

Territorial Tourism Planning in Spain: from boosterism to tourism degrowth?

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Abstract

Tourism saturation and unsustainability have been studied in urban political ecology. Both of these problems are inseparable from tourism planning and have given rise to proposed solutions based on growth containment and even degrowth. These types of measures have been applied to varying degrees in mature coastal destinations in Spain since the 1990s, and are currently being extended to the country's principal urban destinations due to problems generated by tourism saturation. This study examines the progressive incorporation of these measures in territorial tourism planning in Spain and finds that the traditional emphasis on urban-tourism growth is declining and more restrictive policies are now being implemented. This shift is illustrated through analysis of three innovative territorial tourism planning instruments in Barcelona, the Balearic Islands and the Autonomous Region of Valencia. These ostensibly progressive processes suffer from crippling contradictions due to their inability to directly confront the capitalist accumulation model underlying the tourism growth they address. Consequently, much stronger measures capable of transcending this accumulation model in pursuit of genuine, and fair degrowth without systemic constraints are needed.

Keywords: Political Ecology, Degrowth, Growth containment, Tourism saturation, Tourism planning instruments, Spain.

Introduction

Mounting interest in tourism growth containment and tourism degrowth is due to an increased concern about socio-ecological problems and advocacy of initiatives favouring local empowerment through municipal and regional policies. Problems such as the exhaustion of non-renewable natural resources or environmental pollution have given cause for alarm and generated a demand for the control of the more detrimental production activities, such as tourism, due to their contribution to global change (Lezen, et al., 2018; Scott, & Gössling, 2015).

Futhermore, the deterioration of democracy, political and business corruption and the systemic economic crisis (Streeck, 2014), particularly acute in the context of the bursting of the Spanish housing bubble (López & Rodríguez, 2011), have given rise to the emergence of counter-hegemonic movements of “*indignados*” (Asara, 2016), driven by the dispossessions in the city centres and the difficulty to access housing (Wachsmuth & Weiser, 2018; Blanco-Romero, Blázquez-Salom, & Cánoves, 2018).

In Spain, actions aimed at resolving the afore-mentioned socio-environmental challenges have been traditionally based on a territorial planning process implemented through regional policies. The institutional structure of the state has assumed the planning function of the economic and territorial activities using these planning policies in order to optimise the use of natural resources, in favour of the general interest and to resolve or mitigate the socio-ecological conflicts. Its principal instruments have been sectoral planning and other urban and tourism planning tools. Within a global context of unequal geographic development, the territorial rebalance has been addressed, on the whole, through the economic promotion of disadvantaged regions. There are fewer cases of actions seeking to contain growth or to promote degrowth of those areas where wealth is more highly concentrated. Some of these experiences in containing growth have involved: the protection of natural spaces, the limitation of urban development (Rullan, 2011) or of the capacity of

infrastructures, such as airports (Hilbrandt, 2017). The objectives sought in these actions are the assumption of environmental limits, sufficiency (Hayden, 2014), degrowth (Kallis, et al., 2018) or the redistribution of opportunities to access well-being.

Although the design of the territorial and tourism planning instruments is based on discourse that defends a conventional model of sustainability, occasionally it is claimed that they are also being used to solve the crisis of capital accumulation, creating a lock-in to a conventional growth model (Hof & Blázquez, 2015), based on elitist ‘quality tourism’, which favours individual interests and those of the hegemonic project of the dominant classes (Bianchi, 2004), thus contradicting their purported objectives. The very existence of the state apparatus was considered by Henry Lefebvre (1968) as a rationalising and commercialising instrument that enabled relationships of domination to be maintained. Its control through planning gives rise to spaces filled with ideological baggage, materializing the interests defended by urban planners, and economic lobbies (Soja, 1989). Government policy instruments have been studied as a further expression of the neoliberal hegemonic project, consisting in rolling-back the Keynesian welfare state in terms of territorial development regulation (Peck and Tickell, 2002).

This study explores these issues through analysis of three innovative territorial tourism planning instruments in Barcelona, the Balearic Islands and the Autonomous Region of Valencia. Our hypotheses are: first, that territorial tourism planning has evolved in Spain from boosterism to attempts at containment and even degrowth; and second, the application of these regulatory measures suffer from contradictions and inconsistencies in relation to the objectives of socio-environmental justice.

In accordance with this critical approach, the objectives of this study are:

- To periodise the regulatory framework of urban-tourism planning in Spain between 1960 and the present day.

- To discover and analyse three innovative territorial planning instruments for Spanish coastal areas that are subjected to the greatest urban and tourism pressure –the Territorial Action Plan for the Green Coastal Infrastructure (PATIVEL) in the Autonomous Community of the Region of Valencia, the Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT) in Barcelona (Catalonia) and the Plan for Intervention in Tourism Areas (PIAT) in Mallorca (Balearic Islands)– which seek to contain tourism growth in order to mitigate its harmful effects.
- To identify the possible environmental and social contradictions associated with applying these measures to regulate growth in comparison to their own discourse of degrowth, which in this way seems to be used rhetorically.
- By way of conclusion, to assess the extent to which tourism planning in Spain is evolving towards the principles of fair or genuine degrowth.

The article is structured in the following sections: firstly, to explain our methodology; secondly, the literature review; thirdly, analysing the periodisation of the urban-tourism regulatory framework in Spain (1960-2018); and, fourthly, analysing the three instruments for containing growth and new intervention mechanisms to address overtourism. In accordance with the objectives proposed, our three case studies have been chosen in view of their different dimensions. They are not going to be compared, instead an analysis will be carried out, fourthly, in the discussion section, on their regulations aimed at containing urban-tourism growth or promoting degrowth, their socio-ecological contradictions and the discourse that they are based on. Finally, conclusions sum up our contribution.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology based on different tools has been used to develop the objectives described. First, secondary sources of previous studies have been consulted to establish the

periodisation of the Spanish regulatory framework, based on five approaches or traditions of public tourism planning (Getz, 1986; Hall, 2008), updated with recent contributions (Hall, 2014; Saarinen, Rogerson and Hall, 2017). Second, each of the planning instruments has been studied based on the available public and private documentation, particularly sources related to the consultation and public during its administrative processing. Lastly, Grounded Theory methods have been considered in the research (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015), which is considered to be the most suitable method for the theoretical construction in social science research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and it is one of the most frequently used tools in human and social sciences (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). To determine qualified opinions, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with different qualified spokespeople of the stakeholders (social movements', hoteliers' and local administration representatives). These include individuals who are in charge of the administrative policies implemented in the three study areas (PEUAT, PIAT and PATIVEL).

In accordance with the objectives proposed, our study has been conducted taking into account case studies of three different spatial scales (the Autonomous Community of the Region of Valencia, the island of Majorca and the city of Barcelona), which have similar historical tourism backgrounds and are characterised by saturation and more complex experiences of territorial planning for tourist growth containment. Each territorial and tourism planning measure has been studied in terms of its different dimensions, seeking to fulfil the defined objectives: to analyse their regulations aimed at containing urban-tourism growth or stimulating degrowth, their socio-ecological contradictions and the discourses on which they are based.

