REDEFINING STRATEGIES FOR CONSOLIDATED DESTINATIONS: PROPOSALS FOR LITERARY TOURISM

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Abstract: Consolidated tourist destinations are those that have achieved a major influx of visitors and that have been particularly successful in financial terms. However, they risk sliding into stagnation and decline if they are not governed in a manner that ensures their sustainability. Therefore, urban designers and planners seek to boost a destination's position by diversifying and enhancing its attractions, as well as the quality of the experiences offered, while also fostering local participation. This coincides with the two main goals of the Barcelona DMO (Destination Management Organization), which are to redistribute tourism flows and income throughout the city and also to seek and develop new icons and motivations for both travellers and local residents alike. In this context of a boom in both tourism supply and demand, literary tourism is being proposed as a new trend and niche that can offer new options and itineraries.

Key words: literary tourism, aesthetization, hyperconsumer society, long tail theory, sustainability, Barcelona.

REDEFINIENDO ESTRATEGIAS PARA DESTINOS CONSOLIDADOS: PROPUESTAS PARA EL TURISMO LITERARIO

Resumen: Los destinos turísticos consolidados consiguen una gran afluencia de visitantes y se convierten en lugares de éxito, fundamentalmente en el sentido económico. Corren el riesgo de estancarse y decaer si su gobernanza no garantiza su sostenibilidad. Por ello, los gestores urbanos diseñan y planifican nuevas alternativas para perdurar en un buen posicionamiento diversificando y potenciando sus atractivos, e incluso la calidad de las experiencias que ofrecen. También potencian la participación local. Estos dos objetivos coinciden con el interés de la administración que gestiona el turismo en Barcelona de, por un lado, redistribuir los flujos turísticos por toda la ciudad y también sus ingresos, y por otro, buscar y desarrollar nuevos iconos y motivaciones para los viajeros e incluso los residentes. En este contexto de explosión tanto de la oferta como de la demanda turística, el turismo literario es la nueva tendencia y nicho que se propone para ampliar opciones e itinerarios.

Palabras clave: turismo literario, estetización, sociedad hiperconsumista, teoría de la cola larga, sostenibilidad, Barcelona.

INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at literary tourism as a new product that can attract visitors through the offer of enthralling, memorable experiences that are centred around the design and creation of different experiences related to the world of literature, including famous places that have featured in books or in the lives of the authors who wrote them (Squire, 1996).

Tourism and leisure are important drivers of economic and cultural development.

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Demand for such products is growing relentlessly, and different destinations are incessantly vying with each other to become more attractive brands in the eyes of potential consumers (Zukin 1995; Smith, 2007; Domínguez Pérez et al, 2015). In order to remain resilient in such a competitive context, tourism destinations are constantly on the lookout for new visual icons and welcoming atmospheres (Palou Rubio, 2006). The main concerns of any tourist service are creativity and innovation, and that is also with regard to cultural offerings, whereby literary tourism has the potential to attribute new meanings to places, and also offer a new perspective on old ones, thus augmenting the originality and authenticity (Månsson, 2011; Le Bel, 2017).

Given that literary tourism connects with the aesthetization process of destinations towards which consolidated cities are permanently headed, current analysis of the development of literary tourism products is based on the Long Tail theory (Anderson, 2004) and the hedonism and hyperconsumer society approach (Lipovetsky, 2004). Long Tail theory refers to the behaviour of economic sectors that provide products in relatively low volumes but are able to make a profit by offering a greater variety of products on aggregate (Lew & Othman, 2006). This is in contrast to Short Head sectors, where profit is based on a narrower range of products that are sold in much greater volume (Anderson, 2004). Meanwhile, the hedonism and hyperconsumer approach focuses on the perpetual stimulation of demand to commercialise and multiply new leisure needs, and to offer more moments of happiness (Lipovetsky, 2004). Almost like a new religion, it refers

to the incessant urge to improve our lives and to consume everything and everywhere. These two perspectives frame the way that tourism destinations innovate, with literary tourism being defined as a new niche market to attract both foreign visitors and local residents alike.

In view of the above, the aim of this paper is to outline the ways in which destinations can capitalise on the potential market for literary tourism. It takes Barcelona as a case study in order to identify the demand for literary tourism and also the available supply. We do this by addressing the following research questions:

1) How do private and public organizations provide new products related to literary itineraries?
2) Are literary products a successful and sustainable attraction for visitors? Do they contribute to the redistribution of tourism flows?
3) Do long tail theory and the hedonism and hyperconsumer approach help us to understand trends in literary tourism?

Specifically, this research aims to analyse the economic, social and cultural viability, success and sustainability of literary leisure products offered to a wide audience of both tourists and members of the local community. Hence, attention is focused on the real capacity of designed literary itineraries to redistribute tourism flows and minimise the concentration of visitors in touristified city centres. The paper concludes by describing some implications for research and practice on the branding and marketing of literary tourism sites.

A qualitative methodology is used, based on the analysis of secondary data in the form of media reports and policy documents related to local government strategies, together with primary data collected from 11 semi-structured interviews with local governors and representatives of cultural and tourism organizations; as well as participant observation from spending time with the people concerned and engaging in numerous informal conversations during our many visits to literary tourism sites.

