

COMPETITIVENESS AND THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN THE GLOBAL ERA ON THE MUSEUMS OF BARCELONA CITY

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Abstract

Cultural tourism has recently been reaffirmed by UNWTO as an important element of international tourism consumption, representing more than 39% of tourist arrivals. Research in cultural tourism has also grown rapidly, especially in areas such as cultural consumption, cultural motivations and heritage conservation.

Linking tourism with heritage and culture benefits the local economy (Prieto, 2004). Thus, the cultural sphere has an increasing impact on the growth of tourism in a city, although it is necessary to safeguard both urban and cultural heritage and to know how to share it with visitors.

The city of Barcelona is no stranger to this reality of tourist consumption. Barcelona has a rich cultural offer of tangible and intangible heritage. Thus, the objective of this article deals with the impact of the increase in tourism in the city related to the extensive use of the museum offer of Barcelona. The second objective is articulated in the impact that the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have on cultural tourism in Barcelona.

A theoretical-empirical review of the improvement of tourism in the city of Barcelona was carried out, as well as its innovation and the growth that the museum fabric has undergone in recent years.

The document concludes with a series of suggestions for future research directions, and the growing impact that ICTs have on cultural tourism in Barcelona. Likewise, public and private museum institutions, together with the governing bodies, must be able to establish synergies for the benefit of the city and the visitors it receives.

Keywords: Barcelona, cultural tourism, competitiveness, digital age, ICT.

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LA COMPETITIVIDAD Y EL IMPACTO TURÍSTICO EN LA ERA GLOBAL EN LOS MUSEOS DE BARCELONA CIUDAD

Resumen

El turismo cultural ha sido reafirmado recientemente por la OMT como un elemento importante del consumo turístico internacional, lo que representa más del 39% de las llegadas de turistas. La investigación en turismo cultural también ha crecido rápidamente, especialmente en ámbitos como el consumo cultural, las motivaciones culturales y la conservación del patrimonio.

La vinculación del turismo con el patrimonio y la cultura beneficia a la economía local (Prieto, 2004). Así, el ámbito cultural cada vez tiene una mayor impronta en el crecimiento del turismo en una ciudad, si bien es necesario salvaguardar tanto el patrimonio urbano como el cultural y saber compartirlo con los visitantes.

La ciudad de Barcelona no es ajena a esta realidad de consumo turístico. Barcelona tiene una rica oferta cultural de patrimonio material e inmaterial. Así, el objetivo de este artículo versa alrededor del impacto del incremento turístico en la ciudad relacionado con el uso extensivo de la oferta museística de Barcelona. El segundo objetivo se articula en el impacto que tienen las nuevas Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TIC) en el turismo cultural de Barcelona.

Se realizó una revisión teórico-empírico de la mejora del turismo de la ciudad de Barcelona, así como su innovación y el crecimiento que han sufrido en los últimos años el tejido museístico.

El documento concluye con una serie de sugerencias para futuras direcciones de investigación, y la cada vez mayor impronta que tienen TIC en el turismo cultural de Barcelona. Así mismo, las Instituciones museísticas públicas y privadas junto a los órganos de gobierno, deben ser capaces de establecer sinergias en beneficio de la ciudad y de los visitantes que recibe.

Palabras Clave: Barcelona, turismo cultural, competitividad, era digital, TIC.

1. INTRODUCTION

In spite of the moments of uncertainty and instability experienced in 2017, the Catalan economy and, specifically, that of the city of Barcelona, has experienced constant growth (Barcelona Observatory, 2018). A reflection of this reality can be found in indicators such as GDP, which shows growth values above 3%, or the unemployment rate that is gradually decreasing (Observatori de Barcelona, 2018). Most of the indicators referred to show a city that despite adverse circumstances has managed to maintain a good competitive position in the economic and business context, not only nationally, but also internationally (Sarasa *et al.*, 2018).

Barcelona is among the top 25 metropolises in the world in terms of global competitiveness, and among the 15 cities with the best reputation, ahead of cities such as Madrid, London or Amsterdam (Observatori Barcelona, 2018). This fact has helped many foreign investors to become interested in and bet on the city, seeing it as a suitable place with a great business opportunity, which has contributed to placing it among the top 10 urban areas in the world (Islam-Begum, 2015). Undoubtedly, Barcelona stands out in many aspects, for its entrepreneurial spirit, for the business opportunities it offers, and above all for being a city with a good quality of life, prepared to face the challenges of the future (Pradel and Climent, 2018).

Over the years, the city of Barcelona has been infected with a great socio-economic dynamism, and where tourism has increased its preponderant role in the photography of the city, becoming one of its main economic motors (López Palomeque, 2009; López Palomeque, 2015). And Barcelona is an attractive city due to the existence of a rich and diverse cultural heritage, as well as a diverse and high-level leisure offer, where museums and exhibition centres continually struggle to position themselves (López Palomeque, 2015; Puiggrós, *et al.*, 2017). It is therefore not surprising that around 30 million tourists visit it every year, as it enjoys a good competitive position, both nationally and in Europe and beyond, favoured by having very good access infrastructures, the main ones being the airport and the port (Capel, 2010; Bové and Guim, 2013).

Barcelona has undergone notable changes over the last 20 years, evolving from a city with tourism to a tourist city. The 1992 Olympic Games and the creation of the Barcelona Tourism Consortium, which meant a change in the management model for the promotion and encouragement of tourism, favoured this change (Duro and Rodríguez, 2015). However, this growth has also favoured the development of new problems, giving way to situations of tourism-phobia that are opposed to the discourse of the synergistic relationship between tourism-city (Judd, 2003; Duro and Rodríguez, 2015).

