

## The Challenge of Overtourism

Harold Goodwin

The challenge of managing tourism sustainably for residents, tourists and day visitors has been recognised for twenty years. However, the dominant paradigm has been of tourism as a largely unquestioned “good” with sustainable and sustainability liberally applied to reassure adversely impacted communities and critics. In the last two years, there has been a radical change in the perceptions of local people of tourism, in many destinations a tipping point has been reached and mass tourism has become a local political issue, sometimes spilling over into the street.

### Overtourism defined

Overtourism describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably. It is the opposite of Responsible Tourism which is about using tourism to make better places to live in and better places to visit. Often both visitors and guests experience the deterioration concurrently and rebel against it.

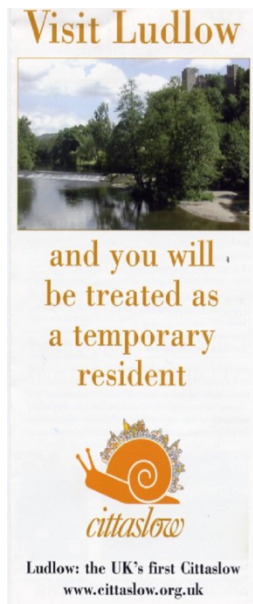
First used on twitter as #overtourism back in August 2012 the concept is likely to become commonplace over the next few years. At World Travel Market in 2017, the UNWTO’s Ministers’ Summit is addressing overtourism. Its meaning is nicely ambiguous, in a sector which celebrates rapid and seemingly endless growth in tourism arrivals we have arrived at overtourism in an increasing number of destinations. Tourism is best understood as a sector of consumption, and as peoples’ living standards rise they consume more travel and tourism – 11% of global consumption is by people of tourists. 11% of our consumption as consumers is as tourists. That is the opportunity – the staycation has not caught on. The propensity to travel amongst those with money and time is very high in a world where consumer preferences have moved, as might be predicted from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, from goods to services and experiences as people seek self-actualisation.<sup>1</sup>

Overtourism has emerged rapidly as a concept. The term is capable of immediate recognition, a label which enables people, whether visitors or locals, to voice their concerns about too much tourism. A wide variety of destinations are now identified as experiencing overtourism, and in a few places, there have been demonstrations, some of which have involved low levels of threat and in a few extreme cases violence.<sup>2</sup>

In Spain the Minister<sup>3</sup> and hosteltur<sup>4</sup> describe the rebellion by local people as (turismofobia) tourism phobia. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General at UNWTO has warned that people won’t travel to places where they are made to feel unwelcome and that many jobs are at stake.<sup>5</sup>

### The Antithesis

Krippendorff, in his seminal text *The Holiday Makers* published in 1987, called for a new form of tourism, one that “will bring the greatest possible benefit to all the participants – travellers, the host population and the tourist business, without causing intolerable ecological and social damage.” The needs of people, hosts and guests, would be at the core of this new tourism. To create it he argued, we need “rebellious tourists and rebellious locals”.<sup>6</sup>The rebellious are now making their voice heard.



The language of hosts and guests<sup>7</sup> was always largely aspirational. It offers an optimistic view of how the relationship between hosts and guests, residents and visitors, tourists and citizens might be developed. It is rarely achieved, but most of us can remember occasions and places where it more or less accurately characterises our experience of a place.

When visiting Ludlow for the Food Festival<sup>8</sup>, as I do every year, there is a palpable sense of being treated as a temporary resident. Partly a consequence of the nature of the town and its people, partly a consequence of being a regular visitor with acquaintances accumulated over a score or more years.<sup>9</sup> It is in part this sense of being a temporary resident that is so seductive and draws us back year after year. Of course, the biggest difference between the temporary resident and the resident is that the temporary visitor does not contribute any local tax, essential to the maintenance of the public realm.

Crowding and congestion are not new issues in tourism.

## Antecedents

In 1996 Boissevain<sup>10</sup> published *Coping with tourists: European reactions to mass tourism*. As he explained in Malta in 1956 the only tourists were relatives visiting British service personnel stationed on the island. In the 1960s “tourists were welcomed with pride and native hospitality”. By the 1990s tourists had become “a commodity on which Malta’s economy depended.” Boissevain lived on Malta and watched the transformation occur. “Increasingly there were reports in the press of rudeness to tourists, of their indecent dress, of confrontation with local hunters, even of occasional fights between hosts and guests.” This prompted him to ask whether the Maltese were having second thoughts about hosting ever more tourists and to write the book.<sup>11</sup>

In 1998, Tyler, Guerrier, & Robertson published *Managing tourism in cities*<sup>12</sup>. This contained three chapters on managing visitors and resources in the city. Tunbridge wrote about Ottawa focusing on the contested Anglo/Franco/Aborigine history and identity issues which arise in overtourism, where the community, or parts of it, feel that their identity has been subverted either by the marketers or by the hordes of visitors. Shackley wrote about the then current tourism management issues in the World Heritage cities of Damascus and Aleppo – that now seems a distant dream. Part of an ongoing research and management project, van der Borg wrote about Venice describing the large region which feeds off the popularity of this iconic destination with tourists arriving as day excursionists from as far away as the Tirol. He suggests that Venice could support around 25,000 visitors per day (15,000 tourists and 10,000 excursionists), describes the marketing, pre-arrival sale of tickets and alternative tourist routes being developed as management strategies which may be followed by other European heritage cities.<sup>13</sup> It is important to remember that the challenge of mass tourism in Venice has long been recognised and that many efforts have been made to manage it. Venice should give us all pause for thought – not all problems have solutions; or at least, not solutions which can be implemented.

