

Locals' perspectives towards the touristification of food markets: The case of Barcelona's La Boqueria

Abstract: Tourismophobic discourse is present in consolidated tourism destinations as huge flows of visitors invade public spaces generating impacts on daily life of residents. Thus, it is important to analyse the perceptions of residents who regularly shop at Barcelona's La Boqueria towards the growing crowds of tourists who visit the same venue. The study aims to acknowledge the evolution of locals' aversion or support regarding the touristification of their food market taking a Barcelona city government overtourism regulations as a breaking point for sequential explanatory mixed-method approach (quantitative→qualitative). Firstly, within the quantitative study, structural equation modelling results suggest that place identity observed through community attachment and resident place image has no direct statistically significant effect on residents' support for tourism development in La Boqueria, however mediated by tourism's perceived benefits and costs, these variables were recognized as statistically significant antecedents of support for La Boqueria's touristification. Secondly, quantitative findings were complemented and further elaborated through in-depth interviews with local residents who shop at La Boqueria and use of available secondary data. We conclude that residents' support for tourism development of La Boqueria as a public resource was strongly associated with the perception of place identity (both place image and community attachment) and expected benefits and associated costs.

Keywords: resident perceptions; tourist attraction; place identity; food markets; community sustainability; Barcelona

1. Introduction

Barcelona is a cultural destination full of rich tangible and intangible heritage. Among them, food markets have an especial interest, and specifically La Boqueria. Until recently, Barcelona has been one of the major global centres of overtourism. This is a city where stories of resident's growing discomfort because of the invasion of numerous spaces by tourism-related activities and visitors had become increasingly common (Milano et al., 2019). Indeed, Barcelona had increasingly begun to witness the rise of social movements by irate inhabitants who in the face of growing visitor numbers were claiming their right to the city (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2018; Milano & Mansilla, 2018). Several of the city's popular food markets, which have continued to be frequented by local inhabitants, were not immune to the transformation brought on by tourism as they emerged as must-see attractions (Domínguez-Pérez & Crespi-Vallbona, 2019). Among them, La Boqueria which is located in the historic centre, the usual visited area for tourists was exposed to the overtourism most profoundly. Both locals who regularly shop there and tourists who wish to experience local gastronomy visit La Boqueria. This has caused growing social tensions within the market itself. During the winter of 2015, several spontaneous demonstrations occurred, led by residents who regularly shop at the market. In response, the local government limited organized group visitation of no more than 15 tourists to just Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 to 15:00. This was aimed at ensuring that the market remains accessible to residents and functions efficiently while minimizing tensions within the enclosure (Crespi-Vallbona & Domínguez-Perez, 2016a). Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive temporal study that aims to understand the residents' (regular shoppers) changes in the perceptions regarding the place-based (La Boqueria) tourism development over the time. Thus, acknowledging resident's perceptions regarding place identity, perceived benefits and costs and eventually support for place-based (La Boqueria) tourism development, before and after the local government measures were initiated, was recognized to be beneficial to reconcile the conflicting perspectives of both users of this public resource.

Thus, due to study pronounced place dependence, further insight in residents place identity formation should play a vital role in future efforts to achieve higher level of acceptance and tolerance between the conflicting groups. The higher affiliation of residents towards specific place, would determine their favorable support for tourism and perception of tourism impacts (Stylidis, 2018a). In this sense, several authors (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Palme et al., 2013; Wang & Chen, 2015) argue that place identity is a determining factor of resident attitudes toward tourism impacts and eventually their support for tourism development. However, in spite of several investigations into the relationship between place identity and resident attitudes toward tourism impacts, these have generally been destination-driven and deployed as cross-sectional approaches (Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015). Conversely, our study favour place-based temporal perspective by observing evolution of place identity as residents' perceptions of the investigated place image and its social context (community attachment), tourism impacts and, specifically, support for tourism in the context of a food market, which serves both as a community resource and a visitor attraction. We have used sequential explanatory mixed method approach allowing us to interpret and further elaborate findings arising from our quantitative survey done before government measures were initiated into La Boqueria food market, with in-depth interviews with the residents

who shop regularly at this market and live in close proximity to La Boqueria and available secondary data of the importance for the study taking account some time distance from the initial implementation of the local government measures. Previous studies investigating both community attachment and image mostly targeted the destination level, whereas our research provides an insight of the place perspective as well as shifts in community attitudes over time.

In sum, study provide an insight in residents' perceptions of place identity characteristics, tourism impacts and support for tourism development with an aim to clarify whether or not the measures aimed at the venue's sustainable management by public administrators have succeeded in reducing the tensions that locals exhibit towards tourists. Our approach combines place and social identity theory with social exchange theory (SET) to acknowledge residents' responses towards tourism development in food markets. As such, in order to analyse the residents' perceptions of tourism's impacts, we consider that the context of place identity is important for successfully developing place-specific tourism forms.

2. Literature review

Touristically, food markets act as cultural icons and leisure places. Their rising popularity can be largely attributed to the growing global importance of food tourism (Crespi-Vallbona et al., 2019; Crespi-Vallbona & Dimitrovski, 2017; Dimitrovski & Crespi-Vallbona, 2018; Robinson et al., 2018). They could be perceived as experience places that means, where interaction and social contact is needed and emotions and particular feelings are shared. They keep their significance as venues for purchasing groceries at good value for money for local residents, and are usually located at the historic centre of cities. Hence, food markets belong to the rich heritage of a community and give a glimpse of the past, as the buildings in which they are often housed are a reflection of a city's history and its people, their tastes and eating habits (Crespi-Vallbona & Domínguez-Pérez, 2016b). These elements are the most coveted for food-market lovers (Crespi-Vallbona & Dimitrovski, 2016).

2.1 Place identity

Wang and Xu (2015, p. 242) define a place as “a setting that has been given meaning based on human experiences, relationships, emotions and thoughts”. Place identity is based on *place identity theory* (Proshansky et al., 1983) and relates to *social identity theory* (Tajfel, 1978). Place identity theory proposes that people respond to changes in their environment, especially when perceiving these as threats to their identity (Bonaiuto et al., 1996). Meanwhile, social identity theory fosters community ties and membership aiming to create an identity that differs markedly to that of community outsiders. Concurrently, it influences a community's behaviour towards the social environment (Haobin et al., 2014). There are a scarce number of studies that combine place and social identity within the existing tourism literature. For example, Foroudi et al. (2018) have point out the value of place and social identity theory in depicting tourists' destination image formation process based on the place websites. However, the potential of marrying place and social identity theory to resolve ongoing place driven clashes between residents and tourists was unfortunately, until now, completely foreseen.

