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# The most affected European destinations by over-tourism

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## **1. Abstract**

This paper examines some of the most over-saturated destinations in Europe and actions taken to control the situation. The destinations studied are Venice, Barcelona, Prague, Santorini, Amsterdam, Dubrovnik and Mallorca and the negative consequences of over-tourism such as the loss of the local identity, the rise in the cost of living and the nuisance caused to the residents are detailed. Additionally, possible solutions in order to cope with overcrowding in the destinations are given, like limiting the number of visitors through technology, spreading the tourists across using different promotion strategies, balancing supply and demand through taxes and pricing and other approaches such as slow tourism.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1. Contextualisation and objectives**

During recent years, the peak season in the most popular European destinations has been growing at a higher number of tourist arrivals. This has affected these European destinations with the overcrowding of the cities because of unsustainable practices of mass tourism. Over-tourism is a relatively new word that has not officially entered the dictionaries but that has become very used and talked about recently. The appearance of this new word means that it has become a very relevant subject nowadays, even though the bad effects that tourism has had on some destinations has been happening for years (Dickinson, 2018). It should be noted that the term “over-tourism” received worldwide attention in 2017 because the media started reporting the rise of local complaints and backlashes against tourism which disturbs the residents’ daily life. This was followed by a lot of protests in cities such as Barcelona and Venice with signs and graffiti reading “Tourists go home!” which was given the term “tourism-phobia” by the media (Francis, n.d.).

The purpose of this paper is to see how different European destinations are affected by over-tourism, if their respective governments are doing something to reverse the situation and what possible solutions are given by different private and public organisations and experts in different fields. The main objectives of this thesis are:

- I. Identifying the factors that made over-tourism possible.
- II. Comprehending the causes of the negative perception of residents towards tourism.
- III. Finding evidence about European destinations that are affected by over-tourism.
- IV. Stating the negative consequences of over-tourism on each destination analysed.
- V. Reporting actions taken in order to minimise the negative consequences.
- VI. Compiling different solutions or recommendations to change the current situation.

## **2.2. Methodology**

To obtain information about the previously mentioned objectives a qualitative research method based on document analysis was used. The procedure was finding, selecting, understanding and synthesising information from the documents. The documents that were analysed were mainly researchers' papers, online newspaper articles, press releases, organisational and institutional reports and books. Some of the documents were obtained from the bibliographic database EBSCOHost accessed through our University credentials, from scholar web searchers such as Google Scholar, from the global information analytics company Elsevier and from the social networking site Researchgate.

## **2.3. Outline**

First, this paper examines the different factors that contribute to the over-tourism in European destinations, explaining the reason behind the continuing growth in the number of tourists, the change in the ways of traveling of the current generations and why some destinations are more affected by over-tourism than others.

Next, the causes of over-tourism are explained citing the work of various researchers such as Milano (2017), World Travel & Tourism Council (2017) and three popular theories to help describe better the anti-tourism sentiments of the locals are given.

Then, evidence about over-tourism in each of the European destinations of this paper (Venice, Barcelona, Prague, Santorini, Amsterdam, Dubrovnik and Mallorca), has been collected and presented.

Finally, some solutions and recommendations to over-tourism are given and actions taken by different destinations are detailed.

## **3. Factors that contribute to the over-tourism**

The factors that explain the continuing growing number of tourists are that, over the past 10-15 years, travelling in Europe has become much more affordable for Europeans. The city tourism in Europe was boosted by the connectivity, specifically through the fast growth of low-cost carriers such as Ryanair. Not only has this led to the appearance of new destinations but it has also increased the opportunities to already well-established destinations (Jordan, 2016; Harrison and Sharpley, 2017). For the North Americans, traveling to Europe has been favoured by the strong value of the dollar against the euro. Finally, for the Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries, Europe became affordable because they are emerging outbound markets (Jordan, 2016). For these markets, Europe is still their favourite destination, with 615 million international tourist arrivals in 2016 (UNWTO, 2017).

Furthermore, apart from the growth in the number of tourists, the way that people are travelling has changed as well. With the online booking tools and the appearance of peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms, such as Airbnb, Home Away, Couchsurfing, new

opportunities for traveling are given. This enables tourists to be much closer to where the residents live, in their neighbourhoods, instead of tourist-oriented facilities and can be the cause of a lot of public disorder and complaints, affecting their everyday life. What is more, traveling is reinforced by social media, review websites and destination rankings, in particular to the most popular destinations. Another contributing problem is the awareness created to visit endangered places (e.g. Great Barrier Reef) “while you can” (Jordan, 2016; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

It should also be noted that some major cities (e.g. London, Paris, Vienna) cope better with mass tourism than others. The factors that explain this, are that the local population is large and the cities present appropriate infrastructures that can take in the high volume of tourists. The cities also count with effective systems of transport that move people to the city centres and other parts of the city. In contrast, the medium-sized and smaller cities are more impacted by the over-tourism because they have a bigger difficulty to deal with the congestion, noise and pollution (Coccosis, Mexa and Collovini, 2002; Val et al., 2017).

### **3.1. Comprehending the anti-tourism sentiment**

In a recently published report, *Coping with success: Managing overcrowding in tourism destinations* by the World Travel and Tourism Council and McKinsey & Co. (2017) analyse what is known as “overcrowding”, “over-tourism” or “tourism-phobia”. Tourist overcrowding is caused by five crucial issues:

1. Alienation of local residents. The residents are concerned about tourism which includes the rise in the rents, noise, the change in local retail and the nature of their neighbourhood. As well as seeing no benefit returns from tourist spending in their economy.
2. Degradation of the tourist experiences. The experience of the tourists is degraded because of queues and crowds.
3. Overload in the infrastructures. The infrastructure is shared between residents and tourists, for non-tourism activities (e.g. retail, hygiene, commuting) which can add up to the consumption of energy and management of waste in the destination.
4. Damage to nature. The environment of a destination is affected by tourists in terms of overuse of the natural resources (e.g. water and forests), harm to the wildlife and pollution.
5. Threats to culture and heritage. The physical and spiritual integrity can be impacted by the overcrowding while also making security more difficult.

In addition, according to Dr. Claudio Milano (2017)’s report *Overtourism and Tourismphobia: Global trends and local contexts*, the protests against discomfort caused by the tourists on locals depend on mainly five specific practices:

1. The privatisation of public spaces.
2. The congestion of public spaces in the cities.
3. The rise in cruise ship tourism that leads to temporary visitors and day-trippers which cause congestion in determined seasons.

4. The increase in housing prices (house rent as well as the price per square meter of buildings).
5. The decrease in the purchasing power of the local residents.