Bosselman, Peterson, & McCarthy<sup>14</sup>, produced a major text on managing tourism growth in 1999 ahead of its time it has not been cited as often as one might reasonably expect.<sup>15</sup> They wrote of the

symbiotic relationship between host and tourists, the benefits and the risks, and the opportunity to tame tourism by managing its growth. They used the Whistler example of community engagement in tourism planning from the mid-nineties to analyse how with a comprehensive annual monitoring programme to inform debate, residents could contribute to an effective local tourism management strategy. They analysed a broad range of case studies and concluded their work with lists of processes and substance elements which formed part of successful strategies.

There is an extensive literature on visitor impacts in national parks and at cultural heritage sites and on the wide range of negative impacts that tourism has on local communities ranging across the economic, social and environmental challenges of sustainability. Fyall and Garrod surveyed “owners of historic properties, heritage consultants, visitor attraction managers and heritage industry representatives” across the UK. They concluded that

“overcrowding, wear and tear, pilfering, graffiti and traffic problems were all significant and widespread causes for concern, the principal dilemma for heritage attractions is how to satisfy visitors' expectations, and manage their impact, without compromising the authenticity of the visitor experience itself.”<sup>16</sup>

The authenticity of the visitors' experience is a challenge too in tackling overtourism. Fyall and Garrod's research found little evidence of pricing strategy being used either to achieve more sustainable levels of visitor demand or as a means to generate revenues for conservation. The heritage industry has been as focused on achieving growth in visitor numbers as the tourism industry. Fyall, Garrod and Leask's 2003 text on *Managing Visitor Attractions*<sup>17</sup> has one chapter on managing visitor attractions, four on developing attractions and four on marketing them. This is not a criticism of Fyall, Garrod and Leask, rather an example of the norm. Barlow had a chapter on Managing Supply and Demand in Leask and Yeoman's book<sup>18</sup> on managing heritage visitor attractions in 1999, queuing is identified as a problem rather than as a demand management strategy.

Kotler first coined the concept of demarketing in 1971 as a policy option and management tool in the marketing mix.<sup>19</sup> His paper was published the year before *Limits to Growth* a very early portent of the current agenda. There have been demarketing initiatives at heritage properties like Sissinghurst to reduce overcrowding<sup>20</sup>, and Clements writing about Cyprus in 1989 concluded that it was possible to affect the profile of visitors by targeting preferred market segments and discouraging others.<sup>21</sup> Demarketing has been used in Napa Valley<sup>22</sup> and Cyprus.<sup>23</sup> Peattie & Peattie in 2009<sup>24</sup> wrote about the potential of a social marketing approach to address ingrained forms of consumer behaviour and to successfully 'de-market' products in health.

The Institute of Tourism (ITW) at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts has recently conducted a comparative study of *Tourism destinations under pressure*. With eleven other universities, they undertook comparative case studies of Baku (Azerbaijan), Cozumel (Mexico), the Great Barrier Reef (Australia), Juist (Germany), Kasane (Botswana), Lombok (Indonesia), Muskoka (Canada), Ohrid (Macedonia), Rigi (Switzerland), Soweto (South Africa) and Vienna (Austria). The study analysed the drivers of tourism development and innovative solutions.<sup>25</sup> They concluded that

“every country seems to have so called tourism hot spots with many visitors coming to these sights or places during peak times. Sometimes certain effects of crowding

are considered as a positive sign and make visitors conclude that the destination or attraction is worth visiting. Nevertheless, when carrying capacities of the tourism system are reached, too many visitors can lead to serious problems for the destination. This phenomenon seems to have increased in the last years and is sometimes referred to as “overtourism”.<sup>26</sup>

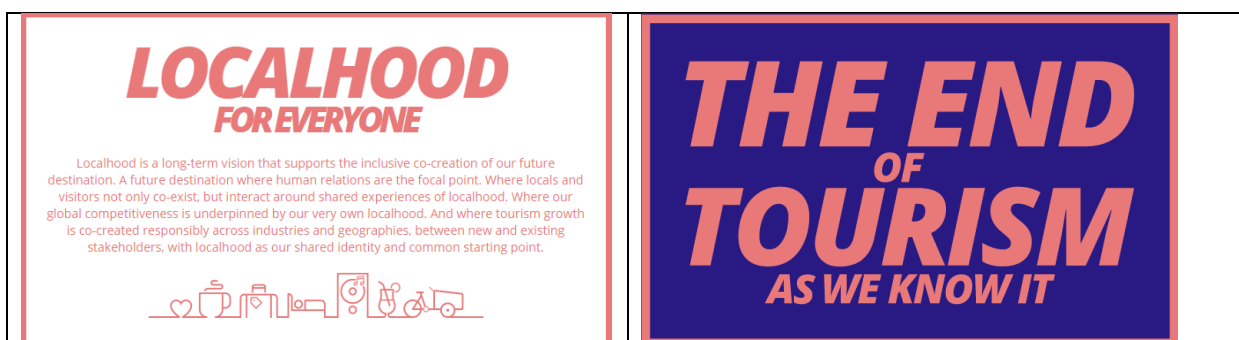
They identify a wide range of causes of overtourism including, in addition to the global growth in tourism, including marketing, changes in tourist behaviour, changes in access and existing and new attractions. As they point out much depends on “how the system is steered on a political as well as on destination level. “ “Social disparity, economic stability and the sensitiveness of the environment” all affect the resilience of a destination. Lack of facilities, seasonality and the forms of tourism in the destination can all contribute to overtourism but critically “the way tourism is managed has a direct impact on carrying capacity and the resilience to overtourism.”<sup>27</sup>