Place identity is characterized “not only by physical components but also through the meaning and association developed between people and place” (Wang & Chen, 2015, p. 18). It provides symbolic meaning to the “place as a repository of emotions and relationships” (Segun, 2012, p. 297) that reflect the sense of belonging (Proshansky et al., 1995). According to Ujang (2010), continuity of physical and social (along with attachment held by the people) identity needs to be secured. Mannarini et al. (2006) have revealed a positive relationship between the subjective image of the neighbourhood and community attachment while Hallak et al. (2015) have noted that the community’s bond to a specific place comes as a result of the amalgam of these two concepts. In contrast to the aforementioned studies, in this investigation we perceive place identity as a dimension comprised of personal value systems of the residents’ community attachment and their place image that are grounded in both place and social identity theory.

To conceptualize how place identity connects to a community’s feelings towards tourism, Wang and Chen (2015) have incorporated a place identity concept into tourism development theories. Place identity theory suggests that resident attitudes towards tourism are determined through their self-concept of place (Wang & Xu, 2015). Residents are likelier to accept tourism’s impacts and will generally support the sector when they feel that its development is consistent with their own place identity (Wang & Xu, 2015). Previous studies (Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015) focused on the place identity in tourism have emphasized the place perspective by highlighting distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy, while social background of the personal attachment to a specific place was not appropriately acknowledged. Therefore, we perceive *place identity* as a dimension that encapsulates the food market’s regular customers’ (i.e., the inhabitants) physical place (place image) and social identity (community attachment), and their accompanying attitudinal and behavioural patterns towards place-based tourism development.

Place image is relevant factor when seeking to understand resident support or rejection of tourism. The concept of place image revolves around the beliefs and impressions about a specific place (Kotler et al., 1993) and has been investigated within the disciplines of marketing, tourism and environmental psychology (Stylidis, 2016). With reference to tourism studies, Stylidis et al. (2018b) have recognized the importance of further investigating place image from the residents’ perspective. A large influx of tourists in a particular neighbourhood may disrupt its residents’ ideal image of that place, especially when pollution they generate and increased level of crime rate, as they were usually identified as soft targets for thefts, were considered. Thus, residents’ perception of benefits and costs generated by place-based tourism development would be highly correlated with their affiliation to the place. In general, taking account residents’ perception of place image, benefits that arise from the tourism development would be supported, while perceived costs would be denounced. Based on this, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1. The residents’ place image has a positive direct effect on perceived benefit.

H2. The residents’ place image has a negative direct effect on perceived costs.

Any community is designated as a residential space determined by multidimensional attributes of place (Pretty et al., 2003). The assumption is that the residents' prevailing attachment to their neighbourhood and immediate surroundings is greater than to other places within the city (Mannarini et al., 2006). Fried (2000) links community attachment to feelings of closeness with other people but also various places within a specific area. Several researchers believe that the reactions of hosts to place-related tourism development impacts, whether these are positive or negative, are influenced by their level of community attachment (Eslami et al., 2019; Gursoy et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2013; Nicholas et al., 2009). Findings of previous studies demonstrate that residents with a higher level of attachment to their communities if they view the sector as economically and socially beneficial (Lee et al., 2013) as long as the magnitude of tourism conforms to an acceptable scale. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H3. Community attachment has a positive direct effect on perceived benefits.

H4. Community attachment has a negative direct effect on perceived costs.

2.2 Social exchange theory (SET)

Ap (1992, p. 668) defined social exchange theory as “a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation”. SET is found to be vital predictor of tourism attitudes' generated on the level of host community. Nunkoo et al. (2013) argue that majority of the studies placing host community attitudes towards tourism in the focus, uses SET as a theoretical foundation of their study. Moreover, Nunkoo et al. (2013, p. 12) state that “popularity of SET can be attributed to the fact that the theory recognizes the heterogeneous nature of a host community”, while Ap (1992, p. 685) argue that SET is “logically and intuitively appealing one that may be used to explain why residents develop positive or negative perceptions of tourism impacts”. Conversely, SET was criticized to be incapable to depict the complex social relations (Moscovici, 1981), while according to Matatolu (2019, p. 136) “theory assumes that human beings act rationally when deciding on an exchange”. Eslami et al. (2019) argue that perceived sociocultural impacts of tourism positively influence non-material life domains (e.g., recreational amenities) while perceived economic impacts of tourism can contribute to both material (e.g., income, housing, economic situation) and non-material life domains. However, tourism also causes several harmful consequences while residents understand that it leads to positive and negative impacts (Oviedo-García et al., 2008). Social Exchange Theory (SET) highlights the close relationship between positive attitudes towards tourism with prevailing beneficial outcomes and limitation of unacceptable costs (Dyer et al., 2007; Lee, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Stylidis et al., 2014). Thus, the perception of future tourism activities strongly depends on the evaluation of benefits and costs based on people's reactions of tourism development levels. If the expected benefits outweigh the expected costs, support for tourism activities will be pervasive, however if costs outweigh the benefits residents could end up clearly articulating their opposition and, eventually, might outright reject tourism development. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H5. Perceived benefits have a positive direct effect on the community's support for the tourism development of La Boqueria.

H6. Perceived costs have a negative direct effect on the community's support for the tourism development of La Boqueria.

Along with the use of SET, residents' attitudes towards tourism can also be understood through personal value systems (Chen et al., 2017; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Wang & Chen, 2015). Gu and Ryan (2008) believe that by incorporating the concept of place identity we can advance the issue of attitudes towards tourism beyond SET by adding personal value systems. Place identity theory argues that when esteem and place attachment grows (Strzelecka et al., 2017), people start to identify themselves with these places, interacting and reinforcing their bonds with other community members and the physical environment. Thus, in addition to applying SET, researchers have recently succeeded in finding a link between place identity and resident attitudes toward tourism (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Palme et al., 2013; Wang & Chen, 2015). Wang and Xu (2015, p. 16) perceive a close link between place identity theory and SET, especially when the relation "between place identity and residents' attitudes toward tourism and their support for tourism are observed" (p. 17). Thus, our study builds on existing knowledge by supplementing the applicability of the SET destination-based framework with the place-specific approach grounded on place and social identity theory. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H7. Community attachment has a positive direct effect on support for La Boqueria tourism development.

H8. The residents' place image has a positive direct effect on support for La Boqueria tourism development.

In cases where residents' attitudes towards tourism are considered, Hadinejad et al. (2019) appreciate SET as one of the most influential and commonly used theoretical backgrounds. Nevertheless, only a few studies using SET framework have considered the mediating role that perceived tourism impacts play in determining support or rejection of tourism-related development (Gannon et al., 2020; Nicholas et al., 2009; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). It is expected that residents with higher level of both place identity dimensions would change their attitude towards support for La Boqueria tourism development when they perceive the impacts of the tourism beneficial and conversely in the situation when the perceived costs were taken account. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H9. Perceived benefits mediate the relationship between residents' place image and support for La Boqueria tourism development.