This is why, as long as there are positive and negative impacts directly associated with tourism (Judd, 2003; Mason, 2015; Cocola, 2015) in relation to the city of Barcelona, they are clearly divergent from the always optimistic relationship that exists between the government of the city council (Table 1).

This research aims to analyse the relationship between the impact of cultural tourism (museums and exhibition centres) in the city of Barcelona. These spaces have ceased to be mere places of a historical/artistic nature aimed at a very select public, to become cultural, educational and entertainment centres that compete with all types of cultural offerings. This

circumstance has turned them into points of reference in the city, not only acclaimed by the neighbours themselves, but also by an important group of tourists.

Table 1. Impacts associated with tourism in the city of Barcelona

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Economic growth.	Overcrowding, concentration and tension in the uses of certain areas and spaces (Palou, 2006).
Transversal generation of wealth.	Loss of identity, trivialization and standardization of the city.
Creation of occupation.	Increase in uncivil behaviour and coexistence conflicts.
Cosmopolitan and multicultural city that favours innovation and creativity.	Discomfort and collateral effects of tourism for residents.
Barcelona Brand (Islam-Begum, 2015).	Negative perception of tourism by citizens: tourism-phobia.
Generation of business opportunities and attraction of talent (human capital).	Lack of connection between tourism agents and citizens.
Creation, improvement and sustainability of the cultural, leisure, services and infrastructure offer.	Poor redistribution of the wealth generated and poor-quality employment.
Involvement and active participation of citizens in the improvement and dynamization of services.	Intrusion and submerged economy.
Diversification and personalization of the offer.	Excessive administrative regulation.
Improved professionalisation of the sector and competitiveness.	Communication focused on negative aspects.
	Risk of not incorporating technological changes and betting on innovation.

Source: Own elaboration

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The consolidation of these visitors has transformed their dynamics, making it essential to have a specific management strategy and a market plan, even adapted to the current trend to reach and captivate its target audience and be more competitive (Buhalis, 2000). It is therefore essential to see these centres as an entity that, like a company, must know the needs of its target audience and offer them a wide enough range to use their service and consume it regularly. A clear bet of competitive advantage is found in the use of new technologies. Digital solutions have offered new opportunities to promote innovative practices, new forms of interaction with the public and the creation of value (Caro *et al.*, 2014).

This article is schematized as follows: in the following chapter a review is made on globalization and competitiveness in the tourism sector, which are those factors that imply an improvement of this international situation. Chapter 3 then specifies the situation of the city of Barcelona in a global competitive context. Chapter 4 shows which are the factors that allow Barcelona to generate a sustained growth of its competitive position at an international level. Once these concepts have been determined, the cultural factors of the city and its current reality are specified. Finally, the main conclusions drawn from this article are shown.

2. GLOBALISATION AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

Nowadays, tourism continues to position itself as one of the most important activities in the world economy, both in urban areas and in the rest of the territories (Garay and Cànovas, 2009). The intensification of this activity, especially after the II WW, has made it necessary to promote a series of changes in the organisational structures so that they can accommodate the majority of travellers who move around and manage everything that entails: cultural preservation, protection of the environment, citizen security, development, economic growth, creation and/or adaptation of infrastructures, among others (Benach and Tello, 2004; Borja, 2010; Duro and Rodríguez, 2015). The UNWTO (2019) estimates that during 2018 there were 1,400 million international tourist displacements and the previous year, in 2017, a total of 1,326 million. The figures for 2018 represent nine years of consecutive sustained growth, surpassing the forecast made in 2010 by the Organization, which gave the figure of 1,400 million for 2020. Therefore, given the growth trend, UNWTO forecasts an increase of 3-4% for 2019. A percentage that, it seems, will remain in trend until reaching in 2030 to 1,800 million tourist travellers in the world.

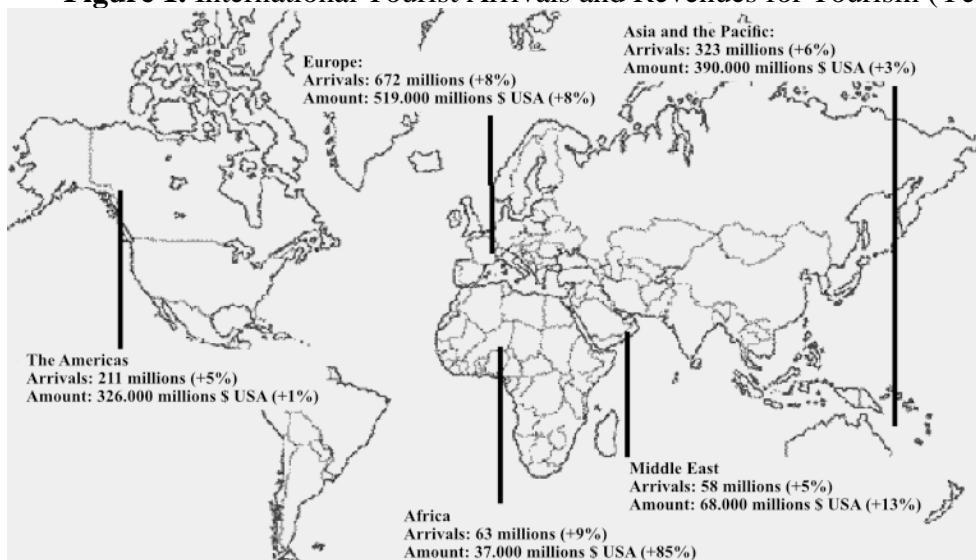
The increase in 2018, represented by 6%, is clearly above the growth of the world economy, positioned at 3.7%. This confirms that this sector is currently one of the most powerful engines in terms of growth and economic development globally. Within this panorama, Europe becomes the most visited region in the world. If we look at its figures, international tourist arrivals in 2018 were 713 million, 6% more than the previous year. The most dynamic area is Western Mediterranean Europe (Duro and Rodríguez, 2015).

