

Visitors and Residents in El Raval Neighborhood of Barcelona. New Opportunities for Creative Tourism?

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Abstract

This article analyzes the relationship between creative tourism and intercultural interaction. The research took place in Barcelona, a city that has become, during the last three decades (1990-2020), a renowned international urban destination. El Raval, a central and multicultural neighbourhood, is the most serious example of a neighbourhood in the city that has experienced rapid tourism growth and pressure. Given the city's wholesale adoption of the co-creation of place, some of the criteria of creative tourism experiences have been used to determine a baseline of engagement attitudes and behaviours of residents and visitors in El Raval neighbourhood. A special emphasis has been given to the role of social media, and how it might affect the relationship between residents and visitors from a creative tourism point of view. The authors created a specific survey which was distributed online to residents and visitors. The results of this study show different perceptions between residents and visitors. On one hand, residents are less willing to engage in the creative tourism enterprise than are visitors. On the other hand, residents underestimate the interest of visitors in connecting with them, while visitors overestimate the interest of residents in connecting with them, suggesting that communication is something that can be improved. Those results make evident the need to use and develop social media tools to connect residents and visitors, and promote cross-cultural interactions and creative tourism.

Keywords: creative tourism, social media, engagement of visitors and residents, El Raval neighbourhood, Barcelona

1. Introduction

El Raval is a neighborhood located in the historical center (Ciutat Vella or Old Town district) of the city of Barcelona (see Figure 1), at the west side of La Rambla, one of the most famous and visited avenues of the city. According to the official statistics, its small footprint of 1.1 km² housed 48,297 inhabitants in 2019 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2020). El Raval shows the highest population density of the city, the average of which is three times lower (15,000 inhabitants per km²). In fact, El Raval is considered one of the most densely populated urban areas in the world (GeographyFieldwork, 2020). 48.1% of its current population was born in Barcelona or in the rest of Spain, with 51.9% born in the rest of the world (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2020). Ethnicities with over 1,000 inhabitants are: Pakistan, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Morocco, Italy, and India. The other nationalities are mainly Latin American and European. From a geographical perspective, people who come from Europe represent 61.8% of the inhabitants in El Raval; 28.6% originate from Asia, 5.7% from America, and 3.7% from Africa.



Figure 1. Location of El Raval neighborhood in the city of Barcelona

El Raval has historically attracted immigrants, but it has been during the last two decades (2000-2020) that the cosmopolitan character of the neighborhood has notably increased with the frequency of international immigration. And, of course, the increasing visitation of international tourists has enlarged El Raval's mosaic of nationalities, creating a neighbourhood characterized by its multicultural and kaleidoscopic nature. Some authors suggest that both its uniqueness and centrality in the city could be reasons for the neighbourhood's continuous observation and attraction (Subirats & Rius, 2008). Since its origin, El Raval has manifested a large immigrant component. Because that, tourism ought to pay especial attention to this characteristic. Recent and ongoing regeneration schemes (e.g. remodeling of streets, creation of new open spaces, development of modern cultural facilities such as museums or university faculties, etc.) have altered the social, environmental and economic characteristics of El Raval (Quaglieri & Scarnato, 2017). However, some of its streets remain little touched since the Middle Ages and the Industrial Revolution. The neighborhood's edgy mix of art, attitude, and street life attracts cosmopolitan crowds. El Raval's character is constantly defined and redefined by the people who call it home, and its locals celebrate their neighborhood's against-the-grain nature (Capel, 1997).