They conclude that stakeholder perspectives matter and that they vary within and between tourism places; there is “no one-size-fits-all solution”; and that the public authorities play a key role in managing tourism. They also call for more

“courageous solutions with regard to restrictions and to new innovative approaches as well as active de-marketing could not only improve the situation in the destination but also make a product more valuable and create new chances to attract new more interesting visitor segments.”

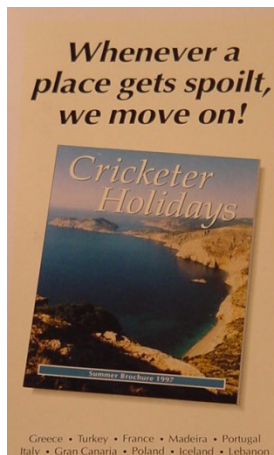
They point out that in order to avoid reinforcing “inequalities tourism planning has to be oriented on common good and not focus on single key players in tourism.” They argue that the industry has to be “pro-active” and “show a high degree of responsibility not only towards tourism business but also towards environment, social community and future generations. ... They should take responsibility and orient themselves towards sustainable development...”<sup>28</sup>

Copenhagen has adopted an aggressive redistribution strategy spreading tourism across the city, “declaring the end of tourism as we know it”. It remains to be seen whether it will generate protests by residents.



See: <http://localhood.wonderfulcopenhagen.dk/>

## Limits to growth

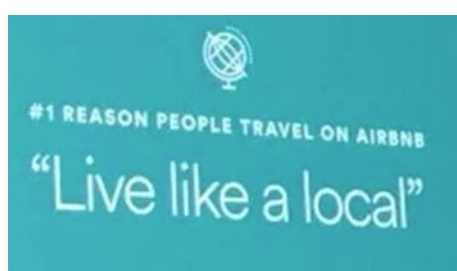


It was in 1972 that the landmark Club of Rome report was published on The Limits to Growth<sup>29</sup>. Work by Turner in 2008<sup>30</sup> comparing their forecasts with what happened in the next thirty years found that they were remarkably accurate. In 2005 Hirsch published on the Social Limits to Growth.<sup>31</sup> Overtourism is but one example of what happens when more and more seek to consume a common resource, particularly when that resource is a common property resource, many honeypot destinations are just that.

The limits are being reached in some destinations across the triple bottom line, there are cultural clashes because of different social mores and norms about behaviour, often fuelled by drink; local people are displaced by increasingly unregulated holiday lets, lawns are trampled to bare earth and beaches littered; shops which used to meet the needs of residents are displaced by outlets selling expensive goods or tat to tourists. Tourism has reached a point where either the hosts or guests, and often both, are dissatisfied. And then the operators move on to discover and develop new destinations, for example, Intrepid which is now promoting the Azores, Finland, North Cyprus, Moldova and the Tatra Mountains in Poland.<sup>32</sup> The challenge is to make all destinations sustainable, and to avoid spreading the problem.

The causes of overtourism are often specific to particular destinations; the cause is rarely singular.

1. The falling cost of travel – the rise of the budget airlines and cheap coach travel have all made it easier for people to pay the price of the journey, while holiday time and holiday pay are constraints, more people are taking city breaks, often multiple short haul flights each year. Flights are very frequently cheaper than rail because aircraft fuel is untaxed and the polluter is not paying for the environmental impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Disintermediation and P2P platforms are creating problems in the housing market, forcing up rents, displacing those on low incomes and creating disturbance in residential neighbourhoods. Airbnb and similar portals have made it easier to find affordable accommodation enabling more people to travel.



Disintermediation enables local people and second homeowners to maximise their revenue from residential property. It also means that tourists are now staying in more residential neighbourhoods; they are in much closer proximity to residents.