Likewise, it is worth mentioning that the data point to urban and cultural tourism as the segment that has grown the most in recent years and is expected to grow even more. This circumstance makes it necessary to pose great challenges in the social, economic and

geographical spheres, especially for those large and popular cities, such as Barcelona (Judd, 2003; Garay and Cànovas, 2009; Duro and Rodríguez, 2015). Within this framework, Spain was placed as the second largest destination in the world, both in terms of international tourist arrivals and income, behind France by 2015 (Cuadrado-Roura and López-Morales, 2015).

Some factors that have contributed to this growth are defined by global economic growth, which has generated a strong demand for travel to virtually all emitting markets. As well as the diversification of markets and the increase of emerging destinations such as Russia or India (Prieto, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). It is worth noting the reduction in transport costs, leading to more affordable air travel, as a result of the stability of fuel prices and increased competition between companies with the incidence of *low cost*, increased routes, among others (Mariani and Baggio, 2012; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). Improved connections between destinations, whether by air, sea or land (Bensassi *et al.*, 2015). Improved development of new technologies and ease of use for adapting them to everyday life (Chandiwana and Pather, 2016; March and Ribera-Fumaz, 2016). Finally, facilities for issuing and/or reducing visas (Álvarez-Díaz and González-Gómez, 2016). As a result, international tourism revenues have also increased. In 2017 the increase was 4.9%, which is 1,340,000 million dollars in the US; and in 2018 the increase was 3.2%, which translates into 1,448,000 million dollars in the US (UNWTO, 2019). It is worth mentioning that as an export category on a global scale, tourism occupies the third position, behind chemicals and fuels, ahead of the automotive.

Figure 1. International Tourist Arrivals and Revenues for Tourism (Year 2017)



Source: OMT (2017)

Globally, the top three tourist markets are China (277.3 million), the United States (144.2 million) and finally Germany (94.2 million). Followed by countries such as the UK, France or Australia. Statistics also indicate that 4 out of 5 tourists travel within their own country and/or region. Thus, the following question arises: which ones really visit museums and exhibition

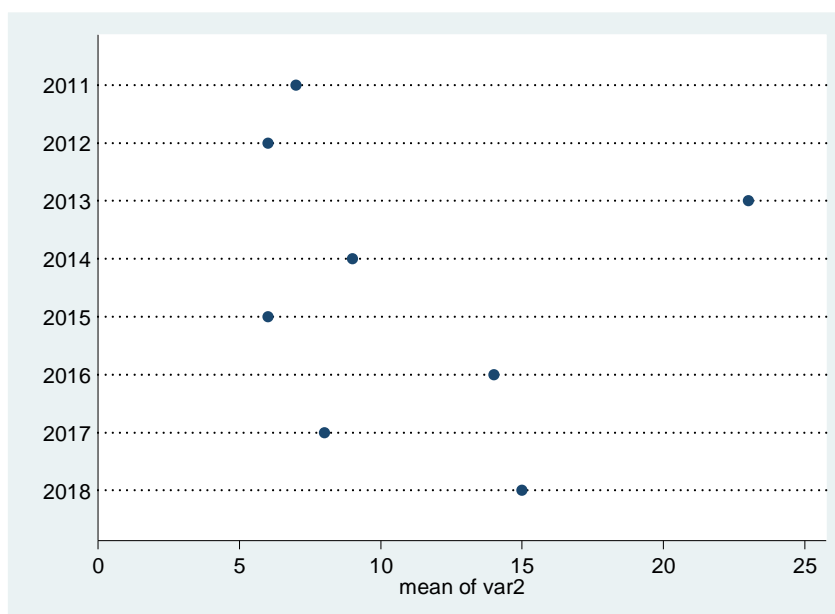
centres? In global figures it is difficult to determine, although it can be estimated that the 1,400 million tourists counted for the past 2018, approximately 55% moved for leisure purposes (2% more than in 2017). Therefore, the corresponding percentage would be much lower, taking the case of Spain as a reference.

The Ministry of Culture, in the Yearbook of Cultural Statistics (2018), offers us different indicators that link tourism and culture, constructed from two official statistics, the Resident Tourism Survey and the Tourist Expenditure Survey, developed by the National Statistics Institute. The results indicate that of the total number of leisure trips made in 2017, 12.5 million tourists, of which 12.8% do so mainly for cultural reasons. To these figures must be added the entries of international tourism that were 12.8 million, representing cultural motivation 18.1%. Tourism's expenditure associated with residents in Spain were 6,747.7 million euros, while expenditure associated with international travellers amounted to 13,923.6 million euros.

3. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS IN BARCELONA CITY

The attack in 2017 on Barcelona's Ramblas and all the tensions caused by the political situation in Catalonia, have to some extent marked economic activity in the city (Criado *et al.*, 2018). One of the sectors most affected has been tourism (Álvarez-Díaz *et al.*, 2019). Globally, Barcelona has suffered, and from the eighth position it occupied in 2017 it has descended to 15th in 2018 (City Receives Trak, 2018).

