

Article

Challenges for European Tourist-City-Ports: Strategies for a Sustainable Coexistence in the Cruise Post-COVID Context

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Abstract: In recent years, cruise tourism has increased the negative effects caused by touristification in many European port cities. Despite this, these cities are in a great competition to be a destination, a tourist-port. Cruise tourism has come to stay, and a steady growth can be expected in a post-COVID-19 scenario, but at what cost? The tourist-port demands highly effective planning answers occurring simultaneously, and the global pandemic crisis provides a buffer of time to seek best practices, combining the expected economical (re)development with social, environmental, and cultural sustainability. This paper proposes five different strategies that contribute to finding a sustainable coexistence between tourist ports and their cities. To this end, trans-scalar strategies developed in previous research from different disciplines have been studied and categorized in a port-city context, in order to provide a holistic viewpoint on the measures carried out to maximize the benefits and limit the negative impacts of cruise tourism on cities.

Keywords: urban tourism; cruise tourism; local identity; touristification; urban planning; cruise ports; sustainable tourism; sustainable development; overtourism; responsible tourism; destination management



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1. Introduction: The Touristification Phenomenon in the Contemporary Port-City

Many European port cities have invested for decades in transforming their waterfronts and in revitalizing their historic centers, becoming extremely attractive cities that compete in a worldwide tourist destination ranking [1–3]. Some of them, for instance Venice or Barcelona, are home ports to numerous shipping companies. Others, such as Malaga, Lisbon, Genoa, or Naples, have focused their efforts on increasing cultural provision and have fought, and continue to fight, to be ports on the main cruise routes, aspiring to become home ports, a quality that greatly increases the local economy's benefit [4–7]. As Rosa et al. [6] explain in their research about the territorial imbalance of the cruising activity in the main Mediterranean port destinations, the construction of cruise terminals (CTs) has improved the value of the nearby historic centers [8], with the consequent upgrading of the destination's cultural resources [9]. Increasingly, marketing strategies based on attracting a higher number of cruise passengers are being carried out by these cities. In this regard, ever larger cruise ships docking and the incipient growth of low-cost tourism have led to these European port cities being invaded by mass-tourism that consequently menaces their identity and makes the phenomenon of touristification worse [10–12].

The World Tourism Organization [13] UNWTO, 2017, defines this tourist overcrowding or overtourism as “the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitor experiences in a negative way”. If overtourism is the impact of tourism amounting to perceiving the host society as an inert object passively subjected to exogenous factors of change, as Picart [14] explained, the touristification of a society proceeds from within, by blurring the

boundaries between the inside and the outside, between that which belongs to culture and that which pertains to tourism. As López-Gay, Cocola-Gant, and Russo [15] affirm, unlike gentrification—where the general population is replaced by a higher socio-economic status cohort [16]—in touristification, some authors note that tourism causes the displacement of residents, but social class is not necessarily upgrading [10–12]. In this regard, tourism is no longer an opportunity but a problem to the city. Currently, the negative impact of tourism development has been associated with terms such as tourism-phobia [17], overtourism [18], or overcrowding [19]. The historic city center has become encased in a ‘tourist bubble’—a concept used in 1972 by Cohen [20], and later by Judd [21], who defined it like a theme park, and more recently reviewed by Jaakson [22]—with a limited size and no local activity or character [21], which is usually insufficient to receive all visitors and much less to allow for the daily life of citizens.

Regarding overcrowding, the fact that the tourist season has been prolonged in recent years, to mitigate tourist overcrowding or to stimulate more economic opportunities, has further contributed to residents’ sense of touristification and the feeling that the local identity of the city is lost [23]. In addition, cruise tourism is seen as a problem in cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Lisbon, or Venice, as it causes large numbers of people to venture into the cities at set times, thus clogging up the city. It is not surprising that Phi [24] indicates Barcelona, Venice, and Dubrovnik as the most cited cities in overtourism studies, three clear examples of “tourist-ports”.

Some of these port-cities such as Venice, Barcelona, Lisbon, or Amsterdam have carried out policies to control touristification, such as the regulation of digital renting platforms, the increase of the tourist taxes, or the regulation of housing prices [19,25]. In addition to these concerns, port-cities need to include the specific issues of cruise tourism, with an impact on destinations that is being increasingly questioned [26]. It results in the overcrowding of heritage attractions, complex transport issues [27], and tourism infrastructures, limited cruiser-spending on land [28–30], and affects the lives of locals. Recent local communities’ reactions and expressions of an anti-cruising sentiment in Venice, Dubrovnik, or Santorini, for example, are, therefore, not a surprise in this context [26]. Many research works question the impact for the destination, both in terms of the economic benefits [31], as well as the social [32] and even environmental costs [33,34]. Local governments—for instance Barcelona, Amsterdam, Venice, or Dubrovnik, among others—are beginning to implement municipal policies that take into account these ephemeral visitors, while reconciling this type of tourism with the interests and needs of local residents. The debate is focused on the balance between social concerns and local economic importance, and the COVID-19 crisis provides a buffer of time to seek best practices [35,36], and a new opportunity to combine the expected economical (re)development with social, environmental, and cultural sustainability. As Dodds and Butler [19] state, in general, factors enabling the continued increase in tourist numbers in cities and elsewhere are far more powerful than forces wishing to limit or reduce traveling to affected communities. The correct management of responsible cruise tourism is, therefore, extremely necessary and highlights the relevance of this research paper.

Since cruise tourism has been the fastest growing segment of the leisure industry—doubling every ten years since 1990 and increasing disproportionately in developing countries—its local development impact and the way to manage it deserves particular attention [37,38]. In 2018, the rate of global cruise passenger growth was about +6.7% (relative to 2016) [39].

Undoubtedly, the parenthesis caused by COVID-19, in the growth of the cruise industry, provides the opportunity to set a research agenda so as to advance the study of a wide set of challenges that cruise lines and ports are facing and identify suitable approaches to mitigate them. In this context, this paper presents five strategies to guide the development of municipal policies for the sustainability management of touristification in port cities and to safeguard their historic urban landscape, functionality, and sociocultural identity. The aim of this article is to offer a holistic point of view and explore how these

strategies offer new management possibilities for existing and future tourist-city-ports. The structure of the paper is as follows: in the next section, the concept of 'tourist port' [40] is described, with its opportunities and threats in the current port cities. In the third section, methodology is explained. In the fourth, five key strategies for encouraging sustainable coexistence between tourism and residents are explained, by mitigating the negative effects and maximizing the benefits in the local economy and society. Lastly, discussion and conclusions applicable to other port city contexts are offered.