An interesting fact about tourism in Barcelona is the number of residents very vocally opposed to it. The perception of the problems it generates, such as gentrification and other social and economic negative outcomes driven by overtourism, have generated a social movement against tourism growth (in fact, in favour of tourism degrowth) (Amore et al., 2020; Koens et al., 2018; Milano et al., 2019). The framework of creative tourism, with part of its emphasis on the engagement of visitors and residents (Duxbury et al., 2021; Richards, 2020; Richards and Marques, 2012; Russo and Richards, 2016; Scherf, 2021), provides the methodology for this article to explore the relationship of visitors and residents in El Raval, as its tourists pursue ever more satisfying and relevant experiences, and its residents struggle without sufficient infrastructure. In this sense, Greg Richards proposes that creative tourists “not only visit places, they also make them, and the point of creative tourism should be to ensure that co-makership happens through an exchange of skills and knowledge with those who are visited” (Richards, 2011, p. 1246). We should remember here that creative tourism is generally perceived as a form of cultural tourism, but a type of tourism based on experiencing, participating and learning (for example, not only observing icons but also taking courses in icon painting at the destination) (Ihamäki, 2013), with tourists having an active role and participation in co-creating their experiences while on vacation (Tan et al., 2013). In fact, Richards and Raymond (2000) offered the first definition of creative tourism, which described the experience of tourists exercising their own creative potential by actively engaging with the social and cultural characteristics of the destinations they visit. Moreover, as Scherf (2021) has pointed out, “the tangible and intangible characteristics of place, and the experiential integration of the tourist with them, is the core of creative tourism. For the residents of these places, there is an opportunity to engage with visitors to offer place-based experiences” (p. 4).

Taking into account all this framework, plus the opportunity to re-envision the tourism industry in the wake of the pandemic's disastrous effect on it, we hypothesize that the promotion of creative tourism could be one of the possible ways to better integrate tourism in destinations that suffer overtourism, and that have experienced the appearance of social movements that fight against tourism growth, as well as to promote a type of tourism that is more sustainable, bringing added value to the destination.

Cities like Barcelona have bought in to the tenets of creative tourism. For example, in the city's Tourism Strategic Plan 2020, the co-constitutive relationship of tourism and the city is highlighted:

Far from being an outside phenomenon, tourism produces the city and, at the same time, the city shapes tourism's possibilities. Tourism is an inherent and constituent part of the current urban phenomenon. Tourist activities must not be seen as something foreign to the city, they are not "out there", but part of its day-to-day activities, intrinsic dynamics and even daily life. Then, tourists do not have to be considered passive players "in the city" but rather as visitors with rights and duties "of the city" (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017, p. 7).

Part of the city's tourism plan is to emphasize communication amongst tourism stakeholders, "to expand the destination narratives, making them more diverse, dynamic, responsible and shared, involving the resident population and visitors in the discovery of other realities, taking care to improve their experience." (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017, p. 34).

Given the city's wholesale adoption of the co-creation of place, it seems appropriate to use some of the criteria of creative tourism experiences to determine a baseline of engagement attitudes and behaviours of residents and visitors in El Raval, so that the city can assess the effectiveness of the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan's implementation. In particular, we were curious about how social media might affect this relationship. In other words: Could social media be a viable strategy to develop visitor-resident relationships? Despite the sea change social media has brought to promotion, decision-making, booking, and rating systems in the tourism industry, and the influx of User Generated Content, there are few published examples of visitor-resident co-placemaking using social media (Milne et al., 2016; Prebensen et al., 2017). As Zeng and Gerritsen's literature review points out, most of the social media research in tourism is focused on a marketing/managing approach (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). A smaller proportion of articles examine how prosumers—those who both provide and consume destinations—share their existential and authentic travel experiences with an online community, as opposed to with a local, destination community (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Despite the scholarly interest in resident-visitor collaborative placemaking, and the interest in tourism and media, there is little research about opportunities for social media to facilitate co-placemaking. Moreover, to marry creative tourism and El Raval could provide a different way of understanding the problems in the neighborhood and position the tourist not as a problematic actor, but as a beneficial one in the everyday life of people living in El Raval.