Figure 2. Positioning of Barcelona city



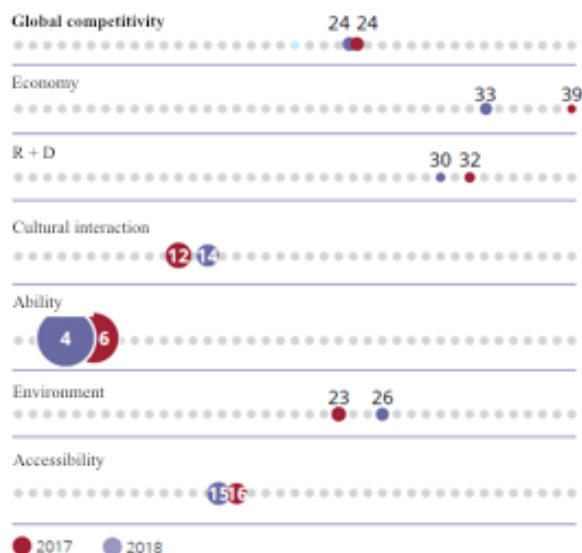
Source: *City Rep Tak. Reputation Institute* (2018).

On the other hand, Barcelona is the fifth in the world according to the *World's Best Cities 2019 of Resonance Consultancy*, which values the quality and reputation of the city from

different perspectives (place, product, programming, people, prosperity and promotion) all incorporating data from digital channels. A situation that has climbed positions with respect to 2018, when it was at number 8.

Despite the complex context, Barcelona's economy and labour market have maintained a notable dynamism, as reflected in GDP (+3% per year), the reduction in unemployment and the creation of new jobs and the increase in exports, among others. At international level, according to the *Global Power City Index* 2018 is among the top twenty-two urban areas in the world, that is among the cities with more global competitiveness, being the eleventh in Europe. The following table shows the score given to different aspects and the comparison between 2017 and 2018: economy, R&D, Cultural Interaction, Habitability, Environment and Accessibility (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Urban Competitiveness Categories. Positioning of Barcelona city during the years 2017 and 2018.



Source: *Global Power City Index 2018. Institute for Urban Strategies. The Mori Memorial Foundation.*

Barcelona is also the eighth most innovative city in Europe and the 30th in the world among 500 cities analysed, according to the *Innovation Cities Index 2018*. It is also the European city with the best strategy for promoting and attracting foreign investment, according to the report *FDI Cities and Regions of the Future 2018/19* (Mullan, 2018). This report also places Catalonia as the Southern European region with the best future prospects, and places Barcelona in the same category as the second city. In terms of foreign investment, the *Global Investment Monitor 2018* (UNCTAD, 2018) ranks Barcelona ninth among the world's main urban areas in attracting *greenfield* foreign investment projects and in investment projects in strategic functions.

Other reports such as the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* (GEM, 2019) show an entrepreneurial activity rate (TDA) for Catalonia of 8%, surpassing autonomous communities such as Madrid or the Balearic Islands; it even takes higher values than countries such as Sweden (7.3%) or Germany (5.3%). In terms of other activities, where it plays an important role, we find the organisation of international fairs and congresses, since 2017 Barcelona was positioned as a world leader, ahead of cities such as Vienna, Paris or London. A type of economic activity that enhances cultural consumption, such as attendance at activities, visits to museums and exhibition centres, among others.

The sum of all these scores makes Barcelona an internationally recognised city not only in economic terms, but also at other levels such as social, cultural and creative, technological, mobility, sustainability and accessibility, being a city with many opportunities and a high quality of life (Rottigni, 2018).

4. FACTORS OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN BARCELONA CITY

Barcelona is one of the urban destinations with more information on tourist activity with statistical data since 1989. Year after year, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Port and other institutions collect data that allow for a more or less reliable x-ray of the tourism received. According to Barcelona City Council, as mentioned in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan, it is estimated that Barcelona receives around 30 million visitors a year. Within these there are, on the one hand, those who stay (tourists) and, on the other, those who do not spend the night (hikers) (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017). Measuring and finding out which ones stay overnight is simpler, as we have the details of the hotels, hostels or apartments where they are staying. Therefore, in order to know those who do not stay overnight, it has been necessary to look for other ways, through the analysis of massive data. Hence the *IoT Big Data Tourism Management* initiative, coordinated by Eureca within the framework of the BigData CoE-Barcelona, and with the collaboration of GSMA and the Mobile World Capital Foundation.

The dynamism generated by tourism and related activities translates into an increase in economic vitality. An analysis of the economic impact of tourism in Barcelona shows that turnover in tourism is around 10 million euros. This figure represents 12% of the city's GDP and generates a large number of jobs, with very different positions. Barcelona occupies the 7th position in the ranking of the main European tourist cities 2018, after London, Paris, Istanbul, Antalya, Milan and Palma de Mallorca. As a result, new companies related to the tourism sector have been proliferating and others have reinvented themselves seeing new business opportunities in this sector.

The motivation that tourists have towards Barcelona, as an urban tourism destination, has been slightly modified in recent years, with leisure being the main reason for visiting, with figures exceeding 65%, leaving professional and personal motivations to a second and third level, when previously, for the 90's or towards 2000 the professional reason is what was above the rest. Barcelona, as a destination, has been able to position itself as a benchmark for urban tourism thanks, on the one hand, to the ability to exploit its offer and, on the other, to the ability to combine activities with the Mediterranean lifestyle. Barcelona ranks 8th in Europe and 31st internationally in terms of the total number of international and national tourists arriving in the city (*Top Cities Destination Ranking 2018 by Euromonitor International*).

As for the main entry routes for international tourism, the Prat Airport on the one hand and the Port of Barcelona on the other should be highlighted. As for the airport, although activity has moderated in recent years, it continues to be the second in Europe. According to the latest data from the Airport Traffic Report, in terms of the volume of people, it remains in the top 10 at European level. Intercontinental traffic (outside Europe) has grown the most in recent years. The Port, for its part, in terms of the traffic of origin and destination of cruises, remains as the main port of Europe and the Mediterranean and internationally remains among the top five.