Below are detailed three famous theories that can help explain the intolerance of the local population towards tourists in saturated destinations.

### **3.1.1. Doxey's Irritation Index**

The cause of local residents' anti-tourism sentiment can be easily explained with Doxey's Irritation Index. This theory analyses the sentiment of local's feelings related to the number of tourists in a destination. According to his theory, there are four stages, starting by euphoria in which the hosts or local residents are curious and interested about tourists, the tourists are welcome in the destination and locals are excited about their presence. When the number of tourists grows, it moves on to the next stage which is the apathy stage. In this stage the tourists are taken for granted and the relationship between locals and tourists becomes more formal and locals are indifferent towards the tourists, they do not know how to feel about them. In the next stage, which is the irritation stage, the number of tourists reaches the maximum level and the development of tourism is saturated, the tourism growth rate is expected to be higher and locals are worried about a rise in prices, crime and their cultural life being interfered by the tourists' presence. The tourists are seen as an irritation or annoyance. The latter phase is antagonism and tourists are blamed for all the bad things in the local society, therefore, locals become hostile towards tourists and seek actions against them. Following this concept, over-tourism can be logically situated in the last two stages of the Doxey's Irritation Index (Reisinger, 2012).

### **3.1.2. Tourism Carrying Capacity**

Another important term to take into consideration is the Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC). This concept was developed to acknowledge that tourism cannot continue growing endlessly without provoking permanent damage (Girard and Nijkamp, 2009). The definition given to describe the tourism carrying capacity by the World Tourism Organisation is "the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and social environment" (as cited in Milano, 2017). Nevertheless, this theory does not exclusively take into account the number of visitors in a destination. Other important variables, according to Milano (2017) are:

1. The distribution area of the visitors.
2. Activities done by the visitors.
3. Tourist behaviour.
4. The infrastructures of the destination.

The Tourism Carrying Capacity theory has been criticised by many because tourist destinations are much more complex and unstable and cannot be perceived as being

constant. However, this theory can be useful to measure the pressure that tourism has on a destination (Milano, 2017).

### **3.1.3. Butler's Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution**

Richard W. Butler's model was elaborated in 1980 and began as a discussion about the carrying capacity of tourism and sustainability. The model tries to explain the destinations' dynamic nature and it shows a generalised evolution of the product life cycle, in this case the product being the destination.

Butler (1980) explained in his own words his concept of the tourism cycle of evolution:

Visitors will come to an area in small numbers initially, restricted by lack of access, facilities and local knowledge. As facilities are provided and awareness grows, visitor numbers will increase. With marketing, information dissemination and further facility provision, the area's popularity will grow rapidly. Eventually, however, the rate of increase in visitor numbers will decline as levels of carrying capacity are reached. These may be identified in terms of environmental factors (e.g. land scarcity, water quality, air quality), of physical plant (e.g. transportation, accommodation, other services), or of social factors (e.g. crowding, resentment by the local population). As the attractiveness of the area declines relative to other areas, because of overuse and the impacts of visitors, the actual number of visitors may also eventually decline. (Butler, 1980)

## **4. Evidence about destinations affected by over-tourism.**

### **4.1. Venice, Italy**

Venice has been a tourist destination since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The city attracted visitors that were drawn by its architecture and rich culture. Venice held special fairs dedicated to buyers of locally produced goods such as books, glass and lace. Venice was also a part of the Grand Tour, which was an international travel with the educational purpose of the young men of the century. Besides the fine arts, theatre and music, gambling was also available in Venice which made it an attractive destination for that time (Baetjer, 2003).

Nevertheless, Venice's yearly exponential growth in the number of visitors was in the 1950's. In that period, it had an average of 2 million visitors annually. With the pass of time it reached 12 million visitors in 1995, over 16 million in 2011 and over 30 million visitors in 2017. This fast growth has played an important part in Venice's annual total income growth and the tourism industry has become a very important contributor to the city's economy (Servizio Statistica e Ricerca, n.d.).

Excluding the economic benefits that tourism has had in the Venetian economy, it has also had negative effects on the city, especially on the citizens. Venice's problem regarding the property market is primarily based on the rather low properties for rent

available to the residents of the city. Over the past 20 years, property owners have converted their apartments into hotels and bed and breakfasts or renting them to tourists through platforms such as Airbnb, leaving a very reduced availability of apartments for local residents. Because of that, the cost of rent for permanent residents was driven very high, so only the wealthiest could afford to live there. According to the site Inside Airbnb (2017)'s compiled data, Venice has a total of 6.027 listings on the website, of which the majority by 74,9% are entire homes/apartments. The second share with 23,9% corresponds to private rooms and the rest, 1.2% are shared rooms. The average price per night is €130 (Boigenzahn, Loftin, Roncati & Yuzvik, 2016).

What is more, local stores and businesses are turned into souvenir shops or tourism related businesses, leaving no option for locals but to buy for their necessities in the mainland of Italy, as for restaurant owners they charge "tourist prices" to locals. In 2016, a protest was organised by means of a group called "Generation 90" in which the local residents were protesting about Venice catering more for tourists than for its residents, by rolling empty shopping trolleys through the streets of Venice (The Local IT, 2016). Furthermore, tourism has absorbed most of the economic activity in Venice leaving very little choices for people who do not want to work in the industry, so they seek new job opportunities elsewhere in the country (Ross, 2015; Milano 2017). Another annoyance for Venetians are the overcrowded streets, bridges and the saturated transportation system constituted by boats also known as "vaporettos" which both residents and tourists rely heavily on to get from one place to another. The large number of tourists using the transportation system forces local residents to change their daily routes to avoid the crowds or waiting in line to get on a boat (Capua, Guyette, Hetherman and Hock, 2012; Giuffrida, 2017).

All the previously explained factors have contributed to the population exodus problem of Venice, concretely of its historic centre. Nowadays 60.000 people visit Venice daily outnumbering the 55.000 residents of the historic city, which 30 years ago were more than 120.000. In 2008, after the drop in the Venetian population to 60.000, to raise awareness about the situation in Venice, the "Venessia.com" pressure group arranged a mock funeral which symbolised the death of Venice whose "soul was dying" due to the loss of population. In 2016 another protest was held by the same group about the continuing population drop rate by walking on the streets wheeling their suitcases and holding banners that read the hashtag "Venexodus". Some demographers say that by 2030, there will no longer be any full-time residents in Venice (Rome, 2009; The Local IT, 2016). People are fearing that if no measures are taken to reverse this over-tourism problem Venice is going to become a theme park, transforming a once mercantile and cultural city into a tourist resort, because it has a big affluence of tourists by day and it will have a no longer living population, leaving the city's buildings empty and converting it into a ghost town at night (Deutsche Welle, 2012).