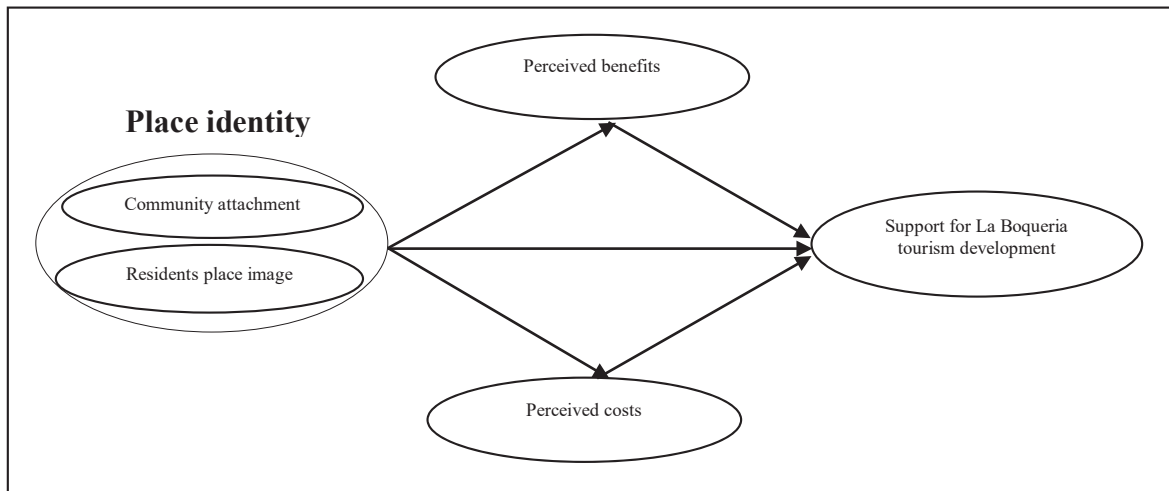
H10. Perceived costs mediate the relationship between residents' place image and support for La Boqueria tourism development.

H11. Perceived benefits mediate the relationship between community attachment and support for La Boqueria tourism development.

H12. Perceived costs mediate the relationship between community attachment and support for La Boqueria tourism development.

Based on the previously discussed hypotheses, we propose the following research model (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Proposed research model



3. Methods

3.1. Research context

With its origins dating back to the twelfth century, La Boqueria is presently located in a 19th Century building. Specifically, the market, which was remodelled in 2000 is located in Las Ramblas, one of the city's most tourist-oriented and well-known pedestrian areas. La Boqueria includes two hundred and fifty stalls, offering both fresh produce and delicatessen items (Boqueria Market Barcelona, 2020a). Several websites, including businessinsider.com, buzzfeed.com and travelchannel.com, as well as tourist guides and brochures, hail La Boqueria as one of Barcelona's unmissable attractions (Crespi-Vallbona & Dimitrovski, 2017).

Since La Boqueria is close to the heavily-touristified Las Ramblas (Figure 2), increasing pressure by tourists on the market has led to growing resentment by locals. Understanding why local residents support or oppose tourism growth helps us establish guidelines that could minimize tourism's negative impact and maximize the support for these initiatives (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2011).

Figure 2. Location of La Boqueria Food Market in the city centre of Barcelona



Source: www.gifex.com

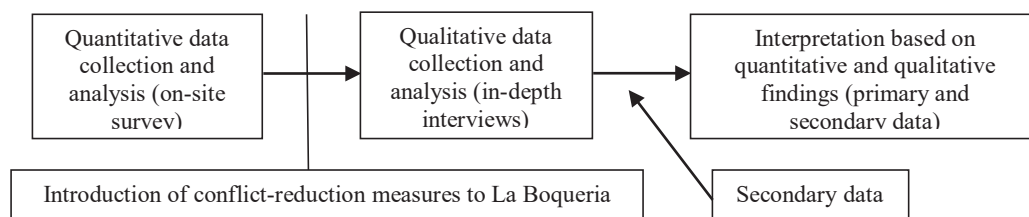
The oversaturation in these central spaces has initiated the emergence of different local movements against tourist-related activities. For instance, the Raval Neighbours' Association (Associació de Veïns del Raval), the Popular Tourism Agency (Agència de Turisme Popular) in the neighbourhood surrounding La Boqueria but also the local press have all denounced the tourist-led invasion of the market, which has had negative repercussions on its regular customers (Karvala, 2019).

3.2 Procedure

Fetters (2018) underlines the value of integrating both a qualitative and a quantitative methodology to address highly complex phenomena. In this case, we adopted mixed methods approach, incorporating both a quantitative and qualitative approach (Figure 3). Study uses sequential explanatory design proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 2018). In the first phase quantitative data was collected and analysed, followed with collection and analysis of qualitative data with an aim to build on quantitative results with the qualitative findings and providing a more comprehensive understanding of the investigated phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Moreover, along with the explanatory mixed-method design, triangulation was also chosen as an appropriate add-on to mixed-method approach applied in the study. The purpose of triangulation design is “to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic” (Morse, 1991, p. 122) and provide more in-depth understanding of the researched phenomena. Our study

implements sequential design to triangulation, as quantitative data collection was sequentially followed by a qualitative data collection of the other data types (in the case of the study both primary and secondary data) (McBride et al., 2019). Method triangulation relates to a multiple method approach to study a single problem (Decrop, 2004) while data triangulation involves the use of various primary and secondary data sources (Oppermann, 2000). The study also involves multilevel triangulation (Decrop, 2004), whereby individual interviews with a limited number of individuals seek to flesh out key points, which otherwise might remain hidden in the information gleaned from the survey targeting several informants.

Figure 3. Procedural diagram of sequential explanatory mixed-method approach



Since the city government and IMMB (*Institut Municipal dels Mercats de Barcelona*) have implemented conflict-reduction measures between locals and tourists (e.g., Gasetta Municipal de Barcelona, Num.11, April 10, 2015 and; Mesura de Govern, Sobre preservació i millora del mercat municipal de la Boqueria, April 1, 2017), we investigated whether the implementation of these regulations influenced residents' attitudes towards tourism over time. First, we undertook a quantitative study for the period before the enactment of the aforementioned regulations. Second, we carried out a qualitative study applied to the period after the regulations were implemented. These qualitative primary data (in-depth interviews) were supplemented with secondary data related to the main concerns of Barcelona's citizens and the evolution of residents' support towards market management in Barcelona.

