research methods will provide validity and support the new knowledge (Walliman 2011). The importance of interactions, future trends and sustainable behaviours will be described with this following research. The purpose of

applied research is to directly address the problem (Bajpaj 2018). This thesis is researching the locals' quality of living in Barcelona and is launched by individual hospitality tourism student.

Reviewing literature, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) suggested that for a group research saturation exists between 10-15 interviewees. Secondly, Crouch & McKenzie (2006) proposed that less than 20 participants will help the interviewer to form a whole picture of the information exchange in a qualitative interview. To reach saturation in this interview, 10 participants will be heard.

All the participants are from the same age class between 19-35. They have lived at least for the past 2 years in the Ciutat Vella in Barcelona, because the research problems need to be perceptible and quantifiable: the interviewees need to be capable to describe their living condition changes. In addition, each interviewee has studied tourism or has someone close to them working or studying in the industry.

#### **4.2 The interview practising methodology**

This interview will be practised with a family member beforehand to improve interviewer's listening skills and how to avoid silence and hurrying. In addition, practicing will improve the interviewer's ability to lead an interview, have the control, guide conversation, and avoid losing the control without putting the right words in the participants' mouth (Bolderston 2012).

First, it is important to practice interviewer's body language being as neutral as possible to minimize the danger of affecting participants' answers (McNamara 2006): body movements, eye contact, pitch voice and dryness of the mouth. As an example, the interviewer's body language can not change when making notes to avoid the interviewer's behaviour effect towards the further answers.

Also, the interviewing techniques and questions will be tested to be as neutral as possible and worded clearly. All the questions are simple, won't be able to be answered with one word and will be asked one at a time (McNamara 2006). As a limitation for example there will not be defensive "why" questions. On the other hand, the "how" questions will be practised as storytelling questions. The interview techniques will be developed to be more encouraging and how to get more deeply detailed responses.

As a result, the interviewees will be given information and added advantage related to the interview objective beforehand. This tactic enables participants' full understanding of the interview subject and therefore decreases the risk of misunderstandings (Bolderston 2012). They know the interview is related to tourism consequences in Barcelona. Also, all the interviews will be recorded and saved for later use to maximize the benefits of obtained results (McNamara 2006). It is important to practice how to make notes and observations straight after the interview has finished.

### **4.3 Residents' quality of living interview**

The structure of this interview has been carefully planned and controlled. These existing interview questions are linked to each other and especially to the content. First, the setting is chosen with minimal distraction to make the interviewer feel comfortable. At the beginning the participants will be asked for permission to record the interview for further notes and if they have any questions before getting started. Also, they will be informed: what is the purpose of the interview, how is the format going to be and how long the interview is going to take approximately. After the general information, the participants will be told who is going to get access to their answers and how they can get in that with the interviewer later if they want to. (McNamara 2006).

The interview model is following semi-structured guidelines where there are a few before planned similar questions for all the candidates (Simply psychology 2014). The rest of the questions are not planned. According to Oxfam's Global research team (2012) this interview model is not fully structured because there will be additional questions during the interview and participants can share their own experiences and thoughts using their own words. For example, via questions "Tell me more about that...", "What do you mean when you say..?" and "how did you feel about that?". In the end this will help to understand interviewees perceptions.

Reviewing the literature, Pulakos and Schmitt (1995) clarified two types of structured interview questions: experience-based and situational questions. The experience-based questions in this research are focused on the living atmosphere in Barcelona at the beginning and how it has changed because of massive tourism flows from residents' perspective. Historical and future oriented questions are investigating residents' behaviour changes in different situations.

#### 4.4 Interview questions

Reviewing the literature (Horrocks and King 2010, 25) the design of interview questions consists the framing of research questions, choosing the interview type, defining the sample and recruiting participants and in the end developing an interview guide. All the interviewees will be all asked at least sixteen common questions plus the additional questions.

The interview has been structured and divided into six main sections inspired by Patton's (2002) six types of question model: personal detail part, background and knowledge related to overtourism, opinions and beliefs, behaviour and experience, feelings, and last general question. In total, there are seventeen questions included in this interview.

The first part of the interview is focused on participants' personal details such as age, gender, nationality, current employment and studying situation. This section analyses participants data focusing on their common features and personal living backgrounds. Therefore, **the first question** is "How long have you lived in Ciutat Vella neighbourhood?". **The second question** is a rating question, "How it feels to live in Ciutat Vella?". **The third question** asks participants to define, "What stands out as the defining characteristic in that neighbourhood?" for them.

The second part is closely related to first part but is researching deeper and more in details interviewees backgrounds (OXFAM 2019). This part is especially interested in target groups' background and knowledge related to tourism or more specifically overtourism. **The fourth question** is based on participants' background related to tourism sector, "Have you worked in the tourism sector and if yes for how many years?". **The fifth question** is based on participants' tourism studies background, "Have you studied tourism and if yes for how many years?". During this section interviewees will clarify for how many years they have worked or studied in the tourism industry.

Abovesaid first two parts are based on facts what comes to participants' personal details and lifestyles: how they are personally related to tourism with their working or studying backgrounds.. Therefore, **the question number six** is "How has tourism flows affected your daily life?". This following third behaviour and experience part (OXFAM 2019) will clarify more specifically what kind of environmental, social, cultural, and economic consequences the tourism industry has in Ciutat Vella. **Questions from number seven**

**to nine** are identifying the environmental, socio-cultural and economic tourism consequences. The questions are following “What kind of environmental impacts does the tourism industry have in your neighbourhood?”, “What kind of impacts does the tourism industry have in your neighbourhood local culture and people?” and “What kind of economic consequences does the tourism industry have in your neighbourhood?” were designed to find out more information related to mass tourism consequences. The aim of **question number ten** “What kind of tourist behaviour makes you happy and sad?” is to find out locals’ desires of ideal tourists. The additional questions “What kind of things you’ve started to for example avoid as a result of tourism?” and “What kind of new interests you have raised as a result of tourism?” are added to find out residents’ behavioural changes due to tourism. Additionally, questions “What kind of tourism behaviours makes you happy and vice versa sad in Barcelona?” are for open feedback concerning locals’ wants and needs related to tourists’ behaviour and daily choices.

The fourth part examines participants’ beliefs and opinions and how overtourism impacts affects locals’ quality of living in Barcelona (OXFAM 2019). The Barcelona residents can share their own experiences and thoughts related to tourism impacts in this section through **questions number eleven** “Can you tell me about your experience related to mass tourism phenomenon in Barcelona?” and **number twelve** “How do you wish that tourists would act in your neighbourhood? The additional questions “What kind of things make you consider Barcelona’s future?”, “How over tourism could be decreased in Barcelona?” and “What kind of things harm your everyday life in Ciutat Vella?” will investigate locals’ overall beliefs and opinions related to tourism phenomenon in Barcelona.

So far in the previous parts, the interviewees have been able to share their thoughts about tourism phenomenon in Barcelona and how it is affecting their quality of living. Therefore, in this “feelings section” the participants will estimate their overall feelings (OXFAM 2019) how it feels to live in Barcelona, Ciutat Vella. The participants are asked rate in **question number thirteen** “How happy are to live in Barcelona?” their quality of life satisfaction in Barcelona. The covid-19 pandemic is considered in the research as well through **question number fourteen** “Has covid-19 pandemic changed the way you think or act in Barcelona?”.

There will be the general last questions part at the end of this interview (Oxfam 2019). **Questions number fifteen** “Is there something that Barcelona city council could do to improve residents’ quality of life in Barcelona?” and **sixteen** “Is there something that



Barcelona residents' could do to improve their own quality of life in Barcelona?" are designed to figure out suitable quality of living improved actions in Barcelona by both residents and city council.