2. The Concept of 'Tourist Port': Opportunities and Threats

Over the last fifty years, port cities have undergone an enormous transformation. In the 1960s–1970s, the phenomenon of the waterfront appeared with the first American experiences of which much has been written [41–48]. Waterfront recovery began in the United States of America and was one of the central themes of urban renewal, changing historic ports from serving a productive industry to serving the unstoppable growth of the leisure industry.

According to Andrade [49], the waterfront has progressed since (1) the first experiences carried out in the 1960s and 1970s in America, where the docks concentrated tertiary uses of leisure and shopping; (2) through the first European experiences, in the 1980s, with the extension of the compact and multifunctional city onto the docks; (3) to hosting universal expositions and large events of the 1990s, where the capacity of port transformation went beyond the limits of urban marketing and became fully-fledged programs for changing a city's image [3,50]; (4) until reaching the new century, in continuity with the previous one, inasmuch as cities still compete with each other, but now they are concerned with differentiating themselves from the others through their own identity, maintaining in the old port as much port activity as it is possible to coexist, making port urban activities part of the daily life of the citizens [49].

With this consciousness of the port as an important element of the city's identity, many port cities have recently promoted tourism-related activities as another port activity compatible with the city [51]. The cruise industry belongs to both tourism and port activity [52]. These port cities have carried out major interventions both in the port and the city that provided them the necessary infrastructure and cultural attractiveness to be included in cruise routes. As a consequence, these cities assume the role of 'tourist ports' [40], the fifth stage in the evolution of waterfront [53].

In the course of this evolution, the direction predominantly sought by port-city integration was to attract residents back to their port. To achieve this, different policies were employed, such as providing local and global uses, extending the urban transport network, and combining port and urban uses, so that the port could again be part of residents' day-to-day life, as it was historically [54]. Today, in this fifth stage, the trend has changed direction again. Few residents accompany the numerous tourists' daily flock along the waterfront heading towards the historic city center [53].

The flow of cruise tourists strengthens the port-city connection, in that direction, as the historical center becomes part of the 'shore itinerary' for thousands of tourists in an instant [53], who cross the waterfront heading towards the historical center congesting it daily.

The cruise industry is one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding tourism subsectors [55], especially in the Mediterranean area, the third destination (see Table 1), with its great heritage cities that offer easily accessible and more attractive destinations for historical and cultural tourism [8,56–58]. Because cruise tourism has increased dramatically in these cities, its impact on local development deserves special attention. For this reason, over the last few years, the literature on the positive and negative impacts of cruise tourism in port cities has grown significantly [59–64].

Table 1. Global Report 2016, 2017, and 2018. Passenger volume by trade (K). Data: CLIA, 2019. Source: Authors.

	2016	2017	2018
Caribbean/Bahamas/Bermudas	10,135	10,695 (+6%)	11,335 (+6%)
Asia and China	3386	4005 (+18%)	4254 (+6%)
Central and western Med.	2920	2907 (+0%)	3068 (+6%)
Northern Europe	1419	1569 (+11%)	1731 (+10%)
Eastern Med.	1020	896 (−12%)	1027 (+15%)

The cruise market is transforming the cruise experience from a luxury product to a more widely available tourist experience, expanding the potential market for the cruise industry [65] and increasing consequently the number of tourists disembarking in these cities (see Table 2). This change in initial conditions can be broadly beneficial for a city, not only in economic terms [66–68], but in three dimensions [1]: the physical dimension—e.g., improving a city’s infrastructure such as the continuity of walks from the terminals to the historical center [68]; the functional dimension—tourist attractions and facilities such as the mix of uses in the terminals focused on residents that create synergies [69,70]; and the social dimension—generating new jobs and cultural activity [71]. However, there are increasingly more cities, especially in the Mediterranean basin [56], where it seems that this effort to reform the city and make it into a large and attractive cultural container is taking its toll, because of the emergence of touristification. There were gains in cultural capital and security in these cities, but these were offset by declining livability conditions for residents, and increased environmental costs, among others [63].

Table 2. Report 2018. Database: Macrotrends; EuroStat; MedCruise. Source: Authors.

City	Population (Metro Area)	Population (City Area)	Tourists	Cruise Passengers	% Cruise Pass./Tourist
Amsterdam	1,132,000	854,047	8,354,200	425,686	5.10%
Lisbon	2,927,000	517,802	7,620,805	577,603	7.58%
Venice	635,000	51,298	5,255,000	1,561,000	29.71%
Barcelona	5,494,000	1,620,182	7,016,600	3,041,963	43.35%
Dubrovnik	37,022	28,428	1,271,657	732,431	57.60%

Much has been written about the negative aspects of cruise tourism [45,63,65,72], mainly about its real economic impact on the city, pollution from ships, congestion, or danger to the architectural heritage. The cruise is a really complex tourism product, and its management is equally complicated [8], creating conflicts with the city and its inhabitants and providing less economic benefits to the local economy than other types of tourism or the residents themselves [32], because passengers tend to consume—sleep, eat, drink, and spend time—on board the cruise ship. Over the last few years, it has not been difficult to find 20,000 cruise passengers disembarking in unison. This fact, together with the incipient growth of low-cost tourism, has caused a real dynamic of substitution of the local for the global in historic centers, where services, amenities, and shops and their prices become oriented and conceived exclusively for the tourist, and not for residents, giving rise to the so-called ‘tourism gentrification’ [73] or ‘touristification’ [10–12].

While, on the one hand, it is true that the danger of tourism to the built heritage has been foreseen for almost twenty years [45], on the other hand, tourism does allow the renovation of abandoned buildings (although to be used as tourist accommodation), which were destined to disappear, and even helps to preserve culture [74]. Casariego and Guerra [75] and Law [76] refer to the value of tourism for improving a city’s image and fostering a stronger sense of identity.

Even so, it is essential to understand that a city's tourist interest is not only in its built heritage, but in its citizens, their customs, their food, their local culture, and the daily activity of the inhabitants in the urban space. As Brito [77] and Barrera [78] state, cultural tourism includes activities related to the experience of historical and cultural heritage, valuing, and promoting that culture's material and immaterial assets. Mass tourism is destroying this essence and converting the city into the scene of daily life that only exists far away in peripheral non-tourist urban areas. In this way, it could be said that what is really in danger is not the city but the life of the city.

