



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI
Departament de Geografia



Universitat d'Alacant
Universidad de Alicante

GRATET

RESEARCH GROUP ON TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS AND TOURISM STUDIES

THE DUALITY OF TOURISM AND SMART CITY GOVERNANCE IN URBAN DESTINATIONS

An analysis of stakeholders' perspectives in Barcelona

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SMARTDEST



CITIES AS MOBILITY HUBS:
TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION THROUGH
"SMART" CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT



THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HORIZON 2020
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 870753

ATLAS anual conference 2022
MTU-Munster Technological University
September 6-9 2022
Cork, Ireland



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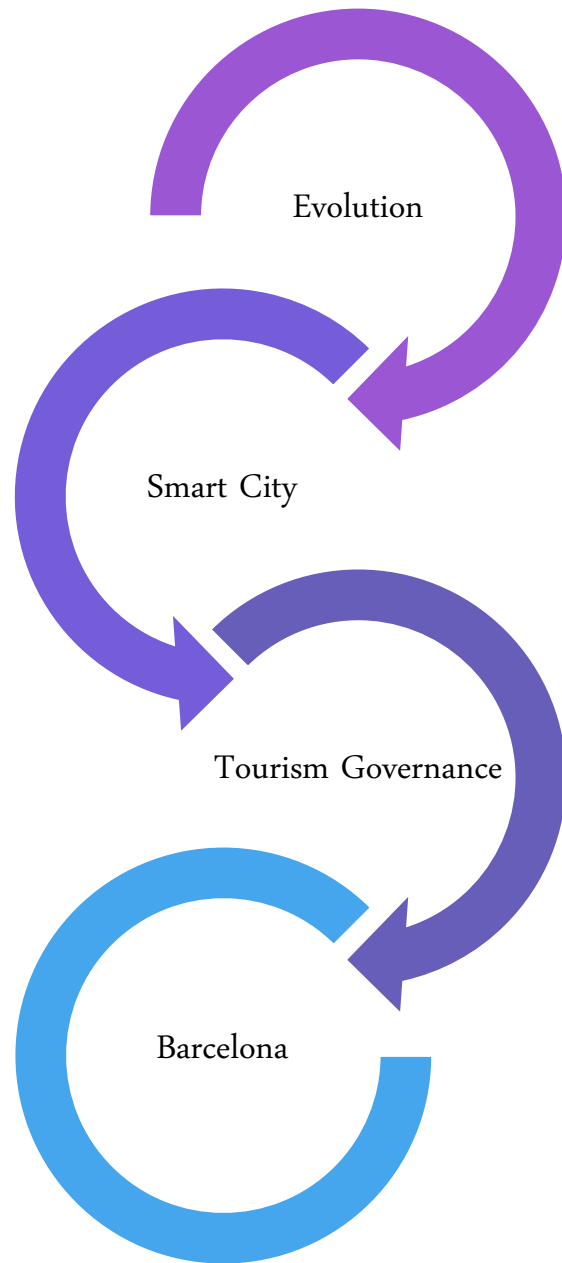
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1. INTRODUCTION

Documents of the different governing bodies

Results of the qualitative text analysis of stakeholders' interviews to know the new perspectives



HYPOTHESIS



Smart initiatives and the digitisation of the city have not been thoroughly negotiated and disseminated among the key stakeholders in the local tourism ecosystem

=



A lack of alignment between what is **proposed**, what is **planned** and what is **developed**, that evoke in a scarcity of evidence. The result of this duality is that synergies between tourism and smart city initiatives are **difficult to achieve**



Tourism is rarely considered as a critical element of smart city development plans, strategies, and agenda (Gretzel and Koo, 2021)



AND...

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COPIES OF PROJECT REPORTS
TACONING SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH
SMART CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT



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RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 1010121

There is a lack of understanding of how stakeholders can harness the benefits of destination intelligence and agility (Buhalis, 2022)





2. OBJECTIVES

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This contribution analyses the relationship between tourism stakeholders and smartisation processes in the context of the tourism governance of Barcelona