**Question seventeen** "Is there anything else you want to add or share before we finish this interview?" is for open feedback. This question is an option for interviewees to tell any possible other comments and thoughts they still wanted to add related to residents' quality of life improvement ideas.

#### **4.5. Data analysis**

The data collection of this survey was following the next steps. First the research questions were decided. Secondly, the theoretical model was formed starting with the selection of keywords and terms (Bajpaj 2019). After this research was done to both online and literature resources (Horrocks and King 2010, 144). The next step was selecting useful and workable data as soon as the resources were found. After the collected theoretical framework, the interview was able to be prepared based on the theoretical literature and research questions.

There were in total ten individual interviewees. The results were analyzed following content analysis method guidelines. First, the results of each interview were read, re-read through, documented and transcribed completely. Then, the residents' opinions and comments were collected into one document. After this, the gotten materials were more looked in detail in chapter five of this paper. These four main subtitles were following: environmental impacts of tourism in Barcelona, social and cultural impacts of tourism in Barcelona, economic impacts of tourism in Barcelona and residents' behavioural changes due to mass tourism growth in Barcelona. Lastly, I defined and named themes for the subtitles under the main headlines.

After this I created a coherent narrative: the interview research questions and findings, both main and sub questions, were answered and presented in the results part. In addition, there were included interviewees' quotes in the results analysis, which is a typical character for the content analysis method (Drisko and Maschi 2015, p. 81). The last step of this research was finishing the discussion and conclusion parts (Better thesis 2019).

I decided to do an interview instead of a questionnaire due to its flexibility: interview allows interviewees to share their own thoughts and experience more specifically (Brinkman 2013, 96-101). Reviewing the literature and professors Gubrium and Holstein (2002), during the interview interviewer has the freedom to raise topics, formulate new questions and to move in new directions. Interview gives more detailed answers, solutions for the research problems and provides an opportunity for many residents to be involved than a questionnaire (OXFAM 2019). This interview is semi-structured, which means questions can be added during the interview. The interview was carried out face-to-face and one-to-one via Skype with ten participants. Due to Corona pandemic situation, the safest research method is online interview which is not dependent on physical interaction between people (U.S. Embassy and consulate in Spain and Catalonia 2020).

The interest towards chosen topic “How tourism impacts the residents’ quality of living in Barcelona?” came from my own experience living in a mass tourism destination. Also, the report “Managing tourism in Barcelona” written by Harold Goodwin raised my interest even more. Harold Goodwin is introducing the timeline of overtourism growth in Barcelona during the past 30 years, residents’ reactions, what has been planned between 2010-2015, 2016-2020 and what should be done: how Olympic games in 1992 changed the city image of Barcelona (Harold Goodwin 2016).

I wanted to concentrate more into questions concerning residents’ reactions to tourism impacts and what should be done to improve the quality of life in Barcelona. For this thesis I researched more points from b-d in the implementation plan for 2016-2020: how to protect the identity of Barcelona as a tourist attraction, reconcile local community and ensure the sustainable geographical and multi-sectoral distribution of tourism. According to Harold Goodwin “Barcelona is a tourist city, it is a brand with a culture and lifestyle created and shared by citizens and tourists. What is good for citizens is good for the tourist. Places that are good to live in are also good to visit”.

Each interview was carried out between one interviewer and one interviewee at a time to ensure maximum validity. Reviewing literature, Conway (1995) examined that one-to-one interviews have the highest reliability. To ensure interviewer reliability the beforehand made interview was followed systematically. Grosse (2002) highlighted that the interview structure needs to be trained beforehand to avoid mistakes, such as systematic bugs, during the real one. This was followed with the interview of the thesis.

## 5 Results

This chapter enlighten more about the results of ‘Barcelona residents’ quality of life interview based on the numbers of the participants and demographics; each information gathered is transferred to the survey question individually. All the results were collected in May 2020 for data references and will be discussed.

The total number of answers, the division between participants’ nationalities and genders can be seen in the figure 7. The total number of members participated in the interview were ten and these participants were from eight different nationalities. The participants’ gender distribution is as follows; four males and six females. Two Finnish females, two Spanish a male and female. Also, other six different nationalities participated, from which, one was Columbian female, one Catalan female, one Swedish male, one British male, one Peruvian male and one Bolivian female. This information is based on the first question of the interview, where the members were asked to their personal details to enable the interviewer to look up their demographics.

Participant	Nationality	Age	Gender	Duration of stay in the Ciutat Vella in years
<b>A</b>	Finnish	24	female	4
<b>B</b>	Finnish	33	female	8
<b>C</b>	Columbia	25	female	3
<b>D</b>	Spanish	21	male	All life
<b>E</b>	Spanish	35	female	5
<b>F</b>	Catalan	25	female	All life
<b>G</b>	Swedish	22	male	2,5
<b>H</b>	British	31	male	6
<b>I</b>	Peruvian	27	male	5
<b>J</b>	Bolivian	22	female	5
		<b>TOTAL</b>	10	

Figure 7: Demographics of respondents (n= 10)

This interview was specifically focused on the residents' opinions, who are currently living in the busiest district in Barcelona called Ciutat Vella. This district contains areas of El Raval, El Gòtico, La Barceloneta, Sant Pere and Santa Caterina and La Ribera (Barcelona turisme 2020). Reviewing figure 8, out of these ten participants three were living in El Gòtico, another three in El Raval, two in La Barceloneta, one in La Ribera and one in Sant Pere. This information was based on the second and third questions of the interview, where the members were asked to describe the defining characteristics of their living districts and the overall atmosphere of it.

The interviewees have lived in Barcelona for minimum of two years and they are currently living in the Ciutat Vella district. This is a purposeful limitation since the discovered problems need to be perceptible and quantifiable. The interviewees must be capable to describe their living condition and behavioural changes due to tourism growth. Two of the interviewees have lived in Barcelona their whole life and the length of stay of other participants was 4-5 years.

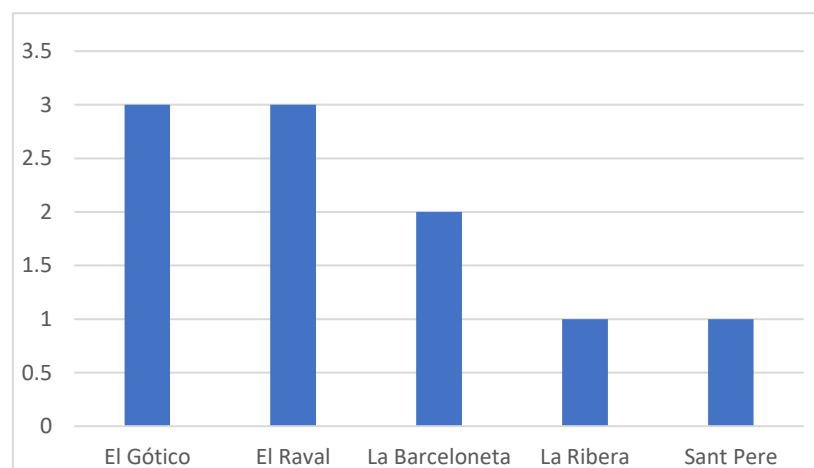


Figure 8: Participants' living neighbourhoods in the Ciutat Vella

Also, each interviewee had knowledge in the tourism field. The background and knowledge part including questions number four and five are being examined based on their experience in the field of tourism. This was a purposeful limitation due to the fact: interviewees who have knowledge of the research subject will potentially have creative improvement ideas than the ones who do not have (Substance abuse and mental health administration 1997). Out of these ten participants, four were working in the tourism sector, three were tourism students and the rest three participants were both studying and working in the tourism field. This can be seen in the figure 9 below.