According to the theoretical sampling in Grounded Theory, our sample of sources and informants is intended to maximise the differences among them, by choosing the divergent discourses that are available (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015).

Literature review

Authors in the field of political ecology explain the interest in degrowth in relation to the criticism of hegemonic neoliberal ideology that the naturalizes of the need for economic growth, individualism, consumerism or competitiveness (Asara, 2016). From this same perspective, it can be interpreted that economic growth has been used as a mechanism to favour the pacification of class conflicts (Kallis et al. 2018), through its promises of employment and social mobility, bolstering profit rates through public investment and labour and territorial flexibility. Growth is also fuelled by the extension of the tourism business frontiers through the rhetoric use of the so-called “sharing economy”, motivated by job insecurity and the chance to boost income (Slee, 2017), for example, through the possibility of renting properties to tourists for short stays (Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018).

Alternative proposals, such as sufficiency (Princen, 2005) and degrowth (Kallis, et al., 2018) suggest that the opulent classes are historically those most responsible for global change and are also those that have a greater margin for reducing their production and consumption patterns (Sachs, 2001; Hall, 2009). However, degrowth can also be proposed in demographic or Malthusian terms, by prioritising economic profitability and treating differently the population according to their income levels. Certain authors claim that the enclosure and containment of growth are related to dispossession, which benefits class hegemonic projects (Bianchi, 2004; Büsher & Fletcher, 2014; Sevilla-Buitrago, 2015; Artigues & Blázquez-Salom, 2016). The resulting social segregation fosters the exclusive and elitist use of space (Kondo et al. 2012), creating a consensus that favours the interests of the ruling classes (Eisenschitz, 2016), that monopolise incomes (Harvey, 2002) or expand and commodify new spaces and aspects of life to address the contradictions inherent in capitalism (Fletcher, 2011; Fletcher & Neves, 2012).

Similarly, a rhetorical use of sustainability discourse is already thought to contribute to the consolidation of the hegemony of the historically dominant classes, facilitated by growth at the heart of capitalism (Igoe et al. 2010; Sklair, 2000). The dominance of the ruling class is achieved with a combination of force and the creation of a discourse that neutralises the counter-hegemonic challenges aimed at the dominating order, co-opting and neutralising them through changes and concessions that re-establish the consensus (Wanner, 2014). Antonio Gramsci called this process the “absorption of the antithesis” (1971, p. 110).

For example, the World Travel & Tourism Council analyses the way that complaints about tourism oversaturation are assimilated without altering the *status quo* (McKinsey & Company, 2017). The WTTC proposes to mitigate overtourism through deseasonalisation, spatial deconcentration, price increases, limiting accommodation places and regulating the access to overcrowded sites.

A partial conception of the socio-ecological variables at stake is at the root of these contradictions. Certain territorial and tourism planning instruments seek to improve environmental conditions, such as the landscape quality of the environments in terms of weak sustainability but they neglect socio-economic aspects which are taken into consideration in political ecology and environmental justice studies.

However, a genuine degrowth project implies a socio-ecological transition (Escobar, 2015) using new forms of radical democracy, guided by environmental justice, solidarity and autonomy (Cattaneo et al. 2012). Social movements are considered to promote a new “epistemic community”, moving the struggle further beyond the boundary of greenwash rhetoric, contesting tourism growth in a transformative “triple movement of emancipation” (Fraser, 2011), against the expansion of the tourist frontier, i.e. touristification (Moranta & Valdivielso, 2020). Otherwise, regulatory measures to contain growth, such as territorial and tourism planning instruments deployed by the state, can be considered as double movements

of social protection (Fletcher, Murray, Blanco-Romero, & Blázquez-Salom, 2019). The resulting proposals for ecological transition are directed by the principles of environmental justice and prioritise the schemes that improve the living conditions of the most disadvantaged (Moreno, 2010; Perles-Ribes Ramón-Rodríguez, Vera-Rebollo, & Ivars-Baidal, 2017).

Genuine degrowth also aims at recognising the ecological dependence of the human species on the ecological systems. It is therefore linked to the strong approach to sustainability in terms of the weak commensurability of natural capital and man-made capital and accepting that there are limits on the global systemic resilience. Given this current state of knowledge, we critically analyse the limitations of territorial tourism planning instruments, through the study of three innovative experiences, in the light of the different interpretations of degrowth. Thus, we aim to improve the knowledge of its practical application by this means.

Analysis and periodisation of the urban-tourism regulatory framework in Spain (1960-2018)

Recent Spanish history, particularly referring to the Mediterranean coastline, shows the effects of the functional specialisation in tourism and real estate. In this period of almost 60 years, different tourist and territorial planning approaches have been applied to the tourism spaces, depending on the changes in the socio-economic and tourism context and the associated economic cycles and the transformations experienced by the country (Murray et al., 2017). It is possible to observe how five main approaches have operated in practice and how they have addressed specific problems related to tourism planning, resulting in responses to overtourism and setting limits on growth and degrowth measures. Below, the phases contained in Table 1 are described.

Table 1: Synthesis of the evolution of the tourist and territorial planning approaches in Spain and measures to contain growth. Source: Compiled by the author

	Boosterism (Until 1975)	Decentralisation and first protectionism (1975-1989)	Restructuring of destinations (1992-1997)	“Urbanisation tsunami) (1998-2007)	Crisis and neoliberal reaction (2008-2014)	Response to overtourism (From 2014)
Economic/tourism cycle	Expansive cycle until the crisis of 1973 1964-1974: 1st property bubble in Spain*	Delayed effects of the 1973 crisis 1986-1992: 2nd property bubble*	Crisis that ended the property bubble	Expansive economic cycle 1996-2007: 3rd property bubble*	Fast recovery of the tourism crisis but not of the socio-economic crisis. Favourable international scenario	Gradual recovery of real estate activity Rent bubble?
Processes of territorial implementation	Hotel establishments on the seafront	Housing development for tourism use in coastal areas	Predominance of housing development, scarce renovation of traditional nuclei and pressure on rustic land	Conventional expansion together with large urban operations, also in the pre-coastal area	Enterprise-based reassessment projects “Zombie urbanisations”	Touristification and gentrification of urban spaces
Predominant approach	Boosterism and economic approach	Greater relevance of physical (urban plans) and community (regulatory participation) approach	Strategic and sustainable tourism planning as a rhetorical principle: local plans and Agenda 21	Contradictory physical planning on a regional level. Resurgence of boosterism	Delegitimisation of public planning in favour of private interests	Broader social participation in urban planning, particularly in large cities
Principal containment measures	Non-existent Growth as an objective	Ley de Costas (Coastal Law) (1988) Declaration of Protected Natural Spaces Tourism density ratios (Balearic Islands)	POOT of Mallorca (1995) Limitations to growth on designated land. Consolidation of regional spatial planning policies	New Spanish Land Act (1998), catalyst of growth Urban construction moratoriums (Balearic and Canary Island). Sub-regional planning of growth containment (Menorca, Catalonia...)	Austerity policies (slowing down of the renovation of destinations) Regulatory flexibility: Declaration of Regional Interest	Limitations to creating new urban tourism rental places (sectoral and urban planning regulations): PEUAT, PIAT... Reinforcement of sub-regional planning as a limit to growth (PATIVEL)