At the end of 2015

“Manhattan’s Airbnb active inventory accounted for approximately 20 percent of hotel rooms. ... The number of units available on home-sharing sites such as Airbnb tends to flex up during compression nights, curtailing hotels’ ability to push average daily rates. .... while the majority of shared accommodation units are in the lower-end category, units can be found in all categories, thereby creating more competition for all hotel classes, including luxury.”<sup>33</sup>

3. The public realm is free – tourists do not pay for their trophy photo in Trafalgar Square or St Marks, maintenance and repair costs have to be met by local taxpayers.
4. Distribution strategies – efforts to spread tourists to less-visited neighbourhoods, often residential, increases tourism impacts adjacent to peoples’ homes. Crowding, queuing and congestion impact on residents and visitors alike. First-time visitors will still want to visit the flagship must-see sights and may repeaters will want to revisit.
5. Whether the spreading of tourism impacts is a result of local government action or peer to peer renting many European cities are experiencing very alien binge drinking and hen and stag parties.
6. Seasonality bunches tourism concentrates numbers – but then there is a quieter season which suits some destinations and individual businesses. Extending the season is seen as desirable for some businesses but not for all.
7. Tourism creates jobs, but they are often relatively low paid and seen as temporary, casual, insecure and without prospects.
8. New originating markets are emerging with substantial numbers of additional tourists travelling internationally and domestically. Their travel is facilitated by increased holiday, entitlements, including public holidays, and rising standards of living. The new middle classes and the rich have a high propensity to travel.
9. Honeypots attract - it is the successfully marketed, established destinations, which attract more tourists.
10. Destination marketing organisations – public and private – go on marketing the established honeypots as they are less expensive to market and success is more assured. Their performance is measured in international tourist arrivals rather than the yield or the spread of tourism to benefit areas which have a greater economic need for additional local expenditure by visitors.
11. Transport is larger scale than it was ten years ago. Aircraft, coaches, trains and cruise liners deposit more passengers with each arrival, and they arrive more often. It is very difficult for destinations to impede these flows; national authorities with different priorities manage the

facilities, or they are independent of control by the local authority or national park. There is usually more opportunity to control cars through congestion charging and parking restrictions.

### Destinations as Commons

In many of the honeypot destinations which are experiencing overtourism one of the main attractions is a public good: places and experiences which cannot be charged for. The public realm is just that. La Rambla in Barcelona, the Piazza San Marco in Venice and Gullfoss in Iceland. The consumption of public goods is non-rival; someone else enjoying the good does not prevent me using it too. The arrival of 15 coaches carrying tourists at the top of La Rambla does not preclude my being there too, but it may ruin or degrade my experience. The second characteristic of a public good is that it is non-excludable unless a local authority decides to charge for admission; there has been talk in Venice of charging for admission to Piazza San Marco. Because the public realm is free and non-excludable it is vulnerable to over-use and exploitation.

In Seoul, Bukchon Hanok Village famed for its traditional Korean houses is included in the itineraries of tour groups because it is open early morning and in the evening and it is free. It enables the tour operators to add value to their itineraries at no cost to themselves; the community suffers the externalities of noise, litter, loss of privacy, crowding and now falling property prices.<sup>34</sup> Bukchon Hanok Village is a classic public good problem.

The visitors and tour companies are free riders; they can use the resource or sell it as part of an itinerary for free. Piazza San Marco is not infinite, it has a finite carrying capacity, in larger numbers tourists “deplete the resource” as Davidson and Maitland put it “views are spoilt, picturesque village streets become crowded with people and tour buses, peace-and-quiet becomes noise and bustle.”<sup>35</sup> Increasing, and apparently limitless use of free resources by tourists and day visitors, imposes the costs of the externalities on others. The maintenance funded by an increasingly aggrieved local population which may rebel. The solutions are unattractive to significant and powerful stakeholder groups in the industry. Privatisation and charging for access to public goods are anathema to local residents unless they can continue to enjoy free access, which is generally viewed as discriminatory against visitors, tourists, outsiders and foreigners. The industry does not want to pay.



Tourism makes extensive use of common pool resources in the public realm and takes advantage of, for example, museums and galleries, which are free or merit-priced initially for the benefit of citizens. The tourism commons are very vulnerable to crowding and degrading by tourism pressure. The industry enjoys free access to the public goods which are very often its core product.

The tragedy of the commons is at the heart of Lord Marshall’s description of the tourism and travel industry as “...essentially the renting out for short-term lets of other people’s environments, whether this is a coastline, a city, a mountain range, or a rainforest.” The problem is that they collect the rent externalising the costs to the public purse.<sup>36</sup>

As Hardin wrote

“Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons.”<sup>37</sup>

Overtourism is a classic case of the tragedy of the commons. However, the commons are managed by local government and national park authorities. They are not wild ungoverned places. The public realm is funded through local taxation – the residents pay for public toilets the maintenance of the fabric and the removal of litter. Tourism businesses are selling the public realm which in London extends to important national cultural icons like the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace and the British Museum but they do not pay anything for the resource they sell. Maitland has written about visitor management in Cambridge and the way in which a dynamic tourism industry adapts to changing regulatory frameworks. As he points out, continued management is necessary to secure visitor dispersal and reduce congestion,<sup>38</sup> and that management needs to be funded.

## Frogs and ratchets

There has been very significant growth in visitor numbers as a consequence of the sustained growth in tourism volumes, international and domestic. It may, or may not, be true that a frog slowly heated in a pan of water will not try to escape and be boiled. However, it does appear to be the case that it is only when visitor numbers become intolerable that residents take to the streets to protest as they have in Barcelona, Berlin, Palma, San Sebastian and Venice amongst other places. The growth in visitor numbers is tolerated and grumbled about for a long time before anger erupts.

