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Overtourism Challenges and Strategies for Cultural  
Heritage Sites: A Case Study of the UNESCO Sites of  
Rome and Regensburg

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the impact of overtourism on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Rome and Regensburg. The objective is to propose sustainable solutions and strategies that balance the growth of tourism with the preservation of cultural heritage and the well-being of local communities. Qualitative research and case study analysis will be employed to examine the specific challenges faced by these cities due to overtourism and to identify strategies for mitigating its impact. By examining visitor management strategies and sustainable tourism initiatives implemented in other cities, such as Dubrovnik and Amsterdam, the thesis develops a comprehensive catalogue of solutions tailored to the needs of Rome and Regensburg. The study employs the Tourism Area Life Cycle Model and empirical data to evaluate the current extent of overtourism in both cities and proposes recommendations for more effective tourism management while safeguarding cultural assets for future generations. Although the phenomenon of overtourism is a relatively new area of research within the field of tourism, it has attracted increasing attention since 2017. Despite the growing body of literature on this topic, research on long-term solutions and management strategies remains limited. This thesis aims to address this gap by providing actionable insights and strategies for heritage sites facing the challenges of overtourism.

## **Extended Summary in Italian**

Sfide e strategie dell'overtourism per i siti del patrimonio culturale: Un case study dei siti UNESCO di Roma e Ratisbona

La crescente popolarità del turismo culturale a livello globale ha esercitato una notevole pressione sui siti del patrimonio mondiale dell'UNESCO, dove l'afflusso di visitatori spesso porta a un turismo eccessivo che minaccia sia la conservazione del patrimonio culturale, sia la qualità della vita delle comunità locali. Questa tesi esamina gli impatti specifici dell'overtourism su due importanti città patrimonio dell'umanità: Roma, una metropoli italiana con monumenti culturali di fama mondiale, e Ratisbona, una città tedesca più piccola ma storicamente significativa. Entrambe le città sono casi unici in termini di condizioni urbane, gestione del turismo e impatto dell'overtourism sul loro patrimonio culturale. L'obiettivo di questa tesi è, in primo luogo, analizzare come l'overtourism influisca sulle dimensioni culturali, sociali ed economiche di Roma e Ratisbona. In secondo luogo vengono proposte strategie sostenibili e attuabili che concilino la crescita del turismo con la conservazione del patrimonio culturale e il benessere della popolazione locale. La ricerca si basa su metodi qualitativi, tra cui studi di caso dettagliati nelle due città. A questi si aggiungono dati empirici, come il numero di visitatori e le analisi delle politiche locali, per comprendere appieno la portata del problema dell'overtourism in ogni luogo. Una componente importante dello studio è l'applicazione del modello TALC (Tourism Area Life Cycle) di Richard Butler, utilizzato per valutare l'attuale fase di sviluppo del turismo in entrambe le città.

Per sviluppare strategie risolutive contro l'overtourism, il lavoro si basa su esempi di gestione turistica efficace di altre città europee, che si trovano ad affrontare problemi simili. Analizzando questi casi di studio europei, viene compilato un catalogo completo di strategie per Roma e Ratisbona.

Sebbene il campo di ricerca sull'overtourism si sia notevolmente ampliato negli ultimi anni, soprattutto a partire dal 2017, sono ancora pochi i lavori che si concentrano su soluzioni sostenibili e a lungo termine, adatte alle città storico-culturali. Il presente lavoro contribuisce a colmare questa lacuna fornendo approfondimenti teorici e soluzioni pratiche che possono essere applicate ai siti del patrimonio culturale di tutto il mondo. Combinando casi di studio approfonditi con strategie di gestione del turismo più ampie, fornisce un'idea di come le destinazioni sotto pressione possano raggiungere un equilibrio tra la crescita del turismo e la conservazione della loro identità culturale unica.

## 1. Introduction

Overtourism has rapidly become a buzzword considering the increasing global awareness and the number of reports about the alarming effects of tourism at European tourist destinations. The wave of protests that occurred during the summer months of this year serves to highlight the increasing tensions between the local population and the influx of visitors that has resulted in these cities becoming overcrowded. The recent instance in July of water gun attacks on tourists in Barcelona is illustrative of the numerous demonstrations and attacks that have been directed towards tourists.<sup>1</sup> Popular tourist destinations seem to feel increasingly under pressure by the uncontrolled influx of visitors, which lead to some places introduce harsh measures. In Barcelona, for example, the government has announced a complete ban on short-term rentals until 2028. Likewise, in Rome, the city is facing the challenge to protect their cultural heritage from the load of tourists by introducing entrance fees for so far public spaces, including the Pantheon in 2023 and now even a fee for the Trevi Fountain is under consideration.

The phenomenon of overtourism in cultural heritage destinations has emerged as a significant concern, offering an intriguing area of investigation with considerable potential for scholarly inquiry. In order to contextualise the thesis, a discussion of the existing literature will be presented, and the significance of the research will be identified. Moreover, the approach and methodology of the thesis will be examined in advance of outlining its structure.

### 1.1 State of the Art

The phenomenon of overtourism has gained significant attention in recent years, with a noticeable surge in publications discussing its consequences since 2017. While the exact origin of the term is difficult to pinpoint, Harold Goodwin, one of the most renowned scholars in overtourism studies, suggests that the term first emerged on Twitter in 2012 as #overtourism.<sup>2</sup> According to Goodwin, the concept is relatively self-explanatory, implying the excessive number of tourists overwhelming a destination. However, other academics, such as Alessandro Capocchi, argue that overtourism is still in its early stages of development as a field of study, making it difficult to define with precision.<sup>3</sup> Despite the term's relatively recent introduction into academic discourse, there is already a substantial body of literature that attempts to define overtourism and analyse its impacts on tourist destinations. Many of these studies focus on the social, environmental, and economic consequences of overtourism, particularly in high-profile locations like Venice and Barcelona. However, while the

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Guy, 'Barcelona Anti-Tourism Protesters Fire Water Pistols at Visitors', CNN, 8 July 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/08/travel/barcelona-tourism-protests-scli-intl/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Goodwin, 'Overtourism: Causes, Symptoms and Treatment', *Tourismus Wissen*, April 2019, 110.

<sup>3</sup> Alessandro Capocchi et al., 'Overtourism: A Literature Review to Assess Implications and Future Perspectives', *Sustainability* 11, no. 12 (2019): 6, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123303>.

causes and effects of overtourism are well-documented, research on potential solutions remains comparatively limited. One of the most comprehensive discussions on overtourism comes from Séraphin, Gladkikh, and Thanh, who analyse overtourism's causes, consequences, and propose various strategies to address the issue.<sup>4</sup> Their work emphasizes the importance of improving destination management and promoting overtourism education. Although these goals are critical, they often lack the specificity needed for practical implementation. Moreover, much of the existing literature, including this publication, tends to focus on famous overtourism hotspots, neglecting the issue's impact on cultural heritage sites and cities, which present a unique set of challenges due to the fragile nature of their historical and cultural assets. A significant gap in the current research landscape is the limited investigation of overtourism in heritage sites. While heritage sites are among the most affected by the negative impacts of overtourism, particularly in terms of conservation and sustainability, there is still a need for further research on how these cities can manage the influx of visitors without jeopardising the integrity of their heritage. The objective of this thesis is to address this gap in knowledge by focusing on two case studies: the UNESCO World Heritage cities of Rome and Regensburg. The thesis examines the specific challenges faced by these heritage cities and presents a comprehensive analysis of other heritage sites. This thesis will move beyond existing literature by developing a detailed catalogue of strategies for addressing the specific needs of cultural heritage sites. The catalogue will offer more precise and actionable solutions than the existing literature, which often lacks sufficient detail. The catalogue will assess the effectiveness of existing strategies, such as entrance fees and visitor management systems, while proposing more comprehensive, long-term solutions that balance tourism promotion and heritage preservation. By examining both large urban centres like Rome and smaller heritage sites like Regensburg, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced and practical understanding of how overtourism can be sustainably managed in cultural heritage contexts.

## **1.2 Significance of the Research Aim**

But how and when did get cities and their cultural heritage under this much pressure from overtourism? This is one of the questions that will be discussed in this thesis, with the aim of identifying the challenges posed by overtourism and the strategies that can be found and have been successfully implemented to mitigate the negative effects of overtourism. The phenomenon of overtourism has become a significant challenge for cultural heritage sites, particularly in Europe, where urban centres are confronted with the dual objective of safeguarding their historical assets and accommodating the influx of mass tourism. The designation of UNESCO World Heritage Sites is

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<sup>4</sup> Hugues Séraphin, Tatiana Gladkikh, and Tan Vo Thanh, eds., *Overtourism: Causes, Implications and Solutions* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42458-9>.

intended to safeguard and celebrate human achievement. However, these sites are now facing the unintended consequence of becoming magnets for excessive visitor numbers. This influx of visitors presents a number of challenges, including the physical degradation of monuments and the disruption of local communities.

This thesis examines the impact of overtourism on the UNESCO sites in Rome and Regensburg, analysing the issues it presents and the strategies employed to mitigate the negative effects. Rome is a metropolis famous for its iconic sites, including the Colosseum and the Pantheon. In contrast, Regensburg is a smaller but historically significant German city. The increasing tourism sector presents a challenge to both cultural heritage sites. This research examines the two World Heritage sites with the aim of contributing to the growing discourse on overtourism and offering insights into how heritage sites can strike a balance between welcoming visitors and safeguarding their cultural value for future generations. The analysis explores what has been done, what remains to be done, and which strategies have proven effective and can be transferred to other sites.

### **1.3 Approach and Methodology**

This thesis employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing a case-study-based approach to explore the challenges posed by overtourism in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Rome and Regensburg. The qualitative nature of the study enables a differentiated understanding of the complex socio-cultural, economic and environmental dynamics of overtourism in the two different, yet comparable destinations. To provide a comprehensive analysis, the research is grounded in an in-depth review of secondary sources. These sources include a broad range of materials such as academic literature, policy documents, government reports, official statistics from local tourist boards, media articles, and existing case studies on overtourism. This selection ensures a multi-layered understanding of both the impacts of overtourism and the strategies adopted to mitigate its effects. By triangulating data from these diverse sources, the study offers a well-rounded view of the current state of tourism management in Rome, Regensburg and beyond. A key aspect of the analysis is the application of tourism modelling, in particular Richard Butler's TALC (Tourism Area Life Cycle) model. The TALC framework helps to contextualise the stages of tourism development in each city and assess its ability to deal with increasing tourism pressures. This model makes it possible to understand where each destination is in terms of its tourism trajectory, whether in growth, stagnation or decline, and how these stages impact both visitor experiences and local sustainability efforts. In addition to the theoretical analysis, this study also includes an empirical investigation of tourism data. Data derived from visitor registrations in diverse types of accommodation and museums provide empirical evidence regarding tourist flows and seasonal fluctuations over a ten-year period. The period under consideration will be limited to the years 2009 to 2019, as tourism figures have been



subject to extreme fluctuations since the year of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, which would therefore compromise the reliability of the data. This analysis aims to quantify the extent of the overtourism problem and provide a detailed examination of its impact on infrastructure and cultural sites. Additionally, the tourism concepts of Rome and Regensburg will be examined to discuss how well the balance between promoting tourism and protecting cultural heritage and sustainability is achieved. Finally, a policy analysis is incorporated, examining specific tourism strategies implemented by other destinations to combat overtourism. The findings are then synthesized to create a solution catalogue tailored to the specific needs of Rome and Regensburg, offering actionable recommendations for future tourism management.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The structure of the thesis is divided into three major parts. The first part serves to frame the topic of the thesis by introducing its three pillars, the history of cultural tourism in Europe from the Grand Tour until today, the development and literature review of the overtourism phenomenon in Europe and, an overview of the development of the UNESCO and their designated Cultural World Heritage Sites and the criteria for their selection. In the second part I will focus on the case studies of Rome and Regensburg and analyse how tourism impacts on the city. The analysis will contain a data analysis of relevant tourism statistics over a period of ten years of national and local tourism policies and I will also identify the challenges of (over)tourism in both cases. Furthermore, for the case study of Rome there will also be examined the impact of the catholic jubilee in 2025 on the tourism sector. For Regensburg on the other hand, there will be a study of the World Heritage Visitor Centre which is unique in its concept. Both case studies will be assessed according to Richard Butlers Tourism Area Life Cycle theory in order to identify the stage of tourism or overtourism the site finds itself in. Rome's and Regensburg's approach to overtourism will be compared, which of course is not possible on a one-to-one scale, because the cities are of such different sizes and show very diverse tourism sectors. Nevertheless, the cities offer a significant parallel in their cultural heritage site because the in both cases, the area encompasses the whole historic city centre. More interesting for the analysis will be the different management styles of the tourism sector and the different life cycle phases of the cities.

Conscious of my personal experience and my academic resources, Western European tourism will be at the centre of the discussion. More specifically, the case studies have also been selected according to my own experiences during my academic career. The choice of Rome as the first case study is obvious because of its worldwide popularity with visitors and its important cultural heritage. However, it should also be explained why Venice was not chosen, as it seems more obvious as the 'overtourism capital' of Italy. The lagoon city has officially recognised that it has a problem with

overtourism and is prepared to combat it by introducing the entry ticket in 2024. However, as this phenomenon is not new to Venice, numerous experts and academics have already addressed the issue over the last few years, like Gonzales in 2018<sup>5</sup> and Bertocchi et al. in 2020<sup>6</sup>. Rome, on the other hand, still offers a relatively untouched field of research, partly because the local government has not yet made any plans to seriously restrict tourism. The consequences of overtourism are also not yet as visible as in Venice, although this is mainly due to the size of the city, as tourism in Rome, unlike in Venice, can spread beyond the boundaries of the city centre. Rome's historical and cultural significance, combined with its status as a major tourist destination and UNESCO World Heritage Site, makes it an exemplary case study for overtourism. The city's multiple challenges and existing management strategies provide rich data for analysing the balance between tourism growth, cultural preservation and sustainability. Regensburg, on the other hand, is not exactly a world-famous destination for international tourists. Nevertheless, the city is an important destination for domestic tourism and is constantly working to improve and expand its tourism attractions and its visibility. As a result of the expanded offerings, demand is also steadily increasing, making Regensburg a potential candidate for the initial onset of overtourism. Rome and Regensburg will therefore offer a unique and new combination of case studies for an overtourism discussion.

After the detailed case study analysis, it is the aim in part three of this thesis to explore the strategies and solutions against the phenomenon of overtourism. Different strategies against overtourism will be explored, which have been implemented by various cities and heritage sites worldwide, including Dubrovnik, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Cinque Terre, Machu Picchu and Mount Rigi. By analysing solutions like visitor caps, rental regulations, and sustainable tourism initiatives, the chapter evaluates their effectiveness and identifies best practices that could be adapted to address the challenges in Rome and Regensburg. Through a detailed analysis of diverse case studies, the chapter provides a foundation for developing sustainable tourism strategies tailored to the needs of these two cities.

In light of the discussions and analyses presented herewith, this thesis seeks to advance a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of overtourism in cultural heritage destinations. At the same time, it offers specific approaches to mitigate the negative consequences of this phenomenon, which is not a problem that will resolve itself but instead requires professional tourism management strategies.

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<sup>5</sup> Ana Trancoso González, 'Venice: The Problem of Overtourism and the Impact of Cruises', *Investigaciones Regionales*, no. 42 (2018): 35–51.

<sup>6</sup> Dario Bertocchi et al., 'Venice and Overtourism: Simulating Sustainable Development Scenarios through a Tourism Carrying Capacity Model', *Sustainability* 12, no. 2 (9 January 2020): 512, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12020512>.

## Part I: Framing (Over)tourism and Cultural Heritage Sites

### 2. History of Cultural Tourism in Europe

In order to understand the concept of overtourism and its consequences and development in cultural heritage sites, it is important to get to the bottom of the origins of tourism, especially cultural tourism. This chapter will deal with the historical and theoretical background of cultural tourism, with special attention in Europe, by trying to find a definition of the term and analysing the historical development from the Grand Tour to the emerging leisure tourism of the new middle class to the explosive dynamics of mass tourism after the Second World War. In addition, some important tourism concepts and categories as well as the struggles of contemporary modern tourism are analysed.

Tourism is a phenomenon extremely dependent on the social, economic, and political development of our society. It is mirroring the features of the globalised world, we are living in. Cultural tourism and how we perceive it has changed significantly within the last decades. Cultural heritage is without doubt a keyword of cultural tourism since it is one of the most important generators of the tourism industry in Europe nowadays.<sup>7</sup> But before focusing on cultural heritage and its challenges through overtourism, it is important to define cultural tourism and tourism in general. Since scholars and policy documents of the last few decades tried to define the term cultural tourism, there gathered an increasing assortment of terms relating to it. This makes a simple explanation even harder because cultural tourism, “heritage tourism, arts tourism, ethnic tourism and a host of other terms seem to be almost interchangeable in their usage”<sup>8</sup>. Being aware of this problem, this thesis will deal with cultural tourism as an umbrella term and try to include all different facets of culture with an emphasis on cultural heritage. The academic world began with an attempt to find a definition of cultural tourism when the niche of this branch of tourism gained recognition with the fragmentation of the mass market in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> The tourism academic Bob Mckercher developed a basic definition in 2009 and argued that all kind of travel would involve a cultural element because by leaving the home culture, a tourist is placed “temporarily in a different cultural milieu, whether in an adjacent city or in a village halfway around the world”<sup>10</sup>. In 2012 he revised his definition and argued that experiencing cultural difference is not equivalent to cultural tourism and that it should not simply be used as an umbrella term.<sup>11</sup> Instead the definite answer on what cultural tourism is and who cultural tourists are gets more

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<sup>7</sup> Greg Richards, ed., *Cultural Tourism in Europe* (Wallingford, UK: CAB International, 1996), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Greg Richards, ‘European Cultural Tourism: Patterns and Prospects’, *Planning Cultural Tourism in Europe*, 1 January 1999, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Bob Mckercher and Hilary Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism. The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 1, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203479537>.

<sup>10</sup> Mckercher and Du Cros, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Bob Mckercher and Hilary Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism. The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 3, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203479537>.

complicated with every new attempt of defining it. This includes definitions by organisations like the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation), the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), and other authorities and tourism scholars.

Greg Richards discusses the topic of cultural tourism in Europe in his book from 1996 by shining light on different theories. He quotes Bonink (1992) who differentiates between a “sites and monuments” approach and a “conceptual approach”. The first one is a product-based definition of culture, underlining the importance of sites and monuments like archaeological sites and museums, architecture (ruins, buildings, towns), statues and sculptures, music and dance, language, events, festivals and much more. His conceptual approach is more process-based by describing the motives and meanings associated with cultural tourism activities.<sup>12</sup> In 1976 one of the first official definitions of cultural tourism was published by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites):

Cultural tourism is that form of tourism whose object is, among other aims, the discovery of monuments and sites. It exerts on these last a very positive effect insofar as it contributes - to satisfy its own ends - to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism justifies in fact the efforts which said maintenance and protection demand of the human community because of the sociocultural and economic benefits which they bestow on all the populations concerned.<sup>13</sup>

This very early characterisation is without doubt a product-based approach which focuses on culture to be consumed in form of monuments, sites, and physical objects. A third approach adopted by McKercher is the experiential approach which might be the most popular contemporary one. It argues that cultural tourism has to include a significant experience in a unique place of special character like a cultural heritage site or a personal search or discovery for a greater understanding.<sup>14</sup> Especially the conceptual process-based and the experiential approach have been adopted by international cultural organisations. The UNWTO adopted the cultural tourism definition from the UN Tourism General Assembly, from its 22nd session 2017:

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.<sup>15</sup>

This definition places far less emphasis on the product-based approach and recognises the new importance of experiences as well as spiritual and emotional features of cultural tourism. The two

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<sup>12</sup> Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> ICOMOS, *Charter of Cultural Tourism* (Paris: ICOMOS, 1976), <http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2902/>.

<sup>14</sup> Mckercher and Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism. The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management.*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> UN Tourism, ‘Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility | UN Tourism’, accessed 9 June 2024, <https://www.unwto.org/ethics-culture-and-social-responsibility>.

definitions lay 41 years apart and show a very different approach to the idea of cultural tourism. This gap shows the difficulty about explaining the phenomenon precisely and why many official organisations try to avoid it completely. In 1999 Greg Richards even got the impression, that “policy documents across Europe tend to duck the issue as well, tending to make the assumption that everybody knows what cultural tourism is”<sup>16</sup>.

Since there is no commonsense about what cultural tourism exactly is, it will be narrowed down as much as possible in the context of overtourism and cultural heritage. For this purpose, cultural tourism can be understood as a form of tourism that focuses on the exploration and appreciation of a place's cultural heritage, including its historical sites, monuments, art, festivals, and local traditions. This definition includes both tangible and intangible heritage (non-physical aspects of culture, like traditions), the significance of which is explained in more detail in chapter four on Cultural World Heritage and UNESCO. The motivation of the tourist plays a subordinate role in this case, but can be for reasons of further education, personal interest or simply for the fear of missing out. In order to better categorise and understand tourism and cultural tourism, its historical development must also be taken into account.

A beginning of tourism is very hard to define because travelling per se is an activity which goes way back to ancient times. But according to the UNWTO, tourism is “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes”<sup>17</sup>. The kind of tourism that people did for leisure or other personal purposes developed with the Grand Tour and even more distinct with the increasing middle class of the Victorian Age.<sup>18</sup> According to most tourism academics modern tourism actually began with the Grand Tour which had its peak in the eighteenth century. Originating in Great Britain, most of the early Grand Tourists were young aristocrats and most of them were male. Their travels were seen as a voyage for classical education on continental Europe and symbolised the passage from childhood to adulthood. Most of the Englishmen and women were accompanied by a teacher or tutor who they spent up to three years travelling with through the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy and other European countries. The travel itinerary often connected important sites of classical culture and history. Especially Italian cities were popular among the tourists, considering the arrival an achievement after the struggling passage over the alps.<sup>19</sup> Nothing about travelling in Europe was affordable considering the infrastructure and the way of living of

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<sup>16</sup> Richards, ‘European Cultural Tourism’, 2.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Glossary of Tourism Terms | UNWTO’, accessed 3 June 2024, <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>.

<sup>18</sup> Margarita Díaz-Andreu, *A History of Archaeological Tourism: Pursuing Leisure and Knowledge from the Eighteenth Century to World War II*, SpringerBriefs in Archaeology (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 23, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32077-5>.

<sup>19</sup> Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, 11.

noblemen. Leisure and the act of actively not working was a part of showing off their wealth. Spending a lot of money was even considered the recommended way to be respected as a Grand Tourist according to guidebooks of this time. The most expensive part was the transportation since most of the travellers had to buy their own carriages once arrived in France and additionally, the use of the roads was costly as well because post roads, which has a good network, carried particularly high tolls. Considering the length of the travels, that exceeded the period of nowadays vacations by far, the amount of luggage was extremely high. But the travellers normally managed to return with even more luggage than they parted with because it soon became part of the experience to bring back souvenirs to show off at home. Especially popular were paintings which depicted the tourist admiring the world's most famous roman ruins as the Pantheon or the Colosseum in Rome, but also natural landscapes like the mount Vesuvio were famous among the travellers. These sorts of paintings can be compared to our postcards and photographs nowadays, in the manner of proving that the tourist has seen the most important classical buildings and sceneries – and the recipient of the postcard has not.<sup>20</sup> In some cases the kind of souvenir was more than just a painting and they brought back ancient objects from newly rediscovered sites like Herculaneum (1711) and Pompeii (1748). The export of antiquities was even encouraged by some guidebooks and was seen as a must-do for travellers to show off the personal gain. This phenomenon was very hard to get under control and with inefficient policies, the authorities struggled until the end of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century to prevent the abduction of precious statues and other artistic objects.<sup>21</sup> Despite the international fight against the market of stolen art, it still is a big problem today. Another phenomenon of modern tourism that came up already with the Grand Tour was the bad behaviour of tourists abroad. Especially young nobleman accompanied by often untalented and inattentive tutors became known for their obscene behaviour. They “preferred to spend their time drinking and whoring”<sup>22</sup> instead of the anticipated cultural education and personal growth which their parents had planned for them.<sup>23</sup>

The history of tourism took a significant turn with the French Revolution in 1789 and the following Napoleonic wars that ended in 1815. This period of change erased most of the previous ideals of the Grand Tour, “replacing the urban-centered and overwhelmingly aristocratic character of the eighteenth-century trip”<sup>24</sup> with a new target group. While travelling during the years of war got increasingly complicated, the visitors returned to Europe after peace was finally settled with the treaty of Paris. Many of the tourists came as curious inspectors of the aftermath of war. The ideas of self-

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<sup>20</sup> Eric G. E. Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 2016, 22f, [https://www.academia.edu/12112145/A\\_History\\_of\\_Modern\\_Tourism](https://www.academia.edu/12112145/A_History_of_Modern_Tourism).