But what do the surveys say about residents' perception of tourism? The urban transformation of homes and businesses due to the influence of tourism is causing residents to move more and more to other areas, be it Barcelona or other nearby towns. And it is the gentrification and other practices that end up damaging and penalizing the residents of the district. Another consequence of the tourism identified by the vast majority of those surveyed is the increase in prices, both in terms of the price of rent and the price of a hotel night, dinner

or coffee, for example. Regarding the latter fact, it is confirmed that since 2015, the year that marked the beginning of the economic recovery, there has been an increase in rental prices in Barcelona, both for offices and logistical land and housing. In 2018, the increase in the cost of living in the city was clearly observed, ranking 14th in the European ranking of *Mercer Human Resource Consulting*. On the contrary, the salary level continues to be situated next to medium-low if compared to other European cities, as has been reflected in the previous point.

5. MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITION SPACES IN BARCELONA

There has been much debate about what cultural tourism is, although museums and exhibition spaces remain within the cultural whole of a city (Kamal and Pramanik, 2015). In this sense, Barcelona has an important offer of museums (Miró, 2018).

5.1. Brief history of the museum city

In 1907 the Board of Museums of the City of Barcelona was created as the main managing body of the city's museums, with the support of the Commonwealth of Catalonia. This managing body established the basic lines that would make up a museum system that sought, on the one hand, to be a form of expression of Catalan identity and culture and, on the other, to become a place of knowledge and education at the service of citizens.

Unlike the great museums of the main European cities, which created their collections from real collections or even from policies of plundering works of art, the museums of Barcelona basically arose from the practice of private collecting. However, in terms of facilities, the network of museum infrastructures was closely linked to the holding of major international events. Clear examples are the *Parc de la Ciutadella* and the palace of Montjuïc resulting from the Universal Exhibitions of 1888 and 1929.

With the Civil War and the dictatorship of General Franco, the work of the Board of Museums was suspended. It did not disappear completely, but it did lose much of its meaning. Despite the restrictions, new museums emerged, such as the Marès Museum (1948) with the donation of the collector Frederic Marès and the construction of the Ethnological Museum (1949). Later, thanks to the donation of the artists themselves, the Picasso Museum (1963) and the Miró Foundation (1975) were also set up.

With the arrival of democracy (1978), as well as with the constitution of the first Town Councils, the nucleus of cultural policy in the city focused on the recovery of spaces, the structuring of the socio-cultural dimension (civic centres and neighbourhood recreational centres) and the recovery of lost traditions, such as the *Fiestas de la Mercè* with its correfocs and giants, the Carnival, the creation of the Grec Festival, etc.

Under this prism, the elaboration of the White Book of the Museums of the City of Barcelona in 1979 was approached as an integrating structure of the different museum facilities of the city in order to take advantage of the potential of the Catalan and Barcelona cultural heritage, not only to promote the Catalan historical memory, but also to give impulse to tourism, a sector that was beginning to consolidate itself as one of the basic pillars of the economy of the city. It was a time when there was a clear desire to generate change, but there was a notable

lack of resources in this temporal stratum. However, the ideas helped to sow the path that would later lead to the reform of the museum system (Puiggrós *et al.*, 2017).

From 1980 onwards, the *Generalitat* assumed responsibility for cultural policy. The first governments did not deploy a very clear museum policy and it was not until 1990 that the Law on Museums was approved and three years later, the Law on Cultural Heritage. At that time, most of Barcelona's infrastructure was in the hands of the City Council and the Provincial Council, which led to a genuine institutional confrontation; all the projects that were to strengthen the city's museums in order to turn Barcelona into a benchmark for Catalan culture in Europe and the Mediterranean were delayed or cancelled. In 1985, with the signing of the Cultural Pact between the Department of Culture of the *Generalitat*, the provincial councils (except Tarragona) and the municipalities, a basic framework was established to deploy the different heritage and museum policies, delimit responsibilities and activate conservation, research and dissemination programmes.

The Pact and Barcelona's candidacy for the 1992 Olympic Games created a climate of optimism that led to the formulation of the Museum Plan in 1985. This document would establish the municipal lines of action, establishing five major museum axes in urban morphology: (1) Montjuïc, (2) El Raval, (3) Barrio Gótico, (4) La Ribera and (5) La Ciudadela. This plan should also favour the appearance of new facilities, such as the *Museo de la Caja de Pensiones* in 1980 (now CosmoCaixa) and the *Centro Cultural de la Fundación "la Caixa"* in *Palau Macaya*.

In the context of this constant evolution, a period of agreements with the Government of the *Generalitat* began to generate the new Museums Act of 1990, which contemplated the creation of the *Junta de Museos de Cataluña*, as the heir to the *Junta de Museos de Barcelona*. The Museums and Cultural Heritage Management Centre, linked to the City Council, also came into operation. A few years later, the Institute of Culture of Barcelona (ICUB) was set up as an autonomous body for the management of cultural policy in the municipality, coinciding with the inauguration of the CCCB (1994) and the MACBA (1995).