DEFINING LITERARY TOURISM

Literary tourism involves "travel to places famous for associations with books or authors" (Squire, 1993, p. 5). At first, this definition was limited by the use of the term "book", but Squire later modified it to mean tourism "associated with places celebrated for literary depictions and/or connections with literary figures" (Squire, 1996, p. 119). Busby and Klug (2001) claim that literary tourism occurs when authors or their works of literature become so popular that people travel either to locations associated with their lives (e.g. birthplace, home, grave) or to those that appear in their work. Visiting such places enables literature enthusiasts to "interact with" or "feel the connection with" the authors they admire, and see or touch objects or memorabilia associated with them or their work. Watson (2006, p. 2) describes literary tourism as "the interconnected practices of visiting and marking sites associated with writers and their work", taking into account its performative aspect and implying that the praxis of literary tourism has the

potential to attribute new meaning to places. As a result, nowadays it is possible to visit a wide range of literary tourism sites, ranging from places where authors were born, grew up, courted, lived or died; to those where their books were written or stories were set. Literary pilgrims seek "a physical body to enable their senses to connect with objects read" (Robertson & Radford, 2009, p. 206). Indeed, Watson (2006) asserts that novels turn readers into tourists and arouse the interest or desire to (re)experience the text by visiting its origin, beginning and inspiration. Thus, literary tourism is viewed as a niche in the wider field of cultural and heritage tourism (Hoppen *et al.,* 2014; Herbert, 2001).

Although scholarly attention to literary tourism is relatively recent, we should be cautious before considering it a new industry; it can be traced back at least to the seventeenth century with the "Grand Tour", a mandatory cultural pilgrimage for young aristocrats around Europe's prime cultural sites, from Paris to Naples, through Florence, Venice and Rome. However, *The Sketch Book*, a collection of 34 essays and short stories written by the American author Washington Irving, and published serially throughout 1819 and 1820, represents the birth of modern literary tourism. Other than five chapters on American subjects, most of the remainder of the book consists of vignettes of English life and landscape, written with the author's characteristic charm while he lived in England. Irving's international renown inspired a generation of American writers to follow in his footsteps by incorporating self-conscious travel, literary tourism, and the production of texts

that drew on and contributed to the emerging aesthetics of travel (Baraw, 2017), that is, the rhetoric of the tourist, the tour guide, and the tour in ways that helped create an active audience of literary tourists.

LITERARY TOURISM: A LONG TAIL BUSINESS IN A HEDONISTIC AND HYPERCONSUMER SOCIETY

Many scholars (Harvey, 1989; Urry, 1990; Fainstein, 2005) emphasize that tourism appropriates, changes and exploits spaces, sites and destinations by giving them new meanings and contents. Novelists do the same with their storied and poetical settings. Hence, literary tourism, as a sub-sector of cultural and heritage tourism, presents Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) with both an opportunity and a challenge. Viewed from the different, unique and peculiar perspective of novelists and their best-loved stories, there is huge potential for success. Destinations can exploit literary resources to develop a series of itineraries that significantly set them apart from their competitors and can attract a specific breed of visitor. And this competitive advantage should help to boost local investment, redistribute tourist flows, and reinforce local identity (Kavaratzis, 2005).

Currently, local businesses strive to grow and succeed by identifying multiple needs, interests and motivations. This must entail a new business model based on the economics of abundance and hedonism, but which is also aligned with the long tail of the demand curve, as opposed to short head businesses

that bring hit products to the market (Anderson, 2004). This has to do with the Pareto Tails, or 80-20, rule. For many economic activities, 20% of products (the short head) generate 80% of sales, while the remaining 80% (the long tail) provide the other 20% of sales (Lew, 2006).

From a tourism perspective, the short head is the honeypot destination that is widely known and attracts a large number of visitors, while the long head is a specialised niche destination. The dominant short head usually congregates hot, congested, touristified places. Conversely, long tail products tend to be other activities and places that are not aligned with such mass consumption. Long tail theory has gained much popularity and success due to the Internet (Brynjolfsson et al, 2003; Anderson, 2004) lowering the cost of reaching diminished niches. Smart technology has reduced the physical or geographic constraints on the connection between supply and demand, raising plentiful opportunities to create and invest in projects aimed at these small markets. It can transform mass markets into millions of small niche ones, and provide truly specialised and customised services and products in keeping with the new interests and motivations of the postmodern consumer. It is the Internet that has made it feasible for long tail products to succeed (Anderson, 2004). Postmodern consumers or post-tourists (Feifer, 1985) seek individualised products, services and experiences, which compels businesses to be innovative and creative, to diversify and to differentiate. Websites offer tourism businesses the opportunity to diversify their offer, including peripheral attrac-

tions and services, in order to compete in a global marketplace.

Postmodern consumers or post-tourists are a reflection of a modern society that is focused on hyper consumerism and the aesthetisation of daily life, with a huge variety of trivial consumer products (Hernández-Ramírez, 2018). According to Lipovetsky and Serroy (2016), our world is immersed in the "artistic capitalism" era, meaning an emotional, aesthetic, artistic dimension that conceals financial capitalism. In this constant process of aestheticization, economic and social transformations have led postmodern consumers to consume for mere pleasure, shifting from rigid accumulation to flexible accumulation, moving backwards from the production-form to the consumption-form (Harvey, 2008), whereby tourism, leisure and other such services have become mandatory cultural experiences, and are viewed socially as the 'right' kind of lifestyle (Maffesoli, 2005).