<sup>21</sup> Díaz-Andreu, *A History of Archaeological Tourism*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 25.

<sup>23</sup> Zuelow, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Zuelow, 29.

improvement through foreign exploration and consumption were soon adopted by an increasing middle-class society during the Victorian age. The old classical destinations like Rome, Naples and, Paris were still popular by the new wave of middle-class tourists but by the 1820s “a romantic vision of landscapes and history, a sense of excitement to be had in nature that European mountains and beaches”<sup>25</sup> offered an escape from the everyday lives of the working class. The idea of looking for excitement and discovering new trails and destinations elicited a widespread wanderlust among all social classes.<sup>26</sup> The wave of tourism after the Grand Tour became a phenomenon benefiting much more people with the reduction of the working day, and the democratization of holidays. The increasing middle class, and the number of travellers who enjoyed free time for leisure grew tremendously.<sup>27</sup>

Even if the term ‘tourism’ was mentioned occasionally in travel journals, it didn’t emerge as a concept before the 1840s when Thomas Cook started to organise his first package-tours. The first excursions were destined to the English Midlands and were organised only for a small group of people, but it didn’t take long for the tours to become popular among the travelling middle-class. The most attractive part about the Cook voyages was, that they were planned from the departure to the return, and the costumer had nothing else to do but to choose a destination and enjoy.<sup>28</sup> Cook planned the voyages into the last detail and left nothing to chance. Thanks to his organisational talent, he can be seen as the founding father of the modern organised travels.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, not everyone was able to afford a long and lavish organised trip. Tourism had to become more affordable for the middle class which didn’t have the income to pay for months or even years of luxury travel. Therefore, the duration of travels and also the destinations and means of transport changed. The technological revolution in transport was a big advantage of the industrialisation, even if the original purpose of the road system being improved was only for the troop movement during the Napoleonic wars. An even bigger transport revolution than the road system and the steamships was the railway, which started carrying passengers from the 1830s. The railway network got expanded in whole Europe and in the United States significantly from the 1870s until the first World War. The reliability due to the timetables made the mean of transport increasingly attractive and modern. Also, the cultural tourism profited enormously from the improving passenger transport because cities and other cultural destinations like archaeological sites were increasingly connected by railway.<sup>30</sup> With the rediscovery of sites like

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<sup>25</sup> Zuelow, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Zuelow, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Marie-Françoise Lanfant et al., eds., *International Tourism: Identity and Change*, Sage Studies in International Sociology 47 (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1995), 24.

<sup>28</sup> Díaz-Andreu, *A History of Archaeological Tourism*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> Attilio Brilli, *Il Viaggio in Italia: Storia Di Una Grande Tradizione Culturale*, Biblioteca Storica (Bologna: Il mulino, 2006), 72.

<sup>30</sup> Díaz-Andreu, *A History of Archaeological Tourism*, 33.

Pompeii and the Palatine hill in Rome in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, not only the cultural tourism grew but also the professionalization of archaeological heritage and the management of museums improved rapidly. Cultural heritage was increasingly perceived as a patriotic symbol, consumed by every social class during the century of nation building.<sup>31</sup> With this increasing awareness for the importance and symbolic power of archaeological artefacts and sites, official authorities were established by the state to supervise them. The Vatican was one of the first ones in 1802 to create a position for the Inspector-General of Antiquities and Fine Arts. Similar jobs were set up by France in 1833 with a Commission of Historical Monuments and other European countries following their example.<sup>32</sup> With the supervision by the state there also came restrictions for visiting the site in order to preserve and protect it. The first tourist guidebooks published in the second half of the nineteenth century, gave all kind of advice on travelling in different European countries. The books even informed about the entry fees and opening hours of monumental sites like Pompeii which opened its gates in 1887 from dawn to sunset for a fee of two francs.<sup>33</sup> Thanks to the tourist guidebooks travel became easier and more reliable, soon expanding the central European horizon by offering tours to Egypt and the Middle East. The Thomas Cook company provided camp sites in Egypt and organised tours to ancient sites.<sup>34</sup> Package-tourism made travelling accessible to a bigger group of people and the guidebooks were advertising popular cities and ancient sites as a cultural must-see. Idyllic unpopulated places soon became swamped by tourists creating an increasing tourism economy that made profit off entrance fees, souvenirs, restaurants and bars, hotels and obviously transportation.<sup>35</sup>

After the turn of the century tourism was extremely affected by political events, most of all World War I and World War II. While tourism during the war years got rather complicated, it was growing a lot after it ended. During the interwar period the potential and the importance of the tourism sector for the world economy became more and more evident. There were a lot of reasons for the increase of tourism but especially the “increasing imposition of holiday time for workers, [...] and a new way of regarding leisure tourism after World War I developed in a climate of an intense nationalist upsurge”<sup>36</sup>. Since nationalism was not a tool for unification anymore, it was used ideologically to argue for the differentiation of states. Countries used it to promote a heritage narrative for their nations past like Benito Mussolini tied the history of the Roman Empire in a straight line to the Italian fascist nation. Part of this narrative also was the promotion of the country’s cultural heritage like the roman

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<sup>31</sup> Díaz-Andreu, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Díaz-Andreu, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Díaz-Andreu, 60.

<sup>34</sup> John M. MacKenzie, ‘Chapter 1. Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries’, in *Histories of Tourism*, ed. John K. Walton (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), 22, <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845410339-003>.

<sup>35</sup> Díaz-Andreu, *A History of Archaeological Tourism*, 78.

<sup>36</sup> Díaz-Andreu, 86.



ruins. Especially from the 1930s the cultural heritage sites were promoted as a nation's most important tourist attractions.<sup>37</sup> Mussolini made sure that Italy's roman past was portrayed in the fascist way by making big investments in archaeology projects which continued to unearth and preserve roman ruins, especially in the Italian capital. The archaeological sites were integrated into the urban planning strategies and can be seen nowadays more or less the same way as Mussolini planned it in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>38</sup> Especially countries with radical nationalism like Italy and also Germany after 1933, promoted tourism within their nation's borders. The Third Reich tried to infiltrate propaganda also in the holiday with the leisure-time and tourism organisation Strength through Joy (*Kraft durch Freude* [KdF]). The KdF organised trips and tours to visit Germany's most important monuments which represented the nation's past and made the visitors feel connected to their country. It was the propaganda ministry's way of instrumentalising and abusing culture and infiltrating even the leisure time with the national socialist ideology.<sup>39</sup>

After the second World War tourism changed significantly and grew to become one of the biggest economic sectors in the world. International organisations for tourism engaged in various sectors to make international tourism more comfortable and profitable. Especially the travel across borders was supposed to be facilitated to encourage tourists to discover other nations than just their own. After the United Nations were founded in 1945 with the idea of creating long lasting peace through cohesion, tourism was promoted as an improvement of international living standards and a better life for all member states.<sup>40</sup> Most academics agree on the period after World War II for being a "Golden Age of Mass Tourism"<sup>41</sup>. Responsible for this development in tourism were changes in economy and technology. After the war ended, aeroplanes became more popular and more accessible for the working population. Technical improvements made aircraft even more impressive, because they made it possible to go faster and further. But also, the economic situation and paid holidays of a large group of the European population significantly improved thanks to the golden years after the war. The economic growth made the people spend more money for their free time and allowed them to be part of the consumer society. They bought cars, went on holidays, and owned television devices. Television was a revolutionary technology, which was able to bring the pictures of the world's most famous tourist destinations into the people's living rooms. All these factors contributed to the growth

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<sup>37</sup> Díaz-Andreu, 86.

<sup>38</sup> Díaz-Andreu, 105.

<sup>39</sup> Shelley Baranowski, 'Chapter 7. Radical Nationalism in an International Context: Strength through Joy and the Paradoxes of Nazi Tourism', in *Histories of Tourism*, ed. John K. Walton (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), 126, <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845410339-009>.

<sup>40</sup> Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 155.

<sup>41</sup> Erkan Sezgin and Medet Yolal, 'Golden Age of Mass Tourism: Its History and Development', in *Visions for Global Tourism Industry - Creating and Sustaining Competitive Strategies*, ed. Murat Kasimoglu (London: InTech, 2012), 73, <https://doi.org/10.5772/37283>.

of the industry, making it also an attractive sector to work in. New kind of work fields developed, offering services like inclusive tours, by international tour operators and their package deals.<sup>42</sup> The Mediterranean states soon realised the economic potential and created seaside resorts, promising sun, sand, and relaxation. Most successful was Franco's Spain by fully taking advantage of the potential of mass tourism. The country took the chance to demonstrate their development despite currency problems and an inferior infrastructure compared to northern European states.<sup>43</sup> While tourism was booming in the 50s and 60s of the twentieth century, a generational change responded rather bored to the inclusive tours, seaside resorts and package deals which left nearly no space for own imagination. Tourists began to look for alternative and more exciting destinations by fleeing from the mainstream travel routes.

In 1980 the geographer Richard Butler created the concept of a Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) which identifies the main stages a tourism destination progresses through. The first one, called 'exploration stage' attracts new tourists and describes the period when they explore the new destination. During the 'involvement stage', the destination gets used to frequent visitor numbers and starts providing services. At the 'development stage', the destination invests into marketing efforts and growth of tourist numbers. The stage afterwards, the 'consolidation stage', is a turning point and the growth is not as great anymore. When the growth finally is at its highest point, the 'stagnation phase' is reached and afterwards when the visitor numbers start to drop, the 'decline stage' as the final one did arrive.<sup>44</sup> After the last stage, the destination didn't become totally unattractive but not worth more than a daytrip anymore. It is crucial to acknowledge that the TALC model has been in existence for over four decades. During this period, there have been significant developments in tourism trends and research, which have shaped the evolution of the model. In a paper published in 2024, Butler himself states that his model has been influenced by new theories and trends and therefore requires interpretation in the context of current research. He emphasises that, in particular, sustainable tourism is a modern phenomenon that must be considered in the context of his model if a destination wishes to avoid decline.<sup>45</sup> While Butler's TALC model is evolving in response to modern tourism dynamics, the increasing desire for unique niche experiences reflects broader changes in tourism, where destinations need to offer more than traditional mass tourism to retain cultural capital and avoid stagnation. The acquisition of cultural capital through tourism requires us to go beyond what the masses are used to. This objective is impossible to achieve if everyone chooses to see the same places.

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<sup>42</sup> Sezgin and Yolal, 75f.

<sup>43</sup> Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 163.

<sup>44</sup> R.W. Butler, 'THE CONCEPT OF A TOURIST AREA CYCLE OF EVOLUTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES', *Canadian Geographies / Géographies Canadiennes* 24, no. 1 (March 1980): 7f, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0064.1980.tb00970.x>.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Butler, 'Tourism Destination Development: The Tourism Area Life Cycle Model', *Tourism Geographies*, 11 March 2024, 4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2024.2325932>.

The cultural tourism market must establish a balance to keep destinations from draining out. Cultural Heritage developed into a tourism branch letting the tourists feel like travelling into a simpler past but also one that mattered. The trend from the 1980s onwards also desired unique and new experiences. Unexplored destinations like Antarctica had growing visitor numbers and still today the destination is considered one of the most unique travel routes mostly because it's so inaccessible.<sup>46</sup> Since the 1990s the tourism market began to be segmented into different niches, trends, and movements, depending on the season, user group, destination, travel motivation, time available and many other reasons.<sup>47</sup> Dark tourism can be seen as one of the most particular movements of tourism because it is a very contemporary one which is being spread through mass media especially in the western societies. Its motivation is visiting places of death or suffering or war – one of the most characteristic examples are holocaust destinations like Auschwitz. But also, battlefield tourism is part of this movement and can be dated back to the American Civil War or later, when spectators travelled to a war site in order to observe the battle while it was taking place or after it was over. Dark tourism is often associated with voyeurism, but the motive can also be out of personal memory, comprehension, emotional involvement, personal cultural experience, or intellectual enrichment.<sup>48</sup> Other movements like “Voluntourism” make the tourist spending the holidays helping others, preferably in underdeveloped areas. A more questionable type of tourism is the so called ‘human safaris’ which makes visitors try to get an insight into untouched civilizations in the rainforest. These types of niche tourism are only a few examples of trips not many tourists embark on, but in order to satisfy the desire for unique experiences, the variations of tourism get more and more creative.<sup>49</sup> Cultural tourism is a movement less unusual and not that new.<sup>50</sup> For mass market providers, culture was an integral part of the product and not a niche market in itself. However, increasing market segmentation created new and more differentiated opportunities for specialised cultural tourism providers. Especially cultural heritage sites and museums experienced a new boom since ‘high’ culture was not only reserved for the old social elite anymore.<sup>51</sup> The importance of cultural tourism

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<sup>46</sup> Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 174ff.

<sup>47</sup> Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Maria Gravari-Barbas, ed., *A Research Agenda for Heritage Tourism*, Elgar Research Agendas (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA: EE | Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020), 153.

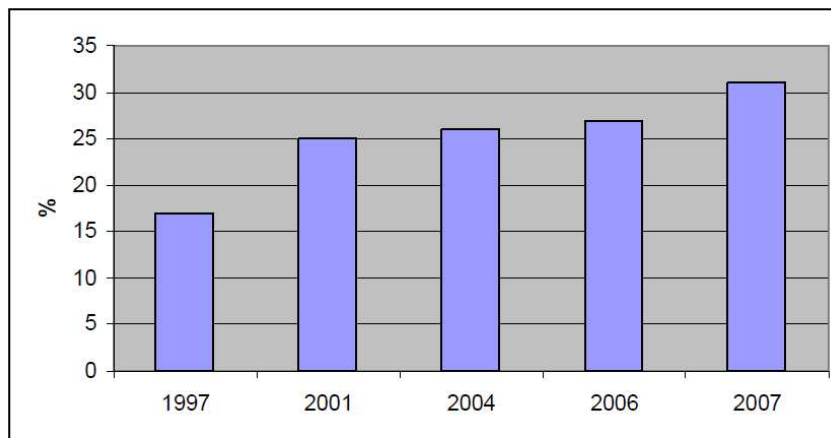
<sup>49</sup> Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 176.

<sup>50</sup> cf. definition of cultural tourism on p.10-12 of chapter 2. “History of Cultural Tourism in Europe”

<sup>51</sup> Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, 15.

can also be seen in the numbers of people embarking on cultural holidays in the last decades. In a period of only ten years (1997-2007) the percentage doubled as can be seen in Figure 1.

### Proportion of tourists on a cultural holiday



Source: ATLAS Surveys 1997-2007

Figure 1: People embarking on cultural holidays worldwide<sup>52</sup>

With the increasing popularity of cultural tourism, also the desire for authenticity has also moved more into focus. The process of culture by itself was being increasingly transformed through tourism into culture as a product of modern consumerism, according to Russo and Domínguez in 2016. Their claim that consumerism is at the heart of modern travel stems from the fact that every detail of the travel experience is increasingly being turned into a business, which is then rigorously evaluated on travel platforms such as Tripadvisor and accordingly determines the success or downfall of a product, restaurant or hotel.<sup>53</sup>

But culture as a process is a theory originating in anthropology and sociology that views culture primarily as a code of behaviour integrated in a particular social group. The boundaries of social groups' cultures are variable and can encompass a nation, a tribe, a company. It is therefore possible to speak of the culture of a specific group or of a culture of mass tourism. Regarding this theory, even elements of a living culture and its way of life transformed into cultural products and attractions which tourists wish to consume as an authentic experience. Monuments and archaeological sites have been consumed as authentic cultural heritage destinations since the beginning of modern tourism, but the awareness of intangible culture is a very contemporary phenomenon.<sup>54</sup> The desire for authentic tourism experiences and intangible culture consumption are both phenomenon of the creative

<sup>52</sup> Greg Richards, *The Impact of Culture on Tourism* (Paris: OECD, 2009), 23.

<sup>53</sup> Antonio Paolo Russo and Alan Quagliari Domínguez, '2. The Shifting Spatial Logic of Tourism in Networked Hospitality', in *Reinventing the Local in Tourism*, ed. Antonio Paolo Russo and Greg Richards (Multilingual Matters, 2016), 17, <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845415709-004>.

<sup>54</sup> Greg Richards, 'Tourism and Culture', in *Tourism and the Environment*, ed. Helen Briassoulis and Jan Straaten (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2000), 3f, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9584-1\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9584-1_10).

industry, an economy, rooting in a neoliberal philosophy. With the urbanisation process of the 1980s the tourism sector came along and touristified the city. Cultural heritage in cities, sites and monuments and various cultural references became an integral part of the cultural urban tourist experience. The ‘experience economy’ as part of the creative industry led to spatial and symbolic restructuring of urban spaces in order to attract tourism.<sup>55</sup> Creative tourism engages with creative lifestyles, networks and combines new technology with old tourism practices and destinations. The tourists’ interest in deeper and emotional experiences gets heard by the creative industry. The creative turn was seen as a big chance for small and medium sized towns like for example seaside localities, gateway communities, mountain resorts, rural communities, and cities with rich historical or culinary heritage. Many of these destinations have established cultural tourism as one of their main economic industries. This success inspired other similar sized towns to transfer local tourism policies to their city to recreate the phenomenon.

A typical strategy is the Guggenheim effect, known through the city of Bilbao, which has developed from a production centre into a creative hub for art and culture following extensive cultural urban renewal. Inspired by this phenomenon, towns build architectural landmarks designed by popular architects to create a cultural honeypot. If the desired effect takes place obviously also depends on the socio-economic circumstances and if the residents support the project. But in general, the idea of duplicating worked in many cases since it’s still a popular strategy to generate visitor influx in less touristic areas.<sup>56</sup> When the destinations finally recognise the desired results, the negative impacts get often ignored and the policy makers and stakeholders continue the short-term profit management. However, after several decades of continuous tourism growth, the discussion about the consequences has become louder among tourism scientists and institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moreover, social movements and urban initiatives started to form and criticise the unsustainable tourism policies that have been mostly growth oriented but not sustainable for the environment or the residents of popular tourism destinations.

Urban development policies and tourism policies often go hand in hand and result in an excessive dependence on visitor economy but disadvantages in regard of services and housing for the local population. Tourism kept shaping popular visitor destinations and has a big influence on the host society.<sup>57</sup> Cultural tourism is seen as one of the most attractive tourism sectors since it can benefit the local communities by creating jobs, bring more diversity into the communities, arises awareness for

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<sup>55</sup> Ko Koens and Claudio Milano, ‘URBAN TOURISM STUDIES: A TRANSVERSAL RESEARCH AGENDA’, *Tourism Culture & Communication*, 2023, 4, <https://doi.org/10.3727/109830423X16999785101653>.

<sup>56</sup> Chiara Rabbiosi and Dimitri Ioannides, ‘Cultural Tourism as a Tool for Transformation in Small and Medium-Sized Towns’, in *A Research Agenda for Small and Medium-Sized Towns* (Camberley: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 112, <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap-0a/book/9781800887121/book-part-9781800887121-12.xml>.

<sup>57</sup> Koens and Milano, ‘URBAN TOURISM STUDIES’, 5.

the local heritage and much more.<sup>58</sup> Policy makers and stakeholders emphasise the positive outcomes of cultural tourism for cultural heritage cities while they tend to overlook the disadvantages of modern tourism. The good and the bad sides of tourism are debatable but what is for sure, is the significant growth of tourism in many popular tourism destinations all over Europe.

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<sup>58</sup> Richards, *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*, 24.

### 3. Overtourism in Europe

Even if overtourism is a term most people have heard before, there is still confusion about the origin and the definition of the phenomenon. This chapter will frame the development of the phenomenon and the use and appearance of the term in academic and non-academic literature. Furthermore, the complicated question of the causes and consequences of overtourism will be analysed in order to provide a comprehensive basis for the case studies and the problem-solving strategies.

The increase of tourism over the last 40 years brought great economic benefits to popular visitor destinations especially in Western Europe. The tourism sector is a major economic factor of the EU with nothing less than 10% of its GDP. With 2.3 million businesses involved and 12.3 million people employed in the industry, the importance gets obvious.<sup>59</sup> These numbers speak for themselves regarding the influence of tourism on the economic and social development of the EU from international down to national and local policies. In 2022 nearly 1.1 billion travellers made trips in the EU for personal or business purposes. Over the last decades, there have been some tourism destinations and regions which gained more popularity than others. Recommendations by guidebooks, personal references, or especially social media nowadays can have a big influence on the tourism market of old and new tourism destinations. Cultural Heritage sites are also destinations attracting particularly many visitors often in small and dense areas. The increasing visitor economy made places like cultural heritage sites feel overcrowded and less enjoyable. During the last few years overloaded tourist destinations and the influences on the surrounding have been summarised with the term overtourism by the academic world but also by social media and international organisations and governments. Google Trends shows that the search for overtourism increased especially after 2017, but there are theories that it actually is an older phenomenon which just got a new name.<sup>60</sup> Dalia Perkumiene argues in 2019 that the problems of overtourism have already been discussed over the last 30 years but that the problems intensified for destinations in the last few years and the discussion therefore intensified.<sup>61</sup> Also Ko Koens argues that overtourism is not a new phenomenon but just appeared as another word for the Spanish term ‘Turismofobia’ (*Tourismphobia*) which was introduced by Spanish academics in the context of anti-tourist sentiments and demonstrations in Barcelona around 2016. He also argues that the term first came up in the media and was discussed without academic basis.<sup>62</sup> The increasing discussion in the media also shows how the recognition of the

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<sup>59</sup> ‘Tourism | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European Parliament’, 30 April 2024, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/126/tourism>.

<sup>60</sup> Capocchi et al., ‘Overtourism’, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Dalia Perkumiene and Rasa Pranskuniene, ‘Overtourism: Between the Right to Travel and Residents’ Rights’, *Sustainability* 11 (10 April 2019): 11, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11072138>.

<sup>62</sup> Ko Koens, Albert Postma, and Bernadett Papp, ‘Is Overtourism Overused? Understanding the Impact of Tourism in a City Context’, *Sustainability* 10 (23 November 2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10124384>.

negative impacts of tourism grew over the past years and can be read as a sign of overtourism actually being a new phenomenon. The damaging effects of global mass tourism are indeed nothing new, but the level of awareness towards the uncontrolled quantitative growth of tourism is a more recent development.<sup>63</sup> The role of media and social movements shouldn't be underestimated in this regard. Especially tourism hotspots under pressure like Barcelona and Venice reacted to the increasing tourism with protests and demonstrations demanding the local government to react to the negative influence for the residents. Already in 2015 there have been protests and citizen platforms engaging for a better tourism management after the residents got the impression, that a visitor limit for the city was reached.

The reaction and formation of social movements as a response to negative tourism impacts is therefore a development that can be seen also as part of the beginning of the overtourism-phenomenon.<sup>64</sup> How extremely current the phenomenon is, can be seen by taking a look at the headlines of this summer 2024. Never before has the attention to overtourism been as great as this year with: "Spain: Canary Islands' mass protests target overtourism"<sup>65</sup> and even more recently "Protesters spray water guns at tourists in Barcelona as thousands rally against overtourism"<sup>66</sup>. The local population of overcrowded destinations seem to show their anger about the situation. Tourism academics and other sciences are trying to catch up with the study on the very contemporary phenomenon, by showing that it is rather a multifaced problem than just a single phenomenon. Concerning many different areas of study, like the economic sciences, social and historical sciences and many more, overtourism is not only influencing tourism, what makes the definition much harder. Scholars still struggle to agree on a standardized explanation since the term has been discussed for not even ten years in the academic world yet.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, the topic should not be seen too broad since there are existing some related terms, overtourism sometimes gets confused with. According to the tourism academic Richard Butler overtourism is not the same as over-crowding or busy areas. In 2018 he defined it rather as a "situation where numbers of visitors overload the services and facilities available and also become a serious inconvenience for permanent residents of such locations"<sup>68</sup>. He was not the only one giving a definition for overtourism in a period when the topic was still discussed only in a few papers. The

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<sup>63</sup> Capocchi et al., 'Overtourism', 9.