There are also environmental impacts that over-tourism has had on Venice, such as the damage caused on the Lagoon by the cruise ships, the air pollution and the visual impact on the locals. Data from the Passenger Terminal of Venice shows that in



2017 there were approximately one million and a half of tourists of 466 cruises (Venezia Terminal Passeggeri S.p.A., 2017). The cruise ships' current route enters the Venetian lagoon coming from the Adriatic Sea, overcoming the port of the "Lido" (an extended 12-kilometer island), entering the basin of San Marco and touring the Giudecca canal until docking at the maritime station. Because of their size, when the cruise ships approach the edges of the city they cause an "annoying friction", witnessed by some distressing videos taken in recent years. In addition, the Regional Agency for Environmental Protection's various reports show that air pollution increases with the tonnage of the vessels, they also cause noise pollution and their propellers move a mass of sediment that cannot be reconstituted (García, 2017).

In November 2013, officials from Venice decided to take action by banning large ships from entering the city centre. The ban lasted only three months and was lifted in March 2014 due to tourism companies arguing that it would have negative economic repercussions on the city's economy and also because it would destabilise cruise ship activities throughout the Mediterranean. The ban was also suspended on the ground that the risks to the heritage represented by these ships are not proven (Hosteltur, 2014). Similar to the socio-economic impacts, the citizens of Venice have organised many protests against the "big ships". In 2013, hundreds of residents went for a swim in the Giudecca Canal to disrupt the passage of vessels. Another one took place in 2016, a group called "No Grandi Navi" of about 1000 people dressed up as pirates who chased the cruise ships with their boats in the Giudecca Canal, shouting anti-cruise-ship slogans (Haines, 2016; Hu, 2016).

In July 2016, UNESCO worried about the current state of Venice's deteriorating lagoon and the lack of measures taken, approved a resolution demanding that Venice prohibits the largest ships and tankers by February 2017. The Italian government was warned that if the country fails to obey its resolution, UNESCO will place Venice on the list of endangered heritage sites, which is a category reserved for ruins destroyed by war in Third World countries (McKenna, 2016; Rodriguez, 2017).

#### **4.2. Barcelona**

In the last twenty years Barcelona has experienced an impressive tourist evolution. In 1990, 1.7 million tourists visited the city. However, after hosting the Olympic Games in 1992, its image of the city was transformed notably, which made it become one of Europe's most popular destinations. In the year 2000, the number of international visitors in Barcelona was of 3.14 million, a figure that has grown to 8.36 million by 2016 (Statista, n.d.), while the city's population is only of 1.6 million (Harrison and Sharpley, 2017).

Similarly to the Venice case, Barcelona has a high concentration of hotels in its historic centre, it is losing residents in areas suffering from excessive tourist pressure, the economic activities are changing and the local resident's dissatisfaction towards tourism is growing (Hosteltur, 2014).

Barcelona's population density is much higher compared to its direct destination competitors. The distribution of the city's tourist activity is very uneven. There is a high tourist supply and demand concentrated in the areas with the most popular and iconic sites, such as Ciutat Vella district, around Sagrada Família and Park Güell. The neighbourhoods and spaces in those concentrated areas present a high tourism intensity while the rest of the areas are underdeveloped for tourism due to the lack of supply and demand. Regarding the hotel accommodation's location, there is a clear contrast in the district distribution. The majority of the hotels are located in the districts of Ciutat Vella, Eixample and Sant Martí, whilst Nou Barris and Sant Andreu have practically none, making them no place for tourism activity. Similar is the case of apartments for tourists, most of them are located in the city's historic centre, in the neighbourhoods of Gràcia, Eixample and Sant Martí. This can be explained by the characteristics of the neighbourhoods, having a lot of famous and desired by the tourists attractions. In the last three decades the number of hotels has increased in a very fast rate, going from 118 hotel establishments in 1990, to 408 establishments in 2016 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2014 and 2016).

Meanwhile, besides the increase in the numbers of hotel facilities there is also a rise in the number of residential properties offered for tourism purposes in the city. Once again, due to the offering through platforms such as Airbnb, the price of rent and property in Barcelona has risen and has made people move out of the city because they can no longer afford to live there. According to the Inside Airbnb (2018) page, the rental housing platform has 18.531 advertisements in the city of Barcelona, of which 46.6% are full apartments and 52.5% are rooms. Besides, 55.8% of the advertisers have more than one property listed. As stated in Gant's report (2016), the displacement of local citizens is not only caused by mass tourism but is also a result of real estate speculation.

Apart from the large density of visitors and residents that travel in the city centre, there is also a huge number of cruise ship passengers. In fact, a dock with capacity for seven large ships was built, allowing 30.000 people to disembark on a single day in August (Verdú, 2016). Due to the existence of this uneven balance in the whole city, with a concentration in just a few points in the city, the problem of congestion arises, which makes more difficult the daily life of Barcelona's local residents (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2014 and 2016).

As a matter of fact, various neighbour association groups have been united by the "Assembly of Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Tourism" to take part in actions to challenge the development of mass tourism (Rodríguez, López and Caballero, 2017). Numerous protests have been held, such as the one from the neighbours of the Barceloneta district, who complained against the proliferation of hammocks, the increase of invisible evictions and the persistence of apartments for tourist rent in their neighbourhood. They claimed that there are very few neighbours left and that they are getting evicted because their rent contracts are not being renewed (Pauné, 2017). In another protest, around 2000 people occupied the famous boulevard La Rambla, with posters reading "Barcelona is not for sale" and "Learn from Venice",

they protested that La Rambla has become a “tourist route”, on which the stores and shops that used to be there have been transformed into places that provide for the tourists, such as textile multinationals, souvenir shops and restaurants offering typical Spanish dishes (França, 2017).

From the survey of residents’ perception of tourism in the city of Barcelona in 2016, 47,5% of the respondents agree that Barcelona has to continue attracting tourists while in 2012 the percentage of this statement was of 71,8%. To the statement that the capacity limit for providing tourist service is being exceeded 48,9% of the respondents agree with the statement, while in 2012 the number was of 24,9%. With these figures we can see that each year the perception of the residents towards tourism is becoming more negative (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2016).