However, these hedonic trends of consumerism are extremely ephemeral and fleeting (Bauman, 2003). Nothing lasts forever, and nothing seems to be irreplaceable. However, from the conception of hedonism and happiness (Baudrillard, 1993; Harvey, 2008), society bases its consumption on cultural images, and on visible and digital products and services. Hence, urban centres embark on processes of embellishment or aestheticization to attract tourism and leisure options that people will consume (Zukin, 1995; Muñoz, 2008), and be happy to do so (Lipovetsky, 2004), because they do not want to be denied luxury, comfort, or

the pleasure of the senses. And most specifically of all, visual pleasure.

This has sparked a race to create attractive images and new icons to quench post-tourists' thirst for visual pleasure. This includes the offer of literary experiences, which might be real-life places associated with the writers (e.g. birthplaces, homes, graves), or the places as imagined in their writing (Robinson & Andersen, 2004).

The fashionable nature of the different forms of literary tourism is also supported by UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, which is an innovative way for cities to highlight their cultural assets and thus broaden their potential for tourism (UNESCO). Several cities were named as UNESCO Cities of Literature: Edinburgh (Scotland, UK) was the first in 2004, followed by Melbourne (Australia), Iowa City (USA), Dublin (Ireland), Reykjavik (Iceland), Norwich (UK), Krakow (Poland) and then Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain) in 2015 (1). These are cities in which DMOs or other private or public agencies actively promote literary tourism, with a focus on different goals: participation, learning, advocacy, creativity and enlightenment. By participation, this means stimulating wider engagement with literature by providing specific opportunities and experiences that are also delivered in partnership with other organisations. Learning and knowledge means the promotion of the pleasures and benefits of literature by inspiring new connections and developments. Advocacy means strengthening local literary heritage in the world. Creativity is providing spaces and opportunities to develop a sense of community with the ultimate in-

tention of spreading culture and literature, which is related to enlightenment in terms of how we engage with literature, strengthen local identities and address these literary products in relation to local residents, which can even be a means and a tool to reinforce pride in a specific place and a sense of belonging to its community.

Such is the duality of this cultural product. Its use is appropriate for different users, including local residents and foreign visitors (Arcos Pumarola et al, 2018). From a tourism perspective, literary places attract both visitors with a general interest in heritage as well as a niche segment of genuine literary pilgrims (Smith, 2003).

THE CASE OF LITERARY TOURISM IN BARCELONA

Literary tourism in Barcelona is used as an illustrative case to analyse the types of products provided to redistribute tourism flows and the associated income throughout the city, as well as to seek and develop new products and motivations for travellers and even residents. Literary tourism is analysed as a long tail product or tourism experience aimed at postconsumers, and specifically at the small niche of literature enthusiasts. Barcelona, is a mature tourism destination that was designated City of Literature status in 2015, and is hence an interesting case to analyse.

METHODOLOGY

This research is rooted in grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), with the aim to gain theoretical insight from empirical data, which is systematically gathered and analysed. Its methodological basis is the case study. According to Yin (2009), case studies are an appropriate method of analysis when complex phenomena raise questions about how and why certain actions or changes occur. To elaborate on this process, this research obtains evidence on literary tourism and its key stakeholders in Barcelona. A single in-depth case study is a valid method for testing, challenging or extending theories by analysing their application to a real-life situation (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), as well as exploring the possibility of alternative explanations (Alvarez et al., 2015; Yin, 2009).

A qualitative methodology is used, based on secondary and primary data. This includes (i) analysis of media reports and policy documents related to local government strategies; (ii) participant observation, that is, spending time with people and engaging in numerous informal conversations during our many visits to the literary itineraries from November 2017 to April 2019, and (iii) in-depth interviews with local governors and representatives of cultural organizations. The interviews were held between 3 and 24 April 2019, typically lasted for one and half hours and contained questions about the subjects' perceptions of literary tourism as a sustainable and successful product among the city's cultural offer. The sessions were videotaped, transcribed and processed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002), which enabled collection of the full diversity of responses, different points of view and qualified opinions.

The participants had previously received emails describing the topics for discussion, that is, the importance of tourist redistribution flows, the evolution and motivational changes of cultural tourism, the concept and praxis of literary tourism and the design and planning of tourism products. The participants were all managers of public and private institutions, selected based on their knowledge of the tourism and cultural sector. In total, eleven interviews were conducted with representatives of *Turisme de Barcelona* (2), *Barcelona City of Literature* (3), *Barcelona Global, Laberint Cultura, Iconoservices, Cultruta, and Conèixer Bcn* (4), and the Guided Tour Union (5). Their extensive professional experience and diversity of disciplines and points of view meant the data was as comprehensive and diverse as possible. We also interviewed the general manager of public libraries in the city and the head of Juan Marsé Library, who provided us with a wealth of information about the full range of novels based on Barcelona, provided us with a wealth of information about the neighbourhoods associated to a writer after whom the centre is named.