Places like El Raval must think about a different way to approach tourism. Creative tourism has emerged, in the city, as a new opportunity to face the challenge of a sustainable tourism industry. How can creative tourism help to articulate a shared space between residents and tourists? Tourists have become increasingly experiential, interested in learning about the culture, heritage and history of the destinations they visit. In fact, they are increasingly interested in knowing the realities and not the articulated images that a curated tourism can show them (Richards, 2020; Russo & Richards, 2016). But also, to create a sustainable tourism industry, satisfaction must be created among the residents, who should perceive a better integration of visitors to the local environment and culture. Accordingly, we formulated two key questions: Can social and cultural value be developed in a collaboration by visitors and residents? And what could the role of social media be in this process? These are, in fact, the key research questions of the present study.

2. El Raval: Past and Present

The neighborhood of El Raval has a long history that started more than 6,000 years ago, when it was inhabited by some rural populations (Gibaja, 2014). At that time the area was full of streams and ponds with a coastline very similar to that one that residents and visitors see today (Aisa & Vidal, 2006). In the second century, with the arrival of the Romans, the peasant population increased. The area became a space with orchards where wheat and wine vines provided the main food source for about 5,000 people, the inhabitants of Barcino, as the roman city of Barcelona was called (Venteo, 2010). There appeared some scattered constructions, the old domus that became, throughout time in Catalonia, the so-called masies (farmhouses) (Fabre et al., 1990). Barcino saw its first walls built in the fourth century, but they only covered a small space of what was the valley where the city was located, and El Raval area remained outside them, and so did not suffer much from the Arabic invasion in the eighth century, as there was little to loot, and because it was unhealthy, malarial, and unpleasant. However, Arabs left a mark that has been indelible over the years: the name Raval. In fact, raval is an arabic word (rabád) which means "outside walls".

Despite not being protected by walls, this area was gradually inhabited, first by ecclesiastical constructions, then small population centers around such constructions, such as Sant Pau del Camp, Sant Llúzer, etc. (Cirici, 1985). In the thirteenth century, the Catalan king Jaume I ordered the construction of the second wall around Barcelona; once again, El Raval was outside the wall, whose boundary was La Rambla ("dry stream") (Aisa & Vidal, 2006). Finally, between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, a new wall was constructed in the city and El Raval was included inside.

Residents in El Raval first settled in the western part of the current neighborhood, close to what we know now as Pelai Street, that in the Roman times already was an important avenue; from there, urban development progressed to the east, toward the sea (Cirici, 1985). But it was in the eighteenth century that the neighbourhood saw its first major population increase—by migration, a population pattern that still characterizes the neighborhood. With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, El Raval became the place where different factories were built. The neighborhood filled rapidly with

tenement blocks (for the workers coming from the countryside); textile mills powered by coal contributed to the unhealthiness of the neighbourhood. El Raval became one of the most densely-populated and foul areas of Europe. However, at this time, the walls around Barcelona were demolished, and in their wake came urban reform, new streets (some paved), and a sewage system (Venteo, 2010). That basic urban grid of El Raval still exists today. In the nineteenth century, El Raval life was divided into two major centers: on the one hand, the western and central area, with factories and workers. At the other, the eastern area, which concentrated the most marginal activities, for example nightlife, bars and prostitution; by the early twentieth century, El Raval became known as *Barri Xino* or Chinese Quarter (Villar, 1996), although there still was not Chinese or Asian population living there (that name was more related to its high density, cosmopolitanism and exotism, that referenced a popular conception of other Chinese quarters of the world).

The changes that arose in the city from the moment of the 1986 declaration of Barcelona as the 1992 Summer Olympic City were deep, and El Raval could not be left out. The neighborhood had been abandoned and marginalized, gangs ran rampant, and the neighborhood had a reputation as dangerous. The city developed two plans for the neighborhood, the "Del Seminari al Liceu" and the "Pla Central del Raval". Some of the ideas from those plans included, for example, redesigning part of the total surface area for social use, demolishing the most degraded dwellings, and rehabilitating the least degraded urban fabrics. All construction started from the west to move towards the east by the opening up of the *Rambla del Raval* as the new central avenue of the neighborhood, creating modern international-quality museums and institutions, like the Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) and the Center of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB), the *Filmoteca de Catalunya* (Catalonia's film library), and supporting art and culture in many spaces. It was expected that the whole transformation would change the face of the neighbourhood (Mart ínez, 2000; Quaglieri & Scarnato, 2017).