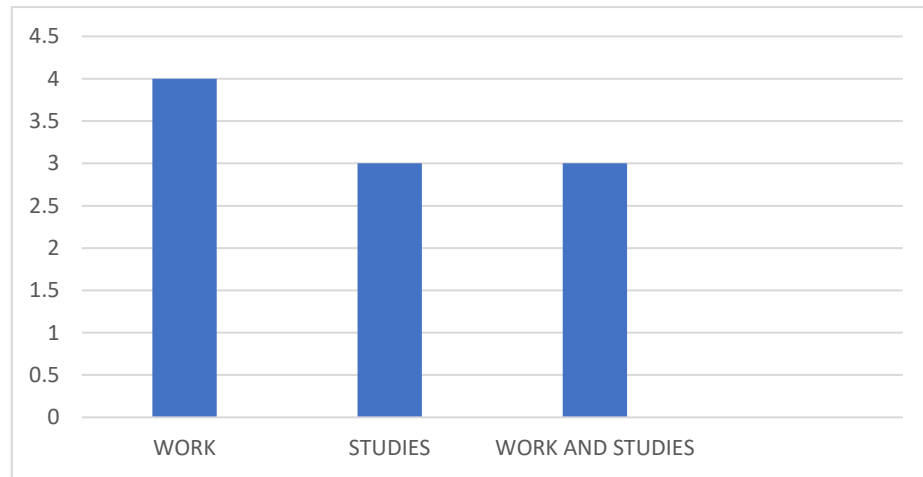


Figure 9: Participants' tourism working or studying background

## 5.1 Environmental impacts of tourism in Barcelona

According to the interviewees' opinions the city image of Barcelona is very dirty nowadays and they think this is caused by the negligent of the city council's: the city council places the importance of the economical growth of Barcelona above the well-being of its environment. Some members were concerned about the future conditions of La Rambla due to the fact millions of people are crossing this famous street, which was found in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 12): La Rambla may collapse anytime soon without reconstruction due to the overload of activities and millions of people bypassing it yearly. General, it was easier to define the negative environmental impacts than positive ones due to the tourism growth. The reasons behind this argument were: evident amount of waste in public places, the power of social media and how the city is becoming livelier and noisier year after year.

### 5.1.1 Barcelona has become an untidy place to live in

Reviewing the answers, the public beaches, parks and attractions are in bad condition due to the amount of waste, massive people flows and parties in the region of Ciutat Vella. For example, the worsened conditions of La Rambla and Montjuic were mentioned many times. It has been forecasted how La Rambla might collapse within the next few years. Therefore, a totally new street will be needed to be constructed. Locals are currently in a stage where they have started to avoid beach and La Rambla districts due to the increased amount of waste and marine destruction.

In addition, the twenty-four hours fast food stores and restaurants are attracting people to party a lot despite the timing of the day and trash are easily left to the nature. Participants have noticed that the number of fast food restaurants has doubled due to tourism growth, which has generated double times more disposable containers on the streets than before. Most of the twenty-four-hour fast food employee are unprofessional and do not have guidelines about work ethics and lack work environment cleanliness. Many participants are currently witnessing their fellow student friends' high consumption of low-priced alcohols and careless partying behaviour when trash is most often left to the nature.

The overall city image of Ciutat Vella district is dirty, untidy and it is difficult to find recycling centres. All the residents agreed on that party tourism leaves marks behind and is well seen in the city image: streets are covered with food, beverage trash and cigarettes. The waste management has gotten worse in a relation to growth in tourism. There are not enough recycle bins for trash, plastic bottles and cans. Also, the full garbage bags are left on the street especially on the beach area.

### **5.1.2 The party tourism has led to unbearable rise of noise pollution and crowded streets**

The city council business strategy is focused on tourism, partying, nightlife and shopping. Therefore, Barcelona is an ideal spot for leisure activity promoters, fast food restaurants, events, prostitution, thieves, and illegal drug businesses despite the time of the day. However, the council is still planning to build new hotels in the Ciutat Vella despite the present situation there.

Furthermore, the popularity of party tourism and number of youth travellers, new accommodation projects and international festivals are unbearable problems for the locals. The consequences of these have affected their quality of life negatively, which were stated as the most important standards for their decision-making process: they have started to avoid the busiest metro stations, streets, beach spots and some food and beverage shops. Most of the apartments are Air bnb apartments and rented for the short-term visitors for business purposes. As a result of this, the interviewees have moved to outskirts because it is more affordable compared to the prices in the center.

The interviewees who have lived their whole life in Barcelona highlighted how tourists' behaviour has affected the locals' living schedule by causing them sleepless nights, insecurity, and oppression. On the other hand, the first-time residents felt that especially the noise level in the Ciutat Vella is unbearable compared to other districts due to the growing number of tourism activities.

### **5.1.3 Tourism works as a catalyst for nature preserving projects**

Reviewing the results, the popularity of nature preserving programs and volunteering city cleanings have increased due to the enormous number of people. As well, to promote the vicinity to be environmental friendly. People have started to act in a more sustainable way and prefer green choices as a result of the negligence of nature during the past few years. It was highlighted how public toilets have generalised due to the growing existing number of people, their public defecating and overall untidy streets full of partying lifestyle. Therefore, there has also been an increase in the number of public toilets to keep the city cleaner.

*"It is fascinating to see how the biking, Euro Segway, walking and sailing as ecological tourist tour options have generalised within the few past years. Also, the street art, Trixi (eco-taxi), yoga classes, 0km products have become more popular along with tourism growth and environmentally friendly tourism product promotion here in Barcelona."*  
(Participant H)

Also, the popularity of environment protection programs has generalised due to all the negative environmental tourism impacts. There has been a sustainable map to guide people towards their sustainable daily behaviour according to their social media lifestyle, leisure activities and interaction with other people. For example, cleaning on the beach operations have been created to keep the La Barceloneta beach aesthetically pleasant and thus the tourists will be happy as a result. In addition, there are green points, where you can leave your household biowaste and on the Strategic Noise Map, you can check out your noise exposure levels according to the acoustic situation of your street.

*"During the past five years there have been more public toilets on the beach. The fact that there are more public restrooms especially in the beach district has made my life so much more pleasant and stress-free. Also, people are not running into restaurants' private toilets and I can finish my paid meals without harassment."* (Participant G)

## 5.2 Social and cultural impacts of tourism in Barcelona

The international products and services are more designed for international customers which is affecting the Catalanian culture. Despite the lost feeling of Catalanian authenticity, people are still very happy to live there. After analyzing the results, it is clearly visible what kind of things have increased and vice versa decreased due to tourism growth. The overall results give an overview of the tourism social and cultural consequences in Barcelona.

More than half of the participants rated being either very happy or happy with the Barcelona living conditions nowadays and a few participants felt unhappy to live there and no one rated their quality of life as super unhappy. The sub question examined the reasons behind locals who were not fully satisfied to live in the Ciutat Vella region. For example the interviewees mentioned following aspects and reasons: the expensive cost of living and low salary levels, increasing number of odd jobs and motor roads, the hotel concepts have replaced green areas, big competitions within entrepreneurs and hospitality tourism industry, mass tourism, overcrowding and smelling streets. On the other hand, the reasons highlighting the good quality of life in Barcelona were multiculturalism, events, festivals, lovely climate, and the overall fact that Barcelona is a fascinating city to live in all seasons (Figure 10).