Moreover, data collected from the aforementioned public institutions was analysed in order to provide the context for the interview guidelines.

CONTEXT AND TOURISM DATA

Literary tourism is considered a niche in the field of cultural and heritage tourism. The findings of the Tourism and Culture Survey 2015 by UNWTO show that cultural tourism arrivals are growing steadily compared to overall international arrivals. 40% of international arrivals are considered to be "cultural tourists", meaning those who participate in a cultural visit or activity as part of their stay (UNWTO, 2016).

According to data from the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism (2019), cultural tourism "constitutes a booming segment" that generates annual revenues of 8,567 million euros and attracted almost 8 million foreign tourists in 2018. It is also estimated that approximately 60% of tourists who visit Spain have some kind of cultural motivation, and that of the nearly 60 million visitors to Spanish museums every year, 20% are foreign tourists, according to data from the Ministry of Culture. With regard to domestic demand, according to the Familitur survey (Institute of Tourism Studies, 2019), 50% of Spanish tourists in 2018 were cultural. Andalusia, Catalonia and the Valencian Community, the three regions with the most tourism in Spain, were also the destinations where Spanish travellers spent most on cultural tourism.

According to Euromonitor International (2020), Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, was one of the most visited cities in Europe (Table 1). A brief historical analysis reveals that the first tourism plan issued by the City Council (1988-1992) had the clear objective of putting Barcelona on the world tourism map and providing the accommodation capacity for participants and visitors at the 1992 Olympic Games.

Table 1. Most visited European Cities (2016-2019)
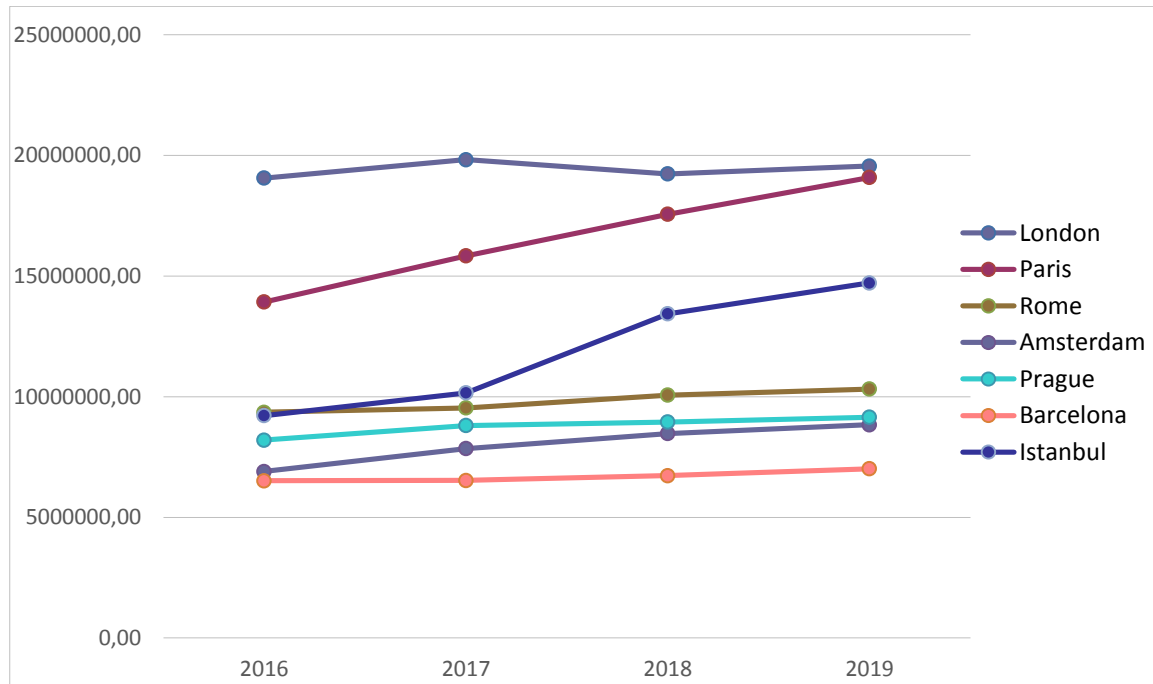
SOURCE: Own elaboration based on Euromonitor International Report, 2020

The XXV Olympic Games held in Barcelona certainly put the city in the minds of potential tourists around the world, creating an image and a brand associated to cosmopolitanism, modernity, design and tradition, with open-minded, welcoming and friendly residents (Alabart Vila et al., 2015). From that moment on, the volume of tourism has incessantly increased year-by-year (Table 2).

In 2019, 9,472,562 international visitors enjoyed the city, mostly gathering in the historic centre because that is where the main cultural sights and attractions are located:

the Rambla, the Cathedral, the Gothic Quarter, and so on. Therefore, cultural tourism is the main motivational factor for visiting Barcelona.