The ratchet effect militates against the rebellion by locals and delays the point at which dissatisfaction by tourists with the quality of the experience deters them from visiting. Each generation of tourists discovers the destination afresh – they have no experience or memory of how it was before to fuel their dissatisfaction. For a place to be ‘spoilt’ there needs to be knowledge of what it was like previously. The “Limits of Acceptable Change” will be based on the previous experience of visitors and locals in each generation. The acceleration of the annual growth in visitor numbers and the closer encounters between residents and visitors, often with different behavioural norms, may in part account for the current rebellions. Change is happening faster and the ratchet effect is diminishing.

## Tourism Area Life Cycle

Butler’s influential concept of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC)<sup>39</sup> recognised that destinations are discovered and then developed, and that, as tourism peaks, consolidation and stagnation ensue. Following stagnation, the tourism area and destination may either decline or be rejuvenated. The TALC model drew on the concepts of the product lifecycle and carrying capacity, an approach that draws on rangeland ecology to determine the optimal numbers which can use an area without degradation. Butler recognised that efforts by the public and private sector can rejuvenate a declining area.

Subsequent application of the TALC and its theoretical development has remained focused on the tackling the challenge of decline.<sup>40</sup> There is much of relevance in this literature in understanding the



negative impacts of tourism, and their effects on the community and the natural and cultural environment particularly. Most of this literature addresses the challenges of decline, rather than the challenges of success. Some of the same market segments and associated tourist behaviours result in a decline, rather than overtourism. Two examples from Greece illustrate this. It should be noted that these problems arise in many resorts and cities around the world

Tourists began to arrive in Kavos at the southern tip of Corfu in the mid-1970s when the population of the fishing village was no more than a few dozen. Kavos had only one restaurant and coffee shop, and there were no clubs and bars. Tourism developed slowly and then very much more rapidly as the local economy shifted from olives and fish to the far more lucrative business of tourism. By 2003 Kavos was hosting 13,000 mainly 18-30 years old "sun, sea and sex" tourists. Most of the hotels were financed by UK operators who had control of the hotels and the marketing of them until the investment had been recouped, the local families who notionally owned the hotels had no control over them until the debt was repaid and they worked as managers, cleaners and catering staff.<sup>41</sup>

Largely unregulated tourism development resulted in around 4,500 unlicensed beds, water supplies were limited, and there were often shortages, there was no sewage system. In Corfu, 86% of violations related to noise from music, 30-35% of violations relating to non-licensed establishments, working permits and working hours and 23% violations relating to driving occurred in Kavos. In 2013 Channel 4 television in the UK aired a reality series "What happens in Kavos"<sup>42</sup> which filmed and broadcast drunken and licentious behaviour by predominantly British tourists.<sup>43</sup> The reality show was suspended after protests by British tour operators and the Greek government. Greek Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni complained that the "...show is highly offensive for Greece and its citizens."<sup>44</sup>

In 1985 some tour operators had been required to leave Benitses following an incident where tourists had killed a donkey, decapitated it and dragged its body around on a pub crawl. The event had been the final straw for the people of Benitses.<sup>45</sup> Tourism in Benitses has been re-established as a traditional fishing village resort marketed by Real Corfu.<sup>46</sup> Benitses is 20 miles from Kavos and the events there were within living memory. This surely indicates how little communities there feel that they can control the development of tourism and the forms it takes. Strong local government is critical to the management of tourism.

On Rhodes, Faliraki went through a similar cycle. In 2003 the Greek authorities clamped down on drunken and sometimes violent loutish behaviour in Faliraki, the resort had attracted attention in part because of another reality programme on television. Blackpool police helped with training,<sup>47</sup> and the local police station was strengthened with 20 officers. Mottershead, the managing director of Thomson Holidays, said: "The perception of the island was tarnished. This year it was put on the map for the wrong reasons and as news about Faliraki escalated families and couples were put off going."<sup>48</sup> By 2015 there were reports in the press the traders in Faliraki wanted the British drunks back, claiming that the clean up has "decimated" the place and that the six month season has shrunk to three.<sup>49</sup> At issue here too is the ability of local government to manage tourism and to determine where the balance is struck between the interests of different stakeholders in tourism, with different target markets, and the other stakeholders in the community.

## The wrong metric

The ease of collection of data on international arrivals and the obsession of ministers of tourism with foreign currency earnings along with a dominant view that travel is a “good thing” which should be unconstrained, has resulted in international arrivals being the celebrated indicator of the health of the sector.

International arrivals are the criteria by which the performance of ministers of tourism is judged, the growth in domestic tourism and day visitors are often overlooked. The industry seeks improved transport links to provide faster access, forgetting that improved access means improved egress. This often reduces the length of stay and may remove any need to stay overnight at all. Significant parts of the Wild Atlantic Way are now accessible to tourists from Dublin hotels depriving County Clare of overnights.

International arrivals is the wrong metric for managing tourism. Visitor spend, the yield, ought to be the indicator used along with visitor and resident satisfaction. For successful destinations, sustainability and competitiveness are both important. As Sir Colin Marshall said in 1994 when he acknowledged that the travel and tourism sector is about short-term lets he also made the classic enlightened self-interest argument for sustainability: “These ‘products’ must be kept fresh and un sullied not just for the next day, but for every tomorrow.”<sup>50</sup>

## Responsible Tourism

Krippendorff argued that this new form of tourism must make life more “fulfilling and enjoyable”<sup>51</sup> It had also to be based, he argued, on a partnership between promoters and developers and the destinations, and progress should be measured in higher incomes, more satisfying jobs, improved social and cultural facilities and better housing.