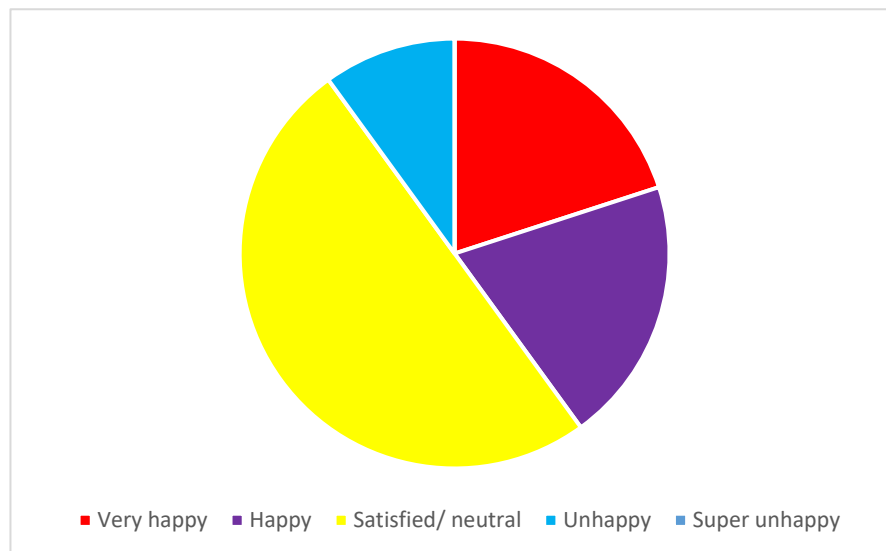


Figure 10: The residents' quality of life satisfaction to live in Barcelona (before the Covid-19 lockdown)



### **5.2.1 Tourism entrepreneurs replace the Catalan culture with their own**

There are no work opportunities for illegal immigrants in Barcelona. Therefore, these people are trying to sell whatever they have brought from their home country and which can be switched to money to represent their own native culture. Some interviewees were questioned about the huge numerous different countries' flags in the La Rambla street. It was mentioned how different stakeholders are trying to make Barcelona multicultural tourism destination and abandoned the importance of Catalan own roots just to please tourists.

*"The Asian people provide cheap Thai massages on the beach, African people are selling souvenirs and blankets representing their roots and some Europeans are marketing Barcelona nightlife and activities with their own languages in an international marketing way." (Participant F)*

Liceu region used to be the most important opera venues in Europe but nowadays it is full of nightlife, prostitution and "coffee shops" which are also known as cannabis cafés. Also, the big mass events, bars, beach area and nightlife are organizing international events and have been promoted by international employees. According to participant B, Flamenco is not rooted in the Catalan culture but is marketed there just to make more income.

*"Barcelona is making wrong illusions about their culture through marketing and tourism products. For example, the flamenco dance is not rooted in Catalan culture originally but is typical for Spanish culture. It is not culturally respectful to market Flamenco as a Catalan culture product." (Participant B)*

### **5.2.2 The insecurity problems are driving residents away from Barcelona**

Locals have been protesting lately against people who are nuisance and also rent their places illegally for the tourists. Also, all the interviewees have felt insecurity due to the massive tourism flows, packed streets, theft, insufficient security labour force and professional groups of thieves. The link between increasing insecurity problems and over tourism has led to the popularity of tourist phobia among residents. In addition, scams, fear of existing insecurity in La Rambla, packed public transport, drunken tourists, rising number of illegal immigrants and criminals have increased the level of insecurity there.

*"The popularity of tourist phobia among residents can possibly lead to loss of tourism and further economical loss in Barcelona. This locals' negative attitude toward tourists could potentially scare them away.' \_\_\_\_*

Especially, the interviewees who have lived in the El Raval district described how the overall safety level has decreased due to tourism growth there. According to them, El Raval can be defined with five main characters 1) the streets are filled with illegal activities, 2) it is always congested, 3) there is around the clock police patrol 4) high level of insecurity in La Rambla and 5) the district is smelling strongly of marijuana.

*"I have been robbed severally and I am scared to walk through the Raval district by myself." (Participant E)*

Furthermore, one interviewee has needed to freeze his debit card more often than ever before during the past five years. Similarly, some argued how they do not store huge amounts of cash at their apartments. Instead they prefer to pay with a debit card rather than carry too much cash. The jam-packed public transportation full of bargaining passengers are ideal spots for thieves. Therefore, it is advisable to use bags with zippers rather than open ones.

*"I prefer to withdraw a maximum fifty euros of cash as near my home as possible due to safety reasons. Also, I try to minimize the number of unattached fortunes and the probability to get robbed by pickpockets." (Participant A)*

Pick pocketing and bag snatching problems are huge on the beach, metros and rail transportation. Reviewing the comments, La Barceloneta is an ideal place for thefts due to the thousands of people, noise levels and overall city hustle: tradesmen collaborate more often with the thefts in crime leagues: when one is having a conversation to distract the victim, the other is stealing this person's personal belongings.

*"The Barcelona crime levels have forced me to be watchful around the clock. There is an obvious connection between the increasing number of fights, violence, and robberies with the tourism growth. The thefts have become more insolent lately due to the non-existent punishments." (Participant G)*

### 5.2.3 Residents have become introverted unwillingly

Tourism phobia and cultural misunderstandings have increased due to the number of first-timer visitors. Most first-timers in Barcelona are typically asking the same questions often from them: "Where is La Sagrada Familia located?", "How long does it take to walk to beach?" and "Which nightclub do you recommend us to visit?". Furthermore, this has made locals more antisocial, angry, and unhelpful because it is difficult to find peaceful public places apart from their own home. On that account interviewees might act rude sometimes.

*"Barcelona residents call tourists as "giri" which is a pejorative nickname for them."  
(Participant J)"*

Even though this issue could be handled, there are many more other social impact factors which are driving locals crazy. For example, tourists and other short time visitors are causing sleepless nights for locals in the Air bnb apartments. The high-volume noise levels and tourists' drunk actions are increasing the already existing locals' tenseness towards them. Moreover, some residents have literally thrown trash from the balconies on some participants while they were walking from work to home.

Reviewing the results, locals are avoiding speaking Spanish with people that have tourist looks despite the fact they are nowadays citizens in Barcelona. It is proved how Catalans automatically switch the communication language to Catalan due to their touristic looks. It can be concluded that locals' rude behaviour results from partying, noisy and unrespectful tourists.

*"I have become more introverted due to the overcrowding problems in Barcelona. I do not feel like staying in touch and meeting my friends outdoors as much as a few years ago. Also, I do not want to spend my day offs in the centrum due to the huge capacity of people." (Participant D)*

Barcelona city is known for party tourism and especially "drunken tourists", according to the theoretical literature part 3. Barcelona as a mass tourism destination. The British participant (H) explained how she wanted to move to Barcelona from the UK because she was facing these drunken locals too often in her neighbourhood. However, she is facing the same problem now in Barcelona.

*“After moving to Barcelona, these “drunken British tourists” reminded me from my roots and why I wanted to change my living city. Therefore, I have preconceptions towards “my people”, I feel embarrassed, and might look askance partying tourists sometimes.”*  
(Participant H)

#### **5.2.4 Residents’ improved multi cultural and language knowledge**

Nowadays there are almost forty different international schools for children and young adults. Therefore, it can be said that the millennium people have noticed the importance of language learning and multicultural knowledge in Barcelona due to the growth of international visitors. Beside this, residents’ English skills have developed during the past few years in return to the multicultural atmosphere and cultural exchanges. The Catalan culture marketing strategy is very workable and will not be hidden under the multiculturalism phenomenon there. On the other hand, some highlighted the fact that the marketing of Catalan culture is surreal and starting to feel fake for them.

Generally, the interviewees who have lived their whole life in Barcelona thought that the increasing multiculturalism has destroyed the Catalan culture and identity completely. On the other hand, the other mentioned how multiculturalism has forced some residents to improve their language skills and cultural knowledge in a good way.