Today El Raval is a neighborhood that, thanks to its multiculturalism, cultural assets, bars and restaurants, *La Boqueria* market, and the charm of its streets, attracts many tourists and local visitors. However, it still has not been possible to totally eradicate prostitution, drugs, crime or dirt (Casanovas, 2003; Delgado, 2007). In addition, tourists have brought different problems, such as the 'botellón' (young people who drink alcohol until the wee hours of the morning on the street), the nocturnal noise, AirBnB proliferation, and the bad odors that cause constant denunciations from the neighbors.

This neighborhood is also experiencing gentrification processes determined by a regeneration policy aimed at urban redevelopment of space and increasing tourism pressure. If not controlled, this gentrification will lead to the expulsion of the longstanding residents who cannot afford the heightened prices, in favour of new social classes and new housing uses, such as the proliferation of tourism apartments (El Raval is currently one of the neighborhoods in Barcelona with the highest number of tourism apartments for rent) (Arias & Quaglieri, 2016; Lagonigro et al., 2020; Quaglieri & Scarnato, 2017). This can bring about negative effects like a difficult resident and tourist coexistence, also provoked by overtourism, creating tourismophobia or attitudes against tourism development, and even against the very presence of tourists in the neighbourhood. Indeed, this has been occurring in some areas of Barcelona since 2014, with El Raval being one of those areas (Blanco-Romero et al., 2018; Zerva et al., 2019).

The city of Barcelona has become, during the last three decades (especially from the celebration of the Olympic Games in 1992) a renowned international urban destination. During the last few years it has consolidated a top position among the most visited cities in Europe, reaching 10 million tourists annually in 2017 and 13.9 million in 2019 (Observatori del Turisme a Barcelona, 2020). Although many districts of the city have benefitted from that tourism development, some have also suffered negative impacts. In this regard, El Raval is the most serious example of a neighborhood that has experienced touristization, or excessive tourism pressure; the number of total tourism accommodation places (around 10,000) in the neighborhood is 11% of the total offer in the city (Porfido et al., 2019), while the population of El Raval represents only 2.9% of the overall city. In order to face that touristization process in several parts of the city, a pair of tourism strategic plans were approved during the last decade (2010 and 2017) by the city council, as well as a Special Urbanistic Plan for Tourism Accommodation (*Pla Especial Urban ític d'Allotjaments Tur ístics*, PEUAT), also approved in 2017, proposing measures for deconcentration and displacement of the tourism activity towards new urban areas (Donaire et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1 Survey Design

To begin gathering data on the research questions, a Likert-like survey about attitudes and behaviors regarding social media in building co-narratives was carried out. Respondents were asked demographic questions, questions about their attitudes toward either visitors or residents, and questions about their use of social media in connecting with the other. We also asked residents and visitors text-based questions about representative places within the neighborhood. Questions were based on the literature review and the identification of the relevant topics and research questions by the

research team. We did not control in any way the distribution or the responses—in this study we seek to test the waters and refine our questions. We recognize the limits of an uncontrolled survey; however, the responses do provide guidance to design a more exact instrument, ideally contained in a study that structurally involves both the city and neighborhood organizations, as well as other stakeholders that wish to see change.

3.2 Data Collection Tool and Method

The survey was distributed online to residents and visitors through February and March 2018. Announcements of the survey were distributed in English, Catalan, and Spanish via social networks, graduate students at university, posters, personal networks, and a student on-site for a few days. Announcements contained the Fluidsurvey website link containing the survey, available in English and Spanish. Respondents selected whether they were visitors or residents; the survey then branched.

4. Results

There were 209 completed responses; 32.5% were residents, and 68.5% were visitors. Residents respondents were evenly distributed by gender, while visitor respondents were 2/3 female, and 1/3 male. The first four questions asked visitors and residents about their beliefs and attitudes toward each other in El Raval.