For the quantitative part of our research, our sample consisted of locals living close to La Boqueria and who do at least some of their shopping in the market. Our research occurred once per week between March 2015 and the end of June 2015, between the hours of 11:00 and 17:00. We shifted between workdays and weekends to account for differences in flows to the food market. The original questionnaire was in English, thus it was translated into Catalan (and Spanish) and back-translated to English following back-translation method proposed by Esfahani and Walters (2018). Thus, we compared the original version and the back-translated version. Given the high costs of employing a translator, the Catalan speaker among us served as back-translator due to her familiarity with the specific socio-cultural context of the research. Our survey followed Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) procedural suggestions concerning respondents' anonymity (to minimise evaluation apprehension and item ambiguity). Prior to distributing the questionnaire, we ran it by a focus group of four tourism academics and fine-tuned questions that were unclear to the respondents. Subsequently, we pilot tested the questions with 30 randomly selected residents before deciding on the final version of the questionnaire.

Our sample of 200 respondents is suitable for implementing SEM analysis based on recommendations by Myers et al. (2011). Also, according to Hair et al. (2010), the sample meets the requirement of a 10:1 ratio, since it includes more than ten participants per item. Given that the population size of the Raval (La Boqueria's surrounding neighbourhood) is approximately 17,000 (Barcelona City Town Statistics, 2018), our sample size is acceptable since it follows quota sampling. The quota sampling secures the generalizability of the findings, as the chosen sample reflects the main characteristics' of the investigated total population.

We developed and measured each variable of the proposed research model via the use of two to three statements. The statements in the model were latent variables selected based on relevant literature (Crespi-Vallbona & Dimitrovski, 2017; Gursoy et al., 2009; Lee, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Oviedo-García et al. 2008; Styliadis et al. 2014).

For our qualitative approach we conducted fifteen in-depth interviews with selected residents living in close proximity to La Boqueria and who shop at the market on a daily basis. These were randomly selected following observation-based evidence of their close relationship with certain market stall owners of the stalls since they were regular customers. We conducted the in-person interviews between October and November 2019 and stopped after reaching theoretical saturation. Interviewees voluntarily responded while shopping according to ethical considerations of confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy protection (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The questions (Appendix 1) included in the interviews consider the aforementioned variables analysed within the quantitative research. The interviews were audio recorded, following the respondents' consent and transcribed using a content analysis technique. In-depth interviews provide an opportunity to validate the results from the quantitative part of the research and capture the information that cannot be conveyed through the quantitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This allows researchers to obtain an interpretative approach in which respondents can easily express their points of view and complement the results of the statistical analysis. Finally, two secondary datasets were examined. The first was local government information addressing the main concerns of Barcelona's citizens while the second related to the evolution of residents' support towards Market Management in Barcelona (1996-2019) provided by Barcelona Statistics (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019). Barcelona City Council conducts regular surveys to gauge the level and type of citizens' concerns and this information is useful for reinforcing our primary data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Quantitative study

The quantitative part of our analysis revealed an almost equal number of male (47.5%) and female respondents (52.5%). Persons between 45 and 54 years old made up the largest age group of respondents (25.0%) while the rest of the age groups were equally distributed (18-24 16.5%; 25-34 16.5%; 35-44 17.0%; 45-54 25.0%; 55-64 12.0%; >65 13.0%). In terms of marital status, the largest of the three groups were married persons (44.0%). Almost a third of respondents indicated that the highest education they had achieved was a Masters' degree (28.5%) whereas just over a quarter listed a high school diploma (26.0%).

Table 1 shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. The proposed model has an acceptable level of convergent and discriminatory validity and composite reliability. The residents' place image CR value was found to be slightly lower than the usual threshold, although according to Hair et al. (2014), values of composite reliability between 0.60 to 0.70 are acceptable. The results indicate that the proposed model reasonably matches the data.

Table 1. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Constructs and items (AVE and CR)	Loading
<i>Residents place image (0.518; 0.680)</i>	
It is clean	0.641
It is safe	0.791
<i>Community attachment (0.786; 0.917)</i>	
Living in this community says a lot about who I am	0.901
Living in this community means a lot to me	0.921
I am very attached to this community	0.836
<i>Perceived benefits (0.619; 0.763)</i>	
The market offers me the opportunity to meet people from other cultures	0.719
The market offers me the opportunity to meet local people	0.849
<i>Perceived costs (0.569; 0.713)</i>	
Tourism in La Boqueria bothers my shopping	0.915
Tourists with high buying power have negatively affected the lifestyle of my community	0.548
<i>Support for La Boqueria tourism development (0.644; 0.773)</i>	
I support the development of La Boqueria tourism initiatives	0.973
Tourism must be developed focusing on attractions, such as food market La Boqueria	0.585

Notes: $\chi^2 = 47.435$; $df = 34$; $p = 0.063$; $\chi^2/df = 1.395$; $GFI = 0.958$; $CFI = 0.984$; $TLI = 0.974$; $IFI = 0.984$; $RMSEA = 0.045$; $SRMR = 0.037$

We used SEM (structural equation modelling) to test the effects of the independent variables (community attachment and residents' place image) on the dependent variables (perceived benefits, perceived costs and support for tourism development in La Boqueria). We present the findings in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of SEM analysis

Observed relationship	β	P	Hypothesis testing
H1: RPI \rightarrow PB	0.249**	0.014	Supported
H2: RPI \rightarrow PC	- 0.179 ^{ns}	0.110	Not supported
H3: CA \rightarrow PB	0.261**	0.003	Supported
H4: CA \rightarrow PC	0.173 ^{ns}	0.082	Not supported
H5: PB \rightarrow SBTD	0.608**	0.000	Supported
H6: PC \rightarrow SBTD	- 0.269**	0.002	Supported
H7: CA \rightarrow SBTD	- 0.070 ^{ns}	0.358	Not supported
H8: RPI \rightarrow SBTD	- 0.065 ^{ns}	0.458	Not supported

Note: RPI-Residents place image; CA-Community attachment; PB-Perceived benefits; PC-Perceived costs; SBTD-Support for La Boqueria tourism development.

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level; ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; ^{ns} Non significant

The results indicate that residents' place image ($\beta = 0.249, p < 0.05$) and community attachment ($\beta = 0.249, p < 0.05$) have a statistically positive effect on perceived benefits. This supports earlier studies (Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015), which argue that place identity affects resident attitudes towards tourism impacts, both negatively and positively. Findings from the quantitative study highlight a positive significant relationship between resident place image and perceived benefits. These findings also support those of previous studies (Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis, 2016), leading us to conclude that when resident place image is regarded as positive it leads to more favourable perceptions of tourism benefits. Moreover, community attachment positively and significantly affects the perceived benefits as well, a finding witnessed in several previous studies (Lee et al. 2013; Nicholas et al., 2009). When residents feel closely attached to their community, their perception of benefits is greater and more pronounced. The role of community attachment in evaluation of tourism impacts was found to be particularly important as food market act as community gathering point, a place that local community members could meet and co-create their place identity and sense of belonging. Moreover, higher social community cohesion stimulates a positive inter-cultural exchange of residents' and tourists as well, especially those that are coming from different cultures, and offer them an opportunity to guard and convey the importance of the Boqueria food market for their identity.