### **4.3. Prague**

The fall of the communist regime in 1989, opened up Prague to western tourist markets, which was supposed to restore the market economy, increase the competitiveness of the city and restore society’s democracy (Dumbrovská and Fialová, 2018). Other important events that affected positively the development of tourism in Prague were the accession to the European Union and the Schengen Area (Dumbrovská and Fialová, 2014). Today, Prague takes the fifth position of most popular European city for tourists (Turp, 2017). In 2017 Prague received 7.6 million visitors which is a 7.4% increase compared to 2016 (PTV Media, 2018).

One of the first studies done on the impact of tourism in Prague’s historic centre was by Simpson (1999) who concluded that the tourism has not dominated Prague as a whole but rather its historic centre. She also describes some of the characteristics of over-tourism such as the land being transformed from residential to commercial use, the displacement of the local residents and the congestion of the streets. In her research, Simpson (1999) also calls to action the need to manage the tourism activity in the historic centre of Prague before it destroys the attractiveness of the destination and the quality of life of the residents.

In recent years, researchers like Dumbrovská and Fialová (2014) also identified a strong tourist concentration in the historical part of the city, in sites that are included in UNESCO’s list of world cultural heritage sites. Congestions and overall “touristification” are particularly observed in the Royal Path which is a route that compresses the city’s most famous monuments, such as the Republic Square, Old Town Square with the astronomical clock and old town hall, the Charles Bridge, Lesser Town Square with St. Nicholas Church and Prague Castle’s area (Dumbrovská and Fialová, 2018). The authors Dumbrovská and Fialová (2014) affirm that the city is losing its value as a residential area and it is transforming into a “tourism ghetto”.

The increase in tourist demand, favoured by the opening of the state borders to western countries, attracted foreign investment in Prague and its historic centre

began its transformation to be able to provide facilities for tourists. As a matter of fact, more than 90% of the facilities in the Royal Path are tourist oriented and facilities such as necessity stores, cafés, cinemas and bookshops have been replaced by large international chains such as McDonalds, KFC, Hilton and Ritz hotels (Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016). Moreover, according to the study of Dumbrovská and Fialová (2018) most souvenir shops are owned by immigrants, mostly from Bulgaria, Serbia and Croatia and they offer mass-produced general souvenirs, with no connection to the local identity. On the other hand, there are very few shops owned by local designers and craftsmen of traditional Czech crafted goods, such as the glass and crystal, the wooden marionettes and toys, jewellery and natural cosmetics. In addition, there are shops that label their stock as “Traditionally Czech” while selling mass-produced, cheaper and with lower quality copies of the traditional Czech crafts.

The inflow of foreign investment had positive effects on the revitalisation of the city but it also had negative effects, such as the population decline (Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016). If we look at the evolution of population in Prague we can see that in 2017, the centre and inner districts of Prague have declined to approximately 785,000 residents, compared to 1980 when population in these districts was of 980.000. On the other hand, the outer districts, which in 1980 had a population of 200.000 residents, have experienced an increase to above 460.000 residents in 2017. When looking at Prague’s central district’s population, which comprises the historic centre or the previously mentioned Royal Path, the population dropped from 53.000 in 1980 to 29.000 in 2017 (Cox, 2017).

In spite of the fact that local residents do not have a negative attitude towards the tourists, they are aware of the effects of tourism impact on their quality of life, such as the noise during night hours, the overcrowding, the increase in prices, vandalism and crime (Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016). In the book *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*, Colomb and Novy (2017) explain the perspective of local residents towards tourists. They view the adverse effects of tourism as a consequence of badly managed development, due to the “laissez-faire” approach and corruption of their municipal government. In post-communist countries, society relies heavily on the role of the state and believes in the paternalistic role of the state. In Czech society, the activism has a reformist approach and is oriented towards the pressure of public authorities and less on collective public protests. It was not until 2010 that members of the public started to organise in order to protect the interests of the residents and the city’s historic centre, which are indirectly affected by tourism. Forms of civil engagement were formed by groups of people that complained against displacement like “Prague 1 Tenants Association” and the “Club of Old Prague” worried about heritage preservation. Explicit forms of opposition against tourism have been organised by a civic association called “Pro1” in a small scale and were focused on disturbances caused by alcohol tourism and Segway tours. In 2017, “Prague 1” councillors expressed their concern about the shared economy phenomenon happening in Prague’s historic centre, which is “pricing the local people out of the

centre of the city and it is in danger of making it a ghost town or tourist museum” (Johnstone, 2017).

To conclude, most of the people involved in the research of Prague’s tourism development agree that the development is not sustainable in the long run and if no measures are taken, Prague will reach the full over-tourism effect (Simpson, 1999; Dumbrovská and Fialová, 2014; Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016; Colomb and Novy, 2017; Johnstone, 2017).

#### **4.4. Santorini**

More than 1.3 million tourists visit Santorini every year, which only has an area of 76 square kilometres. The highest number to date is of 2.5 million people who visited the island in 2016 (Greek Travel Pages, 2016; Lalani, 2017). According to the professor at the University of the Aegan and scientific adviser at South Aegan Tourism Observatory Ioannis Spilanis, at its high tourism season, Santorini receives around 70.000 people on a daily basis. The rapid growth in tourist numbers is having negative effects on the local community, natural environment and long-term popularity of Santorini (Vassilopoulou, 2017).

Local community of Santorini is aware of the impacts created by the overcrowding issue. In a tourist satisfaction survey from 2016, locals showed dissatisfaction on trash disposal, congestion and transportation. The town of Oía is the most popular tourist attraction in Santorini. It is also the most expensive town to find accommodation on the island, which has been turned into a luxurious destination. Locals also believe that the authenticity of their traditions, such as the traditional dance “Horos” are being lost to tourists who are only interested in the luxury feel of the destination. They also criticise that family businesses are being replaced by bigger and well-known firms (Lalani, 2017; Vassilopoulou, 2017).

The consumer prices and housing costs have noticeably increased, which pushed the cost of living for residents up. Many of Santorini’s residents have turned to the tourism industry, even the owners of farming land that is used for producing wine are transforming it into bed and breakfasts to obtain more profits (Dilouambaka,2017). In an interview with The Guardian newspaper, the mayor of Santorini Nikos Zorzos said that the permanent residents of Santorini increased to over 25.000 people because of work opportunities. The public-sector employees who migrate to work in Santorini are struggling to pay the rent and the consumer prices. Moreover, it is difficult for them to find housing because locals prefer to rent to tourists (Capron, 2016; Smith, 2017). However, for foreign vacation home buyers, mainly European, American and Chinese, Santorini is of big interest due to the financial crisis of 2008 which has helped flatten property values on the island. Nevertheless, Santorini has an average price of €3.130 per square metre, which makes it one of the most expensive areas of the Cyclades islands for real estate (McMullen, 2016).

