

Governance Challenges of Consolidated Destinations. The Case of Barcelona

Authors : Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona; Oscar Mascarilla-Miró

Abstract : Mature destinations have different challenges trying to attract tourism and please its citizens. Hence, they have to maintain their touristic interest to standard demand and also not to undecieve those tourists with more advanced experiences. Second, they have to be concerned for the daily life of citizens and avoid the negative effects of touristification. This balance is quite delicate and often has to do with the sensitivity and commitment of the party in the local government. However, what is a general consensus is the need for destinations to differentiate from the homogeneous rest of regions and create new content, consumable resources or marketing events to guarantee their positioning. In this sense, the main responsibility of destinations is to satisfy users, tourists and citizens. Hence, its aim has to do with holistic experiences, which collect these wide approaches. Specifically, this research aims to analyze the volume and growth of tourist houses in the central touristic neighborhoods of Barcelona (this is Ciutat Vella) as the starting point to identify the behavior of tourists regarding their interests in searching for local heritage attractiveness and community atmosphere. Then, different cases are analyzed in order to show how Barcelona struggles to keep its attractive brand for the visitors, as well as for its inhabitants. Methodologically, secondary data used in this research comes from official registered tourist houses (Catalunya Government), Open Data (Barcelona municipality), the Airbnb tourist platform, from the Incasol Data and Municipal Register of Inhabitants. Primary data are collected through in-depth interviews with neighbors, social movement managers and political representatives from Turisme de Barcelona (local DMO, Destination Management Organization). Results show what the opportunities and priorities are for key actors to design policies to find a balance between all different interests.

Keywords : touristification, tourist houses, governance, tourism demand, airbnbification

Conference Title : ICBEG 2024 : International Conference on Business, Economics and Globalization

Conference Location : Santorini, Greece

Conference Dates : July 11-12, 2024