As the most visited sights are in the city centre, the overcrowding and oversaturation in these areas has raised certain opposition to the intensification of tourism activity (Table 3). The government has reacted by passing different decrees and plans to regulate and control uses and licenses in touristified spaces. However, the Tourism Administration's regular surveys show that the population is generally supportive of tourism activity.
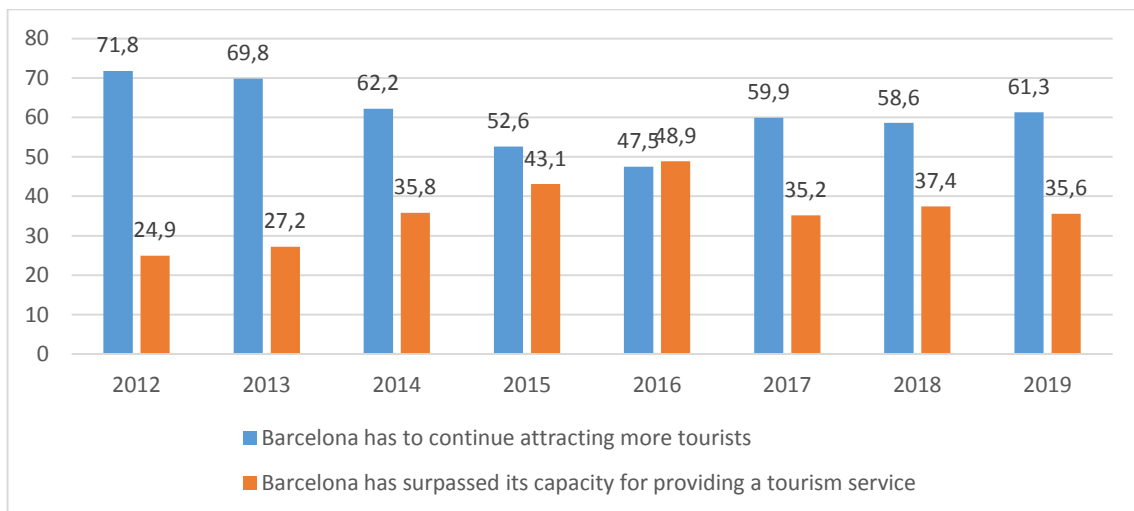
Table 2. Evolution of international tourism arrivals in Barcelona (1990-2018)
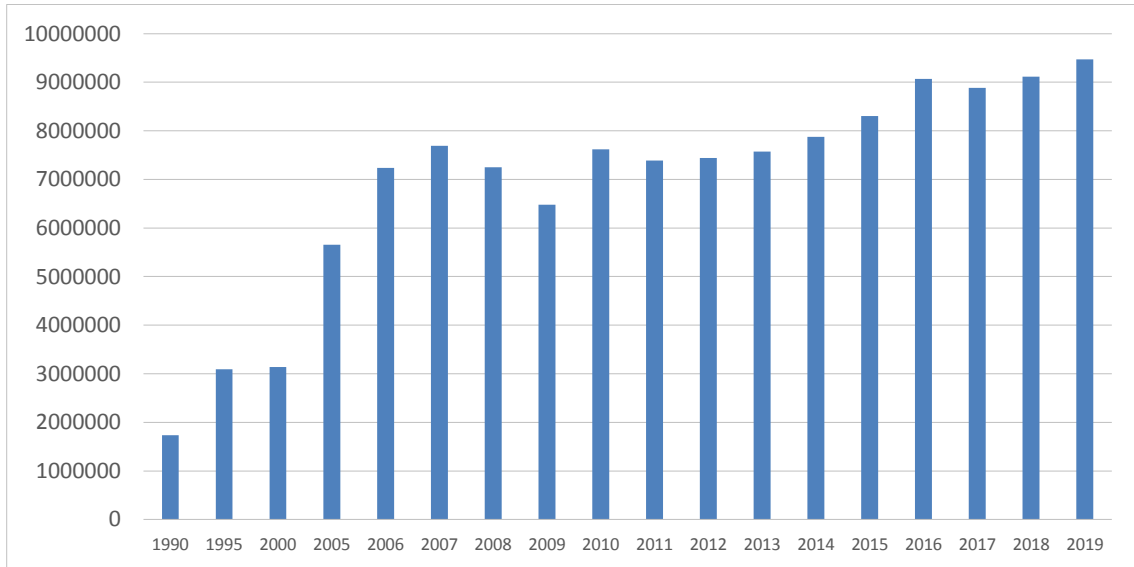
SOURCE: Own elaboration based on Tourism Statistic Reports (Turisme de Barcelona).

Table 3. Evolution of local residents' support/rejection of tourism in Barcelona (2012-2019)

SOURCE: Own elaboration based on Tourism Barcelona Statistics, 2020.

LITERARY PRODUCTS PROVIDED IN BARCELONA

In this context, literary tours arose as another option for discovering the city, and they too can redistribute tourism flows away from the centre. Two writers, Carlos Ruiz Zafon and Ildefonso Falcones, and their respective best-selling novels, "The Shadow of the Wind" and "Cathedral of the Sea", have drawn literary attention to Barcelona and its historic centre. Furthermore, the designation of Barcelona as a "City of Literature" has raised other avenues for exploration throughout the whole city (but especially outside of the centre) and using different methods, such as, for example, treasure hunts, which could also entertain the local population.