Cruise ship operators choose their itineraries and select specific ports that provide positive experiences for their customers [79], so this massification of destinations as well as feelings of rejection among the inhabitants can result in negative experiences for visitors, causing business to shrink or even dry up altogether [80]. In addition, satisfied cruise passengers are more likely to return as tourists, to explore more closely the aspects that stood out most during their previous visit [80,81]. Therefore, since cruise tourism is here to stay, it is increasingly necessary to propose a series of policies that can maximize the benefits of cruise ship tourism while mitigating its negative impact, letting visitors and inhabitants coexist, which in turn allows for the long-term viability of both tourism and local activity.

3. Methods

Throughout history, port cities have maintained links with each other. In fact, all port-city regions have gone through similar processes at around the same period [82], responding to the same problem, normally arising from changes in maritime transport, by means of local solutions, which in turn have spread from one port to another [83]. This unique characteristic of the port city continues to persist today. Issues such as the growing size of cruise ships, mass tourism, and the phenomenon of waterfronts are common in Europe's historic port cities and very similar in port cities in general [84]. This particular condition of the port city allows us to investigate policies and scientific literature with the aim of categorizing and selecting interdisciplinary strategies that have been developed by several researchers in previous studies and subsequently applied by public-private agents in the most representative European port cities.

To face frontline challenges on the port-city touristification, new systematized policies are needed, and a classical method to prepare these policies is the transference of regional experiences addressing common goals. The problems characteristic of contemporariness do not allow for the existence of treated data; but the emergence to address it justifies to seek, discuss, and propose policy orientations.

As such, the article develops a methodology of policy observation in a group of selected cases of European port cities that face touristification, presenting in common a cultural profile and the management of historical heritage urban areas and monuments.

This systematization focus on the following type of policies and policy instruments:

- (i) International charts on tourism oriented towards sustainability and social responsibility;
- (ii) Recent urban and tourism policies developed in the selected case studies;
- (iii) Policy documents of local public entities in the selected case studies;
- (iv) Cruise tourism orientations developed by public-private agents jointly developed in the selected case studies; and
- (v) Orientations identified in the literature review.

The methodology considers two steps. Firstly, it presents a systematization of the observed policies, under the scope of the authors' experience on the subject, organizing them in a proposal of five strategies: the original contribution of the article, followed by the development and justification of each of the proposed strategies, in separated sub-sections.

This characteristic of port cities, the ability to share solutions to similar problems throughout history, justifies a case-specific qualitative research method [85] that allows for analytical generalization of contemporary undergoing policies and policy documents, yet not supported by a solid data basis.

The research method is empirical as it studies a set of contemporary phenomena linked to the tourism industry, in the context of European port cities, which can hardly be dissociated from the fact studied itself, i.e., the study of cruise tourism. The difficulty of carrying out such a broad comparative study has required the use of primary and secondary resources, both bibliographic and archival, on topics related to urban and cruise ship tourism. A cross-review of these documentary sources resulted in a preliminary selection of port cities affected by phenomena such as overtourism, touristification, or the anti-cruise social movement in the time frame of the research.

The article works on the systematization and analysis of the current state of strategies, plans, or policies aimed at tourism management in this selection of cases. To this end, it develops a set of studies that address two main topics: on the one hand, policies oriented to increasing the attractiveness of the destination for tourism; on the other hand, policies aimed at controlling or mitigating the adverse effects of cruise ship tourism on the destination. As a result of a comparative study, the port cities of Barcelona, Venice, Dubrovnik, Lisbon, and Amsterdam were selected as case studies to analyze their responsible tourism policies with the final objective of categorizing trans-scalar strategies (regional, metropolitan, urban, and architectural scale) aimed at limiting the negative impacts of the cruise industry on cities. In this regard, the research generates a framework of knowledge on the relationship between cruise tourism and port cities that allows us to scientifically analyze current strategies of these cases that offer new management possibilities for existing and future tourist-city-ports. This paper has looked to highlight the best practices currently in use in the specific context of tourist-city-ports in order to contribute to finding the necessary balance between tourist ports and their cities at different scales.

4. Strategies for Mitigating the Negative Effects of Cruise Tourism and Maximizing Its Benefits

The UNWTO [86] has given the full definition of sustainable tourism in order to tackle a variety of problems, such as ecological degradation, loss of cultural heritage, and economic dependence: tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities. Making tourism more sustainable means taking these impacts and needs into account in the planning, development, and operation of tourism.

The premise published in the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism [87] was later applied to cruise ship tourism by Klein [63], focusing mainly on natural destinations such as the Caribbean, where responsible tourism has three broad areas of concern: (1) tourism's environmental impact; (2) the equitable distribution of economic benefits to all segments of a tourist destination; and (3) the minimization of negative socio-cultural impacts.

As McCarthy [88] states, in order to maximize the net benefits of tourism development in port cities, possible conflicts between tourism and local development—such as heritage conservation, transport, and refuse collection services—must be carefully managed. Such conflicts must be considered in decision-making, which should also involve local communities. Cruise operators may be similarly compelled to invest in local sewage infrastructure, garbage collection, and clean-up of areas near the port. Such actions may lower social, economic, and environmental costs and may benefit cruise operators themselves in the long term by promoting a clean, vibrant, and friendly port experience for their passengers [63].

Applying these basic principles to the case of European port cities, with their strong cultural and heritage appeal, it is considered that to achieve responsible cruise tourism it is necessary to: (a) minimize negative impacts, especially at the social level, avoiding the touristification that historic centers are suffering; (b) promote a balanced distribution of economic benefits by involving local businesses in the process; (c) make positive contributions to heritage conservation; and (d) provide more enjoyable experiences for tourists by connecting them with the culture and daily life of locals. This means focusing on the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage and increasing participation by the local community. Most of the policies that different cities are now beginning to implement, such as the Plan Estratégico de Turismo 2020 for Barcelona [89], City Balance

Programme 2018–2022 for Amsterdam [90], or the Global Sustainable Tourism Council 2019 for Dubrovnik [91] are focused in one way or another on the points listed above for responsible cruise tourism (a–d). In general terms, these policies are based on strengthening local identity and the decongestion of traditional itineraries through trans-scalar strategies that involve both regional and metropolitan scale down to the single-building scope (see Figure 1).