*Periodisation of the property bubbles in Lois, González and Escudero (2012)

The “Spanish tourism miracle” as a prime example of boosterism (until 1975)

The configuration of mass tourism coastal destinations in Spain from the 1960s took place within a dictatorial political regime that used tourism as a way to obtain foreign exchange earnings in order to palliate the balance of payment deficit and improve the country’s image to the outside world (Murray, 2015). Within this context, tourism planning displayed the

characteristics of *boosterism*, in which the growth in the tourism supply was considered to be a priority, concentrated in coastal towns.

The three Economic and Social Development Plans of the period 1964-1975 show how profitability was the primary objective of the economic approach. The effects of the territorial implementation of tourism in the *boosterism* years were still visible in the coastal destinations and they have resulted in structural problems that are difficult to overcome. The meteoric growth of supply with deficient urban planning led to deficits in infrastructure and quality standards of the supply, the deterioration of natural and cultural heritage, and even, the first saturation problems of tourist sites (Cals, 1974; Murray, 2015).

The decentralisation of policies and the first boost to protectionist measures (1975-1989)

After the economic crisis of 1973 and with the new Land Act (1975), a new stage of growth emerged that was linked more to the construction of housing than the creation of hotel supply. In general, the new municipal plans legalised previous urban-tourism actions and favoured urban expansion. With the return of democracy in Spain (1978), a new stage of decentralising tourism and urban policy began. In the mid-1980s, the Ley de Bases de Régimen Local (1986) (Law regulating the Basis of the Local Government) was passed. It conferred a wide range of competencies in terms of urban planning to the municipalities and urban-tourism growth became a source of municipal finance.

In parallel, the Autonomous Regions passed spatial planning laws on a regional level which enabled this public policy to be consolidated during the 1990s (Benabent, 2006). These initiatives established the base for a more territorial approach to urban planning, while the macroeconomic perspective continued to be fundamental in policies related to the tourism sector. On a local scale, the *laissez-faire* approach of *boosterism* was limited through the

exercising of a greater administrative control and a greater reflection of the effects of planning in the territorial model. Pioneering measures to protect natural spaces were applied in the Balearic Islands from 1984 (Blázquez-Salom, 1999). An attempt was made to modify the development inertia of *boosterism* with protectionist legislation with effects that were more palliative than preventative: Environmental Impact Assessment Act (1986), Coastal Law (1988) or the Law for the Conservation of Natural Spaces and Wild Flora and Fauna (1989)

The restructuring of destinations: planning initiatives without the capacity/will for structural transformation (1990-1997)

At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, there was a recession in international tourist demand for Spain, within a context of global turbulences that gave rise to a neoliberal economic modernisation (Murray et al, 2017). The weaknesses of the “Spanish economic miracle” included a disordered urban growth of the principal tourist destinations which are addressed in the White Paper on Spanish Tourism (1990).

In the 1990s, the corporate desire to monopolise hotel revenue and over-supply fuelled the formation of an increased social consensus in favour of nature conservation, rhetorically based on mitigating the risk of losing tourism competitiveness. In the Balearic Islands, tourism restructuring was focused on adopting measures to contain urban-tourism growth through “hotel moratoriums” but, at the same time, promoting residential development (Aguiló, 1990), with the announcement of the desire of the regional government to convert the islands into Europe's second residence (Amer, 2006). The restructuring of tourism urbanisation was promoted through reductions in density with the establishment of “spongy” urban ratios to create free spaces, foster containment and the redirection of growth. The Tourism Supply-side Regulation Plans (POOT) for the Balearic Islands represent the first decisive action on a regional scale to contain the growth of coastal tourist areas (Blázquez-Salom and Yrigoy, 2016).

The restructuring of the tourist destinations was considered in terms of the maturity and obsolescence of their supply (Vera and Rodríguez, 2015), basing the tourism policies on the discourse of renovation, excellence and sustainability (Future Plans I and II, 1992-1999) and overall quality (Integral Plan of Spanish Tourism Quality, PICTE, 2006). Strategic tourism planning continued to be dependent on urban planning instruments which were binding in nature. The discourse of sustainability promoted social participation in tourism planning processes, for example, through Local Agenda 21 programmes, environmental audits and, less frequently, action and monitoring plans with tracking indicators. Also in the Balearic Islands, the municipality of Calvià applied an Agenda 21 to the review of a developmentalist urban plan (approved in 1991), limiting urban expansion through the declassification of developable land, although the land classified as urban still allowed a considerable growth margin (Blázquez-Salom, 2001).

The “urban development tsunami” and the debate on tourism models (1998-2007)

The expansion of tourism and urbanisation characterised the so-called “urban development tsunami” that affected the coastal strip of the Spanish Mediterranean (Gaja, 2008). In the period 1997-2006, a total of 4.7 million properties were finished, a completely disproportionate figure in the European context (Burriel, 2008), attracting international capital within a climate of strong credit expansion (López & Rodríguez, 2011). The new reform of the Land Law (1988) introduced liberalising measures that favoured real estate expansion. The insistence of pro-growth lobbies (Romero and Vidal, 2018) and the use of urban expansion for municipal financing explain the low incidence of urban planning to contain real estate and tourism growth (Peñín, 2006). Territorial tourism planning was based on the rhetoric of sustainability but urban growth was given priority (Mantecón, 2008). The palliative measures corresponded to a weak sustainability approach, for example, improving water management or protecting spaces of environmental interest, with no real transformation

of the urban and tourism model (Vera & Ivars, 2003).

The urban development tsunami threatened hotel profitability and aggravated the environmental conflicts. The denouncement of the excessive tourism-residential urbanisation was supported by the large hotel owners who criticised the diffused urban development and low profitability of the disperse building models (Deloitte-Exceltur, 2005). Their support for the environmental cause called for a new territorial tourism planning that would determine the mature tourism spaces, coordinate the municipal planning and incorporate measures to contain urban growth. There was a myriad of territorial planning measures and instruments on different regional and local levels which clashed, overlapped and, sometimes contradicted each other (Górgolas Martín, 2016).