<sup>64</sup> Harold Goodwin, 'City Destinations, Overtourism and Governance', *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 7, no. 4 (2021): 919, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-02-2021-0024>.

<sup>65</sup> Jonas Martiny, 'Spain: Canary Islands' Mass Protests Target Overtourism', *Dw.Com*, 29 April 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/spain-canary-islands-mass-protests-target-overtourism/a-68922697>.

<sup>66</sup> Lauren Edmonds, 'Protesters Spray Water Guns at Tourists in Barcelona as Thousands Rally against Overtourism', *Business Insider*, 7 July 2024, <https://www.businessinsider.com/photos-of-protesters-rallying-against-overtourism-in-barcelona-2024-7>.

<sup>67</sup> Capocchi et al., 'Overtourism', 6.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Butler, 'Challenges and Opportunities', *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes* 10 (24 October 2018): 637, <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-07-2018-0042>.



Spanish professor Claudio Milano as one of the academics who published the most papers about overtourism also analysed the topic. In 2019 he published a book about “Overtourism: Excesses, discontents and measures in travel and tourism”<sup>69</sup> in which he also cites his definition of overtourism from a conversation piece in 2018 as

the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have enforced permanent changes to their lifestyles, access to amenities and general well-being.<sup>70</sup>

The impact on the lives of the local population is emphasised even more than in Butlers definition, making it seem like a central topic to be discussed about overtourism. Nevertheless, there are also definitions trying to shine light on more than this one group being negatively affected by the increasing tourism economy. Harold Goodwin as one of the most established tourism and also overtourism experts has already written several papers about the topic and was one of the first ones trying to explain the upcoming topic in 2017:

Overtourism describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably.<sup>71</sup>

Compared to Butler’s and Milano’s definition, he also includes the visitors experience and not only the impact on the life of the local population. Goodwin shows that overtourism can affect different groups of people, even the ones who seem to be responsible for the problem. Along the same line, lays the definition of the UNWTO which refers in a report from 2018 to 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”<sup>72</sup>; hence, focusing on the negative influence, overtourism can have on the citizens quality of life and on the visitors’ experiences. The topic in most cases has been defined from the demand and supply perspective of the tourism economy. This viewpoint portrays overtourism as a capacity problem with a demand which is higher than the carrying capacity of the city or the destination.<sup>73</sup> The theory of the carrying capacity of a destination was discussed as early as in the 1980s and the World Tourism Organisation defined it as “the maximum number of persons which could visit a location within a given period, such that local environmental, physical, economic, and socio-cultural characteristics are not compromised, and

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<sup>69</sup> Claudio Milano, Joseph M. Cheer, and Marina Novelli, eds., *Overtourism: Excesses, Discontents and Measures in Travel and Tourism* (Wallingford, Oxfordshire; Boston, MA: CABI, 2019).

<sup>70</sup> Milano, Cheer, and Novelli, 172.

<sup>71</sup> Harold Goodwin, ‘The Challenge of Overtourism’, October 2017, 5.

<sup>72</sup> World Tourism Organization, *‘Overtourism’? - Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions, Executive Summary* (Madrid: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2018), 4.

<sup>73</sup> Séraphin, Gladkikh, and Vo Thanh, *Overtourism*, 12.

without reducing tourist satisfaction”<sup>74</sup>. The capacity can be higher or lower depending on the environmental, infrastructural, and other characteristics of a destination and on their residents. Once the carrying capacity is reached, tourism can have the effect where either the hosts or guests, and in most cases both, are dissatisfied.<sup>75</sup> That’s why for some scholars like Visentin and Bertocchi (2019) it is clear that overtourism is “an occurrence of far too many visitors for a particular destination to absorb over a given period”<sup>76</sup>.

But the biggest problem with overtourism seems to be the lack of its predictability. Most destinations can identify overtourism only when its already too late and even then, most touristic managements refuse to admit their failure and recognise the symptoms only as part of successful tourism campaigns. One of the main reasons for a late identification of the problem, is the difficulty of defining the causes and origins of overtourism.<sup>77</sup> Harold Goodwin realised that the causes, same as the phenomenon as a whole, can be very specific to particular touristic destinations. Nevertheless, he suggested a list of reasons that could lead to overtourism: As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the cost of travel is falling with budget airlines and cheap coach travel. The second reason is the increase of ‘person to person’ (P2P) platforms like Airbnb which offer tourists the possibility to “live like a local” in residential neighbourhoods. The backhand of this development is the displacement of low-income residents because of the rising rents. An enabler of tourism, often forgotten, is that the public realm is free. Meaning that popular tourism destinations, especially the ones without entrance fee, get run over while the local taxpayer has to pay for the maintenance and repair costs. The seasonal and localised concentration of tourists can also have a negative impact, as the preferred summer travel season and the limited time span encourages visitors to visit only the most important sights, leading them to travel blogs promising the perfect itinerary for “Rome in 3 days”. The successful marketing of so-called honeypots can create a backlash and attract more tourists over time than desired. But not only the classic destinations are affected but also new origin markets which are emerging every year with substantial numbers of additional tourists.

With a continuously growing tourism market, also the facilities and infrastructure of transport is being improved and enables more people to enter in new tourism destinations.<sup>78</sup> The causes listed by Goodwin are very detailed and, in some cases, already include the consequences of overtourism.

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<sup>74</sup> V. Castellani, S. Sala, and D. Pitea, ‘A New Method for Tourism Carrying Capacity Assessment’, in *Ecosystems and Sustainable Development VI*, vol. I (ECOSUD 2007, Coimbra: WIT Press, 2007), 366, <https://doi.org/10.2495/ECO070341>.

<sup>75</sup> Séraphin, Gladkikh, and Vo Thanh, *Overtourism*, 47.

<sup>76</sup> F. Visentin and Dario Bertocchi, ‘Venice: An Analysis of Tourism Excesses in an Overtourism Icon’, 2019, 20, <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781786399823.0018>.

<sup>77</sup> Capocchi et al., ‘Overtourism’, 15.

<sup>78</sup> Goodwin, ‘The Challenge of Overtourism’, 5f.

Claudio Milano expressed his thoughts about the consequences in correlation to a qualitative study about overtourism in Venice, Berlin, and Barcelona:

- Congestion of public spaces in city centres
- The privatisation of public spaces
- The growth of cruise tourism and the consequential seasonal congestion
- The rise in housing prices (rental and purchase by square metre)
- The loss of residents' purchasing power
- The unbalanced number of locals compared to visitors<sup>79</sup>

Other scholars prefer to break the facilitators of overtourism down in even broader categories with a “(1) lack of a systematic approach to managing tourism destination flows; (2) disagreement on priorities from the stakeholders side; and (3) development of a new mobility coupled with technological progress”<sup>80</sup>. Most of these causes of overtourism have a direct impact on the life of the residents, which makes them most sensitive for the tourism development. In order to understand the reaction of the local population and the negative sentiments towards tourism in many overtouristic destinations like Venice, Barcelona and Prague, there are some theories that may help.

George Doxey (1975) developed the irritation index model which divides the locals perception of tourism in four phases: euphoria, apathy, irritation, and antagonism.<sup>81</sup> During the first stage of euphoria, the residents are happily welcoming tourism as a new phenomenon in their city. In the second stage of apathy the number of visitors starts to rise and the relationship becomes less euphoric and more dismissive. When number of tourists reaches saturation point, the irritation phase begins and the local population starts to be concerned about the continuous growth and the possible negative impact. With the last phase of the theory, the antagonism, the residents' frustration is starting to be expressed and the tourists are seen as the reason for all problems.<sup>82</sup> Another theory is Richard Butlers Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) which has already been explained in chapter 2 (p. 9) and which shows the different stages a tourism destination goes through. The theories about overtourism-facilitators and the reception of the residents about increasing tourism are helpful to get an understanding about the phenomenon but they don't answer the question about when exactly a destination enters the critical situation of overtourism. Although this theory may sound like it offers

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<sup>79</sup> Claudio Milano, 'Overtourism and Tourismphobia: Global Trends and Local Contexts', 2017, 5, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13463.88481>.

<sup>80</sup> Serena Volo, 'Overtourism: Definitions, Enablers, Impacts and Managerial Challenges', in *Overtourism: Causes, Implications and Solutions*, ed. Hugues Séraphin, Tatiana Gladkikh, and Tan Vo Thanh (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 14, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42458-9\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42458-9_2).

<sup>81</sup> George V. Doxey, 'A Causation Theory of Visitor-Resident Irritants: Methodology and Research Inferences', in *Travel and Tourism Research Associations Sixth Annual Conference Proceedings*, vol. 3 (San Diego: Scientific Research Publishing, 1975), 195–98.

<sup>82</sup> Ivana Pavlič and Ana Portolan, 'Irritation Index', in *Encyclopedia of Tourism*, ed. Jafar Jafari and Honggen Xiao (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 495, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01384-8\\_564](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01384-8_564).

a simple answer, the capacity of a destination is not as easy to calculate quantitatively as that of public transport, for example, where you could simply count on a certain number of people per square metre. Also the capacity of museums and small containable cultural heritage sites is still possible to be calculated. In contrast, the perceived ‘carrying capacity’, i.e., the limit of the carrying capacity of tourists that is accepted by the local population, is a multifaceted concept that is not so easy to quantify.<sup>83</sup> This problem gets even bigger when the overtourism in destinations like the cultural heritage sites of Rome and Regensburg, the focus of this thesis, should be measured. As the entire area of the city centre in both case studies is cultural heritage, it seems almost impossible to calculate a carrying capacity. But this theory is not the only way how experts tried to define indicators for overtourism. One obvious indicator is the number of visitors to a destination but overtourism also is a matter of behaviour and further factors. In tourism research in addition to the absolute values of tourist numbers and overnight stays, the relative value of arrivals or overnight stays per inhabitant is used in particular to express the “tourism intensity”.<sup>84</sup> Several studies, such as those by McKinsey<sup>85</sup> and the European Commission, have already attempted to produce a risk analysis to provide interested tourist destinations with benchmarks. The European Parliament's TRAN Committee developed a list of variables to assess the risk of overtourism, also considering the guide developed by McKinsey and the World Travel & Tourism Council in 2017. From a list of 21 indicators, these are the most significant ones:

- Tourism's share of GDP as a percentage,
- Tourism density calculated in beds/km<sup>2</sup>,
- Tourism density calculated in beds/resident,
- Air travel growth as a percentage,
- Airbnb's shortest average distance from booking.com addresses in kilometres,
- Airbnb's share of booking.com plus Airbnb in percent,
- Intensity of air travel in terms of passengers per seat,
- Number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.<sup>86</sup>

With these indicators, the TRAN Committee suggests the creation of an early warning tool. An alternative method of the same study was developed to assess the risk of overtourism based on the

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<sup>83</sup> Andreas Kagermeier, ‘4 Wann Wird Aus “Gerade Noch Recht” Ein “Zuviel”’, in *Overtourism*, (UVK Verlag, 2021), 49, <https://elibrary-1utb-1de-1iqjtjo0q031e.emedia1.bsb-muenchen.de/doi/10.36198/9783838554174-49-136>.

<sup>84</sup> Kagermeier, 50.

<sup>85</sup> McKinsey, ‘Coping with Success: Managing Overcrowding in Tourism Destinations’, 14 December 2017, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-infrastructure/our-insights/coping-with-success-managing-overcrowding-in-tourism-destinations>.

<sup>86</sup> Paul Peeters et al., *Overtourism: Impact and Possible Policy Responses*, 2018, 74f.

characteristics of all NUTS 2<sup>87</sup> (second level of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) regions in the EU for which comparable Eurostat data are available. Based on the indicators and the NUT regions, the study suggests a checklist to assess overtourism risks for individual tourism destinations:

- Is your destination less than 30 km from an airport?
- Is your destination less than 15 km from a cruise port?
- Is your destination less than 20 km from a World Heritage Site?
- Do you use a volume growth-oriented (e.g. tourist arrival numbers, bed-nights) set of indicators to evaluate the success of your destination, excluding opportunities for optimisation (e.g. spending per day, liveability for residents)?
- Is your [sic] marketing strategy focused on medium and long-haul, rather than closer markets?
- Are resident sentiments ignored in destination development?
- Do you ignore social media (for both residents and visitors) discussing overcrowding, negatively discussing tourists and other indicators for overtourism?
- Are Airbnb and similar sharing-economy accommodation unregulated nor monitored?
- Are Airbnb and similar sharing-economy' accommodation excluded from (tourism) taxes as paid by hotels, B&B and other contemporary accommodation types?
- Do stakeholders from air transportation and/or cruise ports have a decisive influence on your tourism management and planning?<sup>88</sup>

It should be noted that the questions can be further developed depending on the characteristics of a tourism destination. With the expertise of tourism managers, stakeholders and academics, the questions can be more precise. All the questions which would be answered positive, should be counted and the higher the number is, the higher the risk for overtourism.<sup>89</sup> The previous study is one of the only ones getting more detailed about the question for overtourism indicators and on how to recognise if the destination is at risk. However, many international organisations and governmental apparatuses shy away from a direct solution strategy for overtourism because the phenomenon and its indicators are still too vague to be defined precisely. The checklist of indicators is a good start for tourism hotspots to assess their risk, but what happens if tourism management and policy makers ignore the red flags and the negative impacts of tourism spread uncontrollably?

The consequences of overtourism are already visible at some destinations but they could expand if the tourism sector keeps growing as continuous as it did so far. Throughout their case studies, the

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<sup>87</sup> NUTS is a geographical nomenclature subdividing the economic territory of the European Union (EU) into regions at three different levels (NUTS 1, 2 and 3 respectively, moving from larger to smaller territorial units).

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Nomenclature\\_of\\_territorial\\_units\\_for\\_statistics\\_\(NUTS\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Nomenclature_of_territorial_units_for_statistics_(NUTS))

<sup>88</sup> Paul Peeters et al., 'Research for TRAN Committee - Overtourism: Impact and Possible Policy Responses', n.d., 79.

<sup>89</sup> Peeters et al., 79.

TRAN committee identified several consequences which impacted the environment, the economy, and the society. To the environmental impacts they counted the overcrowding of the infrastructure, service facilities and touristic attractions. The nature and the built environment can obviously also be damaged and polluted or regenerated to please the tourism-specific aesthetics. In the urban environment the service- and goods infrastructure needed by the residents often is being reduced to make place for other sectors and functions mostly benefiting the tourism. The economy also shifts to a more tourism-oriented infrastructure with the degradation of commerce directed at residents and an increasing dependence on the tourism economy. This dependence impacts the economy especially seasonally and in certain sectors. The social impact of overtourism can lead to a marginalisation of the local population because of the high visitor numbers. The influx of tourists into residential areas can also have a significant impact on the local community, leading to an increase in property prices and rental costs. This, in turn, can result in a change in social dynamics, as well as the way in which local traditions and cultural values are expressed. The consequences of all these negative impacts can result in varying degrees of hostility from the side of the residents towards the visitors. When the policy makers don't react fast enough, the overtourism impacts can provoke the local population to demonstrate their dissatisfaction in form of protests and targeted actions against tourists, like it is happening now in Barcelona and on the Canary Islands and other destinations.<sup>90</sup>

The biggest problem of tourism still seems to be the lack of recognition and awareness of its negative impacts. Richard Butler (2022) detected that there is a

series of global trends that are contributing to the appearance and continuation of overtourism and which, to date, are proving immune to mitigation and resolution for specific reasons. These include a lack of willingness to accept the problem of tourist numbers and to reduce or effectively manage these at all levels, from local to international.<sup>91</sup>

Since the definition of overtourism in a destination is still hard to be accurately identified, it is generally preferred to develop strategies for sustainable tourism, in order to work against the negative impacts of tourism. Especially in the last few years the concept of sustainable tourism got very popular in all kinds of sectors. The tourism industry also realised the need to address the explosive tourism development and its negative impacts on the local population, the environment, and the local urban management. Sustainable development has been discussed in all different sectors over the past decades but is still very vague for concrete action. Many policies and strategies include the concept of sustainability without presenting actual measures. This development can also be applied to the tourism sector which chose the sustainable tourism development as the saviour from overtourism and

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<sup>90</sup> Peeters et al., *Overtourism*, 88f.

<sup>91</sup> Richard Butler and Rachel Dodds, 'Overcoming Overtourism: A Review of Failure', *Tourism Review* 77 (2 February 2022): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-04-2021-0215>.

all its bad impacts. In theory it tries to establish a balance between environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development.<sup>92</sup> But some scholars are not even sure if sustainability can be applied to the tourism sector. Richard Butler argues that “sustainable tourism does not exist in most forms of tourism, in part because there is no one universal definition of sustainable tourism, allowing a wide range of greenwashing and misleading claims arguing over the adoption of sustainable principles, and therefore, claiming to be achieving sustainability”<sup>93</sup>. He suspects sustainability to be nothing more than just a cover without any substance and any plan. Only a few specific situations of overtourism could be overcome with sustainability but not the whole phenomenon according to Butler.<sup>94</sup> Putting sustainability into practice actually is a difficult process. Even if policy makers and international organisations are discussing the topic, there are not so many specific tools for implementing concrete measures.<sup>95</sup>

In particular, the Covid-19 period, which dealt a severe blow to the tourism industry, was used as an opportunity to work on more sustainable strategies for the environment and the inhabitants of popular tourist destinations. Both the UNWTO, which committed to sustainable tourism with its recently adopted “Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)”<sup>96</sup>, and the EU, which presented the Commission's “Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism”. Furthermore, with the European Green Deal, the EU is setting an example by promoting new growth models and setting climate neutrality targets by 2050. It is already committed to reducing emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030.<sup>97</sup> These guidelines and strategies show efforts to prevent or counteract overtourism with the help of sustainable tourism concepts. Whether the strategies can be easily implemented in different tourism destinations and actually have an impact remains to be debated.

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<sup>92</sup> Albert Postma and Dirk Schmücker, ‘Understanding and Overcoming Negative Impacts of Tourism in City Destinations: Conceptual Model and Strategic Framework’, *Journal of Tourism Futures* 3 (15 November 2017): 146, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-04-2017-0022>.

<sup>93</sup> Butler and Dodds, ‘Overcoming Overtourism’, 39.

<sup>94</sup> Butler and Dodds, 39.

<sup>95</sup> Ruben Camilo Lois Gonzalez, *SUSTAINABILITY AND VISITOR MANAGEMENT IN TOURIST HISTORIC CITIES* (S.I.: MDPI AG, 2020), ix.

<sup>96</sup> UN Tourism, ‘Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism’, accessed 25 June 2024, <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-statistics/statistical-framework-for-measuring-the-sustainability-of-tourism>.

<sup>97</sup> European Commission, ‘The European Green Deal’, 14 July 2021, [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en).

#### 4. Cultural World Heritage Sites and UNESCO

Cultural heritage sites have been destinations of attraction for tourists since the Grand Tour emerged and also nowadays, they seem to be one of the most popular tourist destinations worldwide. With the increasing tourism sector, the heritage sites begin to face the challenges the phenomenon can bring with it. This chapter focuses on UNESCO and the cultural world heritage sites including its challenges and benefits created by tourism. While getting into the main topic, also the historical development of the international organisation, its values and the criteria of selection will be analysed.

The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is the leading organisation worldwide for the protection and promotion of world heritage, the natural and the cultural equally. Its origins lay in the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education in London in November 1945 after the second World War. This group allied against the threats of Germanys national socialism and was united first in 1942 to discuss the reconstruction of the education system after the war. The idea of a future cooperation between different countries emerged. Directly after the war the United Nations were founded, also in November 1945, which gave the perfect opportunity to further develop the project. On the 16 of November the 37 member states of the UN signed the constitution of the UNESCO, which was put into power on November 4 of 1946.<sup>98</sup> UNESCOs mission from then on was to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reforms. The preamble already makes it clear that there is a close connection between culture and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are at the centre of the educational goals pursued by UNESCO. The goals are to be achieved by promoting education and mutual understanding between the nations. In addition, the dissemination of knowledge is to be supported through the protection of the universal heritage represented by books, works of art and other monuments of historical or scientific interest.<sup>99</sup>

Many see the Convention of the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage as the first big milestone in the history of UNESCO. The incentive for the establishment of the 1972 Convention can probably be explained most easily by the rescue operation of the Egyptian temples in the 60s. Due to the expansion of the Aswan dam, the temples of the Nile Valley were in danger of sinking into the floods. In order to circumvent this, the international community called on UNESCO to save it. With the help of great international commitment, it became possible to move the facade of the Abu Simbel Temple to a safe place. This event was the first impulse for the agreement on an international

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<sup>98</sup> Francesco Cunsolo, 'L'UNESCO: struttura, competenze e funzionamento', ed. Elisa Baroncini, *IL DIRITTO INTERNAZIONALE E LA PROTEZIONE DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE MONDIALE*, n.d., 3.

<sup>99</sup> Francesco Cunsolo, 'ORIGINI E COMPETENZE DELL'UNESCO', ed. Elisa Baroncini, *Tutela e valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale mondiale nel diritto internazionale*, Terminus, n.d., 22.



convention for the protection of culture and natural sites.<sup>100</sup> The general conference adopted the convention on 16 November 1972 in Paris and defined cultural heritage as monuments, groups of buildings and sites. Natural heritage was new to be adopted and was described as:

natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view; geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation; natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.<sup>101</sup>

The primary purpose of the convention was and still is to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage regarded to be of exceptional value to humanity. Until the Convention was published, there was no comprehensive global framework to address the challenges and threats to cultural heritage sites. The Convention established a network of international cooperation and support, recognizing that the deterioration or disappearance of a cultural or natural heritage represents an irreplaceable loss of the heritage of all nations of the world.<sup>102</sup> One of the main features of the World Heritage Convention was the creation of the World Heritage List. The list includes natural and cultural heritage sites that have been classified as exceptionally universally valuable. The World Heritage List currently includes 952 cultural and 231 natural properties across the globe. Of the cultural sites, 490 are located in Europe and North America alone, which collectively represent the largest number of sites of this kind in the world.<sup>103</sup> In order to be included in the World Heritage List, a site must meet at least one of the ten selection criteria established by the Convention. These criteria include, for example, the representation of a masterpiece of human creative genius, a unique or extraordinary testimony of a cultural tradition or civilization, superlative natural phenomena or areas of outstanding natural beauty, or outstanding examples of a traditional human settlement or land use. The criteria are designed to ensure that the most significant and irreplaceable sites receive the highest level of international recognition and protection. If a site has been proposed for inclusion in the list, it will be subjected to a thorough examination by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for Cultural Sites or the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for Natural Sites. These

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<sup>100</sup> Christina Cameron and Mechtild Rössler, 'Creation of the World Heritage Convention', in *Many Voices, One Vision: The Early Years of the World Heritage Convention*, 1st ed. (Milton: Routledge, 2013), 10, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315593777-1>.

<sup>101</sup> UNESCO, 'CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE' (1972), 3, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

<sup>102</sup> Gabriele M. Knoll, *UNESCO Weltkulturerbe und Tourismus: Tourismus kompakt*, 1st ed. (Tübingen: UVK Verlag, 2022), 11f, <https://doi.org/10.24053/9783739880884>.

<sup>103</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'UNESCO World Heritage Centre - World Heritage List Statistics', accessed 25 August 2024, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat/>.

organizations assess whether the site meets the criteria of exceptional universal value and maintains the required level of integrity and authenticity. The assessment also takes into account the legal and administrative framework conditions for the protection of the site. The successful entry into the World Heritage List not only recognizes the global importance of the place, but also obliges the host country to its continuous preservation and protection.