On other hand, study findings suggest that that residents' place image ($\beta = - 0.179, p > 0.05$) and community attachment ($\beta = 0.173, p > 0.05$) have a statistically insignificant effect on perceived costs. Study suggests that residents place identity perceptions reflect the protective stand towards tourism in general, with special attention given to negative costs generated by excessive tourism at the location. Thus, building place identity of host residents was recognized as an instrument of sustainable future of these public resources, especially in the situation when this specific resource was threatened with the overtourism challenges.

Moreover, perceived benefits ($\beta = 0.608, p < 0.05$) have a statistically positive effect on support for tourism development in La Boqueria, while perceived costs ($\beta = - 0.269, p < 0.05$) have a statistically negative effect on support for La Boqueria's tourism development (Table 2). This agrees with previous findings, which indicate that favourable perceptions of tourism impacts lead to greater support for tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2009; Stylidis & Terzidou, 2014). The findings that have demonstrated that perceived benefits have a positive effect matching the results of several previous SET studies (Dyer et al., 2007; Nicholas et al., 2009; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011), while statistically significant negative effect of perceived costs towards support for tourism development in La Boqueria was identified to be in line with Lee's (2013) study.

Finally, study findings suggest that that residents' place image ($\beta = - 0.070, p > 0.05$) and community attachment ($\beta = - 0.065, p > 0.05$) have a statistically insignificant effect on La Boqueria support for tourism development. Study findings indicate an insignificant relationship between resident place image and support for tourism development that was found to be inconsistent with the conclusions of earlier studies (Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis, 2018b), which unravelled a positive significant relationship between residents' place image and their support for tourism development. In addition, residents with higher levels of community attachment may view tourism development in La Boqueria more

negatively compared to other residents, confirming the conclusions from earlier studies (Choi & Murray, 2010; Gannon et al., 2020). Conversely, previous findings disagree with the results of Nicholas et al. (2009) who revealed that community attachment can actually lead to enhanced support for tourism development. In general, strong place identity and evident threat of the La Boqueria overtourism exposure, has influenced a protective attitude of host residents generating a negative perception of La Boqueria tourism development. This conclusion lies in the very heart of the problem identified within the Boqueria facilities at the time, reflecting the general annoyance of regular shoppers towards La Boqueria tourism that has eventually resulted with the spontaneous demonstrations' and social protests.

Finally, we implemented mediation analysis in order to check indirect effects. The bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) methodology (Gannon et al., 2020) was applied to assess potential mediation effects. Table 3 shows the indirect effect of RPI and CA on SBTB through PB and PC. The results confirm the full mediating role of the following: PB between CA and SBTB; PC between CA and SBTB and; PB between RPI and SBTB. They also indicate the partial mediating role of PC between RPI and SBTB.

Table 3. Results of mediation analysis

Hypothesized relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect effect	Results	Hypothesis testing
H9: RPI → PB → SBTB	0.024 ^{ns}	0.146 ^{**}	Full mediation	Supported
H10: RPI → PC → SBTB	0.255 [*]	0.051 [*]	Partial mediation	Partially supported
H11: CA → PB → SBTB	- 0.132 ^{ns}	0.157 ^{**}	Full mediation	Supported
H12: CA → PC → SBTB	0.065 ^{ns}	- 0.051 ^{**}	Full mediation	Supported

Note: RPI-Residents place image; CA-Community attachment; PB-Perceived benefits; PC-Perceived costs; SBTB-Support for La Boqueria tourism development;

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; * Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level; ^{ns} Non significant

Our study findings reveal that PC and PB have a mediating effect, thus building on the existing theory in the context of place identity values and attitudes towards tourism development. Our findings relating to the mediating effect of tourism impacts complement the existing theory for both relationships. These were identified as links between residents' place image and support for tourism development (Stylidis, 2016) and between community attachment and support for tourism development (Gannon et al., 2020). Based on the study findings, mediating effect of perceived benefits explicitly follow the SET postulates, as beneficial tourism impacts (such as in this specific case opportunity to meet people from different cultures and act as gathering point for locals as a part of their place identity practices) enhance the support towards place-based (La Boqueria) tourism development. This is in line with the conclusions made in the previous SET literature (Dyer et al., 2007; Lee, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Stylidis et al., 2014). In general, residents will be more supportive towards tourism development if they perceive food markets as an opportunity to meet people from other countries and offer an opportunity to gather local people. Conversely, mediating role of perceived costs were lowering the bond between place identity and support for Boqueria tourism development confirming findings from previous studies (Dyer et al., 2007; Lee, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Stylidis et al., 2014). In general, residents' perception of perceived costs lower the support of place-based tourism development as a result of

favourable place identity perceptions and local community urge to act as guardians' of their place and identity build on it.

4. 2. *Qualitative study*

The analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews considers the aforementioned variables analysed within the quantitative research. They emphasize the obtained quantitative results, adding reasons and explanations related to investigated variables relationship with the touristification of La Boqueria, namely place identity (place image and community attachment), perceived costs and benefits and La Boqueria support of the tourism development.

Locals' attitudes towards the tourism development of food markets appear to be strongly associated with the perception of place identity and potential benefits to be gained as well as the expected associated costs. If we choose to follow place identity theory, whereby local residents respond to changes in their environment, especially those perceived as a threat (Bonaiuto et al., 1996), it is evident that they will become more protective and oppose any kind of harmful impact on key resources in their community, including food markets. One interviewee confirmed this finding:

They (the tourists) have stolen our market. This is our market, our neighbourhood, and they come as if they were the ministers and do what they want. We have lost our pretty meeting place..., although this is the best market where you can buy quality groceries (man, retired, 72 years).

However, quantitative study findings suggest that perceived tourism benefit were capable to enhance the community pride and reconsider residents' negative attitudes towards tourism development, and eventually contribute to its at least tolerance, if not support. One interviewee stated:

You know... Christmas is coming... I'm foresighted and I've just ordered the foodstuffs for the Christmas day meal. Every year I do the same. They know me... I'm always successful because they sell me good stuff... And, related to crowds of tourism.... In the end, if tourists come this is because our market is famous world-wide (woman, housewife, 68 years).