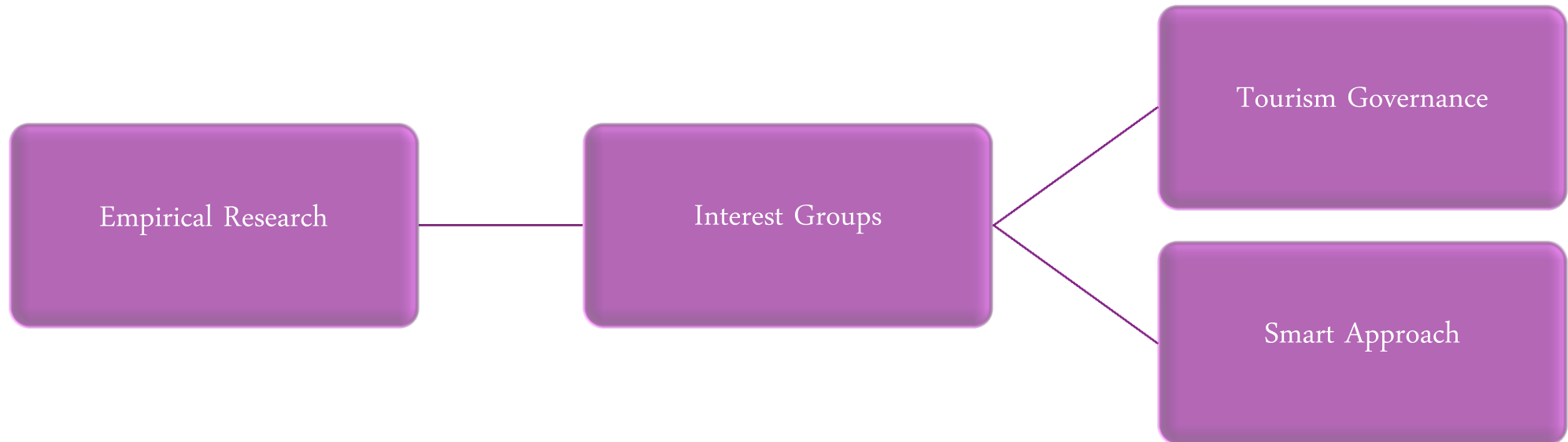
Research Questions

RQ1. How do the Barcelona tourism ecosystem stakeholders perceive the Smart strategy development in the city?

RQ2. What are the differences in the visions of each critical actors that compose the tourism ecosystem?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

1st Part



Smart City instruments

- ICT Master Plan: Deployment of "Smart" Infrastructures in the Public Space (2014)
- Barcelona Digital Plan (2016)

Tourism management Instruments

- Tourism Strategic Plan 2020 (2015)
- Special Tourist Accommodation Plan –PEUAT- (2017)
- Territorial Tourism Management Strategy (2018)
- Barcelona Tourist Mobility Strategy (2017)
- Government Measure. Creation of new ideas and contents to improve Mobility and Sustainability in Tourism (2020)

2nd Part



The objectives of these interviews were:

1. Obtain the perception of stakeholders about the functioning of the smart ecosystem as a way of complementing and contrasting the conclusions of documentary analysis (plans and projects)
2. Identify the main stakeholders in the smart tourism process
3. Evaluate the degree of coordination between the smart city strategy and tourism governance

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
Public Tourism Management	
<i>Municipality</i>	3
<i>Regional DMO</i>	3
Experts	2
Tourism Industry	
<i>Accommodation Management</i>	2
<i>Travel Agencies</i>	1
Related Sectors	
<i>Chambers of Commerce, SMEs and lobbies</i>	4
<i>Others</i>	3

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
Social and Political Actors	
<i>Grassroots associations</i>	2
<i>Labor Unions</i>	2
ICT and innovation stakeholders	
<i>Urban and Digital Innovation</i>	1
<i>Urbanism and Strategic Planning</i>	1
<i>ICT Sector</i>	2
TOTAL	26

SMART TOURISM ECOSYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS



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4. DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS WITH NVivo



The aim was to contribute to a **more comprehensive understanding** of the emerging phenomena of Smart Tourism Destination and stakeholders' involvement to understand the smart development through qualitative analysis using NVivo software.

CODES

CITY GOVERNANCE INVOLVEMENT

PERCEPTION OF THE SC

SMART CITY STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

KEY INITIATIVES (PUBLIC-PRIVATE)

PROBLEMS RELATED

CURRENT SITUATION OF DIGITISATION



RESULTS

5

CITY GOVERNANCE INVOLVEMENT

Agents directly
involved →
classical
tourism sector

ICT and innovation
related stakeholders
different approaches

Low
involvement
of social
stakeholders

Public
administration
perspective is
the total
governance

“We don't participate, but I think we should be there (...) We work with the Economy (area), but we do not work directly with tourism.”