At the same time, Santorini’s number of cruise ship passengers is growing sharply with an annual of 780,000 to 900,000 passengers. This increase has impacted the

infrastructure of Santorini in terms of water consumption (which rose above 46%) and land use. Santorini who is second in number of cruise ship tourists, sees very few economic benefits from its activity. Santorini received 783.893 cruise ship visitors in 2016 while figures that show contribution of the cruise tourism to the economy in the same year was of 509 million euros with Santorini benefiting just 8.6%. This means that Santorini got 43.7 million euros, which divided by number of passengers means an average of 97.9 euros per passenger (Bellos, 2017; Lalani, 2017).

What is more, the infrastructure of the island is unable to meet the demands of the visitors (Greek Travel Pages, 2016) and the rise in the demand of accommodation is endangering the island's ecosystem due to excessive construction. According to a report of the University of Aegean (UoA), the area built on Santorini is of 11% of its surface, compared to the 1% of other islands that form the Cyclades. When it comes to the number of beds it has gone from 9,255 beds in 2004 to 14,095 beds in 2015. As for other facilities, the island counts with more than 700 restaurants, cafes, bar and bakeries (Smith, 2017; Vassilopoulou, 2017).

Furthermore, the mayor of Santorini warned that "Geological formations that are thousands of years old are being destroyed and not just by illegal but also legal construction". Problems with the legislation arose in 2012, when the minister of environment Nikos Sifounakis said that to protect the island, he would amend a presidential decree outlining strict measures for the allowed construction zone. The decree recommended a 500-meter no-build zone along the Vlychada coastline, which, thanks to its unusual volcanic rock formations is one of the island's most popular beaches. Due to pressure from the residents, the Municipal Council of Santorini proposed that the zone should be restricted to 200 meters and, in the end, the Environment Ministry settled for a protected zone of 150 meters (Lialios, 2016).

#### **4.5. Amsterdam**

Tourism in Amsterdam's city centre has been present for several years. It was not until 2016 that the growth in tourism received the media's attention. Amsterdam has a population of 850.000 and it is estimated that visitors' numbers have increased to 17 million a year. The most frequented area by tourists in Amsterdam is the Burgwallen Oude Zijde, also called the Wallen. The Wallen is comprised from the Damstraat to the Central Station (where the Red Light District is also comprised). The area presents a variety of coffee shops, restaurants, sex museums and souvenir shops that are attractive to the visitors. In 1999, Jan Nijman criticised how Amsterdam's city centre is transforming into a theme park. He argued that the tourist industry is attracted primarily by the tolerance aspect and liberal position of the city regarding sex and drugs. Residents of the city and local politicians are starting to see the tourism situation in Amsterdam as a serious issue (Waard, 2012; Oosterhof, 2017; Zee, 2017).

Apart from the growth in tourist numbers, the facilities that cater for tourists have increased from 84 to 155, while a decline in shops for groceries has been identified (from 104 shops to 74). The rise in ice-cream and waffle stores, which are the tourist-oriented ones, is due to a change in a legislation that was aimed at saving an ice-cream factory in the Jordaan neighbourhood. As a result, the shops do not need a license for the food service industry. Moreover, the decline in traditional shops has attributed to the displacement of local residents. This is mainly because the food offered in tourist-oriented shops (e.g. waffles, cheese) do not correspond to the residents' lifestyle. Another reason for local discontent is the behaviour of tourists (e.g. under alcohol and marijuana effects) and the entertainment activities (e.g. Segway tours, pub-crawls) that are turning their neighbourhoods into a "playground". In addition, the overcrowding in the public spaces creates a feeling of lack of space and lack of public familiarity (e.g. friends seeing each other on the streets or recognising familiar faces). It also interferes in the routines of residents, when it comes to the routes they take and places to sit, which results in a loss of place (Haines, 2016; Oosterhof, 2017; Zee, 2017).

Furthermore, the historic centre has been gentrified in the last 20 years, becoming more elitist. This is followed by a rise in middle-high class tourism, however, both middle-high class tourists and low-budget tourists make use of either "high-culture" (e.g. Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh museum, Opera) and "alternative culture" (e.g. coffee shops, Red Light District) (Öztürk and Terhorst, 2012). Additionally, the Wallen, due to its popularity among tourists, has become Amsterdam's symbol in the international vision. The worldwide image of Amsterdam being associated with prostitution and weed has also shaped Amsterdam's society into a stereotype of Dutch people being "potheads" and "sex-crazed". This has affected in a negative way Amsterdammers' status in international social interactions (Waard, 2012).

#### **4.6. Dubrovnik**

In recent years, Dubrovnik has had a large increase in visitor numbers, influenced by the city's feature in the popular TV show Game of Thrones. A large proportion of Dubrovnik's economy depends on tourism which is highly concentrated in summer months (UNESCO-ICOMOS, 2015; Coffey, 2017).

The old city's overcrowding is aggravated by the cruise ships passengers' influx and the day trippers (UNESCO-ICOMOS, 2015). In 2017, the port of Dubrovnik accounted for 538 arrivals of cruise ships with 742,000 passengers, compared to 2015, in which the city had 475 ships and 463 in 2014 (Foster, 2017; Kraus, 2018).

The host population is affected by the congestion and the lack of space in peak months, saying it takes them 40 minutes to walk Dubrovnik's 300-metre pedestrian street. They also criticise that there is only one bar left that is locally frequented and that the fish market is no longer open. On the other hand, in winter the town is deserted, the streets are empty, shops and restaurants are closed and there is almost no cultural life (Euronews, 2017; Foster, 2017).

The city's domestic buildings are being replaced by holiday rental apartments and the permanent residents of Dubrovnik's Old Town account for 1.157 people, a decrease from 5.000 inhabitants in 1991. In contrast more than 2.000 tourists are accommodated in apartments, which causes a lack of housing for seasonal workers. Additionally, there are very few grocery shops for local people while there are 107 souvenir shops and 143 different restaurants aimed at tourists (UNESCO-ICOMOS, 2015; Euronews, 2017; Foster, 2017).

#### **4.7. Mallorca**

Mallorca is an island that belongs to the Balearic Islands, together with Menorca, Ibiza, Formentera and minor small islands and islets (e.g. Cabrera, Dragonera) The Balearic Islands are a very prosperous destination mainly owing to their location and being among the first destinations developed for mass tourism (Harrison and Sharpley, 2017). The Balearic Islands as a whole are the third most visited destination in Spain, behind Catalonia and the Canary Islands. In 2017, the total number of international tourists was of 13.8 million, an increase of 6% from 2016. In comparison with 2007, the international visitors of the Balearic Islands were 10.2 million. That is to say an increase of 35.3% in a decade (Moure, 2018).