Taking account what has been argued previously, local officials and food market managers must think of solutions that combine ideas about additional income generation within a broad sustainability framework when considering future initiatives. A simple solution, for example, as one of the residents stated, is to adopt an entrance fee for non-locals when they visit the market so as to reduce the high volume of tourists. This person argued that:

I think that tourists should have to pay an entrance fee. This overcrowding would disappear. In fact, people just value things that have an economic value... La Boqueria is an interesting attraction for tourists, so they should pay if they wish to enjoy it (woman, 34 years).

Based on the preceding discussion, it is evident that benefits have a transformative influence in strengthening the residents' perceptions of tourism's effects and influencing their support for its development. This notion also aligns with previously accumulated knowledge from studies in the field of environmental psychology (Fried, 2000; Mannarini et al., 2006; Pretty et al., 2003; Proshansky et al., 1983), which emphasize that residents with a strong attachment to their social and physical environment tend to regard proposed development projects in their surroundings positively (Devine-Wright, 2011). Several interviewees confirmed this point:

That's the price we must pay for living in Barcelona, near Las Ramblas (in the historic centre where the Boqueria is located). Tourists, people everywhere, in all the corners... and high prices... yes... that's the real issue. But you can choose... if you want to avoid people you can go to the supermarket. I'm retired and I've time to do shopping whenever I decide to do it... I can understand other people becoming unsatisfied with this changing (for the worse) market, where some establishments cater only to tourists... But I will keep on coming to my Boqueria...there is no doubt. There is no option, you must give up and accept it (man, retired, 69 years).

Another resident added:

That is clear, I'm fed up with all these tourists, but I do not want to stop coming to La Boqueria which is the only place one can buy good food, local products, top-quality food...so, in spite of this crowd, La Boqueria is my favourite place to buy the groceries (woman, 45 years).

Yet another resident who regularly shops at the market stated:

Honestly, I bought fruit juices, last summer... and I'm not a tourist. I agree with the change of the essential image of La Boqueria, but the positive aspect is that the food market is still alive, full of businesses and buyers. Some of them, they are tourists...that's the truth, but we also come here to buy....(woman, 34 years).

In cases where inhabitants regard place image negatively it can adversely influence their perceptions of tourism's benefits. Since La Boqueria was perceived as polluted and unsafe that comes as a result of its overcrowding, this leads to a negative perception of tourism's effects. The aspect of overcrowding was highlight throughout several interviews, revealing one of main reason that causes the residents annoyance and eventually ruin the image of the place. They retain nostalgic memories of the market from when it was just a food market, before it became a touristified icon. Our qualitative analysis confirms these finding as reflected in the following 2 quotes.

1st respondent (woman, 54 years): *Marta (owner name of the fish shop) knows me. I come once per week. She knows what I like to buy, what my sons eat.... .. I adore her... Sometimes, these groups of tourists bother me, they have all the time to stop and take a picture, blocking the path... That's the truth, and sometimes I am really offended...but, you know, the stuff I can buy here, at Marta's shop, my friendship with her... that's for me important.*

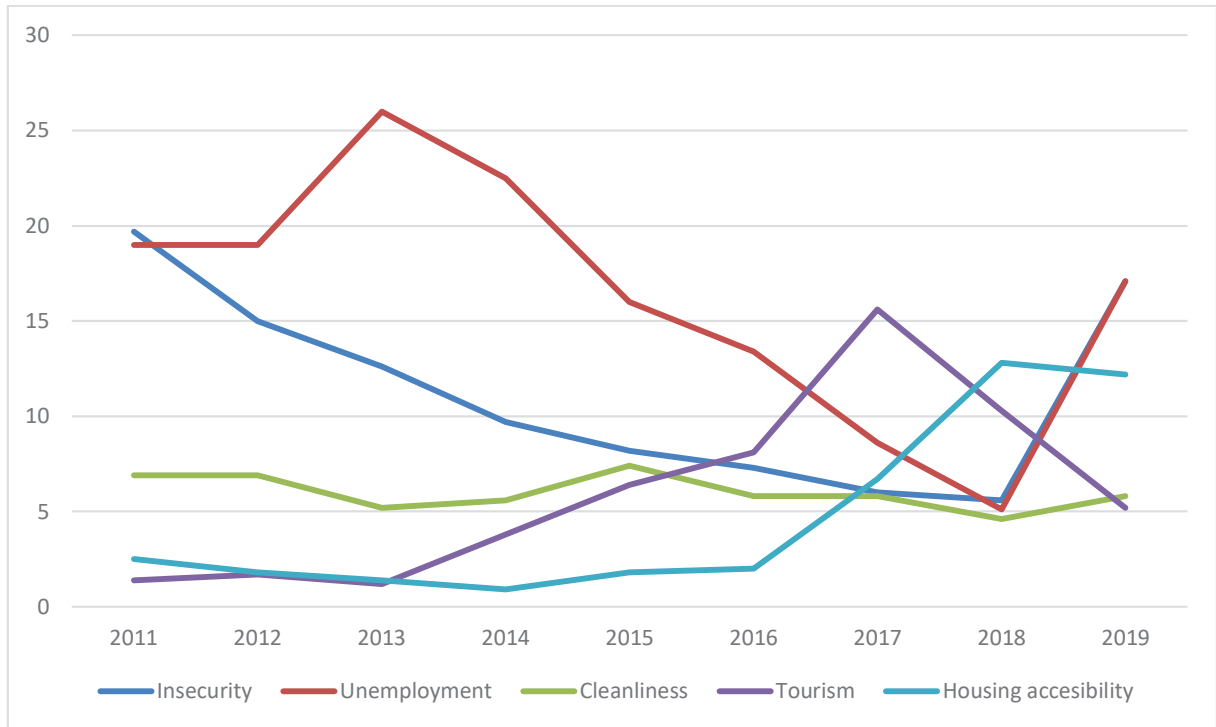
2nd respondent (man, retired, 69 years): *Certainly, the market has changed a lot. It has nothing to do with my memories... Now the market is overcrowded, full of tourists and fruit juice stalls...There are few traditional and lifelong establishments. I remember when I was young and came with my mom to buy almost daily. We spent a lot of time talking and laughing with business owners. I almost knew all of them....., in this aisle.... But nowadays, I do not have so much time to come daily for my groceries . . . but I still do as I like to maintain my family tradition.....at least once per week.*

While the residents do not hide their growing unease towards certain effects deriving from enhanced tourist activity, they believe that the high quality of products and services they obtain while shopping at the food market outweigh these disadvantages. Thus, they are unwilling to forego their daily habit of shopping in the market, especially since doing so allows them to continue a generations-long tradition which reflects both their love of this place and their overall community attachment. Nevertheless, they also accept that economically and socially, La Boqueria remains resilient thanks to the high volume of all consumers - local inhabitants as well as tourists - who wish to satisfy their own cultural and gastronomic curiosity. One interviewee in our qualitative study confirmed this by stating:

Where can you buy this beef? It comes from Girona (a town near to Barcelona), it has a certified quality... If you like to eat healthy and gourmet products, you know that you have to come to La Boqueria. There is no another option in the city despite the presence of tourists everywhere.