In short, for our field of study we can identify three differentiated models of regional territorial tourism policy: 1) the Balearic region which is similar to the Canary Islands in that they both impose moratoriums and an apply an integrated regional tourism planning (Blázquez-Salom & Yrigoy, 2016; Rullan, 2005, 2011; Simancas, 2015); 2) regions such as Catalonia which introduce urban planning measures to protect the coastline that are binding for the municipalities (Nel-lo, 2012); 3) and the autonomous regions, such as Valencia which, without renouncing the rhetoric of sustainability, are committed to urban expansion through large real estate operations (Burriel de Orueta, 2009) and, belatedly, have applied instruments that limit growth, such as the PATIVEL.

The crisis as a catalyst of neoliberal approaches (2008-2014)

The slowdown of urban expansion came about with the international economic crisis of 2008 with the bankruptcy of construction companies, real estate agencies and banks (Méndez et al. 2015). The management of the crisis made regulation more flexible, creating conditions that fostered investment and public funds were dedicated to bailing out financial entities (Murray, 2015); meanwhile, austerity policies were applied, slowing down public investment in a

whole range of areas including the reconstruction of mature tourism destinations (Yrigoy, 2015).

The conditions for tourism growth were restored using new neoliberal territorial and tourism policies. The Comprehensive National Tourism Plan (2012-2015) emphasised the need for private investment implemented through, for example, the financing of hotel corporations (Yrigoy, 2016). New regulations stimulated capital investment through the streamlining of the administrative procedures that were necessary to process urban planning projects, for example, through declarations of autonomic interest (Blázquez-Salom, Artigues, & Yrigoy, 2015), among other measures.

The excess supply of housing, fruit of the urban development tsunami, the high level of private borrowing and job insecurity constitute arguments in favour of the expansion of the tourism business frontiers and the legalisation of renting properties to tourists (Blanco-Romero et al. 2018).

Instruments for containing growth and new intervention mechanisms to address overtourism

In accordance with the objectives proposed, our study has been conducted taking into account case studies (Map 1) of three different spatial scales (the Autonomous Community of the Region of Valencia, the island of Majorca and the city of Barcelona), which have similar historical tourism backgrounds and are characterised by saturation and more complex experiences of territorial planning for tourist growth containment. The instruments analysed below are: the PATIVEL (2018), the PIAT (2018) and PEUAT (2017).

Map 1. Location of the study cases: The Autonomous Community of the Region of Valencia, the island of Majorca and the city of Barcelona.



Source: Compiled by the author.

PATIVEL: The Territorial Action Plan of the Green Coastal Infrastructure

The tourism specialisation of the Region of Valencia is suffering from environmental deterioration, particularly on the coast and a social demand is emerging that is calling for its protection through urban planning. Within this context, the regional government of the Region of Valencia has approved a new planning framework instrument called Estrategia Territorial de la Comunidad Valenciana (Territorial Strategy of the Region of Valencia) (ETCV) (2011). This document explicitly declares the commitment to a sustainable planning in accordance with the principles established by the European Territorial Strategy (1999) and denotes landscape management as a tool of spatial planning.

One of the key elements of the territorial model proposed by the ETCV is the so-called “Green Territorial Infrastructure”. The origins of this concept are rooted in the architecture of the North American landscape (*Law Olmstead*), which has been incorporated into territorial

planning. The Green Infrastructure is defined as an interconnected network made up of landscapes of great environmental, cultural and visual value. It comprises the natural spaces protected in the regional, state or international legislation, the spaces of the Natura 2000 network (Directive 92/43/EEC), the landscapes of cultural and visual value and those fragile spaces with restrictions for urbanisation: the areas with natural risks, risk of erosion and aquifer recharge. In spatial planning processes, these spaces should be connected by ecological corridors and functional connections. In this way, the future uses of the land that may be applied in the space must comply with the requirements of protection and conservation of the Green Infrastructure, which forms the basic structure of the environmental sustainability of a geographic space Vera-Rebollo, Olcina, Sáinz-Pardo Trujillo2019).

The ETCV is specified in the PATIVEL (Decree 58/2018) and has the essential objective of protecting the coastal areas of the Region of Valencia unaffected by urban development. The PATIVEL delimits and orders a total of 52 areas which should be kept free from construction (Conselleria de Vivienda, Obras Públicas y Vertebración del Territorio, 2018). Its scope of protection includes areas that were already declared as non-buildable land and the urban declassification of 1,426 ha of land on the coastal strip. Overall, the PATIVEL seeks to protect a total of 7,500 ha of the region's coastline, equivalent to 12% of the land that has not yet been urbanised in the 2,000 m-wide strip from the coastline (Map 2).

The principal objectives of the PATIVEL are: 1) to define and organise the supramunicipal Green Infrastructure of the coastline, protecting its environmental, territorial, landscape, cultural, educational and protection values against natural and induced risks; 2) to guarantee the ecological and functional connectivity between the coastal and inland spaces and to prevent the fragmentation of the pieces that make up the Green Infrastructure; 3) to improve the maintenance of the free spaces on the coastal strip, preventing the consolidation of continuous buildings and urban barriers; 4) to guarantee the effectiveness of the protection

of the easements of the coastal public domain; 5) to improve the quality and functionality of the already built-up coastal spaces, particularly a quality tourism supply; 6) to facilitate pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and mobility on the coast and along its connections with the inland territory.

Map 2. Areas protected by the PATIVEL (Autonomous Community of the Region of Valencia).



Source: Compiled by the autor based on the Conselleria de Vivienda, Obras Públicas y Vertebración del Territorio (2018).

The PATIVEL is a relevant initiative for protecting the little coastal land that is still undeveloped or for which there is no urban plan that has been approved or in the process of being developed. This new direction already represents a significant change in policy with respect to the land liberalising measures of previous decades. However, its application is not exempt from contradictions which are discussed in the following section.

The PIAT: Plan for Intervention in Tourist Areas in Mallorca

The PIAT, which was initially approved in 2018 (Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018a), is an example of tourist territorial planning, fruit of a long tradition of legal instruments to promote the containment of growth. Its most recent predecessor was the Tourism Supply-side Regulation Plans (POOT), approved in 1995 (Decree 54/95 of April, BOIB 22/06/95) and abolished in 2012. Both plans address on-going conflicts in retrospect. The POOT was created in response to the dysfunctions of the Fordist hotel model, while the PIAT is based on models of Neo-Fordism flexibilisation and geographical expansion of the tourist business (Bianchi, 2002).

The PIAT considers the reality that the whole island is becoming highly desirable to the tourism sector, contrary to the previous fordist model which was limited to the mono-functional urban development of the coast. During the 1990s, the tourism business frontiers widened; the supply became more diversified with the introduction of new geographic areas, aspects of daily life and residential properties which were excluded from the tourism sector in the fordist hotel model. This extension of the geographical area was linked to the introduction of new tangible and intangible elements in the tourism sector. Among them, housing is the good added to the tourism market that generates the most social conflict due to its necessary function for residential use which competes with the tourism and speculative uses.