“I don't think that one of our functions (...), is to participate in governance. It is, for example, to advise or facilitate, or to be at the service of the Barcelona City Council in this case, to be able to put into question technology, to attract tourism of technological talent... We can facilitate the creation of ecosystems, which we already do as a governing body”

“I would say that in tourism policy, (...) it is difficult to have complete sovereignty over the issues, but instead there is an absolute interdependence. To begin with, we are talking about an activity: tourism, which has very liquid borders and therefore tourism, urban planning, mobility, housing, environment, etc. is a cross-cutting issue that we must take into account

“I would like to insist that the level of participation in tourism management in Barcelona must be one of the highest in the world and, of course, in Spain and many European cities. However, it has two poles, and these two poles are not conveyed. The DMO has a vocation and a promotional function, and here the social sectors are not present. There is a tourism and city council in which everyone is present.”

SMART CITY STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

- Actions developed over the last ten years around the smartification of the city and the tourism sector have been evolving over this period → **different approaches to the understanding and knowledge** of the strategies on the part of the different stakeholders
- There are **two groups of actors**: those who are aware of the strategy and those who are not
- Some consider that the strategy is still **very conceptual**, and that the implementation is at a **very early stage**
- Importance of adequate **funding** in order to move from pilot projects to plans with a **long-term impact**.



"I would say that sometimes these initiatives have to be understood as initiatives that are precisely for research and development and that this allows us to move forward or not."



"There are examples of things that have been very spectacular, but their use or conversion into structural improvements in public services is still hard to find."



"We are in pilot projects; obviously, we have had a significant area of reflection, which has been the Smart City Expo where there have not only been examples of good practices and models of management with waste or mobility, etc., but it has also been a space for reflection and debate, so I think Barcelona is very well positioned in these debates, but there is still a lot of room for improvement."

PERCEPTION OF THE SMART CITY

The major result concerning this aspect is the excessive focus on technology and digitisation → come along with the idea that the projects that are developed always end resulting in pilot plans with a limited time perspective

“What happens is that I think that if we think about Smart Tourism, we have to work a lot on the experiences, on the interaction with visitors, that is to say, the PEOPLE part that is forgotten”

“If we continue to think that innovation only happens through the four companies that have always been there and that we know how hard it is for them to innovate, or through the administrations that come with a discourse or an ideology, then innovation is finished there.”

Public Administration perception:

“The smart concept is not a concept we are comfortable with. If you search, you will not find any municipal policy currently defined as a Smart policy. We're not talking about Smart. We're talking about a digitalisation strategy; in other words, sometimes, it doesn't make sense to attach an adjective to a policy.”

“Smart city policies are central policies of cities (...) What happens is that we, in particular, and politically are not in favor of creating a culture for tourists urban planning for tourists. On the contrary, the city belongs to the people of Barcelona.”

SMART CITY STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

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KEY INITIATIVES (PUBLIC-PRIVATE)



- **Verify** how the most well-known initiatives that may be classified as Smart are materialised in **concrete actions**
- **Initiatives with public-private partnerships**
- **High expectations** concerning the future prospects of STD

Smart and Digitalization tools - current initiatives

CheckBarcelona (2021)

Amazing Barcelona (2021)

5G Barcelona (2018)

Barcelona Superblock Program (2016)

Smart Port Barcelona (2019)

CityFlows Project (2021)



PROBLEMS RELATED

Sociotechnological externalities:

- Barcelona as a Smart Working tourism destination
- Data Value and Open Data
- Smart Understanding
- Smart Initiatives will not finish with the old problems