One of the benefits of inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List is access to funding for conservation measures. This can come from a variety of sources, including international grants, national government support and private donations. The prestigious status often opens doors to financial resources that would otherwise not be available and ensures that important conservation projects can be carried out. Another benefit are the opportunities for educational programs and cultural exchange. Sites can become centres of learning and dialogue that promote cultural heritage and intercultural understanding. This educational aspect can also help to foster a sense of pride and identity in local communities. However, this prestigious status also attracts a significant influx of tourists, which can lead to challenges such as overcrowding, environmental degradation, and strain on local infrastructure. To address these problems, UNESCO maintains a "list of endangered World Heritage". This so-called Red List includes sites that are under significant threat and require immediate conservation measures. The inclusion in this list is a call to the international community for support and intervention for protection.<sup>104</sup> In order to stay on the Heritage List it is therefore necessary to keep the authenticity and integrity intact. They are fundamental principles in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites. Authenticity refers to the truthfulness and credibility of the cultural values expressed by a cultural heritage site, which can include a variety of attributes such as design, materials, workmanship, and intangible elements such as traditions and language. It ensures that the cultural significance of a place is truly represented and preserved and promotes a genuine connection to its historical and cultural context.<sup>105</sup> Integrity, on the other hand, measures the wholeness and integrity of a place and its characteristics, ensuring that all the necessary elements are included to convey its outstanding universal value. This includes assessing the size, completeness and absence of adverse effects due to the development or neglect of the site. Together, authenticity and integrity are crucial to protect the values and meanings of cultural heritage sites, to promote dialogue and cultural continuity, and to ensure that these sites can be appreciated by future generations.<sup>106</sup> The beforementioned protection of tangible and intangible heritage is a division of heritage in two categories. The "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural

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<sup>104</sup> Knoll, *UNESCO Weltkulturerbe und Tourismus*, 14f.

<sup>105</sup> Jukka Jokilehto, 'Considerations on Authenticity and Integrity in World Heritage Context', 1 January 2006, 8, [https://www.academia.edu/71974412/Considerations\\_on\\_Authenticity\\_and\\_Integrity\\_in\\_World\\_Heritage\\_Context](https://www.academia.edu/71974412/Considerations_on_Authenticity_and_Integrity_in_World_Heritage_Context).

<sup>106</sup> Jokilehto, 13.

Heritage”<sup>107</sup> of 2003 was a significant milestone for the recognition of intangible heritage. Until the end of 2021 there has been a number of 629 ‘objects’ from 140 countries enlisted on the list of intangible heritage.<sup>108</sup> Tangible heritage refers to physical artifacts, buildings, monuments, landscapes, and other material aspects of culture that have historical, artistic, or cultural significance. Examples include the Colosseum and other Roman ruins of the Italian capital and the medieval oldtown of Regensburg in Germany, as addressed in this thesis. Intangible heritage on the other hand comprises non-physical aspects of culture, such as traditions, rituals, music, dance, languages, and knowledge systems. Examples include the oral traditions of indigenous communities, traditional music and dance forms, festivals, and craftsmanship techniques as they are the elements making thousands of years old monuments feel alive. The tangible heritage is therefore the much more obvious reason so visit a place but nowadays also the intangible one gains more awareness. Since the 1972 Convention, the understanding of cultural heritage evolved, and it became clear that the features of intangible heritage were equally important as tangible heritage. The shift towards its recognition had many reasons that developed over time.<sup>109</sup> Key factors were the increasing awareness for the rapid globalisation and its threat to destroy traditional practices and knowledge. Global interconnection is also fuelled by tourism which can be particularly influential to sensitive cultural heritage – especially the intangible one.<sup>110</sup>

Until the 1990s the academic literature focused mainly on the benefits and positive sides of World Heritage Designations. The primary function of the UNESCO and its list was obviously the protection and preservation of heritage sites, but scholars started to recognise and also analyse the socio-economic advantage. Especially the tourism sector was expected to increase after the inscription of a destination to the World Heritage list. The designation of the sites has established itself as a tourist advertising tool, as inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List is still regarded as a sign of quality and high culture. The Heritage List can be seen as a list of international recognition, signalling that the site meets UNESCO's exceptional criteria. This increased visibility and official evaluation of a site can lead to it being seen as a must-see for the cultural tourist to broaden their horizons.<sup>111</sup> But

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<sup>107</sup> UNESCO, ‘Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003’, 2003, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

<sup>108</sup> Călin Veghes, ‘Does Presence on the UNESCO World Heritage List Support Sustainable Development? A Market-Driven Exploratory Approach’, *European Journal of Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (1 June 2023): 276, <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2023.v12n2p274>.

<sup>109</sup> UNESCO, ‘Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003’.

<sup>110</sup> Hans D’ORVILLE, ‘Globalization and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Opportunities, Threats and Challenges’, *GLOBALIZATION AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE*, 2005, 36, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140090?posInSet=1&queryId=N-EXPLORE-75cc080c-c4cf-4249-b2e7-c4959b19584b>.

<sup>111</sup> Roberto Patuelli, Maurizio Mussoni, and Guido Candela, ‘The Effects of World Heritage Sites on Domestic Tourism: A Spatial Interaction Model for Italy’, *Journal of Geographical Systems* 15 (1 July 2013): 376, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10109-013-0184-5>.

there are also voices trying to show that the list doesn't have a significant influence on the tourism development. Several scholars (Cellini 2011; Huang et al. 2012; Gao and Su 2019) describe the economic results as unclear or not actually increasing after the inscription.<sup>112</sup> The opposite scenario is also under consideration by the scientific community. If the promotion of cultural heritage sites proves to be overly effective, tourism figures may experience an uncontrolled increase. Tiziana Cuccia et al. (2013) are discussing the situation in Italy as one of the countries with the most World Heritage Sites. According to them, the national UNESCO sites have registered a big increase in tourism numbers. In the years 1995-2010, the number of beds in the regions of Bolzano, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Umbria and Veneto has already more than doubled. The high tourism inflow can negatively impact the residents and the cultural and natural heritage. When tourism turns into overtourism, the positive effect for heritage destinations has to be questioned.<sup>113</sup> World Heritage destinations suffering from overtourism often have to work even harder on the protection of their intangible heritage to avoid new packaging of traditions and the exploitation of stereotypes to serve the fast and cheap tourism demand. If the heritage sites can't guarantee the protection, the authenticity is at stake. Not only the downgrading but also the expansion of the touristic area can be a consequence of increasing tourism. Already in 2002 Antonio Russo developed the concept of the "vicious circle" of tourism in cultural heritage sites based on the lifecycle scheme by Richard Butler (see Chapter 2 History of Cultural Tourism p.17). His concept graphically demonstrates the negative effects of uncontrolled tourism growth.

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<sup>112</sup> Veghes, 'Does Presence on the UNESCO World Heritage List Support Sustainable Development?', 277.

<sup>113</sup> Tiziana Cuccia, Calogero Guccio, and I. Rizzo, 'Does UNESCO Inscription Affect the Performance of Tourism Destinations? A Regional Perspective', *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 27 February 2013, 7, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2225771>.

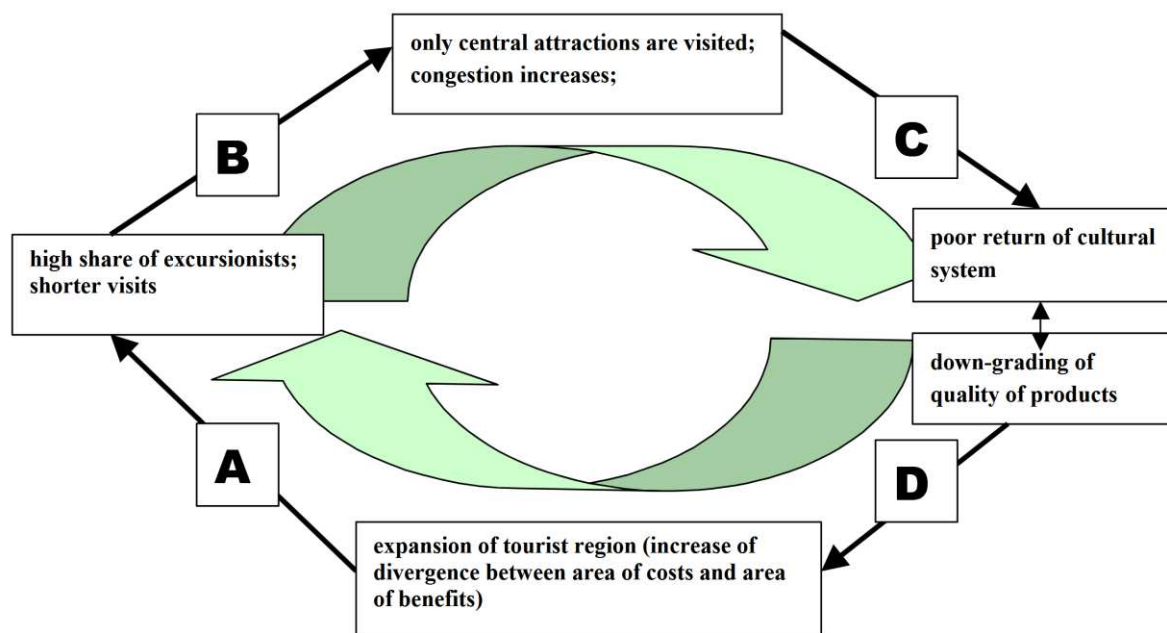


Figure 2: The vicious circle of tourism development in heritage destinations.<sup>114</sup>

The cycle begins with the unplanned expansion of the tourist area without adequate decentralization of the cultural infrastructure (point A). This expansion leads to an increase in day-trippers who spend money outside the centre but still heavily impact the main attractions. Their visits are often short and weather dependent, leading to a concentration in the central areas with minimal cultural engagement. As the number of day trippers increases, traffic congestion becomes a significant problem (point B). The central attractions become overcrowded, which not only lowers the quality of the visitor experience, but also puts immense pressure on the site's management capacity. This overcrowding makes it difficult for visitors to fully appreciate the cultural significance of the site. This uncontrolled growth in tourism means that the site can no longer benefit from it (point C). Overtourism has a negative impact on the performance of attractions and makes them less enjoyable and accessible. The resources required to preserve and promote cultural heritage are becoming scarce and are often beyond the control of local institutions. This lack of control hinders necessary management and conservation measures. Ultimately, this leads to reduced performance of attractions and inadequate management of resources (point D). Local facilities struggle to keep up with the demands and pressures on the heritage site, leading to a deterioration in the overall condition of the site and the visitor experience. This perpetuates the cycle of negative impacts and further contributes to the deterioration of the site.<sup>115</sup> This theory builds up on the assumption that heritage came first and

<sup>114</sup> Antonio Russo, 'THE "VICIOUS CIRCLE" OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN HERITAGE DESTINATIONS', 1 September 2000, 6.

<sup>115</sup> Russo, 7.

tourism afterwards. This is also the idea this thesis is working with: tourism emerged to admire the cultural heritage as a representation of ancient culture and its history. But there are a few studies which try to show another perspective, like Maria Gravari-Barbas paper “Tourism as a heritage producing machine”. The paper argues that tourism plays a crucial role in the creation and confirmation of cultural heritage, whereby places are transformed into heritage sites based on tourist demand and expectations. Furthermore, it suggests that we are entering a new heritage regime, which is driven by the dynamics of tourism.<sup>116</sup>

The theory of tourism as a heritage producer is not very widespread but worth mentioning because it argues that tourism frames heritage as nostalgic and works as a storyteller to promote and develop the idea of heritage. The term ‘manufactured’ heritage goes even a step further by stating that the idea of cultural heritage is only valorised in the Euro-American thought and only got its popularity through the visitor’s gaze from the outside. According to this theory, Western European and American ideologies and aesthetics are being projected on existing heritage all over the world by restoration policies, promotional campaigns and simply by the visitor’s gaze. This ‘heritagization process’ is serving contemporary demands in our globalised world and its standardised values and ideologies.<sup>117</sup> This approach shows that cultural heritage is a complex issue that is not entirely free of negative perspectives.

To address the conflicts surrounding cultural and natural heritage, the United Nations developed the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 with 17 SDGs at core, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals are aimed at sustainability, peace and positive development for people and nature. The SDGs aim on a sustainable balance of the three dimensions of economic, social and environmental development. Some of the SDGs aim indirectly to sustainable tourism. SDG 11, for example, aims to make cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Sustainable tourism practices help to achieve this by ensuring that tourism development is planned and managed in a way that preserves the cultural and natural heritage of urban areas, contributing to the resilience and sustainability of these places. In addition, SDG 8 focuses on promoting sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. By stimulating tourism that benefits local communities economically while preserving their cultural heritage, UNESCO supports the creation of sustainable jobs and inclusive economic growth. Finally, SDG 12 encourages sustainable consumption and production patterns. Sustainable tourism practices supported by UNESCO encourage tourists to use resources responsibly and promote businesses that

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<sup>116</sup> Maria Gravari-Barbas, ‘Tourism as a Heritage Producing Machine’, *Tourism Management Perspectives* 26 (1 April 2018): 5–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.12.002>.

<sup>117</sup> Gravari-Barbas, *A Research Agenda for Heritage Tourism*, 8f.

adhere to sustainable practices, thereby reducing the environmental footprint of tourism activities.<sup>118</sup> By aligning its values with the Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO aims not only to preserve cultural and natural heritage, but also to promote sustainable development that benefits both local communities and the global community. In theory the SDGs and the UNESCO guidelines sound promising, but the practical implementation is very different and in many cases not easily convertible. While World Heritage designation brings undeniable benefits, such as greater visibility, funding and international recognition, it also brings significant challenges. In particular, overtourism poses a critical threat to the sustainability and integrity of World Heritage sites. Local politics and the specific characteristics of individual sites can sometimes hinder the effective implementation of UNESCO strategies, highlighting the need for tailored approaches that take into account both global standards and local realities.<sup>119</sup>

In the following chapter of the case studies of Rome and Regensburg, it is crucial to examine how these cities deal with the pressures of conservation and tourism. Rome, with its ancient monuments and busy urban environment, and Regensburg, with its well-preserved medieval architecture, are contrasting yet complementary examples of how UNESCO World Heritage sites manage the complex interplay of heritage conservation and tourism development. The case studies examine the impact of over-tourism on these sites and the tourism and conservation strategies they adopt to counteract the challenges.

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<sup>118</sup> United Nations, 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', accessed 8 July 2024, <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

<sup>119</sup> Bob McKercher and Hilary Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, Reprinted (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 12.

## Part II: Case Studies and their Challenges

Overtourism poses significant challenges for European cities, especially those that must balance the preservation of their invaluable cultural heritage with the growing demands of a booming tourism industry. This chapter examines the two case studies, Rome and Regensburg, to analyse their respective tourism development trajectories and evaluate the responses and measures implemented by local administrations to manage the impacts. The discussion will finish on identifying the current phase of overtourism in each city, utilizing Richard Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) Theory as a framework. On the basis of this tourism theory, the decisive factors by which the phase of overtourism can be identified will be determined.

### 5. The UNESCO site of Rome

Rome, often referred to as the 'Eternal City', is one of the most historically and culturally significant cities in the world. Founded in 753 BC, Rome became the centre of the Roman Republic and later the Roman Empire, which at its height controlled vast territories in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. This ancient city was the cradle of Western civilisation and shaped modern government, law, architecture and language. Rome's contributions to art and architecture are monumental. During the Renaissance, Rome was a centre of artistic and cultural rebirth, attracting masters such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Bernini. Their works, including the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and St Peter's Basilica, are testament to Rome's enduring influence. The city is rich in historical sights, all of which tell a part of its glorious past. The Roman Forum was the political and economic centre of the Roman Empire, while the Pantheon, with its remarkable dome, is an architectural marvel. Rome's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980 emphasises its outstanding universal value. This status is not only a recognition, but also an obligation to preserve its cultural heritage. The UNESCO inscription includes the historic centre of Rome and, since 1990, the Vatican City and the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, underlining their exceptional historical, aesthetic and spiritual importance.<sup>1</sup> The area of the core zone counts 1.469,7 ha and the buffer zone 7.158,933 ha.<sup>2</sup> The UNESCO World Heritage status brings numerous advantages. It raises Rome's global profile and attracts millions of tourists every year, which significantly boosts the local economy. Tourism contributes to revenue through various channels, such as hospitality, catering and cultural events. It also creates employment opportunities and supports local businesses, strengthening the city's economic resilience. However, this recognition also brings significant challenges, particularly in

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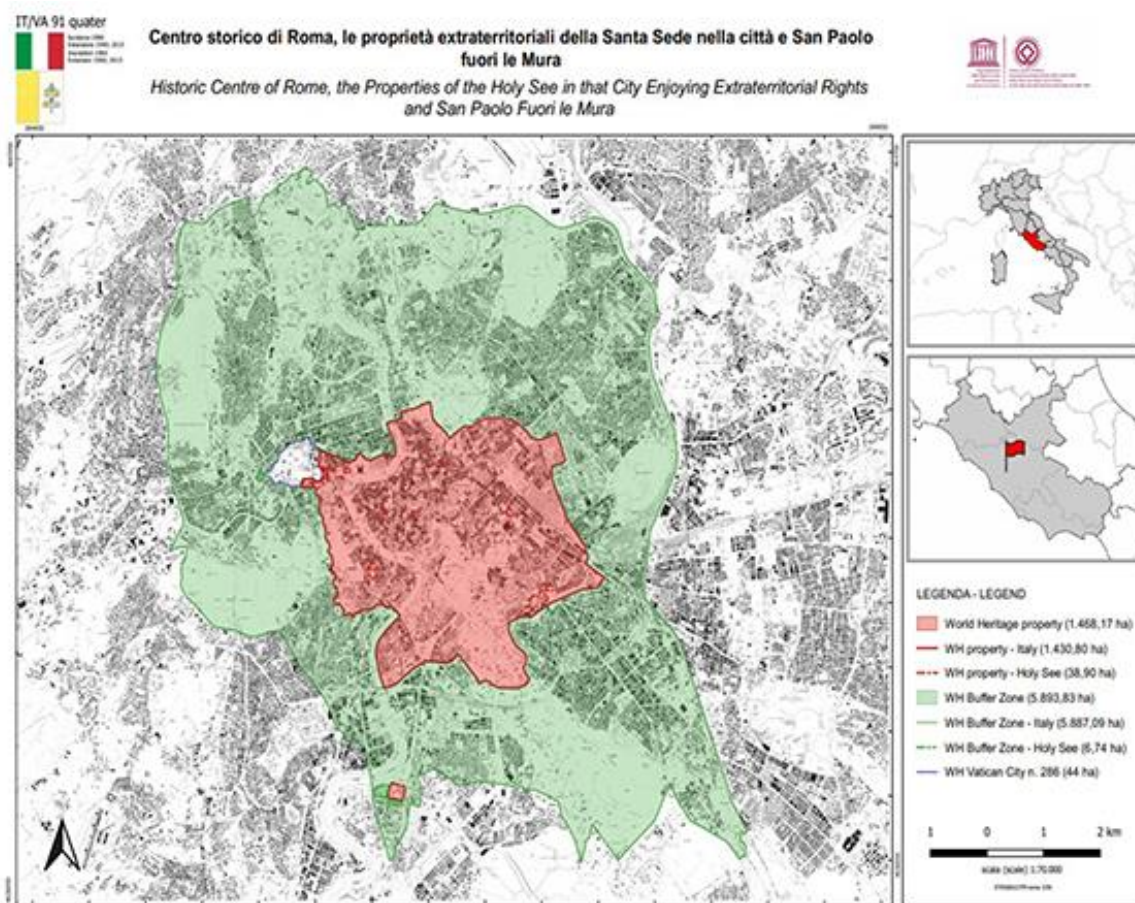
<sup>1</sup> sovraintendenzaroma, 'Sito UNESCO Roma', accessed 10 July 2024, [https://www.sovraintendenzaroma.it/i\\_luoghi/sito\\_unesco](https://www.sovraintendenzaroma.it/i_luoghi/sito_unesco).

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, 'Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in That City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori Le Mura', UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed 25 July 2024, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/91/>.



managing overtourism. The influx of visitors can strain infrastructure, lead to overcrowding and wear and tear on historic sites. Managing these impacts is crucial to preserving Rome's cultural integrity. The increase in tourism can also lead to environmental degradation, including pollution and waste disposal, which jeopardise the sustainability of the city's heritage. Most importantly, the impact on the local population can lead to their dissatisfaction, as they feel that their city is being swamped, leading to rising housing prices and the loss of traditions.

Figure 3: Rome UNESCO cultural heritage area (red) with buffer zone (green)<sup>3</sup>



This chapter includes a detailed case study of the UNESCO cultural heritage site of Rome and its challenges of overtourism. In order to understand the development of tourism and the problems associated with overtourism as accurately as possible, statistical data will be evaluated, national and local tourism laws and policies will be analysed. The chapter continues with an outlook on the catholic church's holy year 2025 and the associated challenges for tourism. Finally, the city's tourism strategy and the management of the cultural heritage and the challenges associated with it will be examined. The statistical data is taken from the online archive of the Municipality of Rome. Unfortunately, there

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO Roma, 'Mappa Perimetro Sito UNESCO 2009', *Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in That City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori Le Mura* (blog), accessed 10 July 2024, <https://romasitounesco.it/download/mappa-perimetro-sito-unesco/>.

is no available data for the exact area of the UNESCO area and the data for the individual city districts is too incomplete to be meaningful. For this reason, the data for the whole of Rome is included, bearing in mind that tourists mainly stay in the World Heritage area, where most of the accommodation and museums are located. Even if those numbers are not exactly mirroring the development on the cultural heritage area, they paint an accurate picture about the tourism development in the eternal city which often concentrates in the historic centre. The period from 2009-2019 is chosen as the time frame in order to be able to determine any changes and at the same time exclude the distortion of the data since the Covid year 2020. As this analysis is centred on the development of tourism, such a dramatic censoring of tourism would distort the results. Even if the tourism figures for 2024 appear to be on the way back to pre-Covid numbers, the statistics are not yet fully finalised and available and are not yet sufficiently representative for the purpose of this analysis. To analyse the development of heritage tourism in Rome as accurately as possible, basic data such as visitor arrivals and presences, as well as the number of accommodations and the number of museum visitors are examined.

The most significant number, the tourist arrivals in Rome, increased from 9,620,753 in 2009 to 19,454,354 in 2019. Accordingly, the number of tourists has more than doubled within ten years, which in itself underlines the thesis of the enormous growth in tourism.

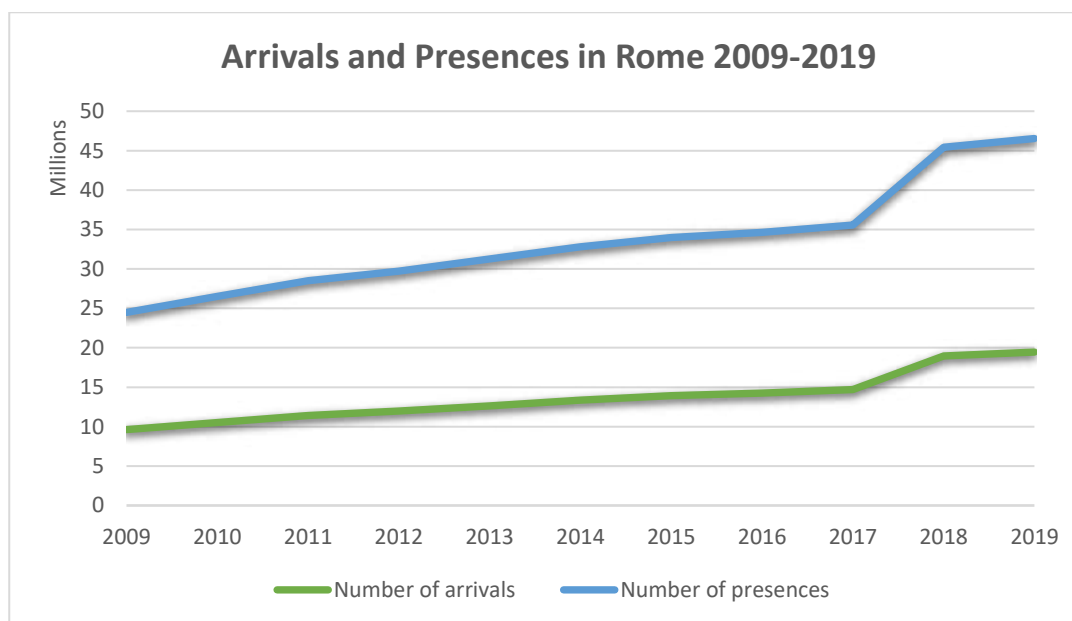


Figure 4: Number of Arrivals and Presences in Rome from 2009-2019.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Compiled from: Comune di Roma, 'Cap. 8 Turismo 2020', Annuario statistico 2020 (Rome: Comune di Roma, 2020), [https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/08\\_Turismo\\_2020.pdf](https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/08_Turismo_2020.pdf).; Comune di Roma, 'Annuario Statistico 2015' (Rome, 2015), <https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/ANNUARIOSTATISTICO2015.pdf>.; Comune di Roma, 'Annuario Statistico 2010' (Rome, 2010), [https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Annuario\\_2010.pdf](https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Annuario_2010.pdf).