The most important results are: 29.9% of the residents like meeting visitors, while 45.8% of visitors like meeting local residents. A difference of approximately 16 points indicates that visitors' attitudes are more open than residents'. One third (33.4%) of residents enjoy sharing their experiences with visitors, while more than half (55.7%) of visitors like learning about El Raval's residents. In this case the difference is higher than the previous one, more than 22 points. Moreover, a majority of El Raval's residents, 52.6%, enjoy telling visitors about the neighborhood's local culture, and 68.8% of visitors enjoy exploring daily life in El Raval (see Table 1). Once again, visitors aim to have a relationship with residents, but residents show themselves less keen. In conclusion, it could be said that visitors are more enthusiastic than residents about meeting people and having cultural exchange. However, the residents' desire to share stories about their everyday life in El Raval suggests that their pride in the neighborhood is also a valuable cultural asset.

Table 1. Survey results: residents and visitors' preferences

As a resident of El Raval, I enjoy...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Meeting visitors	17.5%	19.3%	33.3%	28.1%	1.8%
Sharing my experiences with visitors	15.8%	17.5%	33.3%	28.1%	5.3%
Telling visitors about El Raval's local culture	10.5%	14.0%	22.8%	42.1%	10.5%
As a visitor, when I visit El Raval I enjoy...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Meeting local residents	6.5%	7.5%	40.2%	35.5%	10.3%
Learning about El Raval from residents	6.6%	7.5%	30.2%	42.5%	13.2%
Exploring daily life in El Raval	1.9%	8.5%	20.8%	35.8%	33.0%

The next questions aimed to determine what residents think visitors believe, and vice-versa. Residents generally do not believe (52.8%) that visitors want to discover the everyday life of El Raval. Visitors, on the contrary, are more optimistic and 38.6% of them think that residents of El Raval like to share with them their daily life. As it can be appreciated, there is a sizable gap between visitors' desire to engage and residents' belief that visitors want to engage with the local population in El Raval. One more element to consider here is that more than half (53.5%) of residents strongly disagree that visitors want to learn about their culture, a number that contrasts with the 10% of visitors that believe that residents have no interest in showing their culture, while 47% of visitors do believe residents are interested (see Table 2).

Table 2. Survey results: residents and visitors' perceptions on each other group

As a resident of El Raval, I believe visitors want to...	Strongly				
	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Meet local residents	30.9%	23.6%	27.3%	16.4%	1.8%
Discover what daily life is like in El Raval	27.3%	25.5%	16.4%	23.6%	7.3%
Learn about Raval's local culture	32.1%	21.4%	21.4%	21.4%	3.6%

When interacting with local residents in El Raval, I believe they enjoy...	Strongly				
	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Connecting with me	4.0%	6.9%	52.5%	34.7%	2.0%
Sharing their stories about living in El Raval	3.0%	5.9%	52.5%	32.7%	5.9%
Showing me their local culture	3.0%	7.0%	43.0%	34.0%	13.0%

The next questions asked visitors and residents about their use of social media in El Raval. In general, El Raval residents are far more likely to use social media to share experiences with other residents (37%) or to learn from them (59.2%) than to share experiences and knowledge with visitors (20.4%) or to learn from them (22.2%). Regarding visitors, this group is more likely to use social media to share experiences with other visitors (76.5%), but they are interested to share experiences with residents too (47%) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Survey results: residents and visitors' opinions on the use of social media

Living in El Raval, I am likely to use social media to...	Definitely	Probably	Not	Probabl	Definitel
	Not	Not	Sure	y	y
Share my experiences with other residents	20.4%	27.8%	14.8%	22.2%	14.8%
Share my experiences with visitors	44.4%	25.9%	9.3%	16.7%	3.7%
Learn about the experiences of other residents	11.1%	18.5%	11.1%	40.7%	18.5%
Learn about the experiences of visitors	35.2%	24.1%	18.5%	18.5%	3.7%