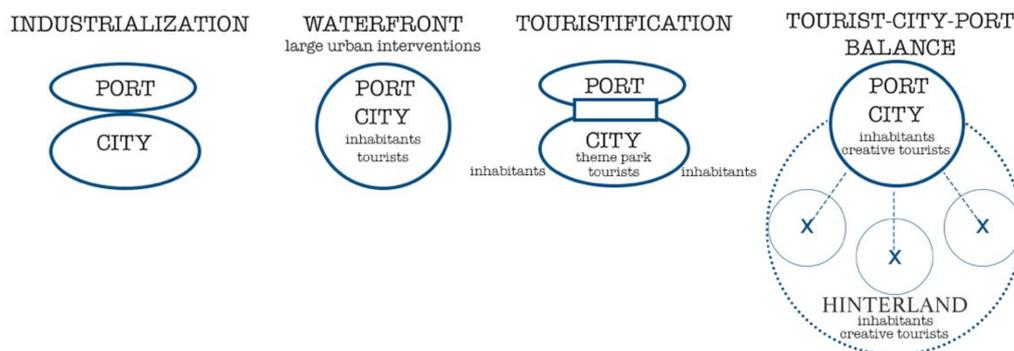


Figure 1. Port-city evolution from industrialization, the waterfront phenomenon, the current tourist port and tourist-city-port balance, the inhabitable and tourist-friendly city with the strategies proposed on both regional, metropolitan, urban, and architectural scale. Source: Authors.

Based on a detailed analysis of the policies that public–private agents jointly developed for each case study, five strategies are exposed as new opportunities for moving toward and maintaining responsible cruise tourism that allows for a fruitful coexistence between inhabitants and visitors: (1) understanding cruise passengers’ behavior and movements; (2) strengthening local identity; (3) regionalizing the cruise business; (4) dispersing visitors into different areas of the city; and (5) enhancing the value of the port’s industrial heritage. These strategies have already been implemented individually in some cities but applying several or all of them together would offer new possibilities for port cities by improving both the quality of the cruise tourism experience and the livability of the city for locals.

In some destination port-cities, such as Barcelona or Amsterdam—which have opted for proximity of cruise terminals to historic centers, together with their cultural attractions and pedestrianization policies—overcrowding has been caused by cruise passengers. There are other cases that—although the cruise terminal is far away, in the industrial port—are either consolidated destinations, such as Venice, or are very well connected, like Dubrovnik, so they also suffer from the problem of overcrowding. This overcrowding is not only a problem of density at a given time but has led to a transformation of the uses of these places, which become completely focused on the so-called visitor economy [92], causing the specialization of the real estate market as well as commerce and amenities; in short, killing off the local life of port cities.

In the same token, the tourism carrying capacity of a destination, defined by UNWTO [93] as “the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, and sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors’ satisfaction” is a key challenge for tourism developers and managers alike [23]. Tourism congestion is not only about the number of visitors but about the capacity to manage them [93].

Alternatives to address this problem can be translated into three different policies: the regulation of capacities by limiting the number of passengers disembarking [31]—as Amsterdam with the prevention of cruise ships from docking in the city center or Dubrovnik where the number of cruise ships is capped to two per day, with an aim to reduce overcrowding [91,94]; the destination management strategy (see Figure 2) that seeks to stabilize tourist numbers and to increase yield (value) through other mechanisms, such as new spending opportunities, such as Barcelona or Palermo [95,96]—strategies 1 and

2; or, as set out below, the promotion of alternative tourism resources accessible from the destination ports that allow to decongest the classic itineraries such as Barcelona (territorial scale), Amsterdam (metropolitan scale), or Lisbon (city center scale)—strategies 3, 4, and 5 (Table 3).

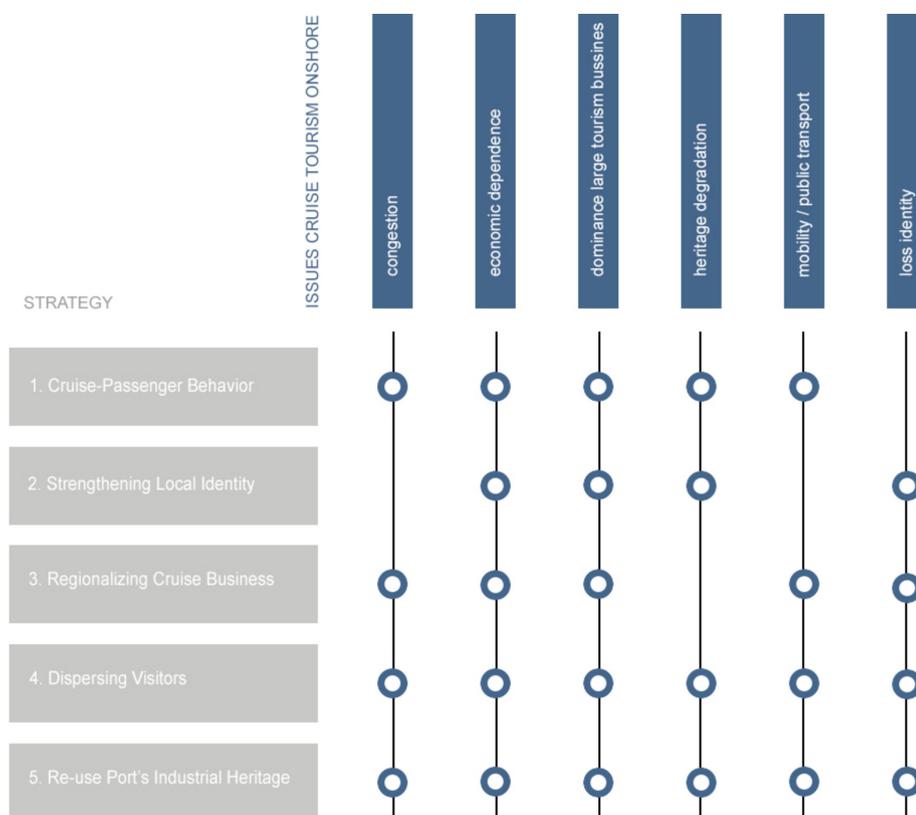


Figure 2. Distribution of specific issues of cruise tourism onshore according to strategies. Source: Authors.

Table 3. Strategies for a responsible and sustainable cruise tourism management.