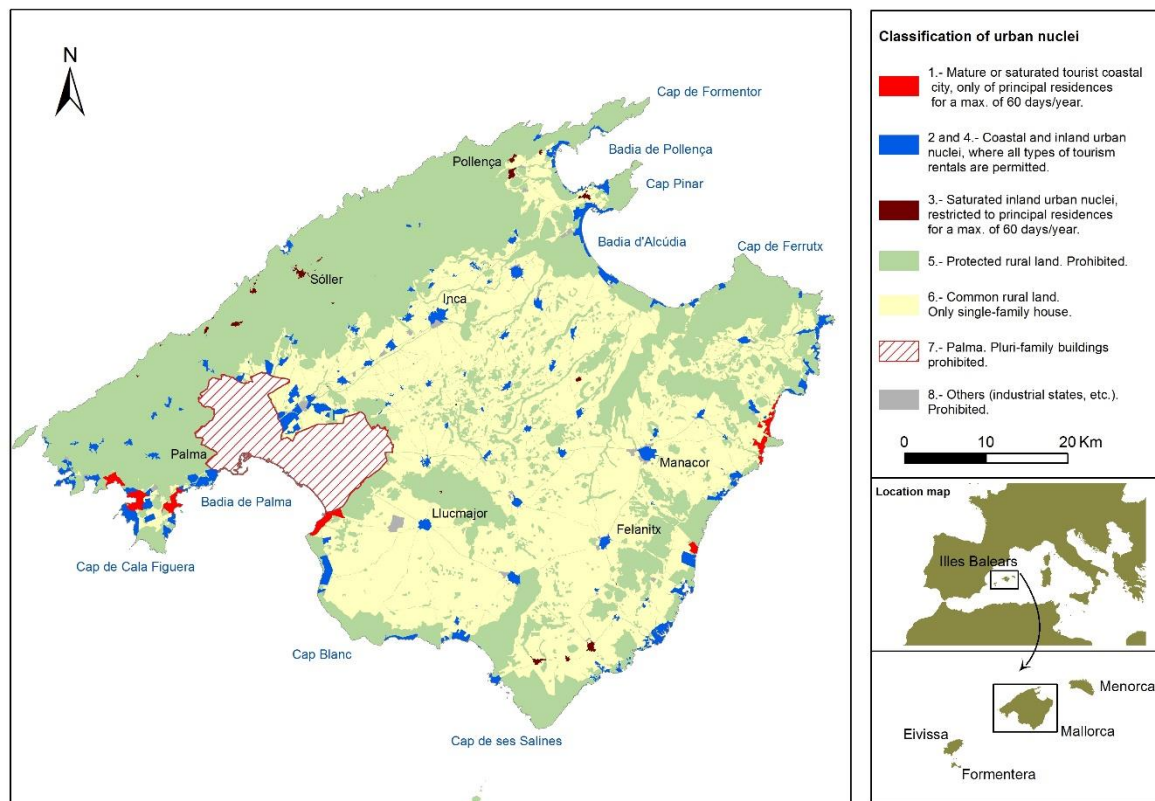
The PIAT acknowledges the diagnosis of overtourism and seeks to address four objectives: 1) to regenerate tourist cities; 2) to limit the tourism use depending on the

territorial capacities; 3) to determine the capacity of the tourism supply, differentiating hotel supply and housing; 4) and to improve the sustainability of the facilities through the promotion of efficiency measures (Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018a).

The PIAT deploys territorial tourism planning measures, particularly oriented towards limiting the accommodation supply, especially apartments and houses. The approval of the PIAT was accompanied by the approval of a zoning plan which seeks to organise its expansion (Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018b). This zoning determines in which urban nuclei different types of short term housing rental (STHR) are permitted, which depends on four variables: 1) the density of inhabitants and tourism beds per hectare of urban and developable land; 2) the percentage of tourist beds with regard to the resident population; 3) the proportion of empty properties with regard to total properties; 4) and the proportion of legalised STHR with regard to the total properties in the urban nucleus.

Therefore, the rental of housing to tourists is zoned according to a classification of all of the urban nuclei (Map 3): 1) the mature or saturated tourist coastal cities where the rental of the main residences of property owners to tourists is only permitted for 60 days per year; 2) the rest of the coastal tourist nuclei, in which all types of tourism rentals are permitted; 3) the inland urban nuclei, where the rental of main residences to tourists is permitted for 60 days per year; 4) the rest of the inland urban nuclei, where all types of rental of properties to tourist are permitted; 5) the protected rural land (natural spaces) where this type of use is prohibited; 6) the rest of common rural land, which has agricultural, forestry or natural uses, and only holiday rental of single-family house is permitted; 7) and finally, the municipality of Palma, with the island's capital, which is governed by its own regulations and where, currently, the rental of housing in pluri-family buildings is prohibited, but not that of single family properties.

Map 3. Zoning of the short term housing rental (STHR) through the PIAT (Mallorca).



Source: Own elaboration based on the Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018a.

The PIAT establishes a maximum capacity of tourist accommodation in Mallorca at 430,000 beds, yet this increased from 292,435 tourist places in 2016 to 395,798 in 2018, which is mainly due to the avalanche of legalisations of tourist accommodation properties (Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018a). This figure does not include the illegal supply of properties rented to tourists which the PIAT acknowledges as being the same as the number of legalised properties. The difference between the maximum capacity permitted and the real amount of tourism rental beds in 2018 is the “margin of places” available for growth. The arguments given in the PIAT in favour of this containment are: 1) the space limits of the island; 2) the overburdening of resources and infrastructures; 3) the threat to the social structure of an excessive specialisation in tourism; 4) the feeling of congestion in the high

season; 5) the saturation of infrastructures and facilities, including housing; 6) and the fight against climate change.

The PIAT diagnoses an over-saturation of the principal tourism resources: cycling tour paths, hiking routes, golf courses, dry marina or beaches. In the case of the beaches, an available theoretical ratio of 1.68 m²/places is calculated, considering the distribution of the useful surface area of all the beaches at the maximum frequentation of the island, which, in 2017 was 1,477,157 people (Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018a). Its diagnosis identifies the beaches that have a low occupation, estimates an optimum ratio of 15m²/person and proposes the building of regulated car parks (with one parking space for every 4 users) in order to facilitate access to 16 isolated beaches.

The PEUAT: Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation in Barcelona

The PEAUT forms part of the intervention and containment measures adopted to address the overtourism problem arising from the success of Barcelona which was obliged to reformulate its policy and tourism intervention measures (López Palomeque, 2015).

Following the bursting of the financial and housing bubble in 2008, the built environment has once again become a guarantor of the credit system as ‘spatio-temporal fixes’ (Harvey, 2006), also in the restructuring the tourism space (Murray *et al.*, 2017). The citizen-based social and cultural identity (Capel, 2005) becomes a new attraction for the tourist business. This is how, the de-industrialised city became the target of tourism regeneration through the commercialisation of its civic culture, or city marketing (Eisenschitz, 2016); and how the “touristification of everyday life” (Bourdeau et al., 2013) has generated the emergence of conflicts regarding social segregation, inflation, congestion, privatisation and the trivialisation of the space (Russo and Scarnato, 2017). Within this context, the multifunctional city provides opportunities to earn monopoly rents for its capital with policies that impose limitations and contribute uniqueness. Paradoxically, the social tension that seeks

to limit this homogenising mass tourism contributes to creating a differentiated and unique city brand, rendering it more attractive and more profitable (Harvey, 2002).