A lot of the issues linked to tourism activity in Mallorca include the road congestion, the rise in prices of rent and property, the development of resort-like areas from which residents feel excluded and the degradation of the environment (Centre for Tourism Research and Technologies of the Balearic Islands, n.d.; Harrison and Sharpley, 2017).

Mallorca has a very high number of vehicles due to the shortage of public transport. Between 1997 and 2017, the number of vehicles increased from 475,837 to 767,356 for a population of 868,693 people. This causes more traffic jams, increases the time to get to work and difficulty to find parking. In addition, in 2017 the rent-a-car vehicles in Mallorca reached 120.000 vehicles (Bauzà, 2018).

In 2017 the housing prices in the Balearic Islands increased by 22.1% which is the second largest increase in Spain (Bauzà, 2018). According to the Centre for Tourism Research and Technologies of the Balearic Islands (n.d.), there is a housing speculation that happens through residential tourism (second home ownership) with an imposition of very high rental prices in the peak season. In Mallorca's coastal municipalities (e.g. Andratx, Alcúdia, Santanyí), the second home ownership is of 60 %, while 88 % of houses are reported to be vacant (non-occupied) making them an object of investment rather than housing (Hof and Salom, 2012). What is more real estate agencies often market properties in English, as in the case of the Santa Catalina neighbourhood (The Local ES, 2016).

Magaluf is an area which is considered as a British enclave because of several factors. The predominant type of visitors is British, English is a dominant language in that area, in both written and spoken forms. Moreover, the use of sterling and imperial measures is possible and facilities such as pubs or cafés have British



connotations (e.g. The Britannia, Lord Nelson, Duke of Wellington). Furthermore, the British national flag (Union Jack) and the flags of Scotland and Wales are seen everywhere, English newspapers, British TV programmes and food and drink are imported. The entertainment in some hotels is aimed at the British and most workers are from the United Kingdom (Harrison and Sharpley, 2017).

In Mallorca and the rest of the Balearic Islands, water and energy constitute limited resources and there are difficulties to assimilate the waste derived from tourist activities. The consumption of tourists is much higher than the one made by residents (Consell de Mallorca, 2017). As a matter of fact, the tourists who visit Palma spend, on a daily average, more than twice the water consumed by residents; while the residents use 119 litres every day, the visitors reach 278 liters (Buades, 2016). The head of Emaya, the municipal cleaning company of Palma, Neus Truyol said that the increasing quantity of garbage which must be collected twice a day is caused by tourism (Deutsche Welle, 2017). Moreover, the island's councillor for Urban Planning and Territory Mercedes Garrido admitted that the natural resources "are limited" and for this reason, these resources may be threatened by an excess of tourist places offered (Ramis, 2017).

Several local protests have been held against mass tourism in the island. In 2016, Mallorca gained international attention when the media reported a graffiti reading "Tourists go home" on the walls of the historic centre (White, 2016). The environmental groups of Mallorca decided to take action to say that it is urgent to take measures against the tourist saturation that the islands are living. That is why they organised a large demonstration in Palma, which took place in September 23, 2017 to protest against the tourism policy of the Government (Adrover, 2017). Some protestors expressed their concern about the rising rent prices and the difficulty of finding accommodation (Cafebabel, 2017). Resident organisations such as "Ciutat per qui l'habita" (literally "A city for who inhabits it") are aimed at standing up for the interests of the residents. "Ciutat per qui l'habita" brings attention to the mass tourism and urges local authorities to take action. A goal of the organisation is to highlight the huge amount of uninhabited properties in the city and the short-term rentals on platforms such as Airbnb (Cafebabel, 2017). Recent anti-tourism demonstrations were the protests against cruise ships, with the arrival in the port of Palma of the biggest cruise ship in the world the "Symphony of the Seas", which has the capacity of carrying 9.000 passengers. The protest was organised by the "Assembly 23-S" integrated by a group of ecologists such as "Fins aquí hem arribat" (literally "It has come to this"), who demonstrated against the impact of the cruise ship's big dimensions with signs reading "Stop cruise ships", "Horror of the Seas" or "Bye bye cruise ships" (Saenz, 2018).

In a survey carried by the Foundation Gadeso, 82% of the respondents consider that the island is suffering saturation. Seventy-four percent affirm that as a result of the saturation there is an abusive consumption of resources: water, energy and garbage collection. The majority of the residents in Mallorca see saturation on the main roads, with 79%, secondary roads, with 73% and on the beaches 76%. When it comes to employment, 83% consider that there is an "excessive dependence" on tourism

activity while 77% believe that tourism is associated with "low quality wages and contracts" (Bauzà, 2017).

## **5. Solutions and recommendations to over-tourism in destinations**

The destinations that are having a reduced tourist experience, seasonality, an overload in infrastructure and threats to nature, culture or heritage should establish approaches to "smooth" these problems (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

The World Travel & Tourism Council (2017) offers the following approaches:

### **5.1. Settling limits of visitors' arrivals.**

In the case of Dubrovnik, UNESCO has proposed that the city puts a limit of a maximum of 8.000 tourists a time. The mayor of Dubrovnik, Mato Franković, decided that starting in 2018 he will limit the number of tourists even more by putting the cap at 4.000 in order to protect the quality of the experience. He has also said that he will put limits on tour operators that are organizing day trips to Dubrovnik. The town also counts with surveillance cameras that track the visitors (Morris, 2017; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

Santorini is also implementing a cap on cruise ship arrivals in order to deal with the congestion caused, with a maximum of 8.000 passengers per day, which in contrast with 2017 it was of 12.000. The government officials have also implemented a system to distribute the arrival and departure times better and will request the cruise ships to leave a one-hour gap between each other when disembarking (The National Herald, 2018).

#### **5.1.1. Installing reservations and ticketing systems**

An example is Cinque Terre. Italy announced in 2016 that it plans to introduce a ticketing system with devices on the roads leading to Cinque Terre, in order to reduce its visitors. Cinque Terre is congested because of day-trippers and cruise ships and with this measure they aim at limiting the number of visitors to 1.5 million. When the number is reached the road access to Cinque Terre will be cut. The tourists will have to purchase tickets online in advance and there will be an app that shows the congestion in the destination (Reuters, 2016).