In 2009, this number of arrivals was made up of 42% Italians, 31% Europeans, 13% US-Americans and 14% other nations. In 2019 this composition didn't change significantly but the number of Italians increased to 47%, 9,173,041 in total numbers. This shows that Italians themselves make up almost half of the tourists in Rome. Tourists in general seem to spend less time in hotel accommodations (*esercizi ricettivi alberghieri*) with an average of 2.4 days in 2009 and 2019 than in complementary accommodation (*esercizi ricettivi complementari*) with 3.1 in 2009 and 2.5 in 2019. This decrease in the average length of stay in complementary accommodation, which includes B&Bs, holiday homes and campsites, can also be seen as a sign of overtourism, as tourists prefer to come for a short period of time, which reduces the economic benefit to the city but still puts the same strain on the infrastructure.

But not only the visitor's behaviour has changed within this ten-year period, also the service providers adjusted to the tourism development by creating more accommodation facilities. With a total of 5,909 accommodations in 2009 and 12,212 in 2019, the offer in the sector more than doubled.<sup>5</sup> It is important to underline here, that hotel sector actually decreased from 1365 to 1036 hotels, but the complementary accommodations increased from 4544 to 11,270, which is an impressive growth of 148%. This dramatic increase highlights the surge in demand for diverse lodging options, reflecting changes in tourist preferences and the proliferation of alternative accommodation platforms like Airbnb. In 2009, Airbnb had only just launched and had very few listings worldwide, including in Rome. By 2019, however, the number of Airbnb listings in Rome had increased significantly, as can be seen from the number of additional accommodation options. In August 2019, there were over 20,000 listings for entire flats and more than 11,000 listings for private and shared rooms in Rome.<sup>6</sup> However, this additional data provided by the website [insideairbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) also shows that the city of Rome has not included the full register of Airbnb listings in its statistics, as otherwise the official number of additional accommodation options would more than triple. This example once again highlights the unclear boundaries and difficulties in defining tourist accommodations. In addition, there are obviously the grey areas of official registration of short-term rentals. The short-term rental market grew very fast and mostly uncontrolled by the local administrations which lead to an increasing invasion of the local housing market. In the study "Overtourism and online short-term rental platforms in Italian cities"<sup>7</sup>, Filippo Celata, professor at the University of La Sapienza, argues that 70-90% of the depopulation of central areas of cities such as Rome and Venice are due to the

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<sup>5</sup> Istat, 'Capacità degli esercizi ricettivi. Anno 2009', Agosto 2010, <https://www.istat.it/tavole-di-dati/capacita-degli-esercizi-ricettivi-anno-2009/>; Comune di Roma, 'Cap. 8 Turismo 2020'.

<sup>6</sup> Massimiliano Crisci et al., 'Spatio-Temporal Variations and Contextual Factors of the Supply of Airbnb in Rome. An Initial Investigation', *Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences* 15, no. 2 (August 2022): 243, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12076-022-00302-y>.

<sup>7</sup> Filippo Celata and Antonello Romano, 'Overtourism and Online Short-Term Rental Platforms in Italian Cities', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 30, no. 5 (4 May 2022): 1020–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1788568>.

conversion of flats into short-term rentals. As a long-awaited response to the housing market crisis, the Italian government has decided to further restrict the market for short-term rentals (i.e. stays of between one and 30 nights), as provided for in the draft law approved by the Ministry of Tourism in June 2023. The text, which is to be converted into a decree law, contains two important and potentially revolutionary measures for the market: the minimum stay of two nights and the national identification code (Cin). This favours the hotel sector, which is the only solution available for one-night stays.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, implementing the measures in Italy is not always so easy, as the administration of the Italian tourism sector is fragmented. Regional and national authorities are often in conflict with each other, leading to overlapping regulation and inefficiency. In particular, the constitutional reform of 2001 transferred control over certain sectors, including tourism, from the central government to the regions, which means that regional policies can differ significantly from national ones and can clash. Not only the accommodation sector experienced a huge increase in visitor numbers, also the cultural sector of the city recorded high numbers over the past few years. Most of the state and municipal Museums of Rome are situated in the Municipio I, in the centre. The total number of visitors to the museums in the World Heritage Site area was 8,956,751 in 2009, but then rose to a total of 22,142,525 by 2019. Over the ten-year period, museum closures, new openings and mergers of various museums must be taken into account, which is why the figures may not be exactly comparable. Nonetheless, an increase of up to 140% in visitor numbers can be assumed, which clearly demonstrates the increasing popularity and tourist appeal of Rome's cultural offerings.

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<sup>8</sup> Alessia Conzonato e Valeriano Musiu, 'Roma e Venezia si spopolano? «È anche colpa di Airbnb»: i dati della Sapienza', *Corriere della Sera*, 27 September 2023, [https://www.corriere.it/economia/casa/23\\_settembre\\_27/roma-veneziaspopolano-anche-colpa-airbnb-dati-sapienza-3195aa52-5c45-11ee-abb6-3e1ca69e756d.shtml](https://www.corriere.it/economia/casa/23_settembre_27/roma-veneziaspopolano-anche-colpa-airbnb-dati-sapienza-3195aa52-5c45-11ee-abb6-3e1ca69e756d.shtml).

Table 1: Impact and Challenges of Overtourism in Rome<sup>9</sup>

Category	Challenges	Details
<b>Environmental Impact</b>	Pollution	Increased air and noise pollution due to high tourist number; Waste management issues with overflowing bins and litter in tourist hotspots.
	Wear and Tear	Damage to ancient monuments and archaeological sites; Degradation of natural areas like parks and public gardens
<b>Infrastructure Strain</b>	Transportation	Overcrowded public transport systems (buses, metro); Traffic congestion leading to longer commute times and increased emissions
	Public Services	Strain on public amenities such as restrooms, clean water supply, and waste disposal; Increased maintenance costs for roads and public infrastructure.
<b>Socio-Economic Effects</b>	Housing Market	Surge in short-term rentals driving up housing price; Displacement of local residents due to higher rental costs and property values.
	Local Businesses	Shift from traditional local shops to tourist-centric businesses (souvenir shops, international chains); Economic benefits of tourism unevenly distributed, often bypassing local communities
	Cultural Identity	Commodification of cultural heritage and local traditions; Loss of authentic local experiences due to tourist-driven changes.
<b>Specific Events Impact</b>	Jubilee Year 2025	Anticipated massive influx of visitors; Pressure on city infrastructure and need for extensive preparatory measures.

Looking into the future, the tourism sector in Rome doesn't seem to catch a break soon. The year 2025 is a jubilee year for the catholic church, which means an increase of pilgrims and visitors for the city. The predictions are talking about a number of 30-35 million tourist arrivals, which makes 105 million presences. The newspaper Roma Today rightly states that this number of tourists on the number of 400,000 beds is a major problem. Demand therefore threatens to be significantly higher than the available accommodation. But Rome obviously doesn't want to miss out on the 16.7 billion euros that this visitor boom would bring in. A race against time is therefore underway to expand hotels

<sup>9</sup> Author's own creation based on chapter analysis.

and open new ones. The city also expects higher revenues from the increase in 5-star accommodation. In the coming years, 30% of all lodgings are predicted to be of high quality. Rome also expects higher spending from wealthier tourists and, in turn, the opportunity to raise the quality of its own visitor offer. Current major projects in the hostel sector include the transformation of Palazzo Marini in Piazza San Silvestro into a Four Seasons luxury hotel and the merging of ten separate buildings between Via Boncompagni and Via Sallustiana into a single luxury hotel building, a Mandarin Oriental. But not everyone agrees that new luxury hotels need to be built to stem the flow of tourists - as currently foreseen in the city of Rome's tourism concept. A model of sustainable tourism is still too small a part of this concept. Especially as there are enough proposals that deal with the revitalisation of unused buildings and properties, for example, which would not only benefit the hotel sector but also the housing market. The press also seems to take a particularly dubious view of the mayors' constant desire for more beds, while they are the same people who are concerned about overtourism.<sup>10</sup> But even Alessandro Onorato, Roma Capitale's councillor for tourism, admits that there is a certain risk of Rome being overwhelmed by tourist flows before the city is ready to cope with them. According to the city council, it is above all the patchy infrastructure that could fuel overtourism. A lack of capacity and large gaps in the infrastructure are no secret in Rome. However, the jubilee year is seen as an opportunity to close these gaps, at least in part.<sup>11</sup> At the 3rd National Tourism Day in March 2024, the Mayor of Rome spoke on the topic of "The big events: The 2025 Jubilee and the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympic Games as a flywheel for a new dimension in Italian tourism". It was emphasised that the city wants to intensively expand its offer for visitors and heavily improve its infrastructure. Particular focus is being placed on partnerships such as those with the Chamber of Commerce and the Roma Airport. The meeting also addressed the ongoing work in the context of the Jubilee, including the parks overlooking the Tiber, the opening of new museums, the 335 Caput Mundi interventions, the report on the reception of tourists through a geolocalised application to guide them, the 12.4 million from the UNESCO call for proposals for promotional projects and the modernisation of conference facilities.<sup>12</sup> The improvement of the infrastructure and the preparations for the jubilee is bringing a lot of construction sites to the city. In the moment the officials are talking about over 400 construction sites which are supported by investments of the Giubileo (*jubilee*) fund and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). These projects are aimed at enhancing Rome's infrastructure, cultural heritage, and public spaces to accommodate the

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<sup>10</sup> Valerio Valeri, 'Per il Giubileo a Roma arriveranno 35 milioni di turisti, ma i posti letto non sono sufficienti', *RomaToday*, 28 March 2024, <https://www.romatoday.it/politica/giubileo-roma-turisti-rischio-overbooking.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Gianluca De Rosa, 'La nuova Ita, il Giubileo: Roma alla prova del turismo', 4 July 2024, <https://www.ilfoglio.it/roma-capoccia/2024/07/04/news/la-nuova-ita-il-giubileo-roma-alla-prova-del-turismo-6714391/>.

<sup>12</sup> Roma Capitale, 'Giubileo, Gualtieri: "Attesi 30 milioni di visitatori, al lavoro per ampliare offerta"', *Roma Capitale*, 27 March 2024, <https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/notizia.page?contentId=NWS1173485>.

influx of pilgrims and tourists expected during the event. In March the authorities launched the website [romasitrasforma.it](https://romasitrasforma.it), a platform on which the citizens can look up a map of all the works in Rome and their current progress. This dynamic map promises more transparency for local residents, who have to suffer from the obstructions and restrictions caused by the construction sites in order to meet tourist demand. Despite the great effort and disruption, the mayor, Roberto Gualtieri, is right that all this overdue infrastructural construction work would probably not have been possible on this scale and at this pace without the pressure of the Jubilee and the PNRR fund. The works also include the cultural heritage sites and thus improve access to and preservation of the UNESCO heritage for visitors.<sup>13</sup> The Jubilee is therefore being hailed by the city as an opportunity to improve the tourist infrastructure and offer. All these large-scale plans and projects sound very promising, but one should not forget the mayor's self-criticism that the city may not be able to cope with the influx of visitors. At this point, we can only wait and hope that the 'Giubileo 2025' project does not take overtourism in Rome to a new level.

Besides the latest developments for the Jubilee in Rome, the city has already developed a tourism concept in 2019, which was presented at the 'La Nuvola' Convention Centre and deals with the rapid development of the number of visitors and its impact on the city. The "Piano Strategico di Sviluppo del Turismo 2019-2025" for Rome, known as FUTOUROMA, aims to manage and enhance Rome's tourism by making it sustainable, socially beneficial, and economically viable. FUTOUROMA outlines several key priorities, including focussing on increasing the attractiveness of Rome, improving accessibility and infrastructure, and ensuring the city's competitiveness in the global tourism market. The focus is on sustainable tourism practices that are designed to meet the needs of both visitors and residents. It also aims to change Rome's image from a purely cultural heritage and artistic destination to a vibrant, modern metropolis.<sup>14</sup> The actual document on the tourism plan is neither on the website of Roma Capitale nor on the new [turismoroma.it](https://turismoroma.it) site. It is not clear whether a more detailed document exists than the articles on the meeting. However, there are detailed articles and announcements about the plan, which outline its goals and initiatives. The plan focuses on enhancing tourism sustainability, creating a "Made in Roma" quality mark, establishing a dedicated tourism police force, and forming a Destination Management Organization (DMO) to manage and promote tourism efforts collaboratively. These initiatives are aimed at transforming Rome into a sustainable and high-quality tourism destination. Increasing Rome's attractiveness as a global tourist

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<sup>13</sup> Maria Egizia Fiaschetti, 'Roma, oltre 400 cantieri in un clic: i lavori di Giubileo e Pnrr sulle mappe interattive', *Corriere della Sera*, 13 March 2024, sec. Roma, oltre 400 cantieri in un clic: i lavori di Giubileo e Pnrr sulle mappe interattive, [https://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/24\\_marzo\\_13/roma-oltre-400-cantieri-in-un-clic-i-lavori-di-giubileo-e-pnrr-sulle-mappe-interattive-bdab7b8f-dc96-4a91-8141-da1c6ee44xik.shtml](https://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/24_marzo_13/roma-oltre-400-cantieri-in-un-clic-i-lavori-di-giubileo-e-pnrr-sulle-mappe-interattive-bdab7b8f-dc96-4a91-8141-da1c6ee44xik.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> 'The Strategic Tourism Plan for Rome 2019> 2025', Turismo Roma, 13 November 2019, <https://www.turismoroma.it/en/page/strategic-tourism-plan-rome-2019-2025>.

destination involves not only marketing and advertising campaigns, but also the improvement of tourist information services and the introduction of the "Made in Roma" brand. This brand is intended to certify the quality of various tourist services and ensure that visitors experience the best that Rome has to offer. Sustainability and integration are also emphasised in the plan with the aim of making the development of tourism environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. This includes measures to avoid overtourism, such as promoting travel outside the peak season and developing initiatives for environmentally friendly tourism. These strategies should reduce the strain on the city's resources and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Another important aspect is the improvement of hospitality and the overall tourist experience. This includes the establishment of a specialised tourist police force to increase safety and legality in the sector, as well as improving the training of staff in customer service. Such measures ensure that visitors feel safe and well looked after, leading to repeat visits and positive word of mouth. The use of data and analysis is emphasised as the basis for tourism strategies. Developing systems to collect and analyse tourism data enables better decision making and more responsive management of tourist flows. This data-driven approach helps to identify trends and proactively address issues. Effective management and funding are essential to the success of these initiatives. It is proposed that a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) be established to centralise efforts and improve coordination between stakeholders. This organisation should ensure that tourism development is in line with the city's wider strategic objectives and is sustainably funded. Finally, the training and professionalisation of tourism staff is also given high priority. Offering training programmes, developing educational partnerships with universities and promoting continuous professional development will ensure that those working in tourism have the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to a quality visitor experience.<sup>15</sup> The goals of the Futouroma plan are ambitious, but are based on practical measures that can be realised with the right commitment and resources. Initiatives such as the Made in Roma brand and the tourism police have clear, immediate impact and are steps that other cities have already successfully implemented. Nevertheless, up to this point, five years after the publication of the Tourism Plan, there is nothing to be found about an active implementation of a Tourism Police or the Made in Roma Brand. Even if such plans cannot be implemented overnight, it would still be appropriate to keep the population up to date instead of letting promising plans dry up. Unfortunately, decisions and plans are often left behind from one change of government to the next under different mayors. In contrast to other objectives of the tourism strategy, however, the idea for the DMO was addressed from 2020. The city has decided to commission Zètema, a project culture company, to set up an operational task

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<sup>15</sup> Roma Capitale, 'Turismo, piano strategico FUTOUROMA 2019 > 2025: governo dei flussi per sostenibilità e qualità' (Rome, 13 November 2019), [https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/CS\\_13novembre2019\\_Turismo\\_FUTOUROMA.pdf](https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/CS_13novembre2019_Turismo_FUTOUROMA.pdf).



force to take over certain functions of the DMO, in particular communication.<sup>16</sup> The involvement of Zètema for tourism management was certainly a good decision because they are still involved in important projects, implementation and recruitment. Nevertheless, the results of the targets set for 2019 are rather modest, even if the local government theoretically still has until 2025 to pursue further goals. Overtourism is clearly not addressed enough and not taken seriously, although this may also be due to the fact that the phenomenon was only just emerging in 2019. The focus of the plan is undoubtedly still on increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of Rome as a visitor destination. The awareness of the needs of city dwellers and visitors is partly there but needs to be further developed if the city is serious about tackling the problem of overtourism. As shown in the examples, the state and local government are trying to promote sustainable tourism strategies, but the importance of economic income from the tourism sector is still one of the largest in Italy, so any restriction has its price. Due to this enormous influence of tourism and also of external and international stakeholders, it is difficult to enforce really effective restrictions. Therefore, the affected population is often not satisfied with the results or lack of implementation of the tourism management of the cities affected by overtourism.

The feeling of being left alone by the decision-makers has led to the emergence of various initiatives and NGOs in recent years that campaign for the rights of residents. One of these movements, for example, is 'Retake Roma', a prominent grassroots movement focused on reclaiming and revitalizing the city's public spaces. Founded in 2009, the organization mobilizes residents to participate in activities aimed at improving urban decency and environmental sustainability. Their actions include Graffiti removal and clean-up drives, educational campaigns to raise awareness about urban spaces and its use, and last but not least the collaboration with local authorities to advocate for policies that prioritize the needs of residents and ensure sustainable tourism practices.<sup>17</sup> Another important group is 'Per Roma', an initiative which focuses on policy advocacy and community support, by addressing the socio-economic impacts of overtourism. Per Roma provides legal support to residents facing eviction or unfair rental practices, often exacerbated by the short-term rental market and organises meetings where residents can voice their concerns and collaborate on solutions. They also created lobbies for regulations that protect residential housing and prevent the conversion of homes into tourist accommodations.<sup>18</sup> The aim of these initiatives is to ensure that the rights and interests of local residents are not pushed into the background by the demands of the tourism industry.

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<sup>16</sup> 'Task Force con funzioni di DMO » Zètema', Zètema, accessed 23 July 2024, <https://www.zetema.it/attivita/task-force-con-funzioni-di-dmo/>.

<sup>17</sup> 'Retake Roma attiva nella cura dei beni comuni!', Retake Roma, accessed 25 July 2024, <https://retake.org/roma/associazione/>.

<sup>18</sup> 'Per Roma. L'Associazione', Per Roma, 1 January 2024, <https://www.perroma.org/associazione/>.

Both the inhabitants and the cultural heritage are to be protected from overtourism. This is already provided for in the management plan for the cultural heritage site in Rome, which was drawn up in 2009 and updated in 2017. The plan is very detailed and emphasizes above all the potential opportunity for tourism growth through the designation as a cultural heritage site. At the same time, however, it also emphasizes sustainable management and the potential danger posed by large numbers of tourists to the sometimes fragile and thousands of years old cultural heritage. Overall, the dual role of tourism as a challenge and an opportunity for the preservation of cultural heritage is emphasised.<sup>19</sup> The need to protect Rome's cultural heritage is demonstrated by the increasing number of headlines in recent years reporting on the wilful vandalism of ruins, some of which are ancient. Among the most famous ones, the Colosseum, damaged by carvings into the thousand-year-old stones. The law regarding the destruction of or damage to a public building or building intended for public use or the practice of a cult, foresees imprisonment for up to three years.<sup>20</sup> But it is not just a question of wilful destruction but also of respect for the city's cultural assets. A classic example is the ban on bathing in the Trevi Fountain, which is regularly broken by tourists. Legendary film classics such as *La Dolce Vita* always find imitators who disregard the restrictions and jump into the fountain for an unforgettable photo. From this perspective, one could also condemn the authorities' decision to grant the Netflix show 'Berlin' permission to film a scene in the Trevi Fountain.<sup>21</sup> Such a popular international show could attract a new wave of imitators. The fountain is one of the most important landmarks in Rome, so bathing in it by inconsiderate visitors may well be seen as a disrespectful gesture by Romans. Local authorities need to make decisions on urban development in order to maintain a balance between modernisation and cultural heritage. The preservation of an authentic urban landscape is crucial for the representative function of the cultural heritage. Therefore, the authenticity of the tourist offer, from gastronomy to other businesses, must also be preserved. Back in 2019, there was a major scandal when the city authorised the fast-food giant McDonalds to open a restaurant next to the ancient Caracalla thermal baths. However, after large protests were heard, the authorities stopped the project, which would have included a car park with 180 parking spaces in addition to the restaurant. The reason given by the city was that it was a protected cultural heritage site and that such a project was therefore not justifiable. On the other hand, gastronomy in the city

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<sup>19</sup> 'Piano di Gestione del Sito Patrimonio Mondiale UNESCO "Centro storico di Roma, le proprietà extraterritoriali della Santa Sede all'interno della città e San Paolo fuori le Mura"', 2009, 21f, <https://romasitounesco.it/sito-unesco/il-piano-di-gestione/>.

<sup>20</sup> Francesca Mulas, 'Graffiti sul Colosseo, bagni nelle fontane e banchetti sui monumenti, ecco la nuova frontiera del turismo vandalico', *Tiscali Cultura*, 8 August 2023, <https://cultura.tiscali.it/arte/articoli/poche-condanne-per-i-vandalisti-del-turismo/>.

<sup>21</sup> "'Berlin'", l'ultimo Colpo a Roma è Il Bagno Notturno Nella Fontana Di Trevi - La Repubblica', accessed 26 July 2024, [https://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli/tv-radio/2023/12/27/news/berlino\\_lultimo\\_colpo\\_a\\_roma\\_e\\_il\\_bagno\\_notturno\\_nella\\_fontana\\_di\\_trevi-421760047/](https://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli/tv-radio/2023/12/27/news/berlino_lultimo_colpo_a_roma_e_il_bagno_notturno_nella_fontana_di_trevi-421760047/).

centre is necessary to satisfy the demand of tourists and not to create a kind of museum in the old town.<sup>22</sup>

The tourism development in Rome is a complicated topic influenced by various parties like the government, private stakeholders and residential initiatives. The stage of (over)tourism is hard to identify because it's always a matter of perspective and definition. The Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model (p.10), by Richard Butler is a useful framework for analysing the tourism development of tourism destinations. This model outlines six stages: Exploration, Involvement, Development, Consolidation, Stagnation, and optionally Rejuvenation or Decline. Each stage represents a different phase in the life of a tourism destination, from its initial discovery by a few adventurous tourists to its potential decline due to overuse and capacity issues. The 2020 paper by Fatma Yasli and Oktay Emir helps identify the context of overtourism in Butlers TALC. According to the paper, the early stage of overtourism begins already in the development stage when the visitor numbers increase rapidly with a parallel establishment of tourism infrastructures and activities. Due to a rapid overuse of the limited resources and capacity, the negative effects of tourism are starting to have an effect on the daily lives of the residents. These consequences are spreading, and the negative effects are getting more intense until the overtourism reaches its maximum with the stagnation phase. At this point the negative impacts are finally so high, that the tourism destination is losing its appeal to potential visitors because of overtourism and the local population feels displaced.<sup>23</sup>

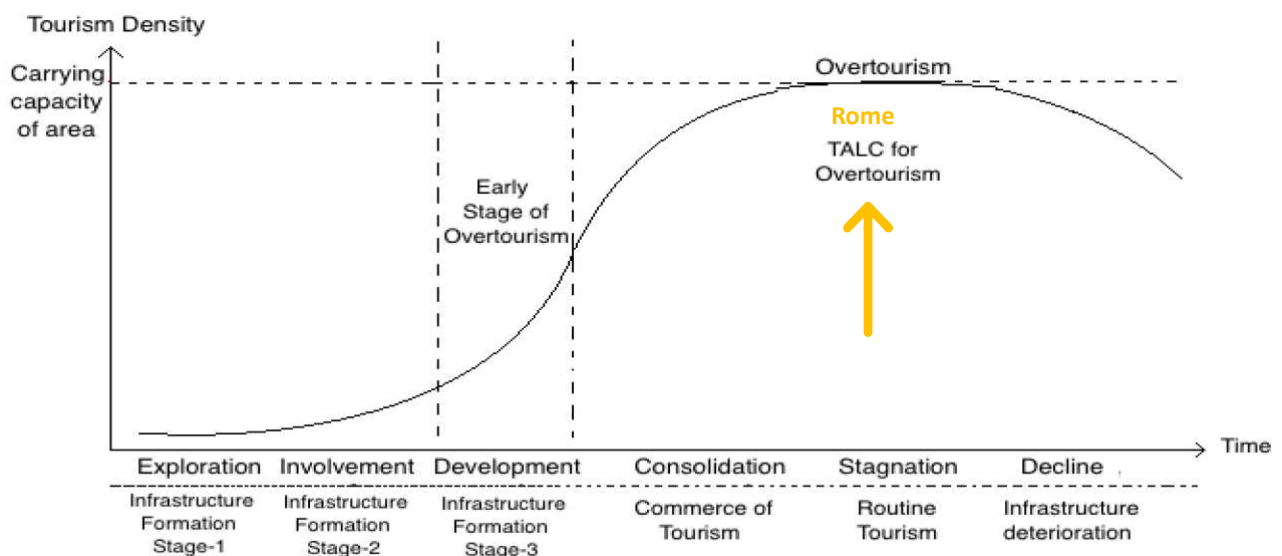


Figure 5: TALC with overtourism in Rome. Early Stage of Overtourism on Tourism Area Life Cycle.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Mark Thatcher, 'L'equilibrio difficile tra tutela del patrimonio e turismo di massa', *Il Sole 24 ORE*, 25 October 2019, sec. Commenti, <https://www.ilssole24ore.com/art/l-equilibrio-difficile-tutela-patrimonio-e-turismo-massa-ACa5gLu>.