*“Existing multiculturalism in Barcelona has enabled an amazing social life for me during these past two and half years of living here.”* (Participant G)

### **5.3 Economic impacts of tourism in Barcelona**

The biggest part of Barcelona’s GDP consists of the hospitality tourism sector. In general, the economical positive tourism impacts are the most remarkable ones. On the other hand, the tourism growth has led to increased cost of living, products’ bad quality-price-ratio and locals’ relocation away from Barcelona city to cheaper districts or destinations. Vice versa the locals who have lived their whole life there have noticed some positive economic impacts due to tourism growth in Barcelona. For example, they were happy about new public transportation prices for 2020.

*“The one-way ticket price has increased in 2020 from 2,20 euros to 2,40 euros, which is a typical option for tourists. On the other hand, the three months public transport ticket*

*has dropped from 110 euros in a year to 80 euros for local people to facilitate locals' quality of life and costs.” (Participant D)*

The economic impacts have forced some locals to change their habits. Participants with cost of living budgets, preferred to do their grocery shopping in Condis or Lidl supermarkets instead of in 24 hours markets in the Ciutat Vella district. According to them, the closer the shop is located either La Rambla or La Barceloneta the pricier it is: as a result of increased number of party tourism and youth travellers in Barcelona, the food and beverage price levels have risen as well. Also, they favoured and recommended to look after local shops when doing grocery shopping and avoid tourist chains. Most often the international shops are known for their expensive foreign selection compared to the Spanish or European based chains. Additionally, alcohol is many times more expensive nearby the beach region and La Rambla than outside the centrum.

*“I pay double times less when I buy food and beverage products from shops located in Gracia or Hospitalet than from shops located in the Ciutat Vella close to the beach or La Rambla.” (Participant H)*

### **5.3.1 Increased cost of living and low salaries has driven away locals**

The increase in cost of living, high competition in the working industry, minimal number of open positions and increased apartment rental prices are forcing people to overpay for their living. According to the research some citizens can not afford their living in Barcelona any longer and are pushed to leave their home city. It was mentioned often how the overall cost of living has increased and the apartments' quality-price ratio decreased due to the high demand: most of the residents in Barcelona do not afford to live in good conditions and still invest half of their wage to monthly rents.

*“Doing grocery shopping is for tourists more expensive than for Spanish and Catalan people due to their foreign touristic looks.” (Participant B)*

The high demand for new open positions and increasing unemployment levels are ideal for employers in Barcelona: they can always pay the minimum salaries for their employees because when one leaves, another will walk in. 70% of the participants are currently working in the hospitality and tourism industry in Barcelona, which is the lowest

paid segment there to work for (Figure 9). These tourism industry employees were sad about their nonexistent salary increments and collective agreements.

*“There are more international co-workers at my workplace than Catalans. It is sad to see that the foreign employees have replaced the Catalans with their versatile language skills and education levels.” (Participant I)*

The whole apartment leasing business in the Ciutat Vella district is focused more for foreigners and out-of-town people, due to the price levels: residents can not afford to pay these touristic renting prices when they are earning the regular Spanish wages. Lately, the landlords have noticed that foreigners are paying more for accommodation than the locals and therefore they increase the rental prices. It is concluded that nowadays there are more foreigners living in El Gòtico in the block of flats than Catalan families.

*“It is double times more expensive to live in the Ciutat Vella than in other cities or districts in Spain, such as in Alicante or Padalona. Sharing the apartment with other people is the only possible way to live in Barcelona due to the high rental costs. The prices of private studios have increased hundreds of euros.” (Participant B)*

The overall social support system is worrying participants. Some interviewees' have recognized the connection between both increased cost of living and the number of homeless people: the more people will become homeless when the prices keep increasing.

*“In the end, this will lead to worsened residents' living conditions and more robberies due to the fact the increased number of people living on the streets. The fact that Barcelona city council is more interested in economic growth and tourism, than residents' affordable living, is harming me every day. Especially during the evening time, when homeless people get together in front of the malls and grocery stores in El Raval with their sleeping bags.” (Participant F)*

### **5.3.2 Millions of tourists bring remarkable business revenues to Barcelona**

Tourism in Barcelona is the third major contribution to national economic life after the industrial and the business sectors, contributing about 10–11% of **its GDP**. As a result of regular tourism arrivals in Barcelona, the entrepreneurs' future seems to be bright and

the risk of failures is low. However, from a customer point of view, the prices are very touristic and high in the Ciutat Vella district due to the massive daily money traffic.

Some interviewees were scared about the fact that the city will be inhabited by rich foreigners and tourists. Whereas this would lead to loss of Catalan citizens and cultural identity. Barcelona as a leading tourist city destination will lose its attractiveness when the prices keep increasing and the Catalonian authenticity has been replaced with international souvenirs. Most importantly it was questioned when Barcelona city will face a huge economical setback and lose its attractiveness.

### **5.3.3 Massive tourism flows enable increasing apartment leasing business and scams**

The Barcelona tourism strategy is based on shopping and nightlife, which in the most cases attracts international people to settle down there. This fact is strongly linked to the increasing immigration effect and growing apartment leasing business. All the respondents underline the fact that Airbnb and other apartment owners are becoming year by year greedier over money because of the ease of getting rich tenant candidates who come to live in Barcelona for a short time.

These days, there are multiple different apartment leasing organizations in Barcelona such as Idealista, Badi and Spotahome beside Airbnb. The locals describe the difficulty of finding an affordable place to stay for a long period. Most of the available rooms are targeted for international students and shared apartments. It can be concluded that the quality-price ratio of existing apartments' is overpriced and overrated. Nowadays people are paying higher prices because of the good location of the apartment despite the bad condition of it.

Some interviewees emphasized the dark side of apartment leasing business and the growing number of frauds in this field of business. Especially international exchange students and people who are heading to Barcelona for their internships have been swindled by fraudsters. The police department are not efficient enough to make proper investigate or report all the swindler due to the limited time and labour.

*"The regular migration is fascinating criminals for online offences. Multiple different apartment leasing online pages are tempting online scammers." (Participant A)*

#### **5.4 Residents' behavioural changes due to mass tourism growth in Barcelona**

Barcelona being the most outgoing city in Europe has affected the locals in many ways. Overall results indicated that the interviewees were quite divided according to their behavioural changes due to mass tourism growth. Some of them have taken more participation in the cultural events along with tourism growth and vice versa some have become more introverted and started to avoid things due to the congestion and its impacts such as drunk people actions, crime and insecurity (Figure 11).

It can be concluded that due to overcrowding, interviewees have been doing their daily tasks more difficult than before and trying new gimmicks. For example, some of the interviewees prefer to exit from less busy metro stations to avoid congestion. Also, some have been avoiding the most busiest streets when connecting to other locations by foot. The overcrowding and insecurity issues have also forced locals to find new free time spots for relaxation. The majority agreed on the fact that insecurity has increased among the residents due to massive tourism flows and increased their everyday life fear level

##### **5.4.1. Residents' to participation in the events**

The regular tourism flows have enabled more cultural and traditional events in Barcelona due to the high demand of it. Especially the busy city lifestyle, new social connections and concerts have all mesmerized student interviewees to stay in Barcelona for a longer and good time ().

*"I moved to Barcelona in the first place after my studies. Quickly, I was fascinated with the multicultural activities, events and joy of life here. Tourism has brought people all around the world into one place. Living in Barcelona has raised my interest towards festivals, carnivals, football and food culture for example." (Participant C)*

On the other hand, residents who have lived their whole life in Barcelona are against the phenomenon of increasing popularity of events and different activities around the year in Barcelona. They mentioned how the around the clock partying and celebration will not allow them to enjoy their day offs in silence. Also, the important religious holidays are getting mixed with regular weekdays due to the hectic daily life in Barcelona.