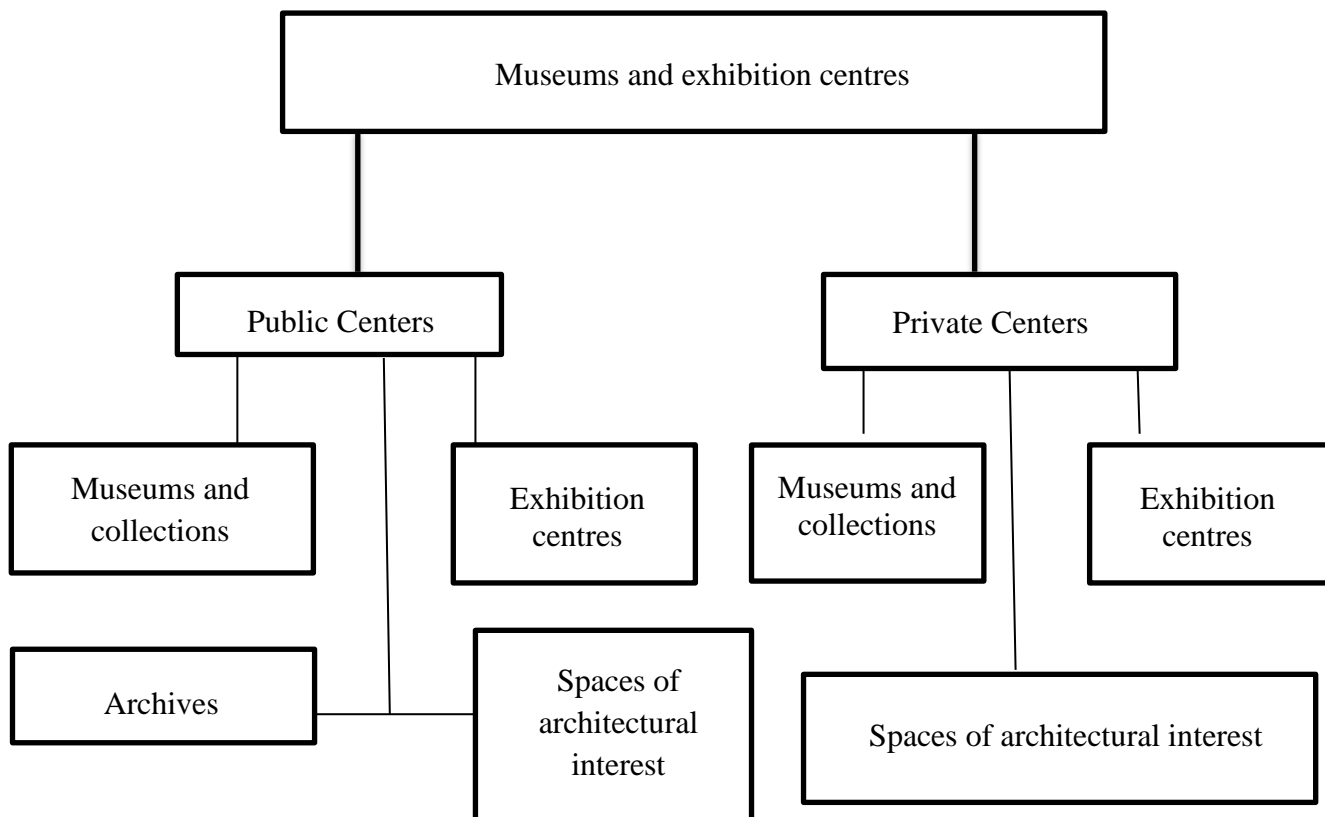
A new stage was thus opened, characterised by the succession of different cultural policies.

5.2. Barcelona's museums and exhibition centres today

Barcelona has an immense cultural heritage and is the only city in the world with eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, six of which are the work of Antoni Gaudí (*Sagrada Família*, *Güell Park*, Güell Palace, *Casa Vicens*, *Casa Milán* and *Casa Batlló*) and the other two by Ramón Montaner (Modernist Precinct of Sant Pau and *Palau de la Música Catalana*). At an international level it is also known for designing strategies and measures conceived to support a creative city model (with the art factories programme) and for creative entrepreneurship (Canódomo *Creative Industries Research Park*), to encourage the use of public space as a cultural space (for example, *Mercè Artes de Calle* or the Light Barcelona Festival). It also organises more than 170 cultural festivals each year, focusing on many different fields such as music, performing arts, literature, cinema, etc.

In terms of museums and exhibition spaces, the city offers a wide range, both private and public (Miró, 2018). The Institute of Culture of Barcelona has been in charge of classifying and organising the different cultural spaces. This management body also governs economic management. Thus, the museums and exhibition centres located in the city of Barcelona can be classified as can be seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Museums and exhibition centres in Barcelona



Source: Own elaboration

But what is the importance of Barcelona's museums? In the following Table 2 you can see the different museums of the city, as well as the volume of visitors in the years 2017 and 2018. It can be said that there is a decrease of approximately 5% in the average number of visitors from one year to the next in a large majority of museums.

Table 2. Visitors to museums and exhibition centres in Barcelona (2017-2018)

	Annual visits	
	2017	2018
Public Centers		
Municipal		
Montjuïc Castle	831.210	761.729
El Born. Centro de cultura y memoria	1.080.079	1.1190.762
Museum of Design	169.293	234.676
Museum of History (MUHBA)	816.989	926.184
Museum of Ethnology and World Cultures	61.016	61.420
Frederic Marès Museum	55.947	54.165
Real Monasterio de Santa Maria de Pedralbes	77.881	66.764
Espacio de Bomberos. Parque de prevención	19.177	17.994
Tibidabo Automaton Museum	105.527	134.028
Olympic and Sports Museum J.A. Samaranch	44.856	59.316
Barcelona Zoo	785.992	834.885
Photographic Archive	9.120	8.416
Historical Archive of the city of Barcelona	69.867	66.474
Fabra i Coats – Contemporary Art Center	16.169	11.292
La Capella	73.338	56.549
La Virreina Centro de Imagen	122.644	79.825
Patrimonial Spaces of the MUHBA	395.998	418.436
Güell Park	3.136.973	3.120.733
Pavilion Mies van der Rohe	85.993	99.494
Consortium with municipal presence		
Antoni Tàpies Foundation	43.582	54.858
Joan Miró Foundation	352.903	377.768
Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA)	331.694	259.679
Museum of Natural Sciences	238.848	237.171
Museum of Music	39.248	34.398
Maritime Museum (MMB)	301.836	292.907
National Museum of Art of Catalonia (MNAC)	891.346	866.271
Picasso Museum	978.483	1.046.190
Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB)	465.638	382.164
Modernist Precinct of Sant Pau	276.358	279.930
Public non-municipals		
Museum of Archaeology	40.003	35.028
Museum of the History of Catalonia	131.855	148.093
Artes Santa Mónica. Creativity Center	49.314	94.806
Robert Palace	976.276	865.776
Güell Palace	205.169	257.978
Private centers		