In response to our first research question, we can currently distinguish three major approaches to or typologies of literary tourism in Barcelona: a) international literary tours, b) the neighbourhoods associated to a local writer, and c) Barcelona being named a "City of Literature".

a) International literary tours

International literary tours are aimed at both local and foreign visitors who are captivated by successful novels and writers. They are offered in different languages, but mainly Spanish and English. The two most iconic examples are *The Shadow of the Wind*, by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, who immerses readers in the books and bookstores of Ciutat Vella (the old, central district of

the city); and *Cathedral of the Sea*, by Ildefonso Falcones, which tells the story of how the Basilica of Santa Maria del Mar was built in the 14th century (also in the historic and touristified centre). Another interesting product is the Cervantes Route that was designed to present Barcelona through the eyes of Don Quijote in 2016 on the occasion of the 4th centenary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes and inspired by the book *Cervantes in Barcelona*.

b) The neighbourhoods associated to a local writer

The other literary proposal in Barcelona, which is less organized in tourism terms, has to do with the neighbourhoods where writers were born and lived. Of particular note are the Raval, the Eixample, Gràcia, El Carmel and Sarrià-Sant Gervasi (Table 4), most of which are outside of the touristified urban centre and are managed by libraries and non-profit-making foundations. They have no regular schedules and neither do they count the number of activities they perform or the number of participants they attract. They are merely focused on promoting knowledge of local writers in their neighbourhoods and providing an active cultural agenda.

c) City of Literature proposals

UNESCO's declaration led to the creation of an organisation called Barcelona City of Literature, which has designed, planned and promoted new ways to discover the city, linked to works by writers who loved and

Table 4. Neighbourhoods and their writers

Neighbourhoods	Writers
Raval	Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Terenci Moix, Maruja Torres
Eixample	Carmen Laforet, Mercedes Salisachs, Montserrat Roig
Gràcia	Mercè Rodoreda
El Carmel	Juan Marsé
Sarrià-Sant Gervasi	Josep Vicenç Foix

SOURCE: Own elaboration

were inspired by Barcelona. For example, it recently created a website to centralise all the essential literary information about the city, detailing bookshops, cultural centres, libraries, writers, recommendations, and so on. The idea is to showcase and internationalize the literature written in the city.

One of its most interesting projects is a smartphone application, a literature-based treasure hunt called *Literapolis*. Launched in September 2018, the game has three levels of difficulty: the first introduces each specific work of literature, its content and writer; the intermediate level helps users to absorb that knowledge and the hardest level gets them thinking about the author, his/her work and its meaning. The app is mainly focused on a local audience with two basic objectives: discovering other places and neighbourhoods through a combination of literature and technology; and covering the core curriculum for schoolchildren aged 14 to 18. The itineraries highlight particular aspects, encouraging participation in cultural activity and local engagement. At present, there are thirteen different treasure hunts

(Table 5) based in different neighbourhoods of the city, most of which are outside of the congested city centre.

Table 5. Selected Literapolis novels and writers

NOVELS	WRITERS
Tatuaje	Manuel Vázquez Montalbán
Ultimas tardes con Teresa	Juan Marsé
Una de zombis	Patricia Martín
La merla blava	Maria Carme Roca
El mussol i la forca	Pau Joan Hernández
Els dies que ens separen	Laia Soler
Marina	Carlos Ruiz Zafón
L'any de la plag	Marc Pastor
Sin noticias de Gurb	Eduardo Mendoza
Mirall trencat	Mercè Rodoreda
Wendy i l'enemic invisible	Andreu Martín
Hot dogs	Care Santos
Serena	Dolors García i Cornellà

SOURCE: Own elaboration

RESULTS

Answering the second research question, we have observed that despite the considerable number of literary activities in the city, aimed at both tourists and the local community, the lack of consistency is hindering their success and sustainability. The international tours are doing little to redistribute tourism flows away from the congested urban centre and are failing to attract enough tourists to be scheduled on a permanent basis. The more localised proposals tend to be limited to the cultural agendas of each specific neighbourhood.

Literapolis is not helping to achieve these objectives either. Its international tours are located precisely in the already over-crowded tourism hub around the city centre. Meanwhile, the neighbourhood tours are somewhat haphazard, with little in the way of a fixed itinerary or a marketable product, merely being offered on request to any organization, often in connection to cultural events. Indeed, both the Barcelona City of Literature and the Literapolis projects are currently primarily aimed at local schools, and their future remains uncertain.

The Shadow of the Wind Tour immerses readers in the old city centre, and the *Cathedral of the Sea Tour* basically deals with the construction of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Mar, which is also located in the historic, touristified centre of Barcelona. Hence, they are doing nothing to redistribute tourism flows towards other parts of the city or to diversify the supply.

"There is no redistribution of tourism flows outside of the central, congested and touristified areas of the city... Most visitors come from South America. The Spanish language has a lot to do with it" (Turisme de Barcelona).

In addition, once the boom period following the publication of these two books was over, interest in the respective tours also declined.

"Carlos Ruiz Zafón and Ildefonso Falcones had their moments of success for a brief period after their work was published. I do not deny the relevance of their novels, but tourist interest in the places, experiences and nostalgia described by the authors lasted more or less one year" (Iconoservices).