Strategies	Definition	Cities
1. Cruise-Passenger Behavior	Studying and understanding movement patterns of cruise passengers in destinations is crucial for improvement and for coexistence with the daily activities of the city and its inhabitants.	Palermo [97,98], Kimberly (Australia) [99], Zihuatanejo (Mexico) [22], Amsterdam [90], Barcelona [89], Dubrovnik [98], Lisbon [80]
2. Strengthening Local Identity	To maintain the distinctive character of the area, enhancing local identity, local culture, valuing and protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage.	Barcelona [73,89], Venice [96], Amsterdam [90], Dubrovnik [91], Lisbon [100]
3. Regionalizing Cruise Business	The regionalization converts the tourist hinterland into a destination region, which is defined as a regional cultural network that allows the growth, expansion, and continuity of the port city.	Venice, Palermo, Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Genoa, Marseille, Naples [101] *, Lisbon [80]
4. Dispersing Visitors	To locate new points of interest in areas that are less frequented by tourists.	Barcelona [102], Amsterdam [90], Copenhagen and Bilbao [94], Lisbon [100]
5. Re-use Port's Industrial Heritage	Ports' industrial buildings are being taken over for local activities that adapt to new ways of living and working, and coexist perfectly with tourist and port activity, keeping alive the memory and identity of the port-city.	Barcelona [70], Venice [103], Amsterdam [104,105], Lisbon [100,106], Naples [107], Hamburg [108]

* This research [101] studies and demonstrates the possibility of being able to promote regionalization in these cities.

4.1. Understanding Cruise Passenger Behavior and Movements

First of all, before any action or inaction, observation is fundamental, which is why it is the main strategy and must be evaluated and considered exhaustively. Movement patterns are strongly influenced by the characteristics and logistics of each destination, so studying and understanding them is crucial for the improvement of and the coexistence with the daily activities of the city and its inhabitants.

In recent years, numerous research papers have studied the subject of spatio-temporal behavior and the movement patterns of cruise passengers in destinations [9,22,53,97–99]. This body of research is of great interest, not only for better serving the needs of visitors and meeting their expectations, but also for enabling coexistence with local people. This would allow them to continue their local everyday activities without being disrupted by large flows of cruise passengers disembarking in the city, and even to implement new activities on these itineraries, growing the benefits for the local economy. Destinations should seek to better understand their markets, including length of stay, spending, and/or activity intention, to identify profitable markets [95]. Several authors [109–112] affirm the need for increased management, especially of tourists within cities; pre-booking for most or all major attractions should be required, which would allow maximum numbers to be set and timing of visitation adjusted to avoid congestion. Cities could benefit enormously by improving their understanding of the behavior of cruise passengers at the destination and the factors that influence their movement patterns. Today, GPS technologies offer very powerful surveying instruments, which allow for the collection of high precision data on human mobility in a cost effective way, such as the study carried out in Palermo and Dubrovnik by De Cantis et al. [97,98]. These are key factors for planning the city, and new transport and itineraries, and managing the social, environmental, and cultural impact of cruise ship tourism on the city itself [97,113].

In the same token, effective spatial planning can help ensure that a development plan involving tourism-related activity includes a range of uses adequately integrated with the city and its hinterland. Local shops could even be located in tourism hotspots to increase visitor spending, contributing to the local economy. Balance is the main basis for this. The space to visit, its inhabitants, the scale of the place, and logistics are determining factors for controlling visitor numbers. As Oklevik et al. explain [95], such knowledge may help address overtourism conflicts while building tourism systems that are more economically, socially, and environmentally resilient. According to Papathanasis, referring to e-cruising [26], even though cruise operators, cruise ports, destination management companies, and other suppliers may well be using information technologies and data for their own internal processes, there is an array of benefits in cooperating and sharing information across the chain [26,56,114]. Indeed, one of the measures in the City in Balance Programme 2018–2022 of Amsterdam [90] is the use of technological interventions (Crowd Monitoring System Amsterdam—CMSA) for volume policy and managing traffic flows, routinely measuring numbers and density of pedestrians to combat overcrowding and increase the flow of pedestrians in certain places. Another example is the Plan de Movilidad Turística (PMT) that regulates tourist mobility in the city of Barcelona and its surroundings through monitoring mechanisms. The analysis of data is key to defining the goals of the Strategic Tourism Plan for the city [89].

4.2. Strengthening the Local Identity

At the city level, a primary strategy is to maintain the distinctive character of the area, enhancing local identity, local culture, and valuing and protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage [73,115,116]. It is fundamentally important that policies focus on the locals, on the population, on its wellbeing, and above all, support local businesses, and that all actions to promote tourism imply some physical and functional/social benefit for the inhabitants. This will lead to sustainable regeneration benefits for the city as a whole and involve the local population in such a way that the benefit has a direct impact on the local economy.

These measures, which focus on the local, on conserving and protecting it, enable a tourism business that is viable in the long term [73,96], as tourists will have a more enjoyable experience with less rejection, and it will help them to connect with local people and culture and their daily lives. Focusing on local identity allows the creation of a specific brand that encourages tourists to identify the destination and differentiate it as a memorable experience [117]. According to the study conducted by MacNeill and Wozniak [63], there are no local benefits from tourism carried out without the participation of destination communities. Cultural capital increases, but it becomes more difficult for residents to carry out their day-to-day activities and leads to greater environmental costs. Better investment and protection for the local community and environment are necessary to achieve cruise tourism that is sustainable at the local level.

The importance of the local community stars in the motto of City in Balance Programme 2018–2022 of Amsterdam [90] that affirms “A new equilibrium between quality of life and hospitality. Visitors are welcome, but residents come first”. Since 2011, when Barcelona received the Biosphere certification as a tourist destination committed to environmentally, socially, and economically responsible management, the brand Biosphere Barcelona has been the leitmotif of the city’s marketing and sustainability has become its key factor [89]. As the Ajuntament de Barcelona suggest, it is necessary to promote cultural initiatives and products linked to tangible and intangible heritage, history, and popular culture, in order to seek complicities between the expectations of the visitors, the functional diversification and enrichment of the city, and the decentralizing potential of a coherent and structured tourist offer [89].

In the case of Dubrovnik, one of the most important issues is to diversify the economy by investing in programming to grow diverse economic supply, focusing on sectors that would connect authentic local products and services to the tourism value chain, and creating a common brand for local products and services, widening the Authentic Croatian Souvenirs program [91]

The City Council of Venice is actively promoting sustainable tourism with projects such as the Detourism campaign [118], run by the City of Venice, which promotes slow and sustainable tourism encouraging travelers to go beyond the usual tourist sights, stumble upon unique experiences. It suggests authentic experiences, out-of-the-ordinary places and itineraries, not only in the city center of Venice but also in other islands and metropolitan areas.