The conflicts generated by tourism massification have transformed tourism into one of the greatest concerns of citizens. This is why the City Council of Barcelona has been developing different measures to manage tourist accommodation, since 2014, such as the moratorium initiated by *Convergència i Unió* (conservative nationalist party). After 2015, the city council, governed by a coalition of left-wing parties, has been approving new intervention instruments: the fight against illegal tourist accommodation (principally offered on the online platforms), the reorganisation of the port in order to move certain cruise terminals away from the centre, or the first plan of its kind in Europe, the PEUAT, designed around new dynamics based on increased citizen participation through dialogue with neighbourhood associations (Blanco-Romero et al., 2018; Russo & Scarnato, 2017).

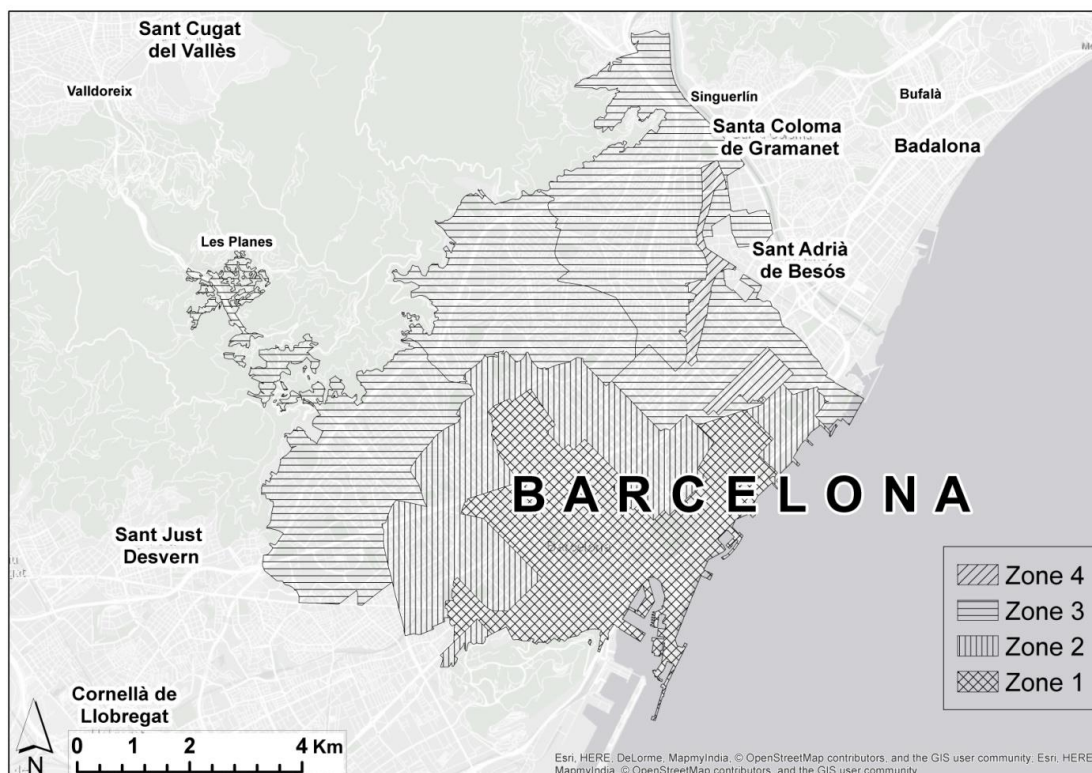
In January 2017, the City Council of Barcelona passed the PEUAT (*Diputació de Barcelona*, 2017) and put an end to the previous moratorium. This initiative, which is a pioneer in its field, constitutes the regulatory framework of the city's urban planning and tourist accommodation management criteria through the application of the urban planning law of Catalonia (Legislative Decree 1/2010). This decree regulates the creation of new tourist accommodation establishments (hotels, apartments, youth hostels, collective residences, etc.) and STHR (HUTs, Housing Used for Tourism). The former HUTs are one of the most controversial aspects of the current situation, for which zero growth has been imposed throughout the whole city.

The objective of PEUAT, drawn up by the City Council of Barcelona, is to improve the quality of life of the city's citizens, aiming to: 1) alleviate tourist pressure; 2) contain the increase in tourist accommodation; 3) preserve the quality of the public space and diversify it

with other activities: 4) promote the diversity of the urban fabrics; 5) guarantee the right to housing, rest, privacy, well-being, sustainable mobility and a healthy environment.

The PEUAT has been designed as an urban planning instrument, distinguishing between four specifically regulated zones (Map 4). Each of these zones is characterised by the distribution of the accommodation throughout the territory, the ratio between the number of tourist beds offered and the resident population, the ratio and conditions of certain uses, the incidence of the activities in the public space and the presence of tourist attractions (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2017). The innovative aspect resides principally in the regulation of the HUTs, establishing zero growth throughout the city so as to prevent excessive concentration and to guarantee a balanced territorial distribution. In this way, when a HUT ceases its activity in a congested area, a new licence will be permitted in uncongested areas or accommodation regrouping will be allowed in the maintenance or growth areas.

Map 4. Zoning of the PEUAT (Barcelona).



Source: Own elaboration based on Barcelona City Council data. 2017.

Therefore, Zone 1, considered as the zone of negative growth, does not allow the introduction of any type of tourist establishment or the increase in the number of places in the existing establishments. It includes whole districts, such as Ciutat Vella or the Poble Sec, where the majority of establishments are concentrated (more than 60% of the city's supply) and they receive an average visiting population of 69% of the total population, in cases such as the Gothic quarter. This measure seeks to achieve degrowth and, in some zones, such as Ciutat Vella, maintains the specific regime with respect to the HUTs that contemplates the regrouping in a whole building and the possibility of relocating the possible fewer places.

In Zone 2, the current number of places and establishments is to be maintained and existing establishments are not allowed to expand. It includes areas such as Sants or Sagrada Família, among others, where the visiting population accounts for, on average, 11% of the total population.

Zone 3 is the largest in size and permits the opening of new establishments and the expansion of existing ones, provided that the growth is contained. Growth is permitted provided that the maximum density of places in terms of the morphological capacity of the area and the current availability of supply of tourist accommodation are not exceeded.

Zone 4 includes all other areas of the city with specific regulations as they are considered as being three large redevelopment areas: la Marina del Prat Vermell, la Sagrera and the northern part of 22@ quarter, with very different characteristics in terms of territory, building density, use and development. In these areas, the introduction of new HUTs is forbidden.