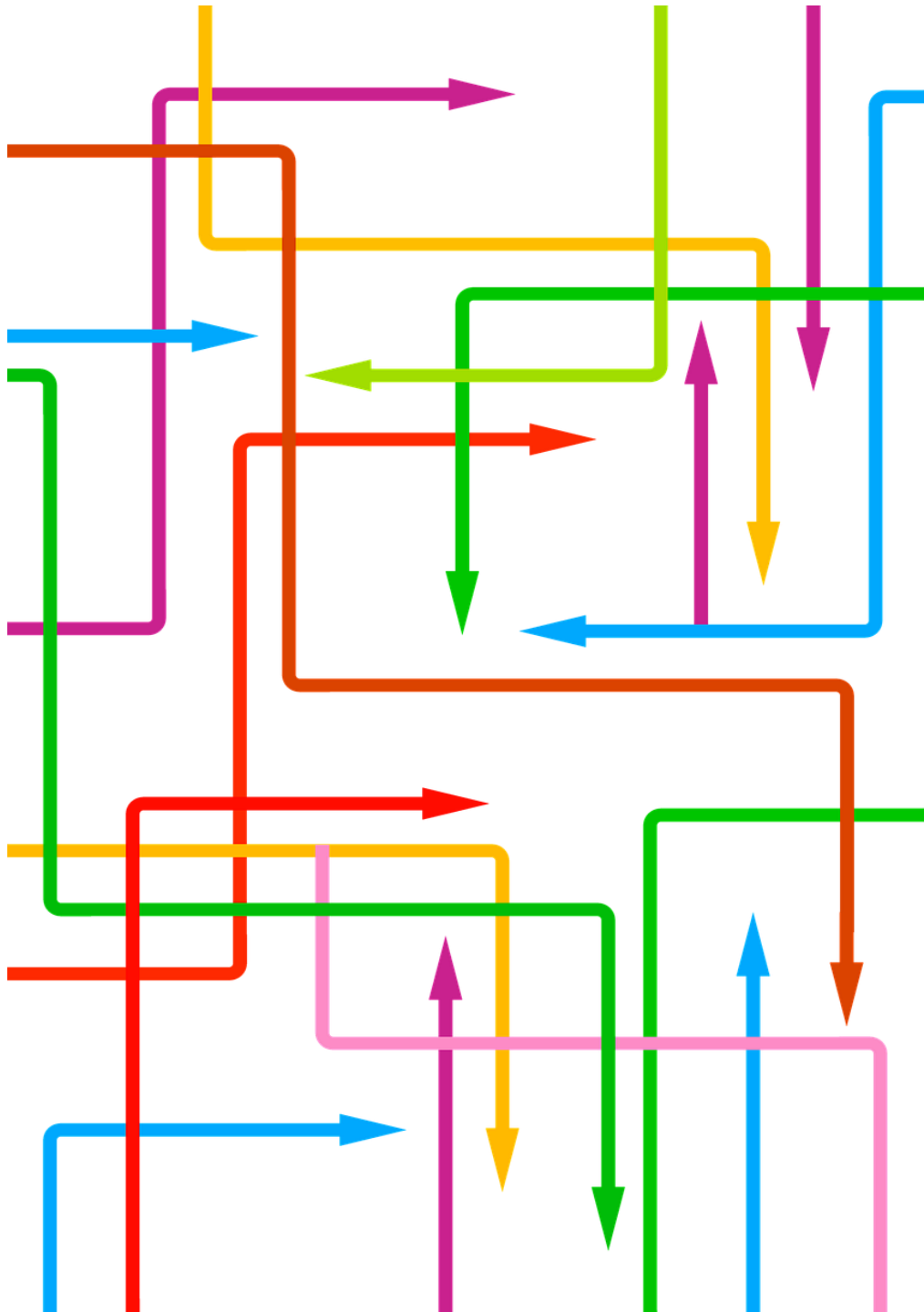


CURRENT SITUATION OF DIGITISATION

- Some actors feel excluded in the digitisation process conducted by the public administration
- Lack of or incipient coordination with national STD networks
- Smart and digitization as a separate concepts
- Awareness about the stakeholders' map expansion

PILOT PROJECTS

- Pilot projects as initiatives for research and development
- Covid as an opportunity
- It is still difficult to integrate structural improvements into public services



6. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

- Definition of scenarios of evolution
- Contribution to a better understanding of the inclusion of social stakeholders in research.
- Characterization of policy and smart governance challenges



- Scarce participation of the ICT sectors in the tourism governance of the city
- More concrete guidance to achieve Smart development
- Need of City-data platforms → accessible, inclusive and user-oriented
- Barcelona as a Laboratory, until when?



THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 101019780





6.2 Limitations



- Analysis using NVivo might be subject to researcher bias occurring in the manual coding process.
- Some very relevant actors in the tourism ecosystem have not participated in the project and others have not been considered as essential. Next steps...
 - Mobility stakeholders
 - Tourists
 - Locals not organized



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



Acknowledgements

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RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 870753

- Esta comunicación es parte del proyecto de I+D+i ADAPTOUR. Referencia: PID2020-112525RB-I00, financiado por MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033. Proyectos I+D+i. Modalidad “Retos Investigación”.



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- The research for this conference paper has been carried out in the framework of the SMARTDEST project "Cities as Mobility Hubs: Tackling Social Exclusion Through 'Smart' Citizen Engagement", funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 RIA program under Grant Agreement no. 870753.
- Amb el suport de la Secretaria d'Universitats i Recerca de la Generalitat de Catalunya i del Fons Social Europeu



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