#### **5.1.2. Using technology to avoid congestion in real time**

Amsterdam's city official tourism and marketing website is trying different strategies such as displaying the waiting time in popular attractions on their website. The organisation has also made a mobile-app called "Discover the City" that sends notifications about busy attractions, suggesting alternative ones. Amsterdam is also working on panels to forecast the overcrowding in particular sites. The department of traffic and other agencies are looking for ways to detect movement of people through cameras and phone data. The information obtained will be analysed and will

help with the optimisation of cleaning and maintenance and to calculate infrastructural needs (Coffey, 2017; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

The mayor of Venice, Luigi Brugnaro and the tourism councillor Paola Mar, decided to introduce "people-counters" in the most visited sites. The numbers of visitors will be automatically shared on social media feeds and in Venice's website to discourage visitors to go there (Modak, 2017).

In 2015 Google introduced the "Popular times" tool, which indicates how busy a location is. The feature uses real-time data obtained from users who have enabled their Google Location History. This can help visitors and residents to decide which sites to visit and how long to wait to visit them (Google, n.d.; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

### **5.1.3. Extend seasons and shift the focus of promotions**

Destinations with defined seasonality can undertake a strategy to shift the demand to low seasons.

The majority of Greek resorts close in November or December. However, in 2015, local authorities of Santorini announced that a lot of the hotels and restaurants will be open in the whole year and there will be an increase in the flights and ferries. Moreover, travellers will be able to organize their vacation in advance because booking services will also be available for an extended period (Greek Travel Pages, 2015; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

The Balearic Islands are another destination facing a lot of congestion in the summer months. For this reason, the Balearic Tourism Agency (2017) has a new promotion campaign called "Better in Winter". In this campaign the islands are promoted in the months from September to May by offering different tourist products such as culture, gastronomy, sports, art, etc. (Agencia de Turismo de las Islas Baleares, 2017).

## **5.2. Spreading the visitors across**

"Spreading" can be a tactic to distribute the visitors across other sites or destinations to disperse them and avoid congestion. This is more aimed at repeat visitors because first-timers want to see the "must-see" places (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017). The spreading can be done by

### **5.2.1. Promoting attractions that are less visited**

The tourism department of Venice promoted a campaign called "Detourism: Travel Venice Like a Local" with a focus on "slow and sustainable tourism". The campaign is done through various channels such as social media and magazines. The aim is to motivate the tourists to explore attractions that differ from the popular ones suggesting less congested and "local experiences" (Veneziaunica, 2014; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

In Amsterdam, to spread the congestion, the city's tourism department tries to switch the pattern that tourists usually take by suggesting alternatives when the visitors buy their Amsterdam City Card (Coffey, 2017).

The city tourism of Prague encourages tourists to spread out more by introducing tourists to less visited parts of the city like "Holešovice as an art district, Karlín for its interesting restaurants and Vinohrady for its Art Deco style and numerous cafes" (Johnston, 2018).

### **5.2.2. Developing new attractions and routes**

Destinations are developing new attractions and routes, so tourists can travel to less overcrowded sites. For this to be successful a cooperation between public and private sectors should exist (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

Amsterdam's city tourism organisation "i Amsterdam" started to package districts in the outside of the city in 2015. An example is the promotion of a beach near Amsterdam, called Zandvoort, which was renamed Amsterdam Beach for tourism purposes. The organisation also extended the range of the City Card to include the areas that are up to an hour distance from the city centre (Ellwood, 2017). Furthermore, to ease the congestion in the city, Amsterdam's marketing department is encouraging tourists to accommodate in areas and cities close to the Dutch capital (e.g. Zandvoort, Haarlem, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht). To incentivise tourists to stay in the other cities the mayor of Amsterdam said that free public transport to Amsterdam will be provided (Dutchnews, 2016).

Venice, Barcelona and Amsterdam are making infrastructural changes to change the route of the cruise ships. The transport minister of Italy responded to Venetians' anti-tourism protests by announcing that Venice will restrict the Giudecca Canal's access to all the ships of more than 55,000 tons of weight. The cruise ships will take another route and will dock at the industrial port of Marghera. The new route is planned to be implemented within four years (Rizzo, 2017). The City Council and the Port of Barcelona made several agreements that will allow a better integration of the port area in the city, to gain space for local use and to manage congestion and reduce emissions. The international cruise terminals will be limited to seven (from currently eight terminals) and they will be grouped together in the dock of Adossat. When the terminals are completed, the space left from the old docks will be transformed for public and private use (Ajuntament de Barcelona & Port de Barcelona, 2018). Amsterdam is planning a new location for large cruise ships away from the city centre. The deputy mayor of Amsterdam explained that the re-location will be done to reduce the number of tourists in the city centre. Four alternative sites are being considered, none of them near the centre and they are looking for sustainable means of transport to transport the passengers to Amsterdam's centre (Bond, 2017; Dutchnews, 2017).

### **5.3. Balancing supply and demand by adjusting the pricing**

An effective way to balance the demand with supply is through pricing. To increase the cost will limit the visitors but it will also raise the cost for locals, so pricing must be planned carefully. Approaches include taxes and fees or price segmentation for different types of visitors (e.g. students, locals) (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

Venice, to ease the life of residents, took measures by giving priority to the locals to board the “vaporettos”. This is done by implementing a transportation gold card “Venezia Unica Oro”, which also costs six euros less than the card for tourists (The Local, 2016).

#### **5.3.1. Implementing taxes and fees**

In Barcelona a proposal was approved that is urged the municipal Government to implement a new tax rate for the day visitors. That is, visitors who do not sleep in the city but come on excursions to see the main points of interest. The measure was taken in order to "regulate the use of public space" and it is aimed at tour operators that organise one-day packages, with visitors who arrive mainly by coach and visit the attractions without making any expense in the destination. The tax is to be implemented in 2018 (La Vanguardia, 2017).

In 2016, the Balearic Islands implemented an “eco-tax”, which varies depending on the hotels’ category and is aimed at funding sustainable tourism. In 2017, authorities announced that the tax will double in the peak season in order to deal with overcrowding and to encourage tourists to visit in the low season. The tax will apply to accommodation as well as cruise ships (Smith, 2017; ABC Mallorca, 2018).

#### **5.3.2. Shifting to variable pricing**

A popular practice is having a differentiated pricing for different types of visitors. In Barcelona tourist attractions such as Park Güell and the castle of Montjuïc have entrance fees for visitors while they are free for residents living nearby (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

### **5.4. Regulating the accommodation supply**

To manage growth, regulating the accommodation supply can be an effective measure for destinations. When it comes to traditional accommodation, such as hotels, restrictions can control the issuing of licenses. However, for home-sharing regulations can limit the number of nights that a renter may lend their house, restrain unlicensed rentals or ban the home-sharing as a whole (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

In Barcelona, the local government banned new licences for tourist accommodation with “The Special Urbanistic Plan for Tourist Accommodation” (PEUAT). The PEUAT, divides the city into four zones and aims at decreasing tourism in the city centre by banning the opening of new hotels, even if existing ones close. In addition, it pushes the new hotels to open in the periphery of the city. Moreover, for short-term rentals, such as Airbnb, they will require licenses to rent rooms for less than 30 days alongside with inspectors that will control if regulations are kept and 615 operations will be closed (Blanchar, 2017; Bremner, 2018).