Can Framis. Vila Casas Foundation	15.770	13.100
CosmoCaixa	1.045.961	884.636
Foto Colectania Foundation	25.020	23.899
Fran Daurel Foundation	218.790	216.624
Suñol Foundation	6.521	8.972
Hash Marihuana Càñamo & Hemp Museum	15.653	13.100
L'Aquàrium	1.631.108	1.626.193
Chocolate Museum	132.758	140.787
F.C. Barcelona Museum	1.730.335	1.848.198
Museum of Modernism of Barcelona	19.985	30.852
Egyptian Museum of Barcelona	270.097	267.521
El Rey de la Magia	..	13.545
Geological Museum of the Seminary of Barcelona	..	3.860
CaixaForum	863.605	748.140
Mapfre Casa Garriga i Nogués Foundation	97.932	77.010
VolART i VolART2 Spaces. Vila Casas Foundation	..	29.117
Basilica of the Sagrada Familia	4.661.770	4.527.427
Casa Batlló	1.062.863	1.136.000
Casa Museo Gaudí	293.000	331.000
Casa Vicens	139.500	..
La Pedrera	934.524	972.508
Poble Espanyol	..	1.299.386
TOTAL	26.445.544	27.648.867

.. No available data

Source: *Institut de Cultura de Barcelona*. Own elaboration.

Table 3 below shows the volume of visitors in a historical forecast from 2014 to 2018, divided into four groups (municipal teams, consortiums or foundations, other public teams and private teams). It is possible to assess the total growth of visitors in all the infrastructures of the city of Barcelona between 2014 and 2017, with an average increase of approximately 4%, while the average evolution from 2017 to 2018 there is a clear decrease of 5%.

Table 3. Number of visitors to Museums and Exhibition Centres in Barcelona (2014-2018)

	Municipal Teams	Consortiums or foundations	Other public equipment	Private equipment	Annual total
2014	8.177.752	3.817.203	1.409.772	12.390.982	25.795.709
2015	8.214.562	3.652.952	1.330.147	13.172.393	26.370.709
2016	8.104.532	3.867.042	1.257.928	13.442.684	26.672.186
2017	8.203.142	3.831.336	1.401.681	14.212.708	27.648.867
2018	7.957.799	3.919.936	1.402.617	13.165.192	26.445.544

Source: *Institut de Cultura de Barcelona*.

5.3.Competitive factors

Competitive advantage and economic growth are promoted by two basic aspects: investment in productive factors (human capital, technology, organization, infrastructure, etc.) and the innovation or efficiency with which these factors are combined. The result, therefore, is determined according to the ability developed by museums and different exhibition centres, while they are exposed to the competition generated between them. Among these factors that have an imprint on the Museums and Exhibition Centres of Barcelona, three groups can be catalogued:

5.3.1. Innovation factors

Globalisation requires constant adaptation and renewal, and for this reason factors such as innovation are key to standing out competitively both on a small and large scale. In this sense, the knowledge and application of ICT in museums and exhibition centres substantially favours the competitive position of the centre that applies it, given that current audiences are, to a large extent, audiences with digital skills. ICTs help to improve the overall functioning of the museum, transform objects and space and provide new interactive opportunities for visitors.

Although we now see their use and application in a very standardised way, their implementation has been incorporated gradually, especially in those centres that were decades old. Newly created centres, on the other hand, have already included ICTs as the basis of their strategy from the outset. The Internet, the consolidation of Social Networks, the widespread use of *smartphones* and the incorporation of ICTs have completely transformed the relationship between museum and visitor, as a new channel has been created, a new way of disseminating information and bringing the museum closer to the public, of making it more visible and totally in keeping with the current situation.

Today, we find many initiatives in museums and exhibition centres that contemplate technology and digitalisation (3D reconstructions, augmented reality, digital collections, virtual visits, radio-guides that are activated when you reach a specific point, etc.). It is true that ICTs bring many benefits in museum management, but they can also have the opposite effect if they are not used properly and if there is no rigorous evaluation of their application, use and user perception. Let us not forget that the incorporation of ICT and the new digital media offered by museums have developed in parallel with the rest of the social spheres. There has been a technological evolution that has diversified the digital technological resources that, in the case of museums, can clearly become another attraction of the same, enhancing their prestige and competitiveness.

A closer look at the different museums and exhibition centres in the city shows that they have generally adapted to this new digital age or are in the process of adapting. Table 4 below shows some features that highlight this competition based on digital strategy, as well as some centres that exemplify it.