Similar issues emerge with regard to another interesting product: the Cervantes Tour. This was also based in the touristified centre, presenting Barcelona through the eyes of Don Quijote, and conceived in 2016 on the occasion of the 4th Centenary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes, inspired by the book *Cervantes in Barcelona*.

"We stopped promoting the Cervantes Tour, and even stopped running it due to the lack of interest. It is a pity, because it really presented the city from a different perspective, with other aims and knowledge interests. Anyway... that's clear ... literary tourism goes with the flow of literary trends and the glamour of certain authors" (Laberintcultura).

The private organizations (*Iconoservices, Conèixer Bcn, Cultruta*) who provide these literary tours agree that they are only effective during the boom period after the books are published or when celebrating the anniversary of a writer's birth or something simi-

Table 6. Evolution of demand for literary tourism (2002-2019)
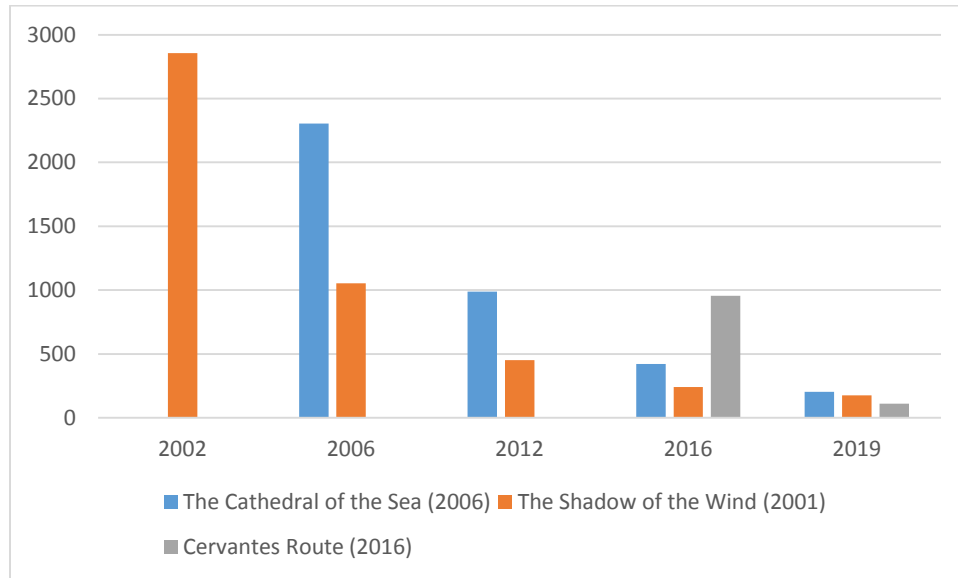
Source: Own elaboration based on Tourism Barcelona Statistics

lar. This period is too short to make any kind of business endeavour viable and only caters for a very niche audience, as validated by data from Turisme de Barcelona (Table 6).

Neighbourhood literary proposals could be a useful way to redistribute tourism flows away from congested, touristified city centres, but unless they are better planned their impact is going to be limited or non-existent. They tend only to be addressed at local community interests, without regular schedules, and with very little follow-up or continuity. Indeed, they rarely even count the number of activities they perform or the number of participants in them, which tend not to be very many.

"I do not have the exact number of tours planned and run ... because this depends on the monthly schedules of each library. Fur- *thermore, they usually plan them around school terms and local festivities in each neighbourhood" (Public Libraries Manager).*

An interesting case in point here is Gracia neighbourhood, where the Fundació Mercè Rodoreda (Mercè Rodoreda Foundation) promotes the life and work of the author of that name in the form of three literary tours of the places where she lived and where her stories were set*: Aloma, Diamond Square, The Street of the Camellias* and *Broken Mirror*. Response to these tours is usually so poor that the Foundation has to cancel the activity.

Another writer who made his city known to the world is Juan Marsé. Throughout many works, Marsé's characters frequent different neighbourhoods of Barcelona, including Guinardó, Gràcia, Salut and Car-

mel, all of which are far removed from the historic and touristic centre. The best place to savour the ambience of Juan Marse's novels is the Carmel neighbourhood, and El Carmel-Juan Marsé Library organises thematic tours on request, with no regular programme. This library also specialises in writers whose lives and work was centred around Barcelona, boasting a collection of more than 4,000 fictional documents.

"Our library is specialised in novels that writers set in Barcelona ... Our collection is really huge and reflects the impressive amount of work by writers who fell in love with Barcelona" (Juan Marsé librarian).

Finally, UNESCO's declaration of Barcelona as a City of Literature has presented an unprecedented opportunity to make literary tourism sustainable, which has been manifested in the form of its flagship product, named Literapolis. Its thirteen treasure hunts are based in different neighbourhoods of the city, most of which are outside of the congested city centre. Hence, they are an excellent means to disperse tourists away from the most overcrowded areas.

"The objective of Literapolis is to involve teachers from different domains, such as Catalan language and literature, Spanish language and literature, social sciences, digital techniques... to use the app as a pedagogical tool to encourage reading at school as a cross curricular subject, because it includes some interviews with the writers and even geolocalisation of the novels ... Each novel has 3 tours, one to be done before reading the book with questions to test their knowledge of the city; the others were designed to be done after reading the novels, with questions

that look in depth at each one's content" (Barcelona City of Literature UNESCO).