<sup>23</sup> Oktay Emir and Fatma Yasli, 'Conceptual Study on Early Stage of Overtourism in the Tourism Area Life Cycle Perspective: The Case of Eskişehir', *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies* 8 (9 December 2020): 20, <https://doi.org/10.21325/jotags.2020.667>.

<sup>24</sup> Emir and Yasli, 20.

Based on the previous analysis of this chapter, overtourism emerged in Rome in relation to the increasing visitor numbers and the accommodation numbers. But also ambitious projects like the jubilee paired with a lack of action and governance by the tourism strategy pushes the city further into a direction which could be identified as the stagnation stage. For Rome, applying the TALC model reveals that it is very close or already in the stagnation stage. This stage is characterized by peak tourist numbers, leading to significant challenges such as overcrowding at major attractions, strain on public infrastructure, and negative impacts on the quality of life for local residents and stressed local resources. The city experiences substantial environmental degradation and the deterioration of its cultural heritage sites due to excessive visitor traffic. The city faces capacity issues, with frequent congestion and pressure on services, highlighting the need for sustainable tourism practices to manage and rejuvenate its tourism sector effectively for both visitors and residents. In the context of the TALC model, the rejuvenation stage represents a critical phase where a destination undertakes strategic initiatives to counteract the negative impacts of overtourism and revitalize its tourism appeal. For Rome, entering the rejuvenation stage would involve several key actions and strategies aimed at sustaining its cultural heritage, enhancing the tourist experience, and improving the quality of life for residents.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Richard W. Butler, 'Overtourism and the Tourism Area Life Cycle', in *Overtourism. Issues, Realities and Solutions*, ed. Rachel Dodds and Richard Butler (De Gruyter, 2019), 77, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110607369-006>.

## 6. The UNESCO site of Regensburg

Regensburg, located in south-east Germany, is a city of great historical and cultural importance. Founded by the Romans in 179 AD as *Castra Regina*, it is still one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Germany. Its strategic location at the northernmost point of the Danube has made it a central centre for trade and administration throughout history. The city's architecture is a testament to its long and varied past. The Stone Bridge, built in the 12th century, is a marvel of medieval engineering, while St Peter's Cathedral is an example of extraordinary Gothic architecture. The old town of Regensburg is often referred to as 'the most northern city in Italy', as it is strongly influenced by Italian architecture, which is particularly evident in the Romanesque and Gothic patrician castles and large burgher house complexes with their noble towers that characterise the cityscape. Regensburg's historical significance is also emphasised by its important function during the Holy Roman Empire. The city was the scene of numerous imperial diets, which were of central importance for the political life and decisions of the empire.<sup>26</sup> The city's wealth and status in the Middle Ages is reflected in its rich architectural heritage, which includes more than 1,000 protected buildings. Regensburg's Old Town and the *Stadtamhof* district were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006 to emphasise the city's exceptional preservation and historical value. The UNESCO World Heritage designation recognises Regensburg's outstanding universal value and highlights its well-preserved medieval urban landscape, which offers an insight into the social and architectural history of a major European trading centre.<sup>27</sup> This prestigious status also has an impact on tourism. It has significantly increased the city's visibility on the world stage and attracts tourists interested in history, culture and architecture. The influx of visitors has brought economic benefits and stimulated local businesses, including hospitality, catering and commerce. However, it also presents a challenge when it comes to managing tourist flows and preserving the historic integrity of the city. The designation emphasises the need for sustainable tourism practices to ensure that Regensburg's cultural and historical heritage is preserved for future generations.

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<sup>26</sup> Dr Eugen Trapp, 'Warum das Denkmälerensemble „Altstadt Regensburg mit Stadtamhof“ die Eintragung in die Liste der Welterbestätten verdient', *Adressbuch Regensburg*, no. 76 (2007 2006), <https://www.statistik-regensburg.de/menue/publikationen.php>.

<sup>27</sup> Matthias Ripp, 'UNESCO World Heritage and Development in Regensburg. In: *Welterbestätte Weiterbauen. 20 Jahre UNESCO-Welterbe Graz*. p.220-237', 2019, 227.

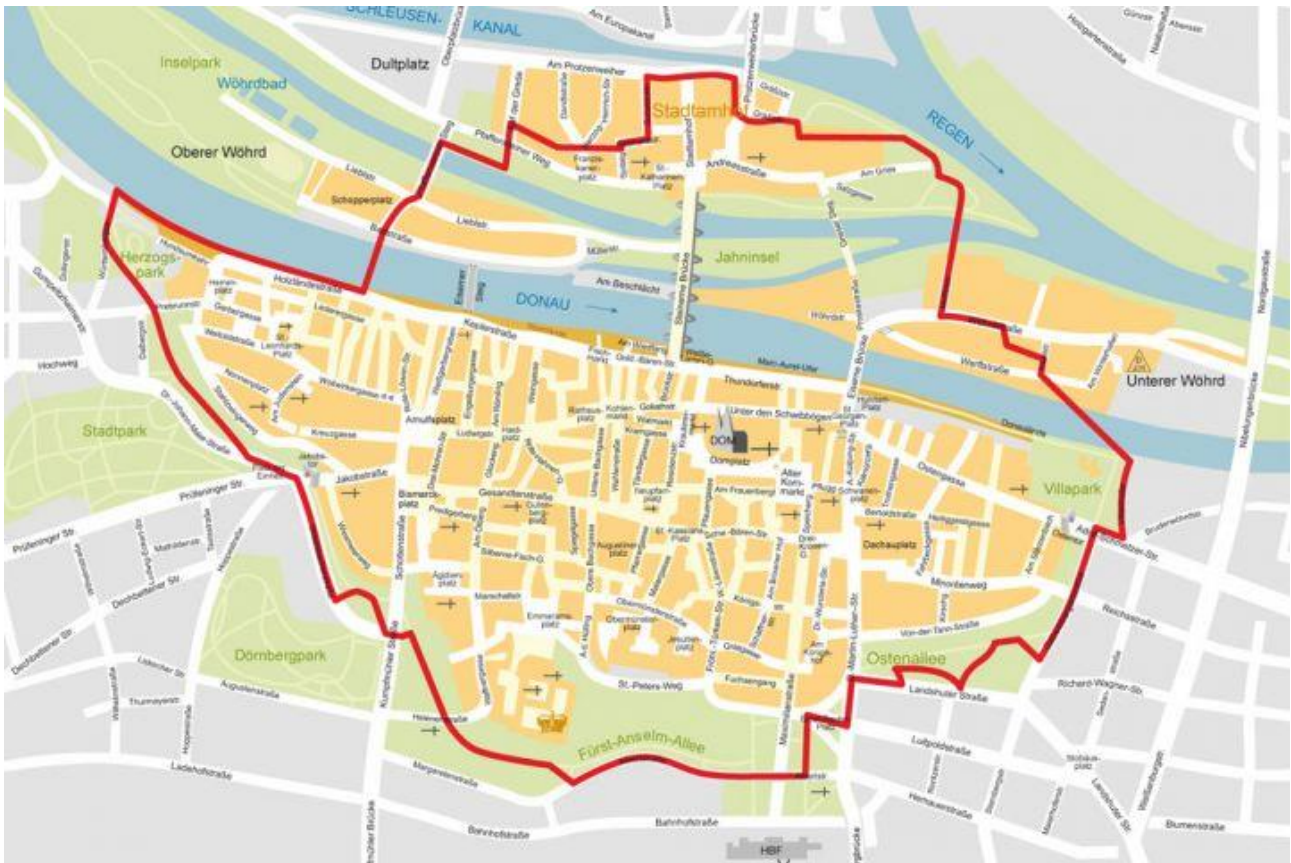


Figure 6: Core zone of the Cultural Heritage site of Regensburg with Stadtamhof.<sup>28</sup>

This Chapter will be structured similar to the case study of Rome. The heritage site of Regensburg will be thoroughly analysed regarding the state of overtourism and its pressure on the UNESCO site. After a historical introduction of the city development and the heritage site nomination, the data analysis of the relevant tourism numbers will follow. Then the main overtourism challenges the heritage city is facing will be investigated and evaluated. Afterwards, the tourism laws and strategies on the national, regional, and local level will be explored to get an idea about the overtourism awareness in the administrative apparatus. In the centre of this part will be the strategies of the World Heritage Coordination and the City of Regensburg who developed a management plan for the UNESCO site and also drafted a tourism concept for the city in 2017, which was updated in 2021. For the data analysis, mainly the statistics from the webpage of the city of Regensburg are used. The statistical yearbook of Regensburg is available for the years 2009 - 2019 since this is the period relevant to our overtourism analysis. The yearbooks give a statistical overview of the tourism and accommodation sector of the city without going into detail about the separate neighbourhoods and districts. As in the case of Rome it is therefore not possible to break down the numbers only to the area of the cultural world heritage site of Regensburg. Considering that the whole old town of

<sup>28</sup> 'Schematische Darstellung Der Welterbe-Kernzone', The World Heritage Site, accessed 8 August 2024, <https://www.regensburg.de/welterbe/en/world-heritage-site>.

Regensburg is UNESCO site, most of the tourists concentrate in this area and book their accommodations there. Therefore, the statistics of the city are significant enough to analyse overtourism in the cultural heritage site. Another challenge for the analysis is, that the statistical yearbooks only consider hotels and accommodations which can host more than nine guests. This means that the graphs exclude the number of guests hosted in private accommodations and small vacation houses like Airbnb. These numbers have to be taken from other sources, which are not yet 100% reliable because platforms like Airbnb were only obliged to make their data available by European law since 2020.<sup>29</sup> This leaves us with an additional number of visitors in 2019, not yet mentioned in the statistics from 2009. The number will be added nevertheless because the availability of private short-term rentals was not worth mentioning in 2009 because Airbnb only launched that year.

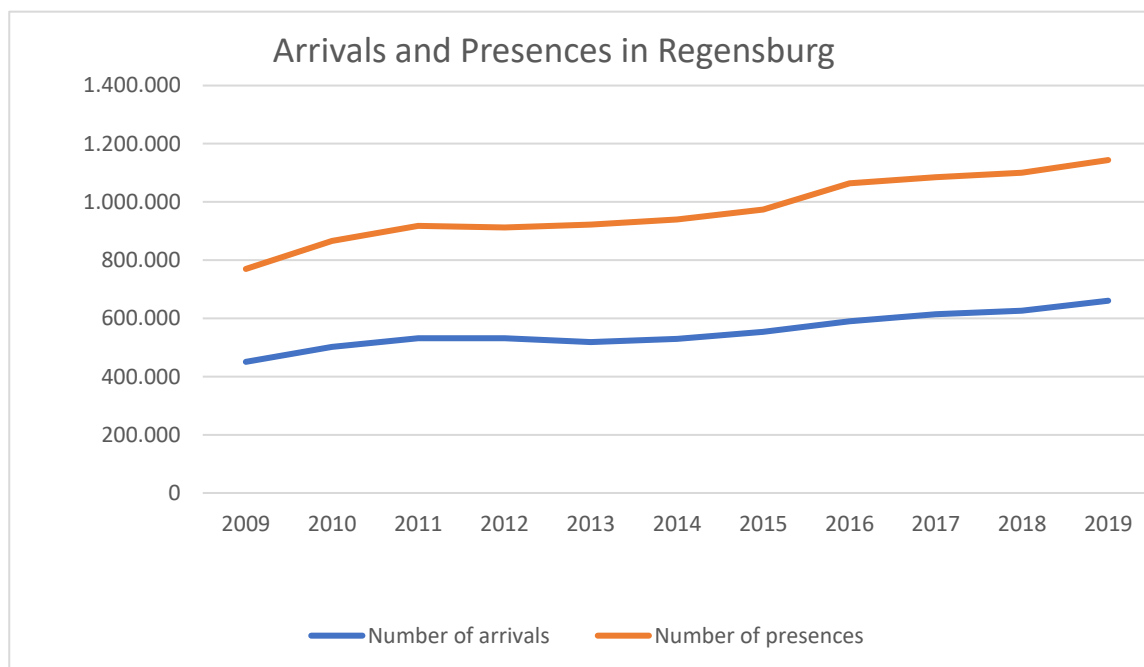


Figure 7: Number of Arrivals and Presences in Regensburg from 2009-2019.<sup>30</sup>

In 2009, a total of 448,354 arrivals were recorded in hotels, guesthouses, youth hostels and other accommodation establishments with more than eight beds.<sup>31</sup> Until 2019 this number increased to 660,640 arrivals which is a growth of 47%. But the arrivals in 2019 were higher than the Bavarian state office for statistics calculated because they only use the numbers of the accommodations with

<sup>29</sup> Destatis, 'Experimentelle Statistiken. Buchungen von Unterkünften auf Online-Plattformen', Statistisches Bundesamt, accessed 7 August 2024, <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Service/EXSTAT/Datensaetze/buchung-online-unterkuenfte.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Compiled from: 'Statistisches Jahrbuch 2020', Jahresbericht (Regensburg, December 2020), 436, <https://www.regensburg.de/fm/121/jahrbuch-2020.pdf>. (in accommodation establishments (including youth hostels) with more than 8, from 2012 with more than 9 guest beds)

<sup>31</sup> 'Statistisches Jahrbuch 2010', Jahresbericht (Regensburg: Stadt Regensburg, December 2010), 168, <https://www.regensburg.de/fm/121/jahrbuch-2010.pdf>.

more than nine beds.<sup>32</sup> But since 2020 the EU commission has an agreement with four of the biggest platforms, Airbnb, Booking, Expedia Group and TripAdvisor, which allows Eurostat and the statistical offices of the Member States to analyse and publish data on the use of accommodation for tourist stays. As a result, the Federal Statistical Office was able to find out that 96,000 guests booked holiday accommodation in Regensburg via one of the four platforms in 2019.<sup>33</sup> If this figure is now added to the official guest statistics, the number of arrivals even amounts to 756,640 in 2019. This would even be a growth of 68% from 2009 to 2019 if you consider that online booking portals have become more and more popular in the last few years.<sup>34</sup> In the case of Regensburg, we also have the option of including day tourism. The ‘Regensburg Tourismus GmbH’ commissioned the consulting firm dwif in 2010, 2014, 2019 and the following years until 2023 to calculate the economic factor of day tourism in particular. Day tourism describes a form of tourism in which visitors leave their place of residence and travel to a destination for the day, without staying overnight. This is why this type of tourist is so difficult to record and is still an unknown figure in most cities. In Regensburg, dwif-internal data, such as its own studies and databases, and external data sources ranging from municipal statistics to surveys and data from the region's national accounts, were used to calculate the number of day trippers. In 2009 the dwif estimated the number of day trippers to be around 15.5 million while the number in 2019 was at 15.4 million which indicates that Regensburg has always been a popular destination for day tourism. Nevertheless, day trippers are among the tourists who fuel overtourism the most, as they usually spend little money in the city but still consume many resources. The 2019 Economic Factors Report estimates that the average expenditure of day tourists is around €34.60, while visitors who spend at least one night in a hotel or other accommodation with more than nine beds spend around €175.30. Overnight guests spend five times as much as day-trippers, making them by far the more popular and more desirable group of visitors when it comes to target group marketing for tourist destinations.<sup>35</sup> In the case of Regensburg, this marketing has apparently worked very well, as the number of overnight guests has increased by almost 50% in ten years. The over-night presences increased from 765,471 in 2009 to 1,143,996 in 2019.<sup>36</sup> The arrivals and presences have grown remarkably over the period of ten years in the UNESCO town. The growth in tourism brings with it

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Statistisches Jahrbuch2020’, 176.

<sup>33</sup> Destatis, ‘Experimentelle Statistiken. Buchungen von Unterkünften auf Online-Plattformen’.

<sup>34</sup> Elisa Fernández-Arias, ‘How Online Booking Has Changed the Travel Agent Landscape - TravelPerk’, TravelPerk, 5 January 2023, <https://www.travelperk.com/blog/how-online-booking-has-changed-travel-agent-landscape/>.

<sup>35</sup> Lars Bengsch and Alexander Neumann, ‘Wirtschaftsfaktor Tourismus in der Stadt Regensburg unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Tagestourismus’, Wirtschaftsfaktor Tourismus (Regensburg: dwif-Consulting, November 2010), 6, [https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dwif-](https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dwif-)

Wirtschaftsfaktor/2010\_Wirtschaftsfaktor\_Tourismus\_Regensburg.pdf.;dwif-Consulting, ‘WIRTSCHAFTSFAKTOR TOURISMUS FÜR DIE STADT REGENSBURG 2019’, Wirtschaftsfaktor Tourismus (Regensburg: dwif-Consulting, December 2021), 6, [https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dwif-](https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dwif-)

Wirtschaftsfaktor/Wirtschaftsfaktor\_Tourismus\_fu\_\_r\_Regensburg\_2019.pdf.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Statistisches Jahrbuch2020’, 436.



a promising increase in economic income, but on the downside it can also lead to overcrowded places and congestion at hotspots such as the old stone bridge. On the other side of the growing number of tourists, however, are the accommodation providers, who are responding to the rising demand and increasing their offer of accommodation facilities from 56 in 2009 to 76 in 2019, without even considering the vacation homes with less than nine beds yet.<sup>37</sup> The growth in tourism is beyond question with the previous statistics, but of particular interest for the phenomenon of overtourism is the seasonal fluctuation, which is particularly decisive in Regensburg, in addition to the rising numbers of tourists. The two tables show that the seasonal concentration of tourist flows has changed little over the ten years. Regensburg's visitor numbers peak in July, August and September, the warmest month of the summer, when the city also has a lot to offer culturally.

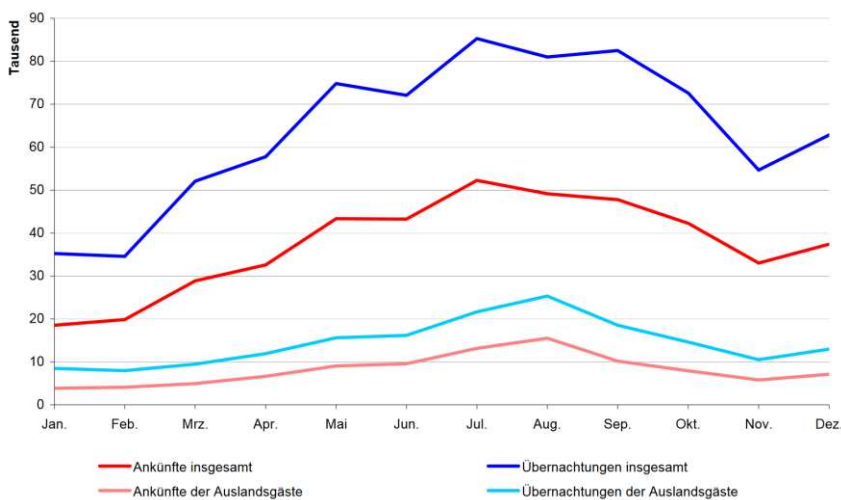


Figure 8: Arrivals and overnight stays in 2009.<sup>38</sup>

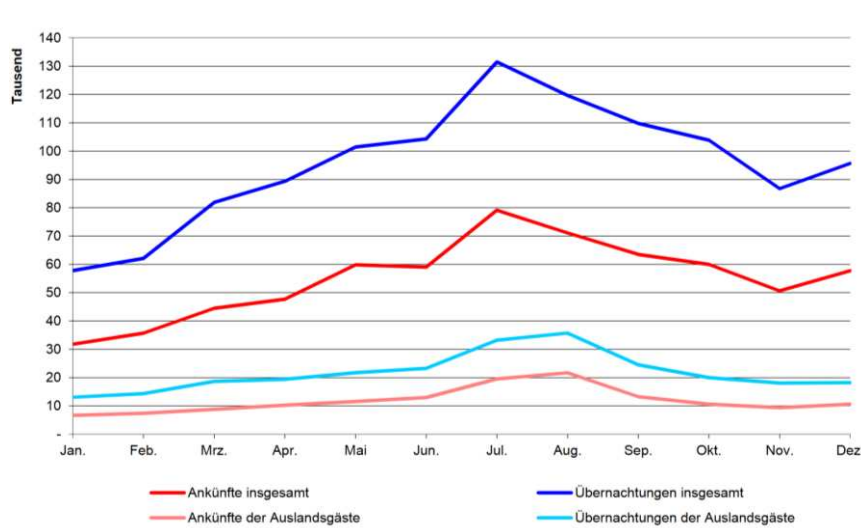


Figure 9: Arrivals and overnight stays in 2019.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 'Statistisches Jahrbuch 2010', 168.; 'Statistisches Jahrbuch2020', 176.

<sup>38</sup> 'Statistisches Jahrbuch 2010', 165.

<sup>39</sup> 'Statistisches Jahrbuch2020', 173.

The seasonal peak in arrivals is stimulated not only by the normal day visitors and overnight stays, but also by the river cruises. River cruise tourism is characterised by the numerous hotel ships that anchor on the banks of the Danube, often only allowing crowds of visitors to visit the old town during the day. This leads to temporary overcrowding in the old town and the low economic benefit of cruise passengers. With expenses of around €35 per passenger and an average of 1,000 ships per year, the question arises in the press as to whether it is worth it at all. In addition, diesel-powered ships obviously have a very poor ecological footprint, as they produce enormous CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.<sup>40</sup> According to the local initiative “Altstadtfreunde Regensburg”, the cruises are perceived as the most annoying part about the tourism industry because they come in large groups without consuming or spending any money.<sup>41</sup> Another issue that received critical attention by residents and the local press is the amount of Airbnb offers in the old town. Private vacation homes have a big share of the accommodation sector today. As mentioned above, the number of arrivals in accommodation such as Airbnb in 2019 was at 96,000 people. But already in 2017 the offer increased so much that the press was alarmed. The *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, a local newspaper from Regensburg, emphasised that the offers on Airbnb were increasingly whole apartments and not only private rooms anymore. This leads to a decrease of permanent rental space for the local residents.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the city authorities have begun to respond to the emergence of protests. In 2019, a so-called misuse of property ordinance (*Zweckentfremdungssatzung*) was introduced in Regensburg, which stipulates that the conversion of residential space into holiday apartments (for portals such as ‘Airbnb’) or commercial space must be approved. According to the mayor, this legislation has made 41 apartments available for long-term tenants again by 2024.<sup>43</sup> In connection with accommodation such as Airbnb, but also hotels, it should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has weakened business enormously. The hotels had hardly any guests and it came to closures and holiday apartments on the other hand were converted to long-term rentals, which at least benefits the residents. However, the situation seems to have improved in the course of 2023 and the number of arrivals was almost back to pre-COVID levels. With tour groups, boat tourists and day trippers back in the city, the awareness of the increasing tourist pressure has grown among many citizens. The city is appealing to the strategy of ‘tourism awareness’ instead of ‘tourism acceptance’. As ‘acceptance’ sounds more like the population enduring it, it should be

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<sup>40</sup> Rainer Wendl, ‘Neue alte Diskussion in Regensburg: Was bringt uns der Tourismus?’, *Mittelbayerische.de*, 14 September 2023, <https://www.mittelbayerische.de/lokales/stadt-regensburg/neue-alte-diskussion-in-regensburg-was-bringt-uns-der-tourismus-12368907>.