Responsible Tourism is about using tourism to make better places for people to live in, first; and second, better places for people to visit. The aspiration is to use tourism rather than to be used by it. Overtourism is the antithesis of Responsible Tourism; it occurs when tourism’s priorities override the interests of the local community. Responsible Tourism requires that the destination and its citizens use tourism, that tourism contributes to sustainable development. The state of overtourism is a consequence of tourism using the destination rather than the destination using tourism.

As the 2002 Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations<sup>52</sup> pointed out “better places for hosts and guests can only be realised at the local level, and that all stakeholders have different, albeit interdependent, responsibilities; tourism can only be managed for sustainability at the destination level.” Sustainable communities can use tourism, but they have to manage it. They have “to take responsibility for achieving sustainable tourism, and to create better places for people to live in and for people to visit.”<sup>53</sup>

Only in the destinations “the places that tourists visit, where tourism enterprises conduct their business and where local communities and tourists and the tourism industry interact,”<sup>54</sup> can tourism be effectively managed for sustainability, and then only if local government and national park authorities take responsibility.

However, the sustainability and local tolerance and acceptance of tourism in a destination are to a very significant extent determined by the behaviour as well as the numbers of tourists. Objections to tourism by local residents, and demonstrations against tourism, are often sparked and fuelled by visitor behaviour. Since the tourist travels to the factory to consume the experience or place their behaviour in the destination plays a significant part in creating the destination. Dress and behaviour acceptable on the beach is not necessarily acceptable in local shops and restaurants – it may not be acceptable on the beach either.

Respect occurs six times in the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations. Responsible Tourism is characterised by being “culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.”<sup>55</sup> In the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development UNWTO has launched a *Travel.Enjoy.Respect* campaign aimed at changing the behaviour of tourists urging tourists to be respectful travellers.<sup>56</sup>

There is a significant trend towards experiential tourism in many source markets with travellers and holidaymakers seeking adventure and authentic experiences of “other” places and “other” people. These are the emancipated tourists envisaged by Krippendorf, seeking “‘emotional recreation’ through activities and experiences which are not possible in everyday life”. Krippendorf saw this as a “new travel culture”, one focused on “the satisfaction of social needs: contact with other people and self-realization through creative activities, knowledge and exploration.”<sup>57</sup> These aspirations increase the levels of interaction between the tourists, the temporary residents, and the local communities are not always respectful interactions. Disintermediation has increased the level and volume of conflicts between local residents and the tourists over noise and behaviour dramatically; and created resentment as local people are denied housing in their community by the rise in rental value and changes in ownership caused by tourists staying in residential areas.

### Disintermediation

The new P2P businesses models which are developing are posing major challenges for regulators in a period when deregulation is the dominant paradigm. Slowly, by adapting existing regulatory frameworks to restore a level playing field, on health and safety, taxation and social nuisance, the negative impacts of disintermediation are being addressed. The distortions in the local housing market, both the availability and cost of property to rent or buy, affect more than tourism and it is not only foreign and domestic tourists whose behaviour has unacceptable social impacts.

Barcelona the new municipal tourism management model is finding ways of effectively managing and taxing the new forms of accommodation, and the new forms of disintermediation, which have contributed to the spectacular growth in tourism and visitor numbers.

#### Box 1 Barcelona takes action on disintermediated accommodation

There is a substantial amount of illegal accommodation on offer in Barcelona that not only creates speculation and a black economy, but also undermines positive coexistence in local communities, in addition to changing housing uses and displacing residential activities, causing people to move out. In July 2016 an Emergency Inspection Plan against Illegal Tourist Flats was launched designed to eliminate existing illegal accommodation in the city, with a budget of €1,350,000

The emergency plan includes measures that attempt to tighten the net around illegal tourist flats through various means. These include:

- Detection measures: the creation of a new team of viewers, for greater efficiency in identifying

illegal activities and facilitating collaboration with local residents, there is an online complaint form at [barcelona.cat/incidencies/habitatgesturistics](http://barcelona.cat/incidencies/habitatgesturistics)

- Measures for carrying out inspections and issuing fines: These include reinforcing the team of inspectors, more pressure on digital platforms and maximum fines for repeat-offender platforms.
- The city council provides to the tax office information on detected illegal homes for tourist use. 3000 inspections were started due to bank payments to the websites.
- Inter-authority collaboration measures: an agreement with the Generalitat to extend the use of web crawlers and data sharing with Spain's Tax Authority.
- Regulatory measures: Working bilaterally with the Generalitat to ensure the new Tourism Regulations facilitate inspection work and, among other things, allow a quicker implementation of legal procedures to stop illegal activities.
- Awareness-raising measures: a new website for checking whether or not a tourist flat has a permit, and a communication campaign to foster positive coexistence, with special emphasis on tourist accommodation.