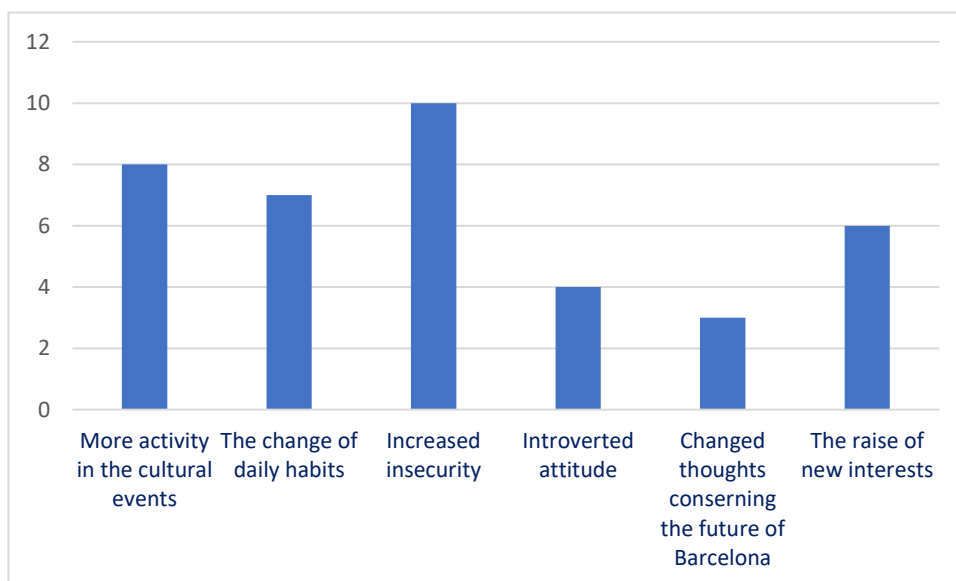


Figure 11: Residents' behavioural or mindset changes due to mass tourism growth in Barcelona

#### 5.4.2. Residents have become more interested of sustainability and Catalanian traditions

All the respondents are living in the middle of the busiest district in Barcelona. Therefore, many of them have started to act in a more sustainable way after experiencing the tourism growth and its negative impacts to the environment daily. The respondents have become more alert of their daily choices: supporting outdoor sports, recycling, transportation, sustainable and responsible tourism models have become more popular with locals. Some interviewees have actually started to investigate different recycling strategies (Figure 13) in Barcelona, due to the current over production and bad waste management system there.

*"I live in the skating culture district and that has been the main reason why I am interested in doing outdoor sports. I think little daily choices matter, when living in a polluted city as Barcelona. It is a cheap, sustainable and time saving option to roller-skate, longboard or skate from one place to another. I prefer to do outdoor sports as often as possible" (Participant G)*

*"I was used to an excellent waste management system when I was living in Finland. Now I must see more effort to be responsible consumer in a city of millions of people yearly." (Participant A)*

On the other hand, the multicultural atmosphere, people, street sellers, street art, vintage shops, new languages, and products have been fascinating some interviewees lately. Some have started to study more about the history of Catalan identity, risen overall cultural knowledge and some learned the basics of new languages (Figure 13). Some interviewees explained how Catalonia people want to upkeep both Catalanian and Spanish languages and especially protest towards the independence movement in Catalonia as an example.

*"It is important to increase one's cultural knowledge and communication skills with foreign people. As a result of my improved cultural knowledge, I am nowadays able to understand the reasons behind Catalanian independence movements: Catalonia is one of the wealthiest areas in Spain, it has good industrial development and the most important medicine, car, metal, chemistry industries are located in Catalonia."*  
(Participant C)

**CATALONIAN CULTURE, VINTAGE,  
OUTDOOR SPORTS,  
THE IMPORTANCE OF  
RECYCLING,  
STREET ART, LANGUAGE SKILLS,  
PUNCTUALITY, ALERTNESS**

Figure 13: The residents' new raised interests because of tourism in Barcelona

### **5.4.3. Overcrowding and safety issues has forced residents to change their habits**

The increased crime rates have led to increased cost of crime prevention and police services. It can be seen how the growth of tourism, the existing insecurity, violence, number of robberies, noise pollution, packed public transport, sex tourism, bad lightning on the public streets have affected resident's daily life in a harming way and forced them to change their habits what comes to choosing their free time locations, streets, public transport options and favoured grocery markets (Figure 14).

Decreasing reliability of police officers and official authorities' disinterest are just making the locals' living conditions worse. The interviewees were confused about the fact that official authority and regular people recognize the illegal immigrants in Barcelona, but no one is doing effort to get rid of them. According to one of them: the police officers are acting careless what comes to the existing illegality in Barcelona.

*"The punishment system and penalties in Barcelona are too light and easy for criminals, which furthermore motivate them to keep doing crimes. For example, the fines can be paid with one stolen phone. The police office does not have rights to drive away housebreakers from your apartment after someone has broken in there. Not sooner than after four months the break in day." (Participant B)*

All members need to change their locations daily either because of school or work. Therefore, they need to travel almost every single day. The members argued how frustrating it is to be late from school or work due to the crowded metro lines: the metros are sometimes so packed that the passengers need to elbow one's way to get in. Also, the fear of getting robbed was mentioned many times. Reviewing the interviewees' expressive body languages, the only way to travel comfortably during the rush hours is either keeping the hands up or sitting on the floor with bags.

*"The public transport is too packed for me, squeezes me in the middle of multiple people and increases the fear of getting robbed. I rarely decide to use public transport. There is less danger when I jump out of the van in small and unpopular metro stations which are not as packed as popular ones, such as Placa de Catalunya, Liceu and Barceloneta." (Participant I)*

FEAR OF ROBBERIES,  
**OVERALL INSECURITY,**  
**THE REPUTATION OF THE SECURITY STAFF,**  
VIOLENCE, SEX TOURISM,  
HIGH NOISE LEVELS,  
**PACKED PUBLIC TRANSPORT,**  
BAD STREET LIGHTNING,  
**INSECURITY AT HOME,** GROWING NUMBER OF HOMELESS  
PEOPLE

Figure 14: Facts that harm residents' everyday life in Barcelona

## **6 Dicussion**

Hence, based on the findings of the theoretical framework, it is appropriate to revisit the empirical data outlined in the beginning of the research. The theoretical framework was built on the grounds of previous literature, articles, and my own experience. The literature concerning the overtourism in Barcelona and more specifically its impacts is still undeveloped. Therefore, it is important place the theoretical framework to the context of residents' quality of living in Barcelona findings of this study.

### **6.1 Theoretical framework revisited**

Generally, tourism has increased the wealth of Barcelona. Both parts highlighted the tourism importance of Barcelona GDP, high competition in the labour markets and overall increased cost of living and rents there. The results part introduced some new insights behind the increased cost of living: most of the foreign entrepreneurs are following international and touristic price levels in the Ciutat Vella region due to the tourism-oriented customer base. Also, the high educated international employees are replacing local workers which leads to increased locals' unemployment levels in the city. Some interviewees highlighted how they have been mistreated due to the nonexistent work collective agreement. According to the results, the price of one-way public transport tickets has almost doubled within the past few years from 1,50 euros to 2,60 euros and vice versa the monthly ticket price has dropped from 110 euros to 80 euros. The monthly tickets are more common within the locals than tourists and therefore the price has been decreased. This change was made for the locals to benefit from the tourism in Barcelona.

What comes to the physical impacts, the theoretical and results parts are supporting each other. The most obvious physical impact was the overall city dirtiness in the Ciutat Vella district when the results and empiric data were in a comparison. The interviewees highlighted the increased dirtiness with the huge amount of food and beverage leftovers, rubbish bags, cigarettes and faeces on the streets. According to them, it has been forecasted that La Rambla street is about to collapse anytime soon if the congestion levels keep staying the same. The collapse of La Rambla would affect considerably businesses located around it because the business owners would not be able to run their business anymore. Additionally, it would complicate the transportation system around the district. Secondly, the locals' migration outside the Ciutat Vella district was

mentioned in both parts. After reviewing the results, it is important to mention that the on-going increasing level of migration is driving locals away from their neighbourhoods: especially the migration of foreign people not locals. The results concluded how the extremely rich people inhabit the whole centre in Barcelona and Catalanian people are not able to compete with them. Thirdly, the congestion is not only forcing people to choose different transportation options but also tempting them to work from home.