<sup>41</sup> ‘REGENSBURG-PLAN 2040’, Altstadtfreunde Regensburg, accessed 21 August 2024, <https://www.altstadtfreunde-regensburg.com/regensburg-plan-2040>.

<sup>42</sup> Christian Eckl, ‘Airbnb: Wenn Touristen die Regensburger aus den Wohnungen verdrängen’, *Wochenblatt.de*, 11 July 2017, <https://www.wochenblatt.de/archiv/airbnb-wenn-touristen-die-regensburger-aus-den-wohnungen-verdraengen-12394256>.

<sup>43</sup> Magdalena Rössert, ‘Airbnb-Angebote: Wie Kommunen in Bayern dagegen vorgehen’, *BR24*, 11 June 2024, <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/bayern/airbnb-angebote-wie-kommunen-dagegen-vorgehen,UFOtGVN>.

replaced by a positive word. An important goal of Regensburg's tourism industry is to increase the positive resonance and understanding of tourism among the local population. The aim of the tourism awareness initiative is to emphasise that tourism is good for the city and not just for the industries involved.<sup>44</sup> The initiative is part of the tourism concept published in 2018 to manage the increasing number of visitors to the medieval city and to maintain and guarantee a balance between tourists and the local population. The concept was also a response to the growing protests against the shortage of living space due to increasing Airbnb offers in the city centre. In 2018, the plan was adopted, which incorporated the results of a survey conducted among the people of Regensburg in 2017. According to this survey, most residents were still satisfied with the tourism management in Regensburg. However, when asked whether the number of tourists should continue to increase in the future, the residents of the old town in particular were of a different opinion. Price increases and the displacement of local amenities were cited as particular threats to the quality of life.<sup>45</sup> The city seems to be aware of the pressure of tourism and reacted with certain measures in its tourism concept. The main problems which were identified in the strategy plan were overcrowding in the historic centre, Strain on Infrastructure, including public transportation and pedestrian areas and the need for cultural and environmental preservation. The city's historic landmarks, which are important attractions for visitors, require careful management to ensure that they are not adversely affected by the influx of tourists. Added to this is the need to maintain environmental sustainability, as increased tourism can lead to higher levels of pollution, waste and general wear and tear on the city's natural and built environment. In order to create the tourism strategy, the tourism council came together for workshops, meetings and presentations. The council included representatives of the most relevant sectors for the tourism industry, from hotels, gastronomy and small business over culture and heritage managers up to infrastructure and city council members. At this point it is maybe interesting to note that the world heritage commission was not explicitly part of the council. The UNESCO management is incorporated as a part of the local authority of Regensburg and they decided to put the representative of the Kulturreferat of the city on the council but not a representative of the actual world heritage team. The creation of the concept took place under the guidance of the dwif-consulting firm as well.<sup>46</sup> During the process, the board of directors drew up so-called 'can-do and must-do principles', which were categorised from low to high according to their importance and were to be implemented. For

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<sup>44</sup> Wendl, 'Neue alte Diskussion in Regensburg'.

<sup>45</sup> Frederic Bouchon and Marion Rauscher, 'Cities and Tourism, a Love and Hate Story; towards a Conceptual Framework for Urban Overtourism Management', *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 5, no. 4 (9 December 2019): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-06-2019-0080>.

<sup>46</sup> dwif-Consulting, 'Zukunftsorientiertes Tourismuskonzept für die Stadt Regensburg', *Tourismuskonzept (Regensburg, June 2018)*, 5, [https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Tourismuskonzept/TK\\_Archiv/2\\_Tourismuskonzept\\_fuer\\_die\\_Stadt\\_Regensburg.pdf](https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Tourismuskonzept/TK_Archiv/2_Tourismuskonzept_fuer_die_Stadt_Regensburg.pdf).

the development of tourism, the board of directors developed six fields of action, which served as a guide for the most important areas in which measures had to be implemented. The must-do principles were categorised as a strict obligation with high priority. The fields of action include:

- Field of action 1: promoting the acceptance for tourism; guide and disperse the tourism development
- Field of action 2: improving the tourism climate and cooperation
- Field of action 3: creating a profile for the ‘city with world heritage designation’
- Field of action 4: MICE-strategy
- Field of action 5: Shaping urbanity, expanding infrastructure and improving quality of stay
- Field of action 6: Expand services and actively shape digital change.<sup>47</sup>

The six fields of action were assigned corresponding measures in the form of must- and can-principles. In the first field of action, which deals with the promotion of tourism acceptance and the management and spatial differentiation of tourism development, the MUST objectives are aimed at promoting acceptance and understanding of tourism among the population. It is crucial that tourism is perceived as an asset. This requires comprehensive awareness-raising measures and continuous dialogue between stakeholders. At the same time, it is emphasised that it is essential to direct visitor flows in a targeted manner in order to avoid congestion and ensure an even distribution of tourists. As CAN objectives, it is suggested that the season should be smoothed out by creating alternative tourism offers that exist alongside the main attractions. This would spread the load across several locations and achieve a more balanced visitor structure. The second field of action focusses on improving the tourism climate and cooperation between the relevant stakeholders. Strengthening cooperation and networks is a MUST here. Close co-operation between the city administration, ‘Regensburg Tourismus GmbH’ and other stakeholders is crucial in order to ensure coherent and efficient tourism management. In addition to this, the securing of young talent and skilled labour is proposed as a CAN principle, in which tourism service providers and the economy work together in this case. In field of action three of profile building as a ‘World Heritage City of Culture’, the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage is a central MUST principle. The World Heritage status of the city of Regensburg should be emphasised and strengthened through targeted measures and offers in order to underline the cultural identity of the city and at the same time increase its attractiveness for visitors. In addition to this, new cultural events and local transport could be further developed as a CAN principle in order to further enhance the city's profile and create additional incentives for a visit. The MICE strategy of field of action four, MICE short for Meetings, Incentives,

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<sup>47</sup> dwif-Consulting, 2.

Conventions and Events, stands for a MUST in the expansion of infrastructure in order to establish Regensburg as an attractive location for conferences and congresses. Without an adequate event infrastructure, the potential of this segment cannot be fully utilised. In addition, the targeted approach of event organisers by means of tailored marketing strategies is proposed in order to arouse the interest of national and international event organisers in Regensburg as a location. In the fifth field of action, which deals with the design of urbanity, the expansion of infrastructure and increasing the quality of stay, it is essential to increase the quality of life in the city by improving the urban infrastructure. This is a central MUST principle in order to create attractive conditions for both residents and tourists. Improved accessibility would also make it possible to make the city accessible to a wider target group and thus promote inclusivity. As a complementary measure, new forms of accommodation and catering could be promoted, which is understood as a CAN principle. Finally, the sixth field of action deals with the expansion of services and the active shaping of digital change. Digital transformation is an indispensable MUST principle here, as the modernisation of the digital infrastructure is crucial for the further development of tourism. This includes the creation of new digital offerings and the optimisation of existing systems. The development of digital platforms is also seen as an important component that could offer visitors additional services, such as mobile apps or digital information systems that make their stay in the city easier. To summarise, the tourism concept for Regensburg defines clear MUST principles that are essential for sustainable tourism development, while the CAN principles suggest additional measures that can be implemented depending on resources and priorities in order to further increase the city's attractiveness.<sup>48</sup>

The concept was already well thought through but after the covid-19 pandemic, and the following tourism crisis, the city saw the need for a renewed and updated tourism concept. In 2023 dwif created a much more detailed report with analyses and strategies. A key objective of the update is to make the concept simpler and more focused, with the previous distinction between mandatory and optional principles being removed. The fields of action have been reduced from seven to five, which allows for a more precise focus. One of the main innovations of the updated concept is the stronger emphasis on sustainability and digitisation. These topics are now integral components of all fields of action, instead of being treated as separate areas. Sustainability and a focus on the common good are at the centre of tourism offerings, which are designed to be environmentally friendly, climate-neutral and socially responsible. Digitisation also plays a crucial role, especially in guiding guests and making experiences bookable. This factor also contributes significantly to sustainable tourism management, which could be a decisive factor in successfully countering overtourism. The concept also envisages a stronger focus on specific target groups, especially the post-material and conservative-upscale

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<sup>48</sup> dwif-Consulting, 'Zukunftsorientiertes Tourismuskonzept für die Stadt Regensburg'.

milieu. These groups are considered particularly suitable for Regensburg and, due to their higher average incomes, promise greater added value for the city. The city's marketing strategies will therefore be specifically tailored to appeal to these target groups and win them over for Regensburg. The update also emphasises the smoothing of seasonality, as the trend is still too seasonal according to statistics. The concept aims to revitalise the first quarter, which is traditionally weaker in terms of overnight stays, by introducing new event formats and further developing existing events. The cooperation between the various fields of action is also emphasised more strongly. Through cross-sectoral cooperation, those involved should be able to work more flexibly on projects, which should promote a better integration of measures and a holistic understanding. In addition, a central area will be set up on the Regensburg Tourism GmbH website to provide a clear overview of the projects, measures and content of the tourism concept. This is intended to improve digital collaboration and provide all stakeholders with better access to relevant information. However, the tourism budget will remain in 'Covid' mode, which means that it will be provided without co-financing contributions. This decision is intended to ensure the implementation of the measures even in economically uncertain times.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the two pioneering tourism concepts, other future-oriented and sustainable projects for tourism have also been launched. Various websites provide information on the efforts to raise awareness of tourism among the population and stakeholders. On the "Zukunft Regensburg Tourismus"<sup>50</sup> (*future Regensburg Tourism*) website, the city of Regensburg provides information on the tourism concept and all related projects and events. The "Tourismus Regensburg"<sup>51</sup> website, on the other hand, is aimed directly at tourists and offers them the opportunity to find more information about visiting the World Heritage city. The Regensburg Tourismus GmbH also has its own website where people can find out about its projects and goals.<sup>52</sup> More specific websites include "Regensburg Nachhaltig"<sup>53</sup> (*Regensburg Sustainable*), which provides information about discovering the city with a 'clear conscience'. The site provides information about companies, retailers, restaurants and accommodation that can offer visitors a sustainable experience. Regensburg entrepreneurs can submit an application to the city to be included in the sustainability list, once they fulfil the criteria. Since the city also wants to profile itself as a congress location, the new website of the "Marina Forum"<sup>54</sup>,

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<sup>49</sup> Andrea Möller and Vinzenz Sommerer, 'Update Tourismuskonzept der Stadt Regensburg', Tourismuskonzept (Regensburg, 17 March 2023), 6f, [https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Tourismuskonzept/Tourismuskonzept\\_Update2023/Bericht\\_Update\\_Tourismuskonzept\\_Regensburg.pdf](https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Tourismuskonzept/Tourismuskonzept_Update2023/Bericht_Update_Tourismuskonzept_Regensburg.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> 'Tourismuskonzept Regensburg', accessed 18 August 2024, <https://tourismuskonzept-regensburg.de/>.

<sup>51</sup> 'Tourismus Regensburg: Regensburg Tourismus GmbH', accessed 18 August 2024, <https://tourismus.regensburg.de/>.

<sup>52</sup> 'Regensburg Tourismus GmbH', accessed 18 August 2024, <https://regensburg-tourismus.gmbh/index.php>.

<sup>53</sup> 'Regensburg Nachhaltig', accessed 18 August 2024, <https://regensburg-nachhaltig.de/>.

<sup>54</sup> 'Marinaforum', accessed 18 August 2024, <https://www.marinaforum.de/>.

the modern centre for meetings and congresses, is used to attract interested parties. Among the city's other informative websites, the most creative is the one that was designed solely to provide locals and tourists with a platform to present their favourite place in Regensburg in the form of a photo or video. This initiative is also intended to give visitors a more personal and familiar insight into the UNESCO city.<sup>55</sup> The public appreciation for the cultural heritage site is aimed for not only through initiatives like the websites. In 2013 the UNESCO Management Plan for Regensburg was published as a comprehensive framework and guideline on how to preserve and manage the city's heritage while balancing the needs for urban development. The Plan underlines the importance of a fair dialogue between different stakeholders, like the citizens, small businesses, private entities and the city. This approach wants to ensure that the conservation efforts are not only focused on the protection of the historical architecture but also to maintain Regensburg as a vibrant, liveable and attractive city. This goal is supposed to be reached by the involvement of citizens through initiatives like the World Heritage Dialogue. The dialogue serves as a platform for discussion, exchange of ideas, and decision-making regarding the conservation and development of the site. It takes place every two years and encourages a wide range of parties to give their opinion and ideas about the cultural heritage management. This ensures that the management plan reflects the community's values and expectations.<sup>56</sup> The tourism strategy within the management plan is a carefully designed component that aims to balance the influx of visitors with the preservation of the town's cultural heritage and the well-being of its residents. In particular, the development of sustainable tourism practices that enhance the visitor experience while minimising the negative impact on the historic environment and local community is emphasised. In the culture and tourism field of action, the aim is to extend the length of stay of visitors and expand the cultural offering. Visitor management is of particular importance, whereby overtourism should also be avoided. Concrete measures for this are expressed in the coordination of group tours, where concentration in narrow places is to be avoided. The development of hotel capacities and their concept should also be kept under observation in order to guarantee a certain quality for visitors but also to avoid issuing too many licences.<sup>57</sup> In addition the plan foresees also some other action-oriented measures which focus on preserving the city's cultural heritage while promoting sustainable development. The most important measures include the strict preservation of historic buildings, archaeological research, and public education to promote appreciation of cultural heritage. Urban development is carefully controlled to maintain harmony

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<sup>55</sup> 'Lieblingsherzeigeplatz Regensburg – Sehenswürdigkeiten in Regensburg', accessed 18 August 2024, <https://www.lieblingsherzeigeplatz.de/>.

<sup>56</sup> Matthias Ripp and Richard Mühlmann, 'World Heritage-Management Plan for the Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof' (Regensburg, January 2012), 91, [https://www.regensburg.de/sixcms/media.php/464/STADT\\_RGBG\\_MANAGEMENTPLAN\\_WELTERBE\\_GB\\_screen.pdf](https://www.regensburg.de/sixcms/media.php/464/STADT_RGBG_MANAGEMENTPLAN_WELTERBE_GB_screen.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Ripp and Mühlmann, 55f.

with the historic environment, and efforts are made to create affordable housing and adaptively reuse historic buildings. Mobility and infrastructure improvements also aim to reduce traffic and promote sustainable modes of transport, while environmental measures focus on protecting green spaces, adapting to climate change, and improving waste management.<sup>58</sup> Just this July, the German environmental organisation “Deutsche Umwelthilfe” (DUH) published new data on a heat check in which 190 German cities were assessed. It measured the percentage of sealed surfaces compared to green spaces in urban areas. With 54% sealing, Regensburg ranks third worst in Germany. The background to the data collection is that heavily sealed municipalities heat up particularly strongly in summer, whereas green spaces can provide citizens with more cooling.<sup>59</sup> The increasing heat can also cause damage to protected cultural heritage sites. However, it is not so easy to combat climate change in a listed city, as some countermeasures can compete with the requirements of the heritage authority.<sup>60</sup> In the World Heritage Site, the risks posed by heat, ventilation, drought and extreme weather events, heavy rain and flooding are particularly relevant. The city of Regensburg has therefore been working on a climate resilience management strategy since 2018. The strategy aims to reconcile sustainable greening and other climate-resilient methods with conservation guidelines.<sup>61</sup> The management plan is a fundamental part and basis of the cultural heritage in Regensburg and on how to integrate it into a constantly developing city. But in order to present the history and the deeper meaning of the world heritage in an educational and informative way for the residents and the visitors alike, the heritage authorities created the world heritage centre. Located directly next to the Stone Bridge, the centre is characterised by its interactive and multimedia presentations and is intended to serve as the first port of call for visitors interested in the World Heritage Site. In 2011, the visitor centre was opened in a medieval salt barn dating from 1616 and since then, in addition to the permanent exhibition, has been used for specially designed workshops, lectures and guided tours to deepen knowledge about the Regensburg World Heritage Site. For many of the 300.000 annual visitors (before covid), the centre was their first contact with this unique cultural heritage site. The aim was therefore to create a local communication hub that would anchor the significance of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ripp and Mühlmann, 65.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Zu viel Beton in Regensburg: Wie die Welterbe-Stadt zur “Hitze-Hölle” wird’, *Süddeutsche.de*, 30 July 2024, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/regensburg-umwelthilfe-versiegelung-flaechenfrass-hitze-klimawandel-lux.ECcf0NLMCfoFEhRCdVCzTn>.

<sup>60</sup> Matthias Ripp and Sebastian Daniel, ‘Implizite Werte in Der Diskussion Um Kulturerbe Und Klimawandel - Eine Grounded-Theory Basierte Analyse. In: Ripp M., Hager, A. Paulowitz B., Scheffler, N. (2024) : Kulturerbe, Klimazukunft, Wertekonflikte. Schnell +Steiner. Regensburg’, 2024, 31.

<sup>61</sup> Joachim Buck, ‘Klimaanpassung im Welterbe Regensburg – ein Widerspruch zur ›Steinernen Altstadt‹? In: Ripp M., Hager, A. Paulowitz B., Scheffler, N. (2024) : Kulturerbe, Klimazukunft, Wertekonflikte. Schnell +Steiner. Regensburg’, 2024, 151, [https://www.regensburg.de/sixcms/media.php/464/3901\\_Kulturerbe\\_WEB\\_DOI.pdf](https://www.regensburg.de/sixcms/media.php/464/3901_Kulturerbe_WEB_DOI.pdf).



world heritage site in the minds of residents and visitors.<sup>62</sup> This approach brings Regensburg a step closer to more sustainable and conscious tourism.

The tourism development in Regensburg has been influenced by many different factors like the increase of visitor numbers but also the creation of the world heritage centre, a UNESCO management plan and a tourism strategy. It is difficult to determine which phase of tourism Regensburg is currently in, as it always depends on the perspective and the parameters considered. According to the previous analysis of tourism development in Regensburg, it is not yet appropriate to speak of overtourism, but there are also different voices from the press, politics and the population. Therefore, the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model (p.10) is also applied in the case study of Regensburg. By incorporating the 2020 paper by Fatma Yasli and Oktay Emir, the stage of (over)tourism in which the city currently finds itself is to be determined.<sup>63</sup> In order to assess exactly where Regensburg stands on the TALC and to evaluate or predict the risks of overtourism, several parameters should be measured. Tourist arrivals are one of the most important initial indicators for measuring overtourism, and the figures in Regensburg showed continuous growth of 47% over the period from 2009 to 2019, even excluding short-stay accommodation with fewer than nine beds. The seasonal peak that Regensburg experiences in the summer months is also particularly interesting for the phenomenon of overtourism. During this period, the tourist pressure on the local population can increase and lead to the perception of a negative image of tourism. The visitor economy also has a major impact on the cityscape. The increase in the number of companies specialising to meet the needs of tourists shows that the locals are seizing the opportunity to get their share of the cake. On the other hand, however, there are also some small businesses that can no longer compete with large companies such as hotel chains.<sup>64</sup> The press and residents are sometimes concerned about the uncontrolled effects of tourism, but the city counters with arguments such as its tourism concept. Based on these parameters, it can be concluded that Regensburg is probably in the late development or early consolidation phase of the TALC model. The city is enjoying the economic benefits of a growing tourism sector, but there are signs that it needs to carefully manage this growth to avoid the negative consequences of overtourism. If these trends are not countered with sustainable tourism practices, Regensburg runs the risk of entering the stagnation phase, in which the negative impacts of tourism could outweigh its benefits. The implementation of strategies such as promoting off-season tourism, improving infrastructure and protecting cultural sites will be crucial to ensuring that the city's tourism sector remains sustainable and beneficial to residents and visitors alike. As the city has already addressed such projects and

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<sup>62</sup> Matthias Ripp and Karl Stocker, eds., *Das Besucherzentrum Welterbe Regensburg: Vermittlungsstrategien einer UNESCO-Welterbestadt*, 19 x 24 cm (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2022), 24.

<sup>63</sup> Emir and Yasli, 'Conceptual Study on Early Stage of Overtourism in the Tourism Area Life Cycle Perspective'.

<sup>64</sup> Marianne Sperb, '„Regensburg hat einfach zu viele Hotels“', *Mittelbayerische.de*, 16 September 2023, <https://www.mittelbayerische.de/archiv/1/regensburg-hat-einfach-zu-viele-hotels-11583272>.

measures in the 2018 tourism strategy, tourism seems to be under control so far. However, the sustainable implementation of many strategies now and in the coming years is crucial. The 2023 concept update has proven that it is necessary to constantly adapt tourism management as visitor behaviour and visitor numbers are constantly evolving.