When I visit El Raval, social media could help me to...	Definitely	Probably	Not	Probabl	Definitel
	Not	Not	Sure	y	y
Share my experiences with other visitors	2.0%	5.1%	16.3%	52.0%	24.5%
Share my experiences with residents	2.0%	17.3%	33.7%	38.8%	8.2%
Learn about the experiences of other visitors	2.0%	2.0%	12.2%	51.0%	32.7%
Learn about the experiences of residents	3.1%	6.1%	26.5%	44.9%	19.4%

Another question of the survey asked about the added value that social media could give to residents and visitors. The result was, 63.5% of residents think it is possible that connecting with their own community using social media would add value to their lives, but only 26.9% of them also think that sharing their experiences and knowledge with visitors would add value to their lives. Only three out of ten residents (30.7%) think that social media would allow them to develop relationships with visitors after their visit ends. As happened with previous questions, visitors' point of view is significantly different. They think that social media could help them not only to connect with other El Raval visitors (59.2%), but also to share their experience with residents (56.4%), and allow them to develop relationships with residents after their visit ends (52.7%) (see Table 4).

Table 4. Survey results: residents and visitors' opinions on the potential effects of using social media

As a resident, I think social media could help me add value to my life in El Raval by...					
	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Connecting with my own community	5.8%	15.4%	15.4%	48.1%	15.4%
Sharing my experiences and knowledge with visitors	21.2%	30.8%	21.2%	23.1%	3.8%
Learning about visitor experiences	30.8%	15.4%	19.2%	34.6%	0.0%
Allowing me to develop relationships with visitors after their visit ends	19.2%	30.8%	19.2%	28.8%	1.9%
As a visitor, I think social media could help me add value to my visit to El Raval by...					
	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Connecting with other El Raval visitors	2.2%	9.7%	29.0%	45.2%	14.0%
Sharing my experience with residents	2.1%	12.8%	28.7%	40.4%	16.0%
Learning from resident experiences	2.1%	6.4%	25.5%	48.9%	17.0%
Allowing me to develop relationships with residents after my visit ends	5.4%	10.8%	31.2%	38.7%	14.0%

Finally, the survey also asked to residents and visitors the most representative things or places in El Raval according to their own opinion. This allowed us to see the different perceptions that both groups had about a neighborhood that was seen and appreciated with different points of view, as one could expect.

Residents (see Figure 2) tend to identify very specific and concrete spots or places that are stops on their everyday life. They especially refer to specific streets (i.e. La Cera, Joaquín Costa, Hospital, Robadors, Sant Pau, etc.), squares (notably Plaça del Pedró and Plaça dels Àngels), and bars. However, undeniably the most mentioned place is the central avenue of the neighborhood, the so-called Rambla del Raval, and in second position—but notably less mentioned than the previous one—is the Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA).

Visitors (see Figure 3) show a single coincidence with residents: the identification of the Rambla del Raval avenue as the most representative point of the neighborhood. However, MACBA is represented at the same level as the Rambla del Raval. While residents mention specific bars, visitors cite generic “restaurants.” Interestingly, with some exception, bars are not mentioned among visitors. Visitors do not list actual street names, though they mention many times the “streets” as places to see and walk around. Visitors highlight another touristic hot spot: La Boqueria market, a traditional market that has become a must-see place for tourists, where the local population tends not to shop, avoiding the “Disneyfication” of the market and its heavy crowds (Crespi-Vallbona & Dimitrovski, 2017). Visitors identify generic shops, as well as—similar to residents—specific cultural spots such as Library (Biblioteca de Catalunya), Filmoteca de Catalunya, the public art piece “El gat del Raval” (El Raval’s cat) located in the Rambla del Raval. Visitors find skateboarding, a practice that has become ingrained in the square and streets around MACBA, representative of El Raval, while residents do not mention it. Skateboarding, and the noise of the board wheels, has become an issue of heightened tension between visitors and residents, resulting in a number of signs posted in English, asking skateboarders to please pick up their boards after 10:00 pm.