4.3. Regionalizing the Cruise Business

One of the measures aimed at promoting alternative tourist resources accessible from the ports of destination is by regionalizing the cruise business [56,119]. The study carried out by Perea-Medina, Rosa-Jiménez, and Andrade [101] confirms the potential for regionalizing the main Mediterranean cruise destinations on the basis of tourist resources in their area of influence and their accessibility. This would require the development of a sustainable model of tourist mobility, beyond the tour operators’ excursions, opting for public transport complemented by tourist bicycles as a key strategy. In this way, the regionalization converts the tourist hinterland into a destination region. The destination region is defined as a regional cultural network which allows the growth, expansion, and continuity of the port city [120]—although it is necessary to improve the integration amid the port, the port city, and the tourist hinterland [6,102]. As Perea-Medina et al. [101] suggest, it is necessary to promote the use of public transport to visit the tourist resources of the region among cruise companies, on one hand, as an alternative to the overcrowding of certain port cities, and, on the other hand, as a means of diversifying the offer, expanding it into segments of cruise tourists, particularly users familiar with new technologies and/or environmentally friendly tourists. The cruise passenger has evolved towards more diverse types, the elderly tourist in search of a tourist complex is mixed with very different ones, among which young people with little time are found, who want to visit a large number of cities in a very limited period.

As in previous plans, the main focus of the Plan Estratégico de Turismo (Strategic Tourism Plan) for Barcelona [89] is to extend the territorial dimension of the tourist destination by diversifying its centers of attraction and strengthening mobility. In the same token, Venice is committed to the regionalization of tourism through the Detourism project [115], which offers visits to the Lagoon Islands. However, it is necessary to take into account that the presence of tourists also transforms the territory, amplifies its qualities and defects, and, at the same time, generates problems related to overcrowding, especially in fragile urban environments that are not prepared to receive large volumes of visitors. Consequently, in these cases, it is always necessary to carefully assess the effects of the territorial sprawl strategy of tourism activity [89].

4.4. *Dispersing Visitors into Different Areas of the City*

Among the alternative tourist resources to be promoted, another option to regionalization, or complementary to it, is to locate new points of interest in the city itself. This can be achieved by planning ahead or opening tourism attractions—whether cultural, historic, or for events—in areas that are less frequented by tourists [94]. One of the most significant of these actions is the “Neighborhood × Neighborhood” strategy carried out by NYC & Company. This initiative was designed to highlight the diversity New York City has to offer, to support local businesses, and encourage visitors to explore areas outside traditional tourist destinations in the five districts, which in turn generates economic activity in these neighborhoods.

In Amsterdam [90], there is collaboration on a national level and within the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (AMA) to attract visitors to the less well-known parts of the city or to go elsewhere, in addition to dispersing cultural programs and events geographically. This lessens the burden on the well-known crowded spots and enables developing neighborhoods and other regions to benefit from these economic opportunities. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of a dispersal policy has its limits, because the hotspots continue to attract large crowds of people.

Venice with the Detourism project [118] proposes ‘sustainable itineraries’ such as ‘A Greener Venice’ or ‘eat like a local’ that move away from the hotspots.

Another example of this strategy is the one carried out in Barcelona [102], where it is proposed to expand the tourist offering beyond the city’s historic centers, helping to strengthen the identity of each neighborhood with activities very different from each other, revitalizing the local economy by conserving and enhancing both the built and cultural heritage. The value of memory of each neighborhood’s tradition gives the tourist a unique experience, because the tourist becomes a visitor, walking and interacting with the local features, with the authentic city, and its inhabitants.

As in regionalization, the organization of public transport is very important, not only the direct connection to the cruise terminal, but also the connection from the historic center to those focal points of tourist attraction. There are many cities such as Lisbon, that, in addition to the multimodal ticket for public transport, raise the tourist card where the free entrance to museums is added to the transport card, encouraging the use of public transport by tourists and facilitating access to different neighborhoods of the city, always reinforcing the service at peak times to avoid the collapse of public transport for local passengers.

The Danish capital Copenhagen and Bilbao in Spain are models for using urban design as a means of regeneration while at the same time fostering tourism development [94].

As Pearce [121] explains, time spent in a destination area is arguably the single most influential criterion shaping tourist behavior because it can directly constrain or expand the activities that can be experienced. Information is crucial when it comes to a very strict schedule. Companies, together with local authorities, must provide maps with suggested walking routes or public transport. The use of public transport allows interaction with the locals, the tourist moving away from the concept of a tourist bubble towards the explorer tourist [22].

4.5. *The Port's Industrial Heritage: New Opportunities for Old Places*

Then again, port cities are now engaged in a post-crisis economy with no scope for the large-scale urban interventions we have seen in this type of location in the recent past. Currently, new forms of intervention are emerging, especially in old industrial cities, becoming more participative: the so-called bottom-up urbanism. In different cities, industrial buildings that are embedded in the urban fabric, but that were laying unused, are being taken over for local activities, keeping alive the memory of the urban activity in the area. These are low-cost interventions in existing spaces and structures, with realistic expectations, offering local solutions to the challenges of urban planning. This is an approach to neighborhood building that uses short-term, low-cost, controlled-scale interventions, and policies to catalyze long-term change [122].

Given the industrial past of these endangered port-cities, where it is common to find these old, disused industrial buildings, challenge and opportunity are coming together at just the right moment.

Accordingly, new forms of intervention can enhance local identity, protect the port's industrial heritage, and counteract the destructive effect of gentrification (on inhabitants and local activities) that today's touristification phenomenon is causing in these cities.

These interventions include not only the recovery of these buildings, many of which would have a long wait for any major urban regeneration interventions, but also the life between them, the public space. Life between buildings becomes richer, more stimulating, and more rewarding than any architect's combination of ideas [123]. This values a port-city's identity and makes it more human by means of particular low-budget, short-term actions, in the context of touristification. It is society itself that recovers these old buildings with alternative uses that adapt to new ways of living and working and coexist perfectly with tourist and port activity. They keep the essence of the city alive through the activities of its inhabitants, with a logic about reusing existing structures, to prevent ports from becoming non-places and their cities from becoming theme parks. Examples of these interventions (see Figure 3) are the LX-Factory, in Lisbon [100,106], the NDSM, in Amsterdam [104,105], and many others where local creative activity has become the focus of tourist attraction or even the Arsenal of Venice that hosts the Biennale [103]. However, if, to these actions the port activity is added, such as old harbor markets, with much of the building in disuse, which can be reactivated with fish markets, restaurants of local fresh products, such as the Sidney Fish Market, or soon, the Barcelona Fish Market, it is the tourism itself that resurrects and encourages traditional local activity [124]. One more time, the organization of public transport is very important to connect these buildings to the historic center, central station, cruise terminal, and so on (see Figure 3).