Source: RTP Working Paper 1 Goodwin H (2016) Managing Tourism in Barcelona<sup>58</sup>

Airbnb and Uber are two leading examples of a much larger group of web platforms which provide a marketing space for overnight accommodation and transport which are facing more and more regulation. They are being required to take more responsibility for the management of P2P business both for regulatory and taxation reasons. Dis-intermediation is occurring and in many places the regulators are getting to grips with this form of business.

Disintermediation is about cutting out the middleman; this used to be achieved by advertising gîtes and B&B's in the small ads in the Sunday paper, which was very disintermediated. Uber and Airbnb and similar platforms do not charge for advertising they take a margin. New business models develop before the regulators nearly always eventually catch up.

### Destinations experiencing Overtourism

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2017, a search for “overtourism” using Google Advanced Search returned 115,000 results. The same search using Google Scholar returned 12 results – but one of the academic references dates to 2008 in the Integrated Coastal Zone Management literature where there is a conceptual echo of overfishing.<sup>59</sup>

A search for “too many tourists” in Google Advanced Search returned 393,000 results, in Google Scholar 1,230. Google returns just eleven results prior to 1965<sup>60</sup>, and 146 to 1995, 443 to 2005 and 726 to 2010. In the last seven years, there have been 504 scholarly publications which refer to “too many tourists”.

The proximate causes of overtourism are locally apparent – it is the consequence of the volume, behaviour and impacts of tourists and the tourism industry in the destination. At the heart of the problem is the fact that we take our holidays in other people's homes.<sup>61</sup> In Barceloneta, a worker's neighbourhood, now being heavily impacted by tourists the local community is campaigning for the right to rest. We need to recognise that most destinations are primarily places where people are born, go to school and then work, fall in love and marry, have children go to the museum, beach and park with them, then grandchildren, retirement and death. Barcelona and Venice are where people live out their lives – they are not resorts.



The growth in tourism is driven by forces over which local governments have no control over the numbers arriving. In Barcelona and Venice, the day visitors arrive by coach, cruise ship, train or plane in numbers which the city government cannot control. The management of this infrastructure which makes mass tourism possible is in the hands of national government which receives much of the tax but does not have to manage the impacts. The political pressure of street demonstrations and elections is directed at local politicians who do not have the levers to reduce demand, although Barcelona is rebalancing its tourism budget to spend more on management and less on promotion.

The focus on ever-increasing international visitor arrivals, rather than yield, the economic benefit of tourism, has distorted the way that national policymakers are judged on their tourism stewardship. Using Gross Value Added would be a significant improvement, a cost-benefit analysis or a net value figure for tourism would make for better decision-making.

O'Leary of Ryan air aspires to offer free flights,

"I have this vision that in the next five to 10 years that the airfares on Ryanair will be free, in which case the flights will be full, and we will be making our money out of sharing the airport revenues; of all the people who will be running through airports, and getting a share of the shopping and the retail revenues at airports."

"I think it will happen. It just won't happen at Heathrow or those big hub airports. But most of the other airports who are looking for big traffic growth, that process is already starting to happen, lowering airport fees and some of the charges."

"If [air passenger duty] is gone: at many airports I'm paying more than £20 already with APD

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and fees, if I start getting that back, why not? I'm doing seat sales this week at £4 and I'm paying the £13 APD – I'm paying you to fly with me.”<sup>62</sup>

O'Leary may or may see his dream materialise but clearly already the fees which regional airports are willing to pay to attract the budget airlines makes air travel cheap for consumers. There is no taxation on aviation fuel in the UK nor is VAT applied, in 2012 the best estimate of the value of the tax break is £8.21bn.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the cruise lines burn cheap crude and very polluting fuel most of the time.<sup>64</sup>

The ability to travel internationally is also impacted by changes in exchange rates Following the decline in the value of Sterling, since the Brexit vote the numbers of overseas residents holidaying in the UK has risen<sup>65</sup> and more residents are holidaying at home, or foregoing their holiday.

The table which follows does not list all of adverse impacts of tourism it rather identifies the management strategies which have been adopted in places seeking to address the challenges of success: overtourism.

Public Protests	Government taking action	Issue raised
Barcelona	Iceland	Scotland, Edinburgh, Orkney & Skye
Venice	Seoul	Italy Florence Palermo Capri
San Sebastian	Cinque Terre	Ireland
Berlin	Dubrovnik	Balearics
Palma, Mallorca	Amsterdam	England
Iceland		Halong Bay
		Rio, Brazil
		Peru
		Portugal
		USA
		Cuba
		China
		Everest
		Prague
		Croatia
		Crete

It is significant that both Amsterdam and Barcelona have been careful to emphasise their tolerance of tourism. “We're an open, tolerant city. How can you ever imagine us saying ‘You're not welcome here!’?” tourism chief Geerte Udo told Condé Nast Traveler.<sup>66</sup> In neither city have local government leaders allowed the movement to become xenophobic. In Barcelona the 2010-15 strategy developed a vision for tourism in Barcelona through to 2020 of a city where

“... the community recognises all kinds of visitors as other (temporary) citizens. The hospitable character of the locals makes it a friendly, different city that people are fond of.”  
 “...there is no room for ‘ghettos’ or neighbourhoods that cater exclusively to tourists.”  
 “Tourist activity continues to contribute to Barcelona’s success by fostering the improvement of the quality of life and social cohesion of its community, to the upkeep and creation of new amenities, and the success of other economic sectors and the dissemination

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of Barcelona around the world.”<sup>67</sup>

Overtourism is presently identified as an urban, built environment phenomenon, and yet we know that many natural areas are struggling to cope with increasing numbers of tourists – overtourism is defined by the rebellion of local people – where there are no politically organised people to rebel the problem continues unrecognised.