Figure 2. Most representative things or places in El Raval according to residents' opinion

Source: Prepared by the authors with data from survey



Figure 3. Most representative things or places in El Raval according to visitors' opinion

Source: Prepared by the authors with data from survey

5. Discussion and Conclusions

According to our research, the relationship of visitors and residents in El Raval can be summed up thus:

1. Residents are less willing to engage in the creative tourism enterprise than are visitors. Still, about an equal number of residents enjoy interacting with visitors as do not; over half of visitors enjoy engaging with residents, so there is room to work.
2. Residents underestimate the interest of visitors in connecting with them; visitors overestimate the interest of residents in connecting with them, suggesting that communication is an issue—communication is something that can be improved.
3. The numbers in the survey suggest there is an opportunity to use social media strategies to assist in bringing together residents and visitors to create shared narratives and mutual value.

If the city of Barcelona is genuinely interested in engaging in creative tourism, it must take advantage of these niches of opportunity to volatize its 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. Specifically, it must connect with the locals and engage them in co-creating place with visitors. Copenhagen's proclamation that it has moved toward "The End of Tourism (as we know it)" toward "Localhood" (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2017) provides the sort of results that would help Barcelona achieve its tourism vision in El Raval, and we believe social media could be of significant assistance. For example, the city could, like

Copenhagen:

1. Use social media tools to communicate with and educate residents about the benefits to them of connecting with visitors through creative tourism.

Ensure updated insights on interaction between visitors and locals. We will develop up-dated data and knowledge of visitor sentiment and interaction with locals, as well as the locals' sentiments and interaction with visitors in order to identify friction points (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2017).

2. Develop social media tools to connect visitors and residents. Many of course exist, primarily for accommodation, but foregrounding a cross-cultural element would promote co-creation of socio-cultural value by allowing residents and visitors to share their own stories, and create new ones together.

Work to enable shareable moments between locals and visitors. We will identify relevant initiatives to enable positive encounters between visitors and locals. Locals recognize the value of our visitors! When locals actively advocate for the value added by visitors to our urban diversity, cultural consumption and pride in our hometown. Visitors become active advocates for our destination! When we deliver a sense of localhood that allows visitors to integrate themselves in a unique local experience and return home as active recommenders of our destination to others (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2017).

Apart from those two previous activities linked to social media, we would also suggest other types of activities that could foster creative tourism in El Raval, such as the following:

3. Develop and offer specific programs of education for the residents of El Raval about the benefits to them of connecting with visitors through creative tourism (i.e. local community place-making)

4. Create a real-time forum for residents and visitors to meet, complementary to those described as social media.

5. Design and offer possible cross-cultural creative tourism events (related to different topics that fit well with creative tourism: gastronomy, intangible cultural heritage and diversity, photography, handicrafts and arts, etc.).

The need to find alternative and sustainable ways for tourism to be part of urban planning, policy, and everyday life in Barcelona is urgent; while it is positive that the city has adopted the concepts of creative tourism, it must also provide a context for its residents to participate in the initiative. Now that the pandemic has severely affected the tourism sector in global tourism cities like Barcelona, this is even more necessary. In this new context, there is an evidence that more sustainable types of tourism will have to be boosted everywhere (Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020; Romagosa, 2020), and creative tourism heads in this direction (Duxbury et al., 2021), creating a better place for both tourists and residents, as creativity can be "a means to improving the quality of life for all users of places" (Richards, 2020). Strategies to accomplish this should be developed and deployed, as our preliminary study of El Raval has shown. If and when such strategies are employed, it would be interesting, after several years, to run the survey again and compare the results to those presented in this study.

This study has pointed out different potentialities of future research that could be carried out in the field of creative tourism, in this case more focussing on the destination's co-placemaking by residents and visitors, and how creative tourism can be a driving force for the promotion of a more sustainable tourism in urban contexts. This approach could be developed in very diverse urban geographical settings all over the world.

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