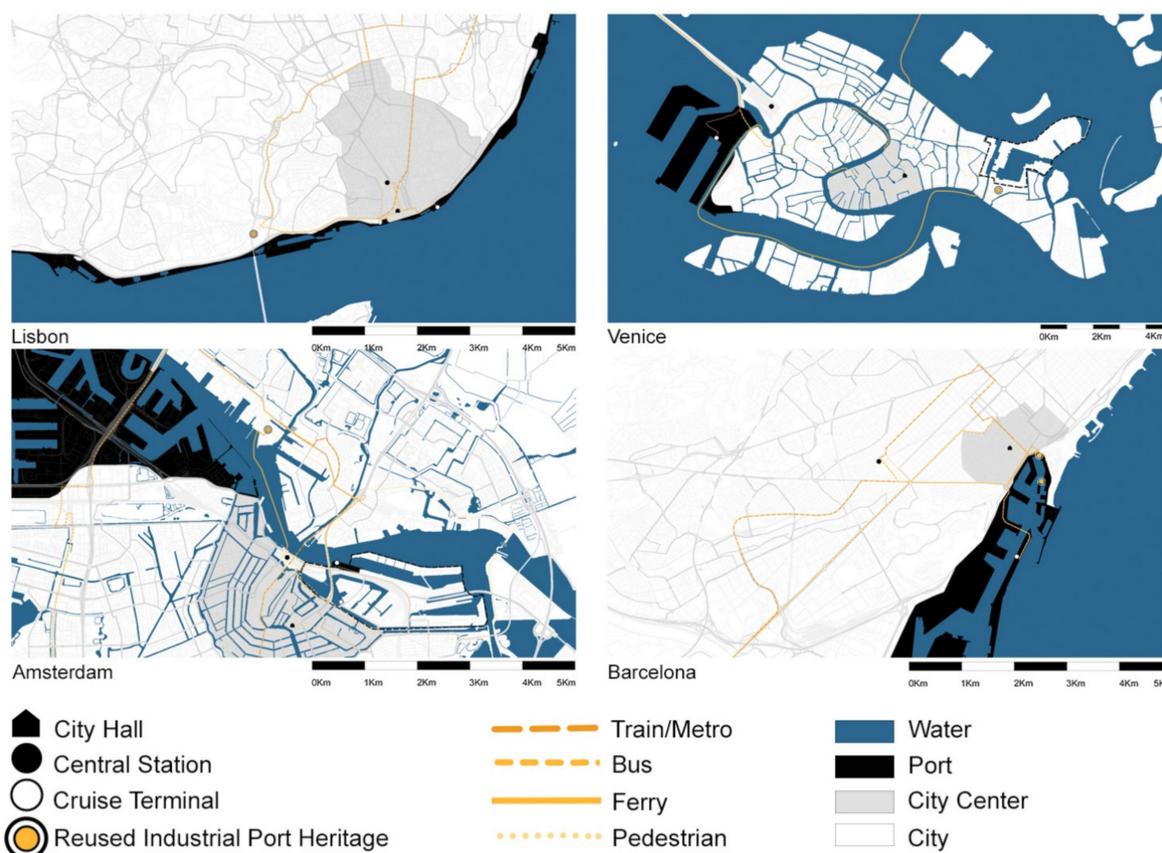


Figure 3. Maps of Strategy 5: Lisbon (LX-Factory), Venice (Arsenal), Amsterdam (NDSM), and Barcelona (FishMarket and Palau de Mar) and public transport connection with central station, airport, cruise terminal, and City Hall. Source: Authors.

As a summary of this study, Table 4 shows the strategies proposed at different scales, by cities, with the bibliographic references of each one to facilitate access to them.

Table 4. Strategies for a responsible cruise tourism studied in cities.

City/Strategy	1. Cruise Passenger Movement	2. Local Identity	3. Regionalizing	4. Dispersing	5. Heritage
Barcelona	[80]	[73]	[56,80,89,101]	[89,102]	[124]
Venice		[96]	[101]	[118]	[103]
Dubrovnik	[97,98,125]	[91]	[91,101]		
Amsterdam	[106]	[126]	[90]	[90]	[104,105]
Lisbon	[80]	[100]	[80]	[100]	[100,106]
Others	Malaga, Valencia [80] Palermo [97,98], Tarragona [127]	Bilbao [128]	Hong Kong [129]	Hong Kong [129]	Naples [107], Hamburg [108]
References	[9,22,26,53,56,95–99,109–114,126]	[63,73,96,106–108,126,128]	[6,56,80,101,102,119,129]	[22,94,100,102,121,129]	[100,103–108,122–124]

5. Discussion

The sustainable relationship between cruise industry and tourist-city-port is in the frontline of contemporary urban policies. Increasingly, marketing strategies based on attracting a higher number of cruise passengers have been carried out by port cities. However, some port cities are already implementing policies to achieve responsible tourism and recover urban life that has already been affected by the phenomenon of touristification. Mass tourism is converting the city into the scene of daily life that only exists far away in peripheral non-tourist urban areas. In this way, it could be said that what is really in danger is not the city but the life of the city. Therefore, since cruise tourism is here to stay, it is increasingly necessary to propose a series of policies that can maximize the benefits of

cruise ship tourism while mitigating its negative impact, letting visitors and inhabitants coexist, which in turn allows for the long-term viability of both tourism and local activity. Tourism congestion is not only about the number of visitors but about the capacity to manage them [93]. The correct management of responsible cruise tourism is, therefore, extremely necessary and highlights the relevance of this research paper.

In this way, an updated view of the most outstanding characteristics of cruise tourism has been provided to contextualize the analysis of the literature and policies of responsible tourism for strategy development in the future tourist-city-ports. This study is key so that port cities can establish these policies and control the call of tourists so that tourism increases the benefits in the city and improves urban life, its activity.

Use the impact of tourism in a positive way, reinforcing the identity of the place and local industries, instead of blurring it.

There is no doubt that tourism is an important economic activity of port-cities and might be beneficial for the destination and the local economy through a controlled and enriching social impact, if managed correctly and in a manner that is respectful of the tangible and intangible heritage of the destination. Sustainable tourism is capable of reactivating the city, not through globalization, but through the enhancement of local activity, tradition, and tangible and intangible heritage. In this way, both can coexist in balance between the primary needs of the citizen and the demands of the tourists, that is a guarantee of long-term activity, since a satisfied cruiser spends more during onshore visits [80,122]. In addition, satisfied cruisers are more likely to return as tourists, to further explore the touristic highlights visited during the onshore tour [80,81].