Discussion. Inconsistencies in the growth containment and degrowth measures

The analysis of the regulatory framework and the three study tools reveals inconsistencies and undesirable collateral effects in the transition towards the containment of growth and degrowth of tourism. These contradictions are found in the actual concept of the tools and

their rhetorical discourse in relation to their practical application.

In the case of the Region of Valencia, in 2018, the PATIVEL took on the tradition of protecting the coast which had been applied in the Balearic Islands in 1999 and in Catalonia in 2005 during the phase called the “urban development tsunami” (Górgolas Martín, 2019). It is a physical/spatial planning tool that applies sub-regional planning measures in order to limit growth. This first characteristic, its late development, particularly when it is compared with the growth containment policies that have been implemented in other Spanish regions for more than two decades, constitutes one weakness.

Futhermore, it specifies the applicability of different interpretations of degrowth, linked to ideological stances. One meaning of degrowth, related just to the quantitative demographic variable, is based on neo-Malthusian proposals that blame unsustainability on the most disadvantaged social classes, in quantitative terms. A more genuine interpretation of degrowth maintains that it should favour the social vulnerable classes (Perles-Ribes, et al., 2017). The first is achieved through the creation, in certain cases, of a pro-degrowth consensus in the oversaturated tourist destinations, in which a reduction of the amount of customers is desired, dispensing with those with the lowest purchasing power. These coalitions between the upper class and hegemonic power take advantage of the containment measures through their control of the revenue of the urban-tourism business. Consequently, territorial protection, with the elimination of the expectation of further property development, increases the value of the real estate in the area, thanks to the generation of unpaid externalities. The decrease in the supply, due to growth containment, deals with the increase of its economic profitability.

The same is the case with the operating licences of the tourist establishments, after applying moratoriums that paralysed the granting of new licences, generally with a significant “pull effect” and high growth ceilings. In the case of the PIAT in Mallorca and the PEUAT in

Barcelona, the hotel sector, property owners and real estate investors benefit from the increased value of their assets due to the higher value in the market of a product that is becoming more scarce and selective. The image attached to a commitment to contain growth favours competitiveness through restructuring and social-spatial segregation in order to replace the mass tourism supply for a more exclusive and expensive offer.

Another contradiction of the curbing of the expansion of urbanisation is its elitisation, with the adoption of mobility habits that imply a more intense energy consumption (Scott, & Gössling, 2015), together with urban planning patterns of single family homes with gardens and swimming pools that consume greater amounts of water. This territorial model of quality tourism uses the discourse of sustainability as a “fix” to favour capital accumulation (Hof & Blázquez-Salom, 2015), monopolised by powerful regional cliques that control the mechanisms for exercising power (Bianchi, 2004).

The tourism pressure on urban spaces and the changes in the rental legislation enabling the eviction of tenants with low rents, fosters, among other factors, gentrification processes (Blanco et al., 2018; Vives-Miró, et al. 2018), which can be aggravated by degrowth measures that do not contemplate social policies to facilitate the access to housing by residents. In this sense, in 2007, the Balearic Parliament added a new objective of “investing in the rehabilitation of dwellings intended for social housing” to the aims of the fund raised with the tourism tax.

Moreover, a geographical expansion of the tourism business frontiers can be observed, which is paradoxically related to the application of the restrictions. In this way, the traditional and multifunctional city or the rural and natural spaces close to the city tourist destinations also become attractive for tourism development. The promise of a greater monopolistic profitability, fuelled by the restrictions to growth, attracts capital in search of profitability and proximity (Hof & Blázquez-Salom, 2013). New actors appear with conflicting interests, such

as associations in favour of tourist rental properties and social movements condemning tourism gentrification who claim the right to the city and access to housing.

The strategic diagnosis of the plan calls for degrowth, but the regulations have not put this into practice. Therefore, the discourse has become rhetoric. According to stakeholders' statements (ABTS' evaluation dated 17/05/2017¹), the PEAUT does not consider Barcelona as a unit in terms of the degrowth of its tourist accommodation capacity, generally allowing growth in the neighbourhoods of the outer ring which are not yet tourist oriented. Also, in Mallorca, the discourse regarding the containment of growth has been a feature of the whole territorial tourism planning process, from the POOT with its hotel moratorium to the PIAT with its promise to impose a ceiling on the increase in the supply of places. The rhetoric of the hegemonic discourse goes to the extent of portraying the PIAT as a degrowth measure. This rhetorical discourse seeks to pacify the resident population which has campaigned for the defence of the territory, in a context of social conflict due to overtourism. Overtourism is battled, but to benefit capital accumulation, commodification of a wider spectrum of everyday life and dispossessing disadvantaged social classes (Moranta & Valdivielso, 2019).

The changes brought about by the legalisation on the use of dwellings to accommodate tourists have been studied in the rural context (Hof & Blázquez-Salom, 2013) and in the central district of the city of Palma (Vives-Miró, et al, 2018; Blanco-Romero, et al. 2018). Changes from a residential to tourism function are altering the area's internal zoning. When tourists are accommodated in neighbourhoods which the plan considers as being residential, certain mandatory facilities do not make sense. Tourists do not need educational centres, social or religious services which the plan stipulates as being obligatory in residential areas. The tourists' demand for free public spaces (from children's play areas to beaches), healthcare

¹ <https://assembleabarris.wordpress.com/2017/05/17/comunicat-de-premsa-abts-valoracio-del-peuat/>
(consulted the 24/07/2018).

facilities, water and energy supply and waste treatment is different from the residential demand. The same is the case for the retail structure, given that the type of stores oriented to the residential population are different to those that attract tourists (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2019).

In term of the practical application of the regulatory measures regarding the use of dwellings for tourism, the planning shows inconsistencies in terms of its fulfilment. One major weakness of these regulations is the failure to apply inspection or sanctioning measures in order to curb inequality. In Mallorca, the increase in the number of tourist rental properties does not respect the margins established by the legislation, with a supply of non-registered or illegal properties representing 54% of the total tourist stays in dwellings in 2016 (Consell Insular de Mallorca, 2018a). Similarly, in Barcelona, the neighbourhood platforms have focused their criticism on denouncing the illegal activities related to tourism accommodation in dwellings and the need for a Citizens Monitoring Committee which controls the compliance with the PEUAT and the inspection and sanctioning mechanisms that are established.

The protection of unique coastal areas through the PATIVEL does not include environmental management measures, a key factor for the subsequent land management (Farinós, 2012). Many areas affected by the urbanisation pressure run the risk of becoming dumping grounds and “socially fallow” (Vera-Rebollo, Olcina & Sáinz, 2019). Classifying land as non-developable under special protection should go hand-in-hand with an environmental and landscape management that requires the collaboration of the regional and local governments and the development of agreements with the land owners that determine the land stewardship (Capdepón & Durá, 2019).