Literapolis also offers sustainable actions in the form of a literary treasure hunt based on novels set in Barcelona that are designed to promote reading habits and foster local knowledge among young people. It works as a mobile app that challenges players to find different places in the city where the novel unfolds. Whenever the players correctly find one of these spots, they have to solve some kind of puzzle in order to receive further information that will help them to find the next location. In short, Literapolis works like a paper chase, and is a fun way to learn more about a city and a novel, as much for the general public as for tourists, and can even work as a corporate team-building activity. However, our research has found that Literapolis has only been used by a small number of students from the city when one of the 13 itineraries deals with a novel on the mandatory reading list (Table 5). Families, elderly people and other population groups have yet to play it. There is no doubt that this treasure hunt could help to promote the city, but although it is available in English, Catalan and Spanish, nothing has been done to promote the idea as a tourism resource.

Hence, to answer our third research question, the results show that literary tourism is a long tail business with very few interested customers, and only for the very short period of time after a best-seller is released or when celebrating a writer's anniversary. There simply are not enough numbers in terms of customers or revenue to make such schemes economically sustainable for much longer than a year. In fact, although most of

the international itineraries appear on web-sites, they never happen. Moreover, they are mainly focused on the central and historic areas, which are already heavily touristified and congested, and thus contribute little to the redistribution of tourism flows. Hence, there are only financial benefits to be gained from literary tourism in highly specific cases and only at certain times. The only literary tourism products that have experienced any significant success have been those that are offered as a complement to other forms of tourism. In short, literary tourism products might offer a new and more diversified way to experience the city, but as soon as the associated books decline in popularity, then interest in these products among foreign tourists will invariably wane as well.

In contrast, local residents have a more ongoing interest in their own literary culture, although the tours associated to certain writers arranged by non-profit-making foundations and libraries lack any kind of established schedule and tend only to attract a rather negligible number of users.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research has investigated literary tourism, an innovative product used as a means for mature destinations to diversify their offer by providing a different perspective on the place (Mansson, 2011; Hoppen et al., 2014; Le Bel, 2017). There is no doubt that destinations with a rich literary background due to being the places where writers lived or where they set their novels are attractive for literature enthusiasts.

However, consumers generally seem to have very little interest in this specific kind of cultural tourism and the various business ventures have not been very successful. In short, literary tourism is a good example of an Internet-based (Anderson, 2004) long tail product that generates very few sales (Lew, 2006).

The ultimate goal of mature destinations is to maintain their market position, which means they need to remain attractive not only to first-time foreign visitors, but also to provide motivations for repeat visits. This entails the need to create new leisure experiences and new attractions, while also seeking to foster the participation and involvement of the local community.

Many of these destinations also face the huge challenge of redistributing tourism flows away from their congested historic centres. Literary tourism would appear to be an excellent means to achieve this in a sustainable manner, as it is an interesting cultural proposal for tourists and residents alike. However, a differentiation needs to be made between internationally focused products and those that only target domestic visitors. However, both potential sets of participants are very few and far between, and so these are examples of Long Tail products (Anderson, 2004).

The results show that literary tourism is a highly ephemeral and temporary trend, often linked to the celebration of a writer's birth or the launch of a best-seller. Consequently, the volume of visitors and income are too insignificant for such itineraries and organizations to be economically sus-

tainable. And most of them are focused on central and historic areas of cities that are already highly touristified and congested (one of the main concerns of mature tourism destinations such as Barcelona), which does not help to redistribute tourism flows. In addition, while local residents are interested in knowing more about their own literary culture, there are no regular tours available in their neighbourhoods.

Nevertheless, Literapolis suggests that there is still hope. Its treasure hunts aimed at students and even families are an interesting, fun way to learn that could trigger a change in the way that literary tourism is approached. Nowadays, technology is an essential part of tourism activities, and especially those related to long tail businesses. However, for the moment, this app is only associated to mandatory books on school reading lists, and DMOs need to redesign Literapolis to cater for other market segments.

The main limitation of this study concerns the data and references, which were collected before the Covid19 pandemic and may therefore be out of date. Hence, it would be interesting to conduct further research on this type of tourism in order to observe possible changes towards its enhancement, or otherwise towards its ultimate demise.

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NOTES

(1) Nowadays there are 42 cities named City of Literature.

(2) Turisme de Barcelona is the DMO of the city. The general manager and supervisor of the tourism office were interviewed, and they observe tourist behaviour on a daily basis in relation to the city's different itineraries and proposals.

(3) Barcelona City of Literature is the public organization that was founded as the result of Barcelona being declared a City of Literature in 2015. Its general manager was interviewed as the organization has created special activities throughout the city that combine literary knowledge with technology.

(4) Barcelona Global, Laberint Cultura, Iconoservices, Cultruta, and Conèixer Bcn are private cultural organizations that provide literary tours in Barcelona, which are presented in this paper as "International Literary Tours".

(5) The Guided Tour Union represents the all tour guides in the city and has in-depth knowledge of tourists' motivations and consumer behaviours.