As the Official Tourism Website of the City of Venice [118] affirms, a sustainable approach to tourism benefits both the city and its visitors. Visitors benefit from a sustainable approach to tourism through better links with local communities, a high-quality tourism experience, and a natural and built environment that is cared for. The touristification phenomenon is imposing new development patterns on the chosen destinations that tend towards globalized landscapes, with the consequent loss of identity. Cities understand the need to face this, and the COVID-19 crisis 'buffer of time' provides an opportunity to improve local political orientations and to better compatibilize the desired future economical (re)development with the objectives of social, environmental, and cultural sustainability.

European port cities threatened by the touristification phenomenon must act before they lose their true identity, before all their inhabitants move away, before they become theme parks with no local activity. In order to achieve this balance between inhabitants and visitors, based on the premise set out in the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism [87], five strategies, partly applied by the main destinations, are proposed, based mainly on: (1) understanding cruise passengers' patterns of movement; (2) promoting and protecting local identity, by enhancing existing spaces and local activity, both in the (3) hinterland, (4) different neighborhoods, and in the (5) port-city interface itself, the flow of cruise passengers can be dispersed away from the traditional itinerary to offer new possibilities for reducing negative impacts and increasing the benefits of cruise tourism to the local community, allowing inhabitants and visitors to live together.

These interventions at different scales will enable us to humanize the port city, so that: (a) the inhabitants can continue to live in historic centers, these being the scenarios of their real, everyday lives; (b) ports can form part of their inhabitants' daily life, recovering their identity by enhancing tangible and intangible heritage; and, moreover, (c) cultural, contemplative tourism can evolve into a creative, more enriching, and less destructive activity.

The innovation in these strategies lies in using existing resources and the daily citizens' activity, until now often abandoned or forgotten, to protect cities' identity, increase the benefit for the local economy by extending the scope beyond traditional routes, and ensure harmonious coexistence with tourism. As Milano [130] affirms "(T)he causes and consequences of over-tourism require bottom-up technical and political solutions that seeks harmony between the economic imperative, and the social, cultural, and ecological

inheritances of people and places" [17]. These initiatives focus on finding a set of key spatial principles, synergies between programs, and principles for collaborative organization between local authorities, participating companies, and the local population, all with the intention of working together to regulate and plan sustainable tourism development [131–135]. To summarize, this will preserve the identity of these cities beyond its monuments, through local activities making them more genuine and different, and achieving a better coexistence between inhabitants, visitors, and their activities.

The regulation and organization of tourist and cruise flows would be a key step towards achieving inhabitable, tourist-friendly cities [96,136]. Even persuading tourists to visit less crowded sites or cities has been the most common suggestion, as Dodds and Butler [19] state, proposing, for example, that visitors in Venice do not go to see the San Marco Square and in Barcelona visitors should disregard La Rambla; not visiting the iconic sites and attractions [137], however, is unrealistic as such attractions are too well known to be forgotten or ignored. Nevertheless, in recent years, the cruise market is transforming the cruise experience from a luxury product to a more widely available tourist experience, increasing the number of tourists disembarking in these cities as well as its diversity, among which are young tourists attracted by the creative industry and more alternative areas.

Hence, for the tourist activity to remain, it is necessary to be very respectful of the destination since the experience of the visitors depends on the aptitude of the inhabitants. As such, it is necessary to find a balance to enable visitors and residents to live together to maintain and even maximize the benefits of the cherished tourism in their cities.

Finally, the 'anti-tourism' situation across Europe is becoming a rapidly evolving phenomenon with significant policy and practice implications; as Seraphin et al. affirm [138], it provides evidence that sustainability in tourism is something that has yet to be achieved. The number of policies on the matter is growing rapidly, therefore, to further advance the debate on the impact of cruise tourism on the local community. In order to find the balance between visitors and residents, it is crucial that local governments, port authorities, and shipping companies have knowledge about them, because they are the ones that can and should apply certain strategies of conciliation, coexistence, and mutual benefit. To guarantee the sustainable development of a port-city under a touristification process is a very difficult task. The process requires a collaborative strategy between all the involved agents, working together to plan and manage the development of tourism, but also to defend the interests of local inhabitants and to reduce the community's concerns. Management and planning operating in isolation are unable to satisfactorily address tourism-related tensions [139]. Collective efforts would benefit both, improving the welfare of citizens and tourists by ensuring long-term continuity of both local activity and cruise tourism.

6. Conclusions

The article identifies some practical recommendations to address touristification in contemporary port cities. As observed, as cities have revitalized their waterfronts and historic centers in the last decades, becoming more competitive in the worldwide cruise tourism destination ranking, the negative impacts of this phenomenon arise. Signs became evident in several sectors: overcrowding, price inflation and gentrification on local housing and commerce, pressure on facilities, transport systems, and public space, among others. As such, the first recommendation is to act as soon as anti-tourism and anti-cruising sentiments start to emerge in society; the sooner the phenomenon is dealt with, the less it might grow, and the more effective policies become. How to approach this problem? How to compatibilize economic development with the safeguard of local identity and the feeling of local communities that tourism, and particularly cruise-tourism, is part of their model of development and not an aggressive element to their way of living? The article proposes five strategies that, locally adapted to each port-city's specific characteristics, can support local policies: (1) understanding cruise passengers' behavior and movements; (2) strengthening local identity; (3) regionalizing the cruise business; (4) dispersing visitors into different areas of the city; and (5) enhancing the value of the port's industrial heritage.

These systematized strategies to address touristification in cruise-tourism port cities are, in fact, a coordinated pack of recommended actions that become available to public authorities and economic agents.

The reflections on different impacts and benefits of tourism in the tourist-city-port context, the diverse scales of action (regional, metropolitan, urban, and architectural), and the presented case studies and literature review provide initial insights into the role of holistic research on port-city responsible tourism from a comparative perspective based on the analysis of complex patterns and multiple scale strategies. Further quantitative research is however necessary to properly understand the potential of such strategies, particularly the data of the monitorization of the urban policies implemented to face touristification. The outcome of these strategies is difficult to quantify with the COVID parenthesis, but an objective analysis is essential and will ensure an improvement in the quality of results. Furthermore, the issues of carbon, transport, and climate change which have not been addressed in this paper—such as the Policy Strategies for the Mitigation of GHG Emissions caused by the Mass-Tourism Mobility in Coastal Areas [27], the model of ecological system security developed by Lu et al. [140] or the importance of carbon effects of tourist modal choices [34]—need to be included in future studies in order to provide well-rounded results in terms of climate change issues in the tourism policy making.

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