Although decisions are made through consultation and citizen participation processes, another inconsistency of the plans resides in the social conflicts. Even though the PEUAT, the

PATIVEL or the PIAT were intended to be created through participative governance processes, their application reveals lines of debate and tension between the different groups involved, due mainly to the fact that governance has been understood as the relativisation of the State, whereby the government of the city is shared with private agents and the most powerful continue to exercise control, establishing a consensus to maintain their class hegemony (Garnier, 2011). Their instrumental political use legitimises growth as social glue, due to its virtuous cycle of wealth creation, capital gains, job positions, etc. (Logan and Moloch, 1987). Therefore, both the hotel sector and the citizens' associations (ABTS among others) have already expressed their disagreement, each in their respective field of action. According to its representatives, the *Gremi d'Hotelers*, has presented a contentious-administrative appeal against the PEUAT, so as to stop and request the elimination of the restrictions imposed on the growth of tourist accommodation in the city, in the same way as town councils and land owners reject and appeal against the PATIVEL with respect to the protection of land along the coastline. Meanwhile, while acknowledging the need for the PEUAT as a containment tool, the ABTS considers it to be insufficient, given that it does not address the underlying problem of tourist saturation as it allows an increase in the number of tourist accommodation places despite the degrowth and desaturation proposals put forward by the citizens.

Furthermore, the PATIVEL lacks a programme to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the approved model, over an appropriate time span, using a system of basic indicators (Wang & Banzhaf, 2018). There is another inconsistency in the PEUAT in terms of its duration which is established at four years. This means that it is impossible to implement long-term actions and it is necessary to contemplate the licences previously granted in addition to those permitted by the PEUAT (approximately 23,000 places in four and a half years).

Conclusions

There are clear trends in the historical territorial tourism planning sequence in Spain. The boom of mass tourism in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s constitutes a clear example of *boosterism*. The first measures to contain growth date back to the mid-1990s. They were applied to mature coastal areas and were, on the whole, implemented by regional governments. These measures were particularly prominent in the Balearic and Canary Islands.

On a local scale, from the mid-1980s, urban planning incorporated a greater reflection of the city model compared to previous stages. However, the plans were too rigid and based on bloated developable land classifications which generated enormous growth potential. The community-based approach was tentatively developed in the design of local urban plans, and from the 1990s, through selective social participation in the creation of tourism and local Agenda 21 strategic plans.

Sustainable tourism development as a focus of planning in Spain requires a highly critical balance. From the mid-1990s, sustainability was incorporated into planning as a rhetorical principle but very little real progress was made, with the exception of certain processes related to Local Agenda 21 programmes, such as the case of Calvià (Mallorca) or Menorca, which established limits on urban and tourism development. From a physical-spatial point of view, measures for protecting natural spaces, regulating construction on non-developable land or establishing moratoriums and measures to limit urban growth have been implemented by regional governments.

During the urban development tsunami, the hegemonic discourse regarding the virtue of tourism development and the legal and administrative tangle into which tourist urban development had evolved are reminiscent of *boosterism*, with solutions that generally favoured business interests. This social aspect should be taken into account in view of the potential reactivation of the real estate activity. In fact, the effects of the 2008 crisis do not

appear to have caused a reconsideration of the tourism urban development processes.

According to the analysis of our case studies, the stagnation of construction in coastal destinations is derived from the consequences of the economic crisis and does not respond to a new sustainable development strategy. On the other hand, the crisis has served to justify neoliberal approaches in favour of the strategic nature of the new urban-tourism operations.

However, some evidence points to a change of scenario that is more favourable for growth containment policies and, to a lesser extent, for degrowth. The accumulated effect of the real estate growth cycles has generated structural deficits and a growing awareness of the saturation of tourist areas, particularly in mature coastal destinations and large cities, aggravated by the dizzying increase in tourist accommodation offered on online platforms. In this way, real qualitative progress will be made in terms of the intervention instruments in the destinations most affected by overtourism, which are also those with progressive governments (Barcelona, Madrid or Palma), where citizen participation is fostered in planning processes in order to correct and avoid the effects of mass tourism.

The three instruments analysed (PATIVEL, PIAT and PEUAT) all follow this trend. The impact of tourism on the transformation of the territorial and socio-economic organisation and of the spaces affected by this activity is more visible than ever. The comparison of their discourses clashes with the evaluation of their real effectiveness. According to the analysis carried out preliminary conclusions can be drawn, which should be included in the emerging debate about tourism degrowth and contrasted in future case studies. First, these instruments are being promoted as paradigmatic tools for content urban growth, although they have come late, once the successive waves of urban-tourist development have already artificialized the Spanish coast (such in the case of the Region of Valencia). Second, although they help reduce the demographic pressure in quantitative terms in these saturated tourist destinations, they favour property rental (in the tourist but also in the real estate

sectors. Third, the curbing of the urbanisation expansion becomes elitist, where the less favoured inhabitants are being evicted and moved, while more affluent customers invest and gentrify the built environment and behave with more intensive energy and water consumption habits. Fourth, the application of tourist territorial planning tools to curb growth, without any other measure of social redistribution of the benefits, favours capital accumulation, which is monopolised by cliques that control the mechanism to exercise power. Fifth, the adoption of innovative tourist territorial plans stimulates the geographical expansion of the tourist business frontier (towards the designated natural areas, the rural areas, the central district of the historical city or the outskirts). Sixth, the enactment of the plans doesn't mean that they are actually implemented, due to lack of inspection and sanctioning measures. Seventh, setting aside land from urban development turns it into "socially-fallow" areas, which become dumping grounds without environmental management measures. And finally, private agents and the most powerful continue to exercise control, establishing a consensus to maintain their class hegemony, taking advantage of the generation of unpaid externalities.

Consequently, more restrictive measures are justified in those destinations that are the most affected by tourism, if degrowth is to be applied in an effective way. However, like all types of public action, these measures are not neutral and they can produce inconsistencies with the risk of the discourse of degrowth being orchestrated in such a way that it favours individual interests. Future research agenda should consider, on the one hand, new ways of defining planning instruments to overdue these contradictions and, on the other hand, explore paths to fulfil genuine and fair degrowth without systemic constraints.

Notes

1. The in-depth interviews were carried out in 2018 in Barcelona and Palma, and they are stored on file at the TUDISTAR research group headquarters, at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. They can be consulted by contacting us (tudistar@uab.cat). With regard to PATIVEL, an in-depth analysis was carried out on the public participation process, and as

an expert an author took part in the claims stage presented in the Plan, which is available in <http://www.habitatge.gva.es/auto/planes-accion-territorial/PATIVEL/08%20Plan%20de%20participaci%c3%b3n%20p%c3%bablica/Plan%20de%20participaci%c3%b3n%20p%c3%bablica.pdf>.

2. <https://assembleabarris.wordpress.com/2017/05/17/comunicat-de-premsa-abts-valoracio-del-peuat/> (consulted on the 24/07/2018).

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