## Consequences of Overtourism and Management Responses

In considering the causes of overtourism, it is important to recognise that tourists and day visitors are not the only users of the destinations where over tourism is emerging as an issue – overcrowding on public transport is both experienced and caused by locals, commuters, visitors and tourists and compounded by a lack of infrastructure investment.

Tourism can displace other commercial activities and colonise residential areas so that, for example, in 2012 Venice now has a residential population of 57,000, down from 174,000 in 1951, in 70 years Venice has lost two-thirds of its resident population, displaced by tourism. Tourism is the commercial monoculture of Venice.

	Actions reported in the media or <b>published</b>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	
Prague	Prague bans Segways from historic city centre’s narrow streets
<b>Croatia</b>	
Dubrovnik	Seeking to be a top quality destination CCTV cameras would be introduced to monitor – and, if necessary, stop – crowds passing through the city’s three gates. Cancelling cruise ship stops cutting the number of cruise ships arriving at peak time and attempt to move them away from peak times, such as the weekend. Impose limits on tour operators running day trips to the city.
Hvar	Plans to fine lewd, rude and drunk tourists
<b>Denmark</b>	forbids foreigners from buying houses in coastal areas or along its beaches.
Copenhagen	establishment of new bars and restaurants has been prohibited bicycle routes for tourists have been created and there are "silent areas" within residential areas.
<b>Iceland</b>	Official registration for home sharing and business licenses for people who rent out their accommodation for more than 90 days a year or make more than about \$18,000 in rental income. The government has also taken measures to upgrade Iceland’s roads, bridges and parking lots. Responding to outrages over bad tourist behaviour, it has put more toilets and garbage cans in the countryside.
<b>France</b>	
Paris	Timed ticketing at the Eiffel Tower
<b>Greece</b>	
Crete	has banned 10,000 18-30 British holidaymakers
<b>Holland</b>	
Amsterdam	2016 Banned Beer Bikes Zandvoort was renamed Amsterdam Beach to attract visitors The range of the City Card was extended to encourage visitors to travel out. Video streaming the queues outside the major sites and attractions

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	Experimenting with updating residents on crowding Introducing a 24hr hotline for residents to raise concerns about Airbnb properties.
<b>Italy</b>	
Cinque Terre	Numbers capped with an online ticketing system
Florence	Mayor hosing church steps to deter tourists for picnicking there
Santorini	Limiting boat arrivals to 8,000 per day
Venice	Tourism squeezed out residents and created a monoculture Authorities are banning new accommodation from opening up in the historic centre. Locals have privileged access to vaporetti Discussions about capping numbers in to Piazza San Marco Attempts to ban cruise ships
<b>Peru</b>	Machu Picchu to introducing timed ticketing
<b>Spain</b>	
Barcelona	Overcrowding , social conflict and tourist phobia Unable to control arrivals Loss of identity, trivialisation and uniformity of the city Poor quality jobs Not scapegoating tourists – conceptual shift to managing visitors Territorial deconcentration /decongestion Management of sites and transport Taking responsibility for managing tourism so that it is sustainable Inseparable pairing between sustainability and competitiveness Managing visitors rather than tourists Joined up governance based on publicly shared data and intelligence Continuity of policy Using marketing to attract particular segments Rebalancing from promotion to managing and planning Moratorium on new hotel licences “Inseparable pairing” between sustainability and competitiveness. Clamping down on unregistered and illegal apartments - managing and taxing new forms of accommodation and seeking the support of tourists and the local community to identify illegal lets. <sup>68</sup> SmartCitizen ‘ambiental monitoring’ kits sensors to monitor noise and pollution levels and generate statistical evidence of tourists’ impact on the quality of life of local residents.
<b>USA</b>	
Whistler	Has had a bed unit cap since 1976 Building restricted accommodation for staff

Tourism is a social phenomenon although it has some serious environmental [impacts](#). Tourism is what we make it, hosts and guests, the industry and government, we can make it different.

Perhaps the last word should go to Ada Colau, wriing in The Guardian in September 2014, she is now Mayor of Barcelona.

“The tourism crisis in Barcelona is further proof of the emptiness of the promises of neo-liberalism that deregulation and privatisation will allow us all to prosper.



Of course, the answer is not to attack tourism. Everyone is a tourist at some point in their life. Rather, we have to regulate the sector, return to the traditions of local urban planning, and put the rights of residents before those of big business.

The way of life for all Barcelonans is seriously under threat. And the only solution is to win back democracy for the city. This is precisely what the residents of La Barceloneta are doing – defending their neighbourhood, their city, from the free market and from the political elites that are putting our home up for sale. And this has inspired the creation of [Guanvem Barcelona](#) (Let's Win Back Barcelona), a citizen platform launched by neighbourhood activists, social and political movements, professionals and academics, that has set itself the challenge of winning the May 2015 municipal elections to democratise the city and put its institutions at the service of the common good.<sup>69</sup>

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