As we now can notice, there were a few social and cultural similarities between the theoretical framework and the results: crime levels, illegal businesses and multiculturalism have all grown due to tourism in Barcelona. Reviewing the answers, locals have felt more unsafe due to the bad reputation of law enforcement. In addition, there is not enough security to look after the city. The ones who are on duty are inattentive to minor situations except bigger crime. Also, in some cases, the penalty system is outdated, and the fines are easy to pay back. The theoretical part introduced the nickname "El Chino" for the Raval district describing its crime. Additionally, the interview results came up with a mean nickname "Giri" for the tourists who are causing harm for the city itself. After putting together the theoretical literature, it was clear how much multiculturalism tourism has brought to Barcelona business products and services. Anyhow interviewees explained the fact behind the growth of multiculturalism: illegal immigrants do not have permit to work legally there, so they sell souvenirs representing their own culture as means of making cash for living.

It can be concluded that tourism is not only the main problem in Barcelona. Also, tourism products and services have developed to wrong direction because some people are selling desperately valuable things for money. Likewise, the city council's greediness over tourism product sales and services is attracting more tourists to visit Barcelona yearly. The locals have become more introvert and started to approach tourists in bad manners because of the crossed tourism carrying capacity.

## **6.2 Residents' quality of life improvement suggestions**

Currently local people are affected by several economical, physical, social, and cultural tourism impacts in Barcelona. The increase of tourism has brought many positive impacts to the city's sustainability development and economy, but not to the environment and society as much. Therefore, the government should educate people more about sustainability. The locals' quality of life improvement suggestions have been

listed below: how to enhance their quality of living in Barcelona and minimize the need of their behavioural changes due to tourism impacts.

According to the results, the economical consequences were the most outstanding ones. It became clear that the increased cost of living and low salaries in Barcelona have driven away locals from the centrum. Therefore, the locals are wishing that the ongoing new hotel constructions need to be stopped and vice versa they should be offered more opportunities and places to stay with affordable prices: currently most of the interviewees are investing 50% or more of their monthly salary to the living costs and there are 3000 homeless people in Barcelona of whom 1000 are sleeping on the streets. The apartment owners should do marketing in the first place to locals instead of to tourists, business travellers and students. This would limit the changing moving flows in the Ciutat Vella neighbourhood due to the fact locals are more often looking for long-term places to stay. The city could build a block of flats only for the locals with decent prices instead of building a huge hotel company in the middle of local people living districts. This is a great example how the government could enhance people to be more people focused than money focused through their own actions. Also, local people should get more benefits with their NIE cards (personal identification card in Barcelona) such as discounts in public transportation and of overall cost of livings. Additionally, breadlines of loss food organized once a day in Barcelona for poor families could help them to get back on their feet.

Physical, functional, psychological, and cognitive health dimensions of health affect to one's social well-being (Linda J. Waite 2018). Therefore, locals' social quality of life could be improved through their own attitude change towards tourism: they should be more open minded towards tourism, learn from them and share their personal thoughts with them. Therefore, demonstrations and introvert behaviour are not workable problem-solving methods. Vice versa locals could talk louder, openly, and straightforward about the existing problems instead of being introvert towards tourists. It is also worth noting that tourism, multiculturalism and international shops bring much change to the Barcelona and for its Catalanian culture. To support Catalanian identity, business owners should change their mindset from money focused into traditionality. On the other hand, in the huge labour markets and international workers are replacing the need of locals. When reviewing the results, most of the workplaces and bosses are not following any collective agreements in Barcelona. This is another good example that need to be changed to improve locals' quality of living.

What comes to existing insecurity problems the participants were willing to have more safe houses and sanctuaries for the people who are in a need of place to stay. Reviewing the results this improvement would keep the streets more safe, clean, and silent. Another factor which stood out in the interviews was the existing number of illegal residents. The locals feel like Barcelona is a home for illegal residents and refugees without any punishments of their actions or control. Therefore, the illegal residents who are not helping the country itself to develop should be evicted. Also, the punishments of crimes are negligible, which leads to crime spiral when criminals can pay themselves out easily after stealing a smart phone. The gravity of crimes needs to be so high that criminals will not be granted a bail to decrease the number of crimes and improve the quality of locals' life.

Barcelona city is one of the biggest metropolises in the Europe and the control in public transport should be more active and secured. In addition, there should be more busses and metros running during the rush hours: this would facilitate locals' life a lot and make the travelling in public transport more effortless. Now the metro rails are not shared and due to this fact people are running through the rails to avoid paying for the tickets. Passengers should not be able to jump over the ports and travel without tickets. When the number of these "free passengers" is cut to the minimum, the paying passengers can enjoy more their travel in peace. Usually these "free passengers" are linked to pickpockets and therefore the number of crimes would be cut down with better security in public transportation. There need to be more ticket inspectors on the stations, moving busses, trams and metros checking tickets and overall behaviour. Also, the entrance and exit gates should be from the top to bottom built in order to travellers are forced to pay for their tickets. In the future, an idea of built air train from Barcelona to other Spanish cities and for example to France would solve the packed transportation problem. The travellers will be provided more peaceful public transportation experiences as soon as the transportation system is more organized and secured.

The improvement waste management system, a bigger variety of attracted tourism sectors and new attractions need to be found to minimize the negative tourism impacts. The government should put more focus on marketing different type of tourism there to attract different kind of visitors around the year. For example, market Barcelona for business, healthcare, culture, eco tourism and sustainable tourism instead of party tourism and city breakers. Eco and sustainable travellers are known of their sustainable



travelling behaviour when travelling: these travellers try to minimize waste and pollution, conserve natural environments instead of the most packed tourist attractions, support local people and their businesses, respect and preserve local culture, prioritize animal welfare and first of all they give back to the visiting country itself for example via volunteering (UNWTO 2019). Due to corona virus pandemic, Barcelona was closed to tourists to allow time for it to recover from the impacts that had resulted from large-scale infections there. Whilst inconvenient for tourists who had planned to travel here, this was perfect opportunity for Barcelona nature to recover. Therefore, I suggest that Barcelona should close the city for tourists more often when the city is starting to face overcrowding and its negative impacts.

### **6.3 Self evaluation of own research process and work**

In the first place I wanted to simplify the whole research and make it good on the first round through good planning. Therefore, I made a pre-planned timeline for my thesis writing progress and discussed about it with my personal supervisor. Also, I drew up a preliminary outline of my final paper to clarify to whole writing process. We discussed about the evaluation criteria of research papers to facilitate me to understand what the requirements of best grades are. During the whole writing, I have been making notes of all the used references to help with the organization of my reference list.

My knowledge base was further improved by reading matter-of-fact textbooks. Reviewed over fifty different sources including scientific reseaches, papers and examples of both Bachelor and Master thesis from sustainable, mass and overtourism fields. These materials studied the environmental, social, cultural and economical consequences of them. Also, I took human resource and tourism mobility courses while I was living and studying in Barcelona. These courses enhanced and broadened the fundamental knowledge related to overtourism and tourism impacts which are the two fields directly related to the thesis topic. Due tot his fact, I had good understanding of the knowledge base related to the area of this research

#### **6.3.1 The things that I did well**

I managed to return the final report on the end of September 2020 due to the fact I stayed in regular contact with my mentor and followed the research schedule. The results part answers for the research questions: why residents' quality of life I

satisfactory and how their quality of life could be improved. I managed to find ways to improve locals' quality life on all economical, environmental, social and cultural levels. All in all, I succeed to put together research, which is informative, clear, limited, and good ground for future studies and sustainable tourism development ideas in the Mediterranean region. The locals' voice and opportunity to have an influence on change in this thesis through interviews make the whole study interesting and reliable.