Finally, secondary data was examined to acknowledge the wider context of the investigated phenomena. Barcelona City Council regularly gauges the level and type of citizens' concerns. The citizens are most concerned about insecurity (17.1%), unemployment (17.1%) and housing accessibility (12.2). After 2017 (correlated with previously discussed measures initiated by the city government in 2015 and 2017) there was a downturn in concerns relating to tourism over the following two years (2018 and 2019) (Figure 4). This is significant because it reveals that the government finally reacted to the inconveniences the citizens had experienced because of tourism by implementing various measures to regulate and control the use of such touristified spaces (e.g., by monitoring and reducing the number of visitors in specific attractions).

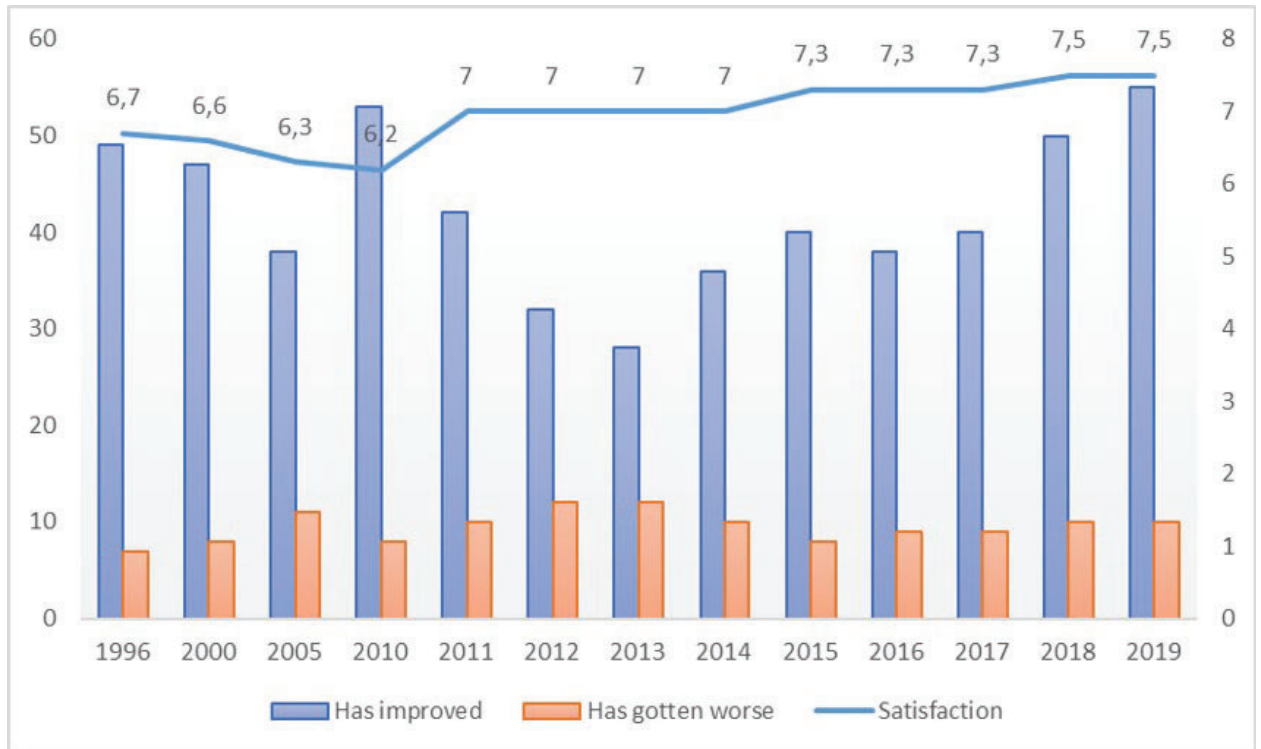
Figure 4. Evolution of main concerns (in %) of citizenship in Barcelona (2011-2019)



Source: Own elaboration from Local Government data.

Similarly, the citizen survey conducted by the Local Administration reflects the inhabitants' support of the IMMB management of all the city's markets (Figure 5). In terms of the general management of public services provided by the city council, markets are one of the highest ranked services by the inhabitants, receiving an average score of satisfaction of 7.5. This reflects that the markets, including La Boqueria, have been improving in terms of their overall conditions but also the products they have on offer.

Figure 5. Evolution of residents' support to Market Management in Barcelona (1996-2019)



Source: Own elaboration from Barcelona Statistics

The above data indicate that the attitudes of Barcelona’s citizens towards tourism are shifting and this might partly explain why they have started to tolerate high influx of the tourists using these public resources’ and continue to maintain an attachment to the traditional food markets, including La Boqueria. Overall, this attachment reveals that they tend to be supportive towards the market’s management but also the quality of produce and services on offer. These secondary data reinforce the supportive attitudes highlighted during the interview process. Residents prioritize the services, the common good that food markets represent for them, more than the inconvenience generated when a place is touristically congested.

5. Concluding remarks

Given the growing popularity of food tourism worldwide, food markets have emerged as important cultural and gastronomic pilgrimage sites. Accordingly, tourism researchers have begun to pay growing attention to these venues (Crespi-Vallbona et al., 2019; Crespi-Vallbona & Dimitrovski, 2017; Dimitrovski & Crespi-Vallbona, 2018; Mashkov & Shoval, 2020). Further understanding of food markets’ relevance as tourist attractions but also the conflicts this novel form of tourism causes in communities where residents feel that their daily activity spaces are increasingly invaded by visitors can shed light on how inhabitants and guests can mutually use public resources at a destination. We conclude that residents’ support for tourism development of La Boqueria as a public resource was strongly associated with the perception of place identity (both place image and community attachment) and expected benefits and associated costs. Residents openly express their concerns with regards to enhanced tourist activity in the food market while, concurrently, they are unwilling to change their everyday shopping routine as a part of

their identity. Thus, residents' attitudes' concerning the current and future use of valuable public resources, including food markets, are closely associated with place and social identity theories. Also, their perception of the costs and benefits associated with tourism development are in line with premises of SET.

