Chapter 12

The Development of a Scale to Measure Tourism-Phobia:
An Exploratory Case of Residents in Majorca

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ABSTRACT

The Balearic Islands in general, and Majorca in particular play a significant role in Spanish tourism but the tremendous growth in the number of tourists has led to the deterioration of the environment, a notable decrease in tourist satisfaction, and is having a negative impact on the welfare of residents. Aversion to and rejection of tourism among residents is popularly called tourism-phobia. This chapter studies the negative aspects which over-tourism is causing in the perception of both native and foreign residents of Majorca, as well as to propose a scale developed to measure tourism-phobia. Data for the study was gathered through a questionnaire, with a total of 149 valid responses. An exploratory factor analysis revealed four main underlying dimensions of tourism-phobia encompassing a number of different variables. The aim is for the scale to be used as part of continuous analysis of sustainable tourism development in Majorca, as well as in other destinations saturated by tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the growing importance of travel and tourism in society and the escalating number of international tourists, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) declared 2017 as the international year for the development of sustainable tourism (Boulding, 2018). The UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as a type of tourism “that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005; pg. 11). The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and UNWTO (2005) state that guidelines and management principles for the sustainable development of tourism are applicable everywhere, regardless of the type of destination, tourism, number of tourists, and so on. However, due to the high number of visitors to specific tourist destinations and increasing numbers of parties interested in monetizing visitor flow, the sustainable development of the tourism sector is under threat.

Despite this declaration, 2017 was a milestone year concerning aversion towards holidaymakers in many European seaside destinations, and the terms “over-tourism” and “tourism-phobia” started to appear in the press worldwide (Arteaga & Hernández, 2017). Local communities began to draw attention to everyday problems caused by tourist invasions and started protesting against them (Goldstein, 2017). This chapter focuses on this issue and investigates overtourism from the perspective of residents. The study is centered on evaluating residents’ fears about sustainability, encompassing different dimensions: environmental, legal, safety, loss of identity, and so forth.

The paper is structured as follows: first, a parallel is drawn between tourism growth in Spain and the Balearics and anti-tourism acts; secondly, a literature review describes the theory of tourism and the development of tourism-phobia; thirdly, the research method, consisting of the generation of scale items and the distribution of the questionnaire is explained. In the next section, data purification, the demography of respondents, and the results are described, followed by a discussion of the main findings from the analysis. Finally, the key findings, limitations, and ideas for future investigation are presented.

The Growth of Tourism-Phobia in Spain and the Balearics

Tourism in Spain reached its maximum level of 82 million international tourists in 2017, an increase of 8.9% on 2016, according to estimates by the Spanish Tourism Board Turespaña (Hosteltur, 2018). This was the first time Spain surpassed the USA in tourist numbers, in second place only to France (Mincotur, 2018). The most significant impact of tourists was to be found in the province of Catalonia, with the capital Barcelona receiving 18,223,294 tourists in 2017 – more than any other Spanish region (Minetad, 2018). In the summer of 2017, many residents of Barcelona started protesting against the tourism industry on the streets, as they believed the city was turning into a theme park, and their interests were being neglected in favor of the needs of tourists (Vidal-Folch, 2018). Some posted slogans on buildings such as “Tourism is killing our neighborhoods” or “Tourists go home.” Other anti-tourism activists slashed the tyres of a tour bus, sprayed graffiti onto a tour bus full of tourists, and destroyed tourist bicycles. Since then, new rules have come into force, such as the prohibition of Segway and electric scooters in the Old City and the seafront (Coldwell, 2017).

In the same year (2017), the Balearic Islands were in second place to Catalonia in regard to international tourist numbers, receiving 13,691,618 tourists. Both regions showed an increase of more than 6% in the number of tourists in comparison with the previous year (Minetad, 2018). In a similar vein to Barcelona, more than 3,000 residents protested in the center of Palma chanting phrases such as: “Tour-