Table 4. Digital era in Barcelona's museums

Tool	
Web	Websites have become a letter of introduction. Having a dynamic and updated website, with a news section, with a blog where articles of interest are posted, gives life to the platform, but also seriousness and prestige to the institution. In this sense, a good example of management can be found on the website of the National Art Museum of Catalonia or the Sagrada Familia.
Virtual visit	The world is very big and we can not always visit the places we would like, include the virtual tour on the web, open the museum in the world and in a new type of visitor. The Picasso Museum or the MUHBA Heritage Spaces are already open to digital visitors.
Online collection	The Maritime Museum, the National Art Museum of Catalonia and the Design Museum are some of the museum centres that present a large part of their collections online. This is another way of getting to know the museum and its collections, both before and after the visit, it is a good way of adding value to the user and differentiating oneself.
Exhibitions	Permanent and temporary exhibitions, some better worked than others, but currently all have digital integration, from the most basic resource such as a video, to a tablet that allows you to see objects, reconstructed spaces, etc. in VR. The Björk Digital exhibition that took place in 2017 at the CCCB perfectly reflected the search for this differentiation through the content and expression of an exhibition in the museum. Another example can be found in the current <i>Meet Vincent VanGogh</i> exhibition, located in Puerto Viejo.

Source: Own elaboration

5.3.2. Infrastructure factors/Location

Barcelona is a city prepared to welcome the tourist/excursionist, both nationally and internationally, the various museums and exhibition centres of the city are equipped with an infrastructure worthy of the twenty-first century. And, on the other hand, there is the added value that most of the buildings that host these museums and centres have an outstanding historical-artistic component that in many cases becomes the indisputable claim, the container passes over the content and where the architect, in most cases, is an outstanding personality, a sure bet for the visitor. Antoni Gaudí, Domènech i Muntaner, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, Josep Lluís Sert, are some of the most outstanding names.

The location of these centres can also become a competitive advantage. At an international or national level, they are immersed in a city with many possibilities, equipped with a well-structured and accessible air, sea and land transport network. Once in the city, all the museums are very well communicated with public transport, offering the possibility of visiting different centres without moving from the same area. In some cases, the attraction centre may incite a visit to another centre that the tourist/hiker would not

have contemplated at the beginning due to lack of knowledge, lack of time, etc. The smaller centres must know how to take advantage of it and include the relevant strategies. We have an example with the Picasso Museum, which is one of the museums that attracts visitors to the city, and right in front of it, the Museum of World Cultures.

5.3.3. Human capital factors

Properly managed human capital can be key to competitive strategy. Human capital is a resource that must be taken care of, which is why it is very important to invest in training, development and incentives. Beyond an expense, it must be seen as a source of wealth. In the cultural sector, and specifically in the area of museums and exhibition centres, the context that has been developed at present is not the best.

On the one hand, we find ourselves with stable staff, being civil servants in the public sphere. In this case, the transparency required shows an important investment of economic resources in the human team, as well as very favourable conditions (working hours, holidays, flexibility, training, family conciliation, etc.). As for the private sector, although it is more private with which, everything remains more secret; if one notes, at a general level, the lack of personnel for the development of some tasks or support to the established ones, which in many occasions also generates climates of discontent, stress, etc. At least, within this group we find outstanding personalities within the field or subject of the museum, which brings great value and prestige to the institution, and therefore competitive advantage.

On the other hand, however, we have temporary or subcontracted staff. The reality for this group is quite different from that of permanent or stable staff. We can see a reflection of this in the different strikes promoted by the workers of some of the subcontracted companies for the management of customer service, the most recent cases being CiutArt and MagmaCultura by the MACBA, which have closed the museum in more than one day or forcing it to keep its doors open.

The precariousness of work and the consequent discontent of the workers is not positive for the museum or exhibition centre, both externally and internally. The image that emerges can be very damaging at a competitive level. Therefore, the same institutions must be able to attack this serious problem that currently affects them, as they may have prestigious staff to their team, but if they do not take care of all the bulk of staff whether own or external, instead of advantage, will have disadvantage and, consequently, the numbers of visitors can be altered.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Today, tourism is one of the most important activities of the world economy, which has forced organizational structures to adapt and evolve accordingly. It has also forced to establish the necessary regulations due to the 1,400 million tourist displacements last 2018 or the 1,326 million of the previous year.

In 2017 it was a complex year. The attacks on La Rambla and political instability were some of the events that shaken Barcelona's image as a tourist destination. However, the year ended with a positive balance and the city gradually regained the confidence of its visitors as

reflected in some of the statistics that have been shared. Likewise, the public opinion in different benchmark SSRs confirms this. Although the complex context, the economy and the labour market of Barcelona have maintained a remarkable dynamism, as reflected in the GDP (+ 3% per year), the reduction in unemployment and the creation of new jobs.

Barcelona is a city opened to visitors, with a wide range of leisure activities and an outstanding cultural heritage that makes it a prime destination, at the height of the digital era in which we find ourselves. Museums and exhibition centres within the framework between economy and tourism play an essential role, as they are a reflection of the city that hosts them and the ideal attraction to attract quality tourism (that is, much more than the party and fun that a Mediterranean beach destination represents for many).

ICTs are a revolution in the sector, and a whole world has opened up in the field of museums and exhibition centres. They offer a very wide range of solutions and are key to competitive strategy at all levels. However, it must be borne in mind that the use and effectiveness of this technology will depend on the capacity and disposition of the visitor, whether he or she is more or less immersed in the new technological era. Factors such as infrastructure/location and human capital are also key and decisive factors in the race to gain competitive advantage.

Thus, the city's museums and exhibition centres must be capable of exercising all their functions, with a strong social orientation that directs all their actions and with a clear commitment to technology, as a means of management and communication, both internally and externally.

The public and private museum institutions, together with the governing bodies, must be able to establish synergies and collaborations for the benefit of the city and all the visitors they receive. Likewise, do not limit yourself to the local level, but take advantage of globality to grow and collaborate with other institutions at the international level.

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