5.1 Theoretical implications

The theoretical contribution of our research is four-fold. *First*, it assesses the impact of resident place identity (community attachment and place image) comprised of what has Ujang (2010) labelled physical (place image) and social (community attachment) identity of the place. Thus, using the stance of both place and social identity theory place image and community attachment were conceptualized as place identity dimensions. Moreover, study further develops the understanding of place identity formation process investigated on the level of single place in contrast to its previous discussion from destination perspective (Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015) and acknowledges its evolution over time. The study's temporal nature was suitable in terms of depicting the changes of place identity more thoroughly in comparison to the common approach of tourism researchers based only on place attachment (Dwyer et al., 2019). Both, quantitative and qualitative findings support the crucial role of residents' perception of place identity in place/determined tourism development. Thus, any effort made in direction of forming a place-based tourist product, such as food market would secure its sustainable future. Some of the interviews have pointed out the higher level of place identity should not only limit the support for tourism development, yet provide a solid foundation for host/tourists reconciliation.

Second, our findings demonstrate the applicability of social exchange theory in the context of the model directed towards resident support for place-based tourism development. Identifying the antecedents of tourism support by the local population is a critical factor for ongoing community development, especially in an environment threatened by overtourism. Our study further verifies the applicability of the SET, by considering the high influx of tourists (specifically overtourism) within the observed community (Gursoy et al., 2002) characterised with high level of place identity. The study aims to resolve some of the SET limitations (Moscovici, 1981) by giving additional attention to wider social context, particularly, community social background as a prerequisite that nurtures the approach that favours situation when expected benefits outweigh the expected costs, that consequently leads to support for tourism activities.

Third, the validity of our model is strengthened by accounting for the mediating effect of perceived benefits and costs within the quantitative study, later on confirmed with several quotes in qualitative study as well. Only a handful of studies have implemented the mediation approach within the SET framework (Gannon et al., 2020; Nicholas et al., 2009; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017), while even less has further elaborated these findings through qualitative study. Previous studies were focused on destination whereas our study deployed a place-specific context (e.g., the food market) while combining place and social identity theory with social exchange theory. Thus, accounting for the residents' attitudes towards their place identity (both physical and social), we confirmed perceived benefits as effective predictors of support for La Boqueria's tourism development.

Fourth, our study follows Truong et al. (2020) encouragement for further applicability of the mixed method approach in tourism and hospitality. Our study has implemented a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach in the context of highly relevant contemporary urban overtourism problems. By implementing sequential explanatory mixed-method approach, quantitative data was supported with qualitative data in the second phase providing a more comprehensive understanding of the place identity and its effects on support for place-based tourism development exposed to overtourism pressure. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), sequential explanatory mixed-method approach can be particularly useful when quantitative data was supplemented with more detail insight in the mechanisms within the phenomena, particularly taking account surprising or unexpected results. Thus, issues of the importance of the study that goes beyond the identified quantitative variables were acknowledged (crowding at the market, value of high quality products and in some degree reconciliation with the tourists' presence). Moreover, study adds on to the standard sequential explanatory mixed methods approach by giving additional attention to different levels of triangulation, method (quantitative and qualitative), data (primary and secondary) and multilevel triangulation (individual interviews complementing a survey involving a group of informants) (Decrop, 2004). Finally, mixed method approach was performed in a context that investigates changes through time in resident perceptions towards tourism, thus future tourism studies could benefit from an approach such as this.

5.2 Managerial implications

In the future, policymakers, local authorities and organizations responsible for tourism development, will have to pay greater attention to residents' attitudes relating to place identity. Providing residents with complete information about the benefits and costs of tourism development will allow them to have a greater say as to how the industry will evolve (Nunkoo & Ramkinssoon, 2011). Greater residents' engagement was discussed by Wang & Xu (2015) who argue for resident input in the planning process related to the development and use of sites for tourism purposes. Based on this argument, it is vital that the planning strategies relating to La Boqueria food market, including its future use as a visitor space, must account for residents' place-based personal values.

It is imperative to actively involve residents in various aspects of tourism development. For instance, authorities could encourage locals to act as "ambassadors" of their neighbourhood and specifically the food market by asking them to volunteer to guide food market tours. Thus, residents can highlight the products on offer (both food and non-food items). Guiding tourists through food market will allow the locals to convey the message that is close to their place identity by emphasizing their importance as community "social glue", that could eventually direct its use by in line with the host community expectations. By guiding food tours by locals the benefits of inter-cultural exchange would be strengthened and thus consequently the mutual understanding between the sides will rise resulting with higher level of support of Boqueria tourism development over time. Food markets, as tourist attractions, enable people from various cultures to interact with each other and with local inhabitants. Thus, tourism planners and policymakers should also consider organizing "meet the local" events. These would allow residents to have an opportunity to express their own sentiments about the place, thus

fostering community identity and, hopefully, enhancing support for tourism development among host residents.

Further, food market managers should strive to coordinate their marketing strategy with local representatives in order to gain their support for any planned initiatives. Naturally, they should stress the potential benefits that would result from such an effort for public participation and collaboration. Economic dependency on tourism functions as a significant variable leading to positive resident attitudes towards tourism development (Oviedo-García et al., 2008) informing locals about the tourism-derived benefits will increase their support for tourism-related initiatives.

It is hard to achieve such an initiative given the public's overall mistrust towards policymakers whom they see as partially responsible for the highly unregulated mass tourism in Barcelona, including La Boqueria. Therefore, any visible improvement that respects the local community's interests and accounts for the inhabitants' pride of place and quality of life, is important when it comes to shifting opinions towards a more favourable direction. This implies that the authorities should adopt a cautious planning approach by closely working with the local community to develop a superior mutual understanding of the negative consequences deriving from uncontrolled tourism development. Wang and Xu (2015) have concluded that resident place identity and thereby, these individuals' attitudes towards tourism could be driven by the current stage of tourism development. Interestingly, managers in La Boqueria have cautiously begun implementing certain actions to better control tourism flows, even though these are not yet entirely effective (Crespi-Vallbona et al., 2019).

5.3 Future research and limitations

Finally, we should highlight certain limitations of our research. Taking account the findings related to the importance of place identity, results cannot be generalized and applied to all food markets, since every market is connected with its own local community, each of which has a number of contingent characteristics. Thus, our study should be considered as a behavioural model of resident support focused on a sole tourist attraction. The study was also limited due to a small number of respondents, and limited number of items corresponding to each of the variables. Moreover, it would be of value if one could utilize an extended model that accounts for differences concerning the level of perceived benefits and costs in line with the main sustainability pillars (economic, socio-cultural and environmental). Finally, a focus on the important community landmarks, which hold considerable personal and social value in the local community quality of life domain could provide an additional insight into the process. We suggest that in future research we can redirect our focus toward a cross-national study approach in order to compare findings from different geographical, social, cultural and economic contexts.

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