The Balearic Islands introduced penalisation to landlords who illegally rent apartments to tourists with fines between 20.000 euros to 40.000 euros. Suspected illegal rents can be reported by the residents and platforms such as Airbnb could face fines of up to 400.000 euros if authorities discover rentals without license numbers advertised (Edwards, 2017). In fact, in February 2018, the Government of the Balearic Islands fined Airbnb with 300.000 euros for advertising rentals with no license on their website (Bohórquez, 2018).

Amsterdam limited Airbnb rentals in 2017, to up to 60 days a year. However, in January 2018, the city council announced that from 2019 the number of days will be down to 30 days a year (Dutchnews, 2018). Currently, residents who rent through Airbnb or similar platforms have to report their listings to the municipality and if they do not do so, can be fined with up to 6.000 euros (Pieters, 2017). Additionally, with the help of online investigations, tough penalties and “undercover guests”, illegal hotels are being closed (City of Amsterdam, n.d.).

#### **5.4.1. Limit access and activities**

In destinations where local residents are alienated, with nature damage or where culture and heritage are threatened, the option is limiting or even banning certain tourism-oriented activities (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

Amsterdam decided to ban the opening of new shops such as souvenirs, tour tickets, waffles or hiring “beer bikes” in the centre of the city. In an interview with the newspaper The Telegraph, the deputy mayor Kajsa Ollongren said: “By not allowing new tourist shops to open we make sure our city centre remains attractive and liveable for Amsterdammers and our visitors” (Boztas, 2017). Venice is another city that has banned new shops (e.g kebab shops and fast-food) from opening, with the exception of artisanal ice-cream. In an interview with the newspaper The Guardian, Venice tourism chief, Paola Mar said: “There are local products that we must try to promote, this would be better for the spirit of the city and, at an environmental level, would be more sustainable” (Giuffrida, 2017). In Mallorca, several municipalities have banned public drinking in response to tourist misbehaviour with fines up to 1.500 euros (Sobot, 2017). Barcelona has decided to ban Segways and electric scooters from the seafront and the historic centre (Bürgen, 2017; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017). Prague’s administration has approved a draft for a decree that bans the use of alcohol in public for the “Prague 1” district which could be implemented in 2018 (Johnston, 2017).

## **5.5. Other approaches**

### **5.5.1. Slow tourism**

The slow movement was inspired by an Italian sociologist and gastronomy lover who wanted to stop the advance of fast food restaurants which contradict the Mediterranean culinary tradition values. This philosophy was then extended to the travel industry, as a response to the accelerated ways of life and mass tourism destinations. This type of tourism defends a more relaxed way of traveling and in contact with the nature, as well as interacting with the local population. In this line, the State Property Agency and the Ministry of Culture announced a new alternative, a project aimed at young entrepreneurs, that gives away 103 historic buildings that are no longer used or with little activity, with the condition that they become spaces for this type of tourism. The project was included in the strategic tourism plan of Italy and it has the intention of moderating the waves of tourists in the most popular areas of the country and to promote lesser known destinations. The proposed projects that are admitted will be able to enjoy the property rights for nine years, extendable by nine years more. The buildings are distributed throughout the country and among the available properties there are castles, villas, schools, monasteries, convents or defensive towers overlooking the sea (Hosteltur, 2017).

In Spain, one of the destinations that has bet most on this trend is the island of Menorca (Balearic Islands), which has created the “Menorca Slow” brand, thanks to the tranquillity conditions on the island and the great presence of nature throughout its territory, as well as a network of accommodations adapted to this new philosophy. Moreover, ten Spanish municipalities belong to a network of slow cities for sustainable tourism, an international association with presence in about 30 countries, which wants to value the landscape, gastronomic, cultural qualities or social involvement of them (Hosteltur, 2017).

### **5.5.2. Customised activities based on social media profiles**

Future travel trends involve Artificial Intelligence. Amsterdam is working on an Artificial Intelligence powered service for the application Facebook Messenger. The app will draw information from their Facebook profile’s posts and likes and will suggest different sight-seeing attractions and activities in the city. A Dutch version is currently available, an English version is expected by late 2018 (Coffey, 2017).

## 6. Conclusion

Europe is the most visited continent in numbers of international tourist arrivals. The increase in the number of visitors has been favoured by factors like the increased connectivity and appearance of low-cost carriers for Europeans, the change in the currency value for Americans and the developing countries' becoming an important tourism outbound market. The congestion in the destinations has been caused by the changing ways of travelling with an increased use of shared economy and the influence of social media to travel more.

The residents' negative perception towards tourism in the destinations analysed is overall very similar. It exists due to concerns such as the loss of cultural identity, loss of traditional retail, increase in tourism oriented facilities, the rise in property prices and speculation due to the use of platforms like Airbnb together with the lack of housing availability, the additional congestion caused by cruise ship tourism and day trippers, the lack of benefits in return to the community, the impact on the environment and the overuse of limited resources.

Some destinations are already taking measures to try to control over-tourism. Dubrovnik and Santorini are limiting the number of cruise ship passengers. While to limit road access a possible solution is given with the example of Cinque Terre when a certain number of visitors is reached. Amsterdam and Venice rely on technology by displaying the number of visitors in real time in order to enlighten the tourists to avoid congestion in specific sites. Santorini and the Balearic Islands are promoting their off-season because they are affected by a defined seasonality. Barcelona, Venice and Amsterdam are spreading visitors by changing the routes of cruise ships. Airbnb is being regulated in Amsterdam, Balearic Islands and Barcelona. To preserve the cultural heritage, local identity and avoid public disturbance some destinations have banned public drinking, activities and shops. As an alternative approach, slow tourism and the use of artificial intelligence are suggested.

Conclusively, in the worst-case scenario, the consequences of lack of actions to reverse the situation could leave the destinations suffering from over-tourism without any permanent residents, turning the destination into something similar to a theme-park. Most of the residents in the destinations are aware that tourists are not only to blame but also authorities should take serious actions to control the situation. For this reason, the public and private sector should cooperate in planning and managing the tourism development in a more sustainable way.



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