I have learned the importance of weekly schedule and balance between having breaks and hard working. Therefore, I took day offs also and looked at my text with fresh eyes also. Also, I asked for a lot feedback from different people during the writing process with the grammatic and content for example. I managed to put together a research free of errors such as grammars, spelling and usage.

All in all, I learned how to put together an interview research from choosing the research method all the way to results and conclusion parts. I practiced purposely the interview questions through and made some changes to make the question template easier to understand, follow and achieve the goal of answering this research project questions. What comes to the theoretical part I truly realised the importance of real explanations and story examples so the text as a whole was easy to understand, reliable and mature.

I truly challenged myself, red my writings aloud and asked questions from myself to improve my research to get the best possible results out of it. Especially, during the writing process I was putting effort into gripping beginnings and endings of each paragraph. Also, I modified my text to be easy to follow with paragraph's logical direction of moving toward main points while answering questions thoroughly. After my research was ready, I finalized each paragraph with clear topic sentences that stated the main point that I wanted to make out of them. At the same time, I realised that I needed to learn how to cut the bibliography and learn new techniques with that because it crossed two pages at the first sigh. Anyhow, I managed to cut my contents page into two pages and fit in all the needed information there. My goal was to put together a captivating research, which is publishable and base for further studies as well and I think I achieved that goal well.

### **6.3.2 The following things I could have done better**

During the writing process I was fighting against my self-distance. I was for a long time struggling with a thought that this thesis will define the rest of my life. I should have been more merciful for myself and take the whole thesis process as a learning process in the first place. Anyways, I decided to have one-month break in June. After that, I looked at my thesis with fresh eyes and mind full of new ideas. Having a break was not planned so I changed my schedule a bit. After the deserved break my final paper became faster ready and better.

What comes to choosing the target group and interviewees, I could have interviewed more people overall. Due to this fact, I could have reached bigger variety of answers and new point of views. Also, I could have limited the group of interviewees more specifically into people who have lived their whole life in Barcelona: now I talked with ten people of whom two were raised and born in Barcelona.

The number of pages of my research including attachments, text and sources is over eighty pages. Therefore, I think my research could have been more reader-friendly and summarized. During this writing process I learned the importance of making limitations in order to keep the total number of pages in control.

## **7 Conclusion**

The aim of the conclusion is to wrap up this research and introduce the main findings and conclusions of this study. Furthermore, through the conclusions of the study, the practical improvement quality of living actions for Barcelona residents will be discussed. Lastly, the suggestions for further studies will be presented.

### **7.1 Summary of the study**

The aim of this research was to improve locals' quality of life in Barcelona, while identifying the existing both negative and positive social, cultural, economical, and environmental tourism consequences there. Thus, this study has successfully outlined the improvement ideas from Barcelona residents' point of views. Thereby, the purpose of this study was to find answers to the following research questions:

1. How is increasing in tourism affects the environment, economics, and socio-culture in Barcelona?
2. What kind of consequences tourism has caused residents in Barcelona?
3. How are residents' behaviour changed in Barcelona because of the growing phenomenon in tourism?
4. How residents' quality of life can be improved in Barcelona?

By analyzing Barcelona residents' representations of their quality of life linked with mass tourism in the Spring 2020, this thesis has shown the increase in cost of living, insecurity problems, dirtiness, party tourism, noise pollution, promotion of party tourism and congestion are pushing the locals to relocate from the centre of Barcelona.

Thus, based on the findings, this study outlines some key distinctions, which can help determine what kind of actions will be most effective and help to improve locals' quality of life in Barcelona be taken into consideration by the city councils' authorization and residents' needs.

Based on a qualitative analysis of " How tourism impacts the residents' quality of living in Barcelona?", it can be concluded that tourism management plan provided by Barcelona city council needs to follow more sustainable guidelines and locals' needs. Therefore, more restrictions on non-essential travel and immigrant movement at Barcelona land border is needed. Reviewing the opinions gathered for this study, this

would decrease the overcrowding problems there. Moreover, it can also be concluded that the new built and found attractions outside of the Ciutat Vella would spread out tourists from the centre and prevent La Rambla from collapsing. I have personally studied in the CETT-University which is located in the centre of Barcelona. These gotten results can later be used as study materials for their sustainability and human rights classes just like for different schools as well.

## **7.2 Recommendations for the future studies**

This research has thereby been an exploratory study into the equity quality of life and living conditions phenomenon, which is an undeveloped research area still. Therefore, the findings of this study opened more new questions than what this research was able to answer. More research needs to be conducted on the topic itself, tourism impacts for from locals' perspective, especially in the Spanish and Mediterranean region context.

However, this study could not provide an overview on a whole Spain scale, thus it would be interesting to see whether the Spanish people quality of life is different in other cities and societies. To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could address overpricing, overcrowding and the overall traffic jam in general for example.

Moreover, future researches could look more in depth into companies and entrepreneurs that are driving locals away through their *pricy apartment leasing and other businesses*. Additionally, *packed public transport problems* were also something that were highlighted by several respondents of this study. Thereby, another research topic could dig into *new mobility plan* in Barcelona considering improved public transport opportunities, such as air train and more running shifts during the rush hours. Thirdly, further researches are needed to determine *the causes of relationship between illegal immigrants and social tourism impacts*. The overcrowding problems could be solved in Barcelona if the illegal immigrants were driven away,

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## **Attachments**

### **Appendix A: Used interview form in this thesis**

#### **How tourism impacts the residents' quality of living in Barcelona?**

The priority of this research is to improve Barcelona residents' quality of life in the Ciutat Vella neighbourhood. The participants' answers will help to increase one's knowledge about the negative and positive impacts affected by tourism from the local community point of view. Also, in this interview the interviewees are able to share their desires about responsible tourism behaviour and actions in Barcelona.

In the beginning of 2020, the covid-19 pandemic has had a huge effect in Barcelona causing different new lockdown measurements and rules. Spain has been under the lockdown since March 13, 2020 until May 2, 2020. Therefore, interviewees are asked to answer the following questions how they felt before the lockdown.

#### **INTERVIEW**

**Personal details will be asked first:** age, gender, nationality, living area, current employment and studying situation

1. How long have you lived in the Ciutat Vella?
2. How does it feel like to live in that neighbourhood?
3. What stands out to you as the defining characteristic of Ciutat Vella?

**Background and knowledge related to tourism:** studies, relatives etc

4. Do you work in the tourism industry? For how many years?
5. Do you study in the tourism industry? For how many years?

#### **Behaviour and experience**

6. How has tourism flows have affected your daily life?
7. What kind of environmental impacts does the tourism industry have in your neighbourhood?

8. What kind of impacts does the tourism industry have in your neighbourhood local culture and people?
9. What kind of economic consequences does the tourism industry have in your neighbourhood?
10. What type of tourist behaviour and tourism makes you happy? What makes you the saddest?

### **Opinions and belief**

11. Can you tell me about your experience related to the tourism phenomenon in Barcelona?
12. How do you wish that tourists would act around your neighbourhood?

### **Feelings**

13. How happy are you to live in Barcelona (from 1-5)?
14. How covid-19 pandemic change the way you act in Barcelona? Changed your life?
15. Is there something that Barcelona residents' could do in the tourism sector to improve their quality of life?
16. Is there something that Barcelona city council could do to improve residents' quality of life?

### **General last question**

17. Is there anything else you want to add before we finish this interview?