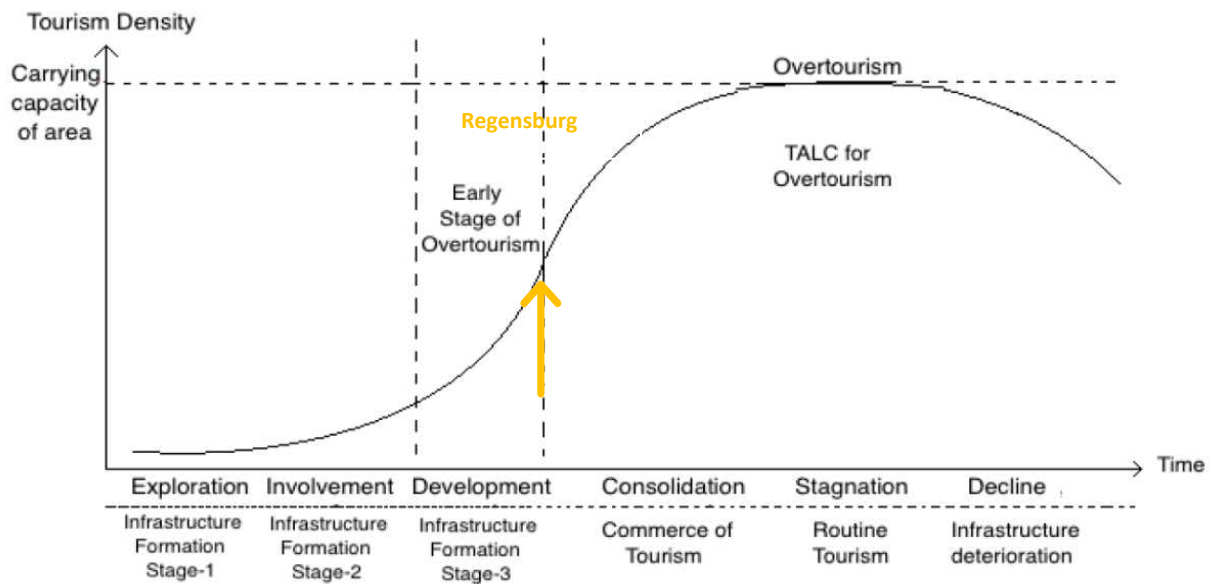


Figure 10: TALC with overtourism in Regensburg. Early Stage of Overtourism on Tourism Area Life Cycle.<sup>65</sup>

While both Regensburg and Rome are designated UNESCO World Heritage Cities, their respective sizes and the characteristics of their tourist populations afford a divergent contextual framework for a comparative analysis of overtourism. Regensburg is a smaller city that primarily attracts local and regional tourists and is therefore less threatened by the phenomenon of overtourism than Rome. However, both cities have experienced a notable increase in tourism, and are now confronted with the challenges that arise from a growing number of visitors. While the city of Regensburg is as yet not experiencing the effects of mass tourism, its compact medieval city centre makes it vulnerable to such pressures in the future. The growth of tourism can result in an exponential increase in visitor numbers, which can place significant strain on local resources and have an impact on the quality of life of residents. It is therefore of the highest importance for the city of Regensburg to manage tourism in a sustainable manner, while at the same time taking into account the needs of the local population. The city's current strategies, including the promotion of off-season tourism and the distribution of visitor flows, are promising and demonstrate a promising approach to the management of tourism. Nevertheless, as the number of tourists is increasing, it is crucial for Regensburg to further refine its approaches in order to ensure sustainable tourism development. This should include a focus on distributing visitor numbers throughout the year and promoting exploration outside the city centre. In

<sup>65</sup> Emir and Yasli, 'Conceptual Study on Early Stage of Overtourism in the Tourism Area Life Cycle Perspective', 20.

contrast, Rome is already confronted with significant challenges related to overtourism. Despite the existence of a number of EU directives, national laws and local initiatives with the aim of managing tourism, the size of Rome's tourism sector makes the implementation of effective management strategies a challenging endeavour. The city is experiencing difficulties as a result of an overload of infrastructure, environmental degradation and public dissatisfaction, which suggests that the existing measures are not sufficient or are not being implemented effectively. Notwithstanding these challenges, Rome's status as a significant global tourist destination requires a sustainable and strategic approach to tourism management. In order to guarantee the protection of cultural heritage while enhancing the visitor experience, it is essential to implement more effective coordination between policymakers, tourism authorities and community stakeholders. It is clear that in both Regensburg and Rome, tourism should be closely linked to efforts to preserve cultural heritage. This will ensure that it is seen as an opportunity rather than a threat. Through the implementation of a more structured and sustainable tourism management strategy, both cities have the potential to transform the challenges of over-tourism into opportunities for a high-quality, sustainable visitor experience that respects both cultural heritage and the needs of the local population. In order to ensure the continued success of both cities as tourist destinations, it is essential that their tourism management strategies demonstrate both awareness and adaptability in the face of future challenges. As the global tourism industry continues to expand, the pressure on cultural heritage sites will intensify. It is therefore essential to develop innovative solutions and engage with local communities on an ongoing basis to maintain a balance between welcoming tourists and preserving cultural heritage. The following chapter examines successful solutions, opportunities and strategies employed by other heritage sites worldwide to address overtourism. These examples can provide insights for Rome and Regensburg in developing sustainable tourism management practices that benefit both residents and visitors.

Table 2: Key features of the case study analyses of Rome and Regensburg

Features	Rome	Regensburg
<b>Tourist Arrivals (2009)</b>	9,620,753	448,354
<b>Tourist Arrivals (2019)</b>	19,454,354	660,640
<b>Main Tourist Attractions</b>	Colosseum, Vatican City, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon	Stone Bridge, St. Peter's Cathedral, Old Town
<b>UNESCO World Heritage Status</b>	Historic Center (1980) and the Properties of the Holy See (1990)	Old Town with Stadtamhof (2006)
<b>Tourism Growth</b>	High growth, exponential, especially during significant events	Moderate and steady, with focus on cultural and river tourism
<b>Tourism Type</b>	Predominantly cultural and religious tourism	Cultural and heritage tourism
<b>Impact of Overtourism</b>	High: with overcrowding with significant wear on heritage sites, infrastructure strain, and resident displacement and environmental degradation	Moderate: localized pressure on the historic centre, resident displacement due to short-term rentals
<b>Key Challenges</b>	Overcrowding, pollution, deterioration of heritage sites, community pushback, infrastructure overload, resident displacement due to short-term rentals	Managing visitor flow in historic areas, preserving heritage, maintaining quality of life for residents including
<b>Tourism Management Approach</b>	Reactive: Focus on infrastructure expansion, regulation of short-term rentals, event-based responses	Proactive: Sustainable tourism promotion, off-peak season campaigns, visitor flow management, community involvement in tourism planning
<b>Sustainability Focus</b>	Limited: Mainly infrastructural with less emphasis on sustainability, accommodating tourism growth	Higher: Focus on preserving cultural heritage and promoting responsible tourism, balancing tourism with preservation and resident well-being
<b>Community Involvement</b>	Limited: Often top-down, local resistance, locals often feeling sidelined	Higher: Community-engaged planning and local involvement in tourism strategies, regular consultation

<b>Regulatory Measures</b>	Heavy reliance on laws and regulations to control tourism flow, mixed success in enforcement	Heritage preservation laws, visitor management plans
<b>Future Outlook</b>	Continued growth with potential for more conflict between tourism and local needs	Aiming for sustainable tourism growth with better balance between visitors and residents

### **Part III: Strategies, Opportunities and Solutions against Overtourism**

As the previous chapters have shown, overtourism is a very complex phenomenon that impacts various aspects of urban spaces and cultural sites. The analysis of the two case studies, Regensburg and Rome, has shown that despite their different sizes and contexts, they can face similar challenges related to overtourism. However, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution, as the two cities' tourism strategies differ in terms of their orientation and implementation. This divergence is due to the unique circumstances and characteristics of each heritage city, even though many of the problems caused by overtourism are overlapping. Rome, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, attracts millions of visitors annually. This influx often results in overcrowded streets, congested infrastructure and diminished quality of life for residents. The city's ancient monuments and historical sites are at risk not only from physical damage due to the large numbers of tourists, but also from pollution and inadequate management practices. Rome faces the challenge of balancing its status as a global cultural centre with the need to preserve its heritage while ensuring the well-being of the local population. Regensburg, although smaller in size, also suffers from the pressure of increasing numbers of tourists, especially in its small city centre. Known for its well-preserved medieval city centre and cozy charm, Regensburg attracts visitors seeking an authentic historical European experience. Despite the difference in scale, increasing tourism in Regensburg poses a challenge in terms of maintaining the integrity of the cultural heritage and managing the impact on local life. The aim of this chapter is to examine and analyse the strategies that various cultural heritage sites and cities around the world have implemented to address the challenges of overtourism. A range of examples are used to identify effective measures for managing tourist flows, safeguarding cultural integrity and maintaining harmonious relations between tourists and local communities. In particular, heritage sites face the dual challenge of attracting visitors while preserving their historical and cultural values. The specific examples to be analysed include Dubrovnik's 'Respect the City' programme, Amsterdam's 'Stay Away' campaign, Barcelona's "PEUAT" Strategy, the "Cinque Terre Card", Machu Picchu's Strategy and Mount Rigi's measures. These examples will provide insights into the strategies employed and their effectiveness in combating overtourism. A structured and systematic methodology will be applied, focusing on secondary data sources and comparative analysis. The selected destinations were chosen for their relevance to the overtourism issues identified in the analysis of Rome and Regensburg, their diversity of overtourism challenges, the strength of their implemented strategies and the transferability of their experiences to other UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The analysis will concentrate on the most significant overtourism issues, including cruise ship congestion, party tourism, displacement of residents, environmental degradation, and the preservation of cultural, religious, and archaeological sites. The focus will be on European destinations, although different

geographical and cultural contexts will be considered to understand how overtourism issues and their solutions may differ in various settings. The inclusion of a variety of regions provides a richer, more nuanced analysis and highlights both similarities and differences in how overtourism is dealt with. For each cultural heritage site or city, a brief introduction explains the nature and extent of the overtourism problem. This includes an examination of the specific challenges faced by the destination, the historical context and the impact on local communities, the environment and cultural heritage. This is followed by a description of the strategies that each destination has implemented to combat overtourism. These strategies are categorised according to the type of problem they are designed to address, e.g. visitor caps, regulation of short-term rentals, targeted campaigns to discourage certain tourist behaviours, efforts to preserve cultural and natural heritage and initiatives to promote sustainable tourism practices. Each strategy will be evaluated on the basis of its effectiveness in combating overtourism. This includes analysing the results through, for example, stakeholder reviews, academic discussions, media reports, public surveys, social media and other sources. The analysis concludes with a summary of the lessons learnt from each case study. Best practices are identified that provide insight into how similar strategies could be adapted to address the challenges of overtourism in Rome and Regensburg. This concluding section highlights transferable solutions and innovative approaches that could inform the development of a bespoke strategy catalogue for these two cities.

The selection of diverse and relevant case studies is combined with a structured analytical framework to provide a solid basis for understanding overtourism management strategies and their applicability in different contexts. By examining real-life examples, this chapter contributes to the development of grounded, evidence-based strategies for sustainable tourism management in heritage cities.

## 7. Strategies of other Heritage Cities

### 7.1 Over-tourism from cruise ships: Dubrovnik's 'Respect the City' programme



Figure 11: Cruise ship arriving in Dubrovnik<sup>1</sup>

Dubrovnik in Croatia has long been a popular tourist destination. The city is located by the Adriatic Sea and has a population of 44,000 by December 2017. Its medieval UNESCO World Heritage-listed old town, breathtaking coastal views and historical significance attract millions of visitors every year.<sup>2</sup> The city's popularity has exploded, particularly since the hit TV series *Game of Thrones* was filmed in parts of the Croatian old town. However, this popularity has led to significant challenges, particularly from cruise tourism. Over the years, the city has faced problems such as overcrowding, infrastructure congestion, and a declining quality of life for residents. The influx of large cruise ships, which often carry thousands of passengers at a time, has been identified as one of the main causes of overtourism in Dubrovnik.<sup>3</sup> The congestion of cruise ships presents Dubrovnik with a dual challenge. The influx of tourists brings economic benefits to the city, but the sheer number of cruise ship passengers disembarking for short visits can overload the city's infrastructure. This results in traffic

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<sup>1</sup> Julie Delahaye, 'Cruise Sailings to Dubrovnik Are Set to Change in a Big Way', *The Mirror*, 4 October 2018, sec. Cruises, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/travel/cruises/dubrovnik-limit-number-cruise-ships-13360495>.

<sup>2</sup> Saeid Abbasian, Gustaf Onn, and Denis Arnautovic, 'Overtourism in Dubrovnik in the Eyes of Local Tourism Employees: A Qualitative Study', ed. Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández, *Cogent Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (January 2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2020.1775944>.

<sup>3</sup> Aggelos Panayiotopoulos and Carlo Pisano, 'Overtourism Dystopias and Socialist Utopias: Towards an Urban Armature for Dubrovnik', *Tourism Planning & Development* 16, no. 4 (4 July 2019): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2019.1569123>.



congestion, the overuse of public space and damage to cultural sites.<sup>4</sup> According to Abbasian et al. (2020), local tourism stakeholders have expressed concern about cruise ship tourists contributing to the overcrowding of the old city, which is often more than it can accommodate during the peak tourist season.<sup>5</sup> In 2013, the city of Dubrovnik recorded over a million cruise passengers, which highlighted the strain on the city's infrastructure and cultural sites. By 2017, the situation had reached a point where UNESCO issued a warning that the overwhelming number of tourists could endanger the city's status as a World Heritage Site. In order to prevent irreversible damage, UNESCO recommended that the number of tourists in the historic core should not exceed 8,000 at any given time. In response to these challenges, Dubrovnik has initiated the 'Respect the City' programme, a comprehensive strategy designed to address the negative effects of tourism, above all those associated with cruise tourism. The programme's primary objective is to regulate the number of cruise ships permitted to dock in Dubrovnik on a daily basis. In particular, the programme permits a maximum of two cruise ships per day and restricts the total number of cruise passengers to approximately 4,000. The objective of this cap is to prevent overcrowding in the city's narrow streets and historical sites. Furthermore, the programme incorporates measures to regulate the timing of cruise ship arrivals, ensuring that passengers disembark at varying times throughout the day. This strategy is designed to mitigate congestion at peak times, facilitate a more controlled flow of visitors and reduce the burden on local infrastructure. Establishing effective communication and collaboration with cruise operators is a crucial aspect of this approach, as it allows the city to regulate tourist flows more effectively and address the undesirable consequences of large crowds.<sup>6</sup> The Respect the City programme has shown promising results in alleviating excessive tourism pressures. By limiting cruise ship arrivals and introducing a staggered timetable, Dubrovnik has managed to reduce the daily influx of tourists, particularly during peak hours. This has allowed both residents and tourists to enjoy the city's historic sites without the overwhelming crowds that used to characterise the summer months. The collaboration with the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) was essential and demonstrates the importance of partnership between local authorities and the cruise industry in combating overtourism. Initial evaluations of the Respect the City programme suggest that these measures have begun to ease the pressures of over-tourism in Dubrovnik. Limiting the number of cruise ship arrivals has helped to reduce traffic peaks, making it easier for both tourists and residents to get around the city. In addition, cooperation with cruise lines to stagger arrivals has been successful in preventing a sudden increase in the number of tourists, which previously led to traffic congestion and

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Stieghorst, 'Cruise Lines' Dubrovnik Deal Seen as Way to Combat Overcrowding', 18 March 2018, <https://www.travelweekly.com/Cruise-Travel/Dubrovnik-deal-combat-overcrowding>.

<sup>5</sup> Abbasian, Onn, and Arnautovic, 'Overtourism in Dubrovnik in the Eyes of Local Tourism Employees', 5.

<sup>6</sup> Tiffany Chan, 'Once Overrun, Dubrovnik Plans for Sustainability', *GSTC*, 16 April 2021, <https://www.gstcouncil.org/once-overrun-dubrovnik-plans-for-sustainability/>.

overcrowding in public places. While these measures are promising, the long-term effectiveness of the programme requires continuous evaluation and adjustment. For example, it may be necessary to further adjust the caps on cruise passengers or to implement additional measures to manage other forms of tourism that contribute to overcrowding.<sup>7</sup> Such measures include, for instance, the introduction of a ban on suitcases in the old town of Dubrovnik, which came into force in 2023 and provides for a fine of €265 for violations. In general, Dubrovnik's tourism strategies tend towards restrictions and the dismantling of the tourism industry as a reaction to the excessive number of visitors.<sup>8</sup>

The "Respect the City" programme, nevertheless, offers valuable insights into the management of the challenges posed by cruise tourism. By introducing restrictions on the arrival of cruise ships and coordinating with cruise lines to stagger passenger disembarkation, Dubrovnik has taken proactive steps to protect its cultural heritage and improve the quality of life for its residents.

## **7.2 Managing Party Tourism and Drunk Tourism: Amsterdam's "Stay Away" Campaign**

The city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands is known for its rich history, iconic canals and vibrant culture. In recent decades, it has also gained a reputation as a destination for partying. Consequently, the city now attracts considerable numbers of tourists, particularly young men from the UK and other European countries, seeking a permissive environment for partying, drinking and using cannabis. While tourism plays an important role in Amsterdam's economy, it has also given rise to challenges associated with overtourism. In particular, party tourism has resulted in concerns such as noise pollution, public drunkenness, and other disruptive behaviours.<sup>9</sup> Attracted by the vibrant nightlife, the number of tourists arrive in Amsterdam with one of the numerous budget airlines and stay in hostels and holiday accommodations like Airbnb. In the case of Amsterdam, more than 79% of the website listings are entire apartments which speaks for the displacement of the residents.<sup>10</sup> Other problems include the occurrence of loud, disorderly behaviour at a late hour, instances of public urination and an excessive amount of littering. These actions not only disturb the local residents but also create an unsafe and unpleasant environment for other visitors and local businesses. According

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<sup>7</sup> Chan.

<sup>8</sup> Bjarne Kommnick, 'Koffer-Verbot für Urlauber: Kroatischer Touristen-Hotspot beschließt skurrile Regelung', 30 June 2023, <https://www.merkur.de/welt/strafe-bussgeld-gepaeck-reise-urlaub-tourismus-kroatien-dubrovnik-kofferverbot-gesetz-92369741.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Holligan, 'Amsterdam Launches Stay Away Ad Campaign Targeting Young British Men', 28 March 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65107405>.

<sup>10</sup> 'Overtourism in Amsterdam', accessed 30 August 2024, <https://www.responsibletravel.com/holidays/the-netherlands/travel-guide/overtourism-in-amsterdam>.

to Alexander Araya López, the anti-social behaviour exhibited by tourists, such as public drinking and disruptive activities, has prompted local authorities to implement measures to control and regulate these activities in order to maintain public order and preserve the cultural and social integrity of Amsterdam.<sup>11</sup> In response, the city of Amsterdam initiated the 'Stay Away' campaign in 2023, which is specifically oriented towards party tourists. The campaign employs digital advertising, including videos, to discourage specific types of tourists, particularly young men who seek to visit Amsterdam for excessive alcohol consumption, drug use, and wild parties. The advertisements are designed to appear when individuals conduct online searches for terms associated with rowdy social gatherings in Amsterdam. Such advertisements serve to act as a warning to potential offenders, highlighting the possible fines and legal consequences of such behaviour.<sup>12</sup> In addition to these initiatives, the city launched the 'Amsterdam Rules Quiz' in March 2024 as part of its digital strategy. The objective of this interactive online quiz is to educate potential visitors about acceptable behaviour in Amsterdam and the city's regulations.

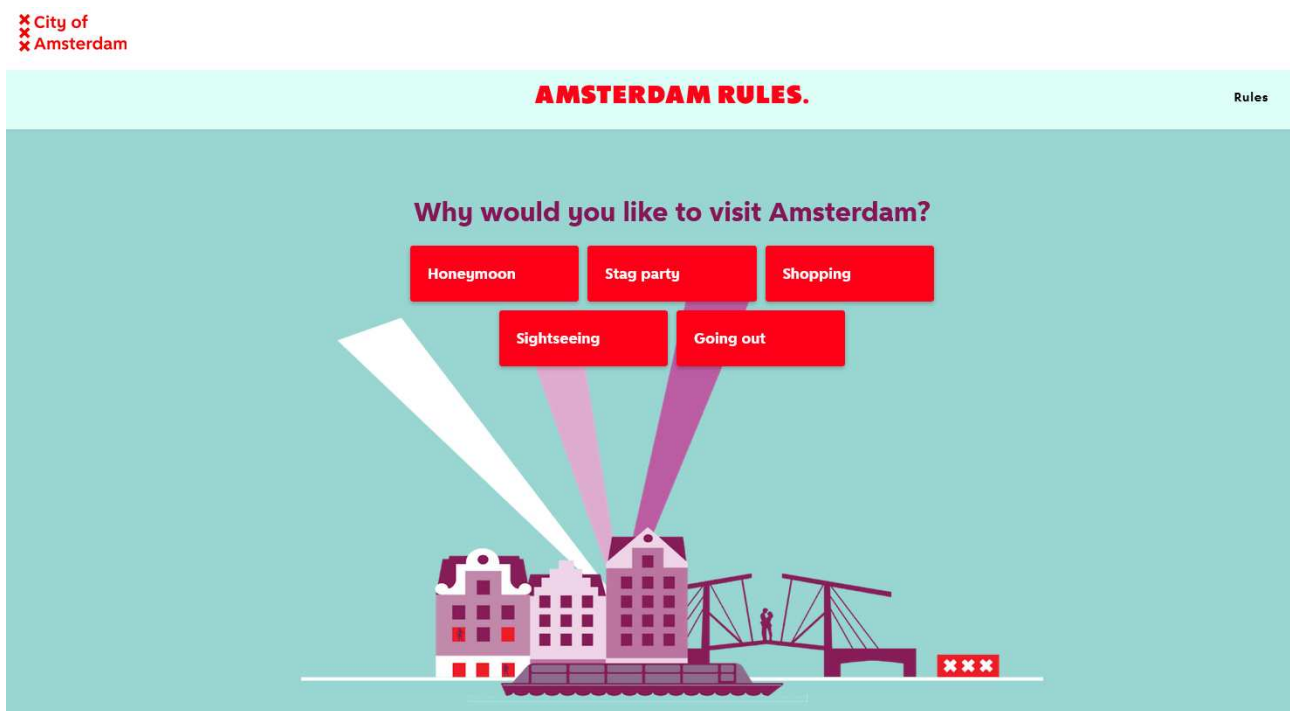


Figure 12: Amsterdam rules in quiz form to discourage party tourists<sup>13</sup>

By taking the quiz, tourists are made aware of the consequences of anti-social behaviour, including the risk of heavy fines for public drunkenness, restrictions on noise levels and the ban on drinking alcohol in public places. The quiz serves both as a preventative measure and an educational tool,

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Araya López, 'Policing the "Anti-Social" Tourist. Mass Tourism and "Disorderly Behaviors" in Venice, Amsterdam and Barcelona.' (University of Salento, 2020), 1200, <https://doi.org/10.1285/i20356609V13I2P1190>.

<sup>12</sup> Dawit Habtemariam, 'Amsterdam's "Stay Away" Ads Didn't Deter Partiers. Now What?', Skift, 29 November 2023, <https://skift.com/2023/11/29/amsterdams-stay-away-ads-didnt-deter-partiers-now-what/>.

<sup>13</sup> 'Amsterdam Rules. Quiz', City of Amsterdam, accessed 30 August 2024, <https://www.amsterdam-rules.com/quiz>.

reinforcing the city's message that it welcomes respectful visitors who contribute positively to the city's atmosphere.<sup>14</sup> In addition to these online initiatives, the city of Amsterdam has also implemented more stringent local regulations with the objective of addressing the issues associated with party tourism. The measures include the imposition of higher fines for public drunkenness, urination, and excessive noise, as well as a prohibition on guided pub crawls, which contribute to public disorder. Furthermore, the city has reduced the number of licences for the sale of alcohol in key tourist areas and introduced restrictions on the locations and times at which alcohol can be consumed. The campaign explicitly states that tourists and locals are subject to the same rules for using public space, which is intended to foster a sense of shared responsibility.<sup>15</sup>

The effectiveness of the Stay Away campaign, the Amsterdam Rules Quiz and the associated ordinances can be assessed by monitoring changes in the behaviour of tourists and feedback from residents and businesses. The media and public discourse have indicated that the campaign has not resulted in the anticipated outcomes.

Additionally, the city council revealed that the strategy had not achieved the desired impact, as evidenced by the continued influx of tourists. Nevertheless, there appears to have been an increase in awareness of the issue of inappropriate tourist behaviour. The online quiz was incorporated into the campaign this year as a means of reaching a wider audience, given that it appears in Google searches when tourists are searching for parties, coffee shops, and the Red Light District in Amsterdam. While the Stay Away campaign has thus far demonstrated limited effectiveness, the introduction of the online quiz and other measures, such as earlier closing hours for bars and the banning of smoking cannabis in public spaces, may prove beneficial.<sup>16</sup>

The approach adopted by Amsterdam in addressing the issue of party tourism represents a proactive model for other cities facing similar challenges. By concentrating on particular problematic behaviours and combining deterrence and education, Amsterdam is attempting to transform its image from that of a party destination to a city that emphasises its cultural heritage and quality of life for all. This strategy places emphasis on the necessity for tailored approaches to tourism management, which address the specific issues faced by a given city and ensure that tourism development is sustainable and meets the needs of local communities.

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<sup>14</sup> 'Amsterdam Doubles-down on Stay Away Campaign with Website to Deter Bad Tourists | NL Times', 15 March 2024, <https://nltimes.nl/2024/03/15/amsterdam-doubles-stay-away-campaign-website-deter-bad-tourists>.

<sup>15</sup> Araya López, 'Policing the "Anti-Social" Tourist. Mass Tourism and "Disorderly Behaviors" in Venice, Amsterdam and Barcelona.', 1200.

<sup>16</sup> 'Amsterdam Doubles-down on Stay Away Campaign with Website to Deter Bad Tourists | NL Times'.

### **7.3 Housing and Local Displacement: Barcelona's "PEUAT" Strategy**

No other Spanish tourist destination was in the news as often as Barcelona this summer because of anti-tourist campaigns. The protests are no longer limited to 'Tourists Go Home' graffiti. There are even reports that 'Barcelona anti-tourism protesters fire water pistols at visitors. Over the last few years, the situation has seemingly escalated, causing the city to recognise the seriousness of the situation and take action.<sup>17</sup> The city is home to no fewer than nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is famous for iconic buildings such as Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Família and the modernist masterpieces that characterise its cityscape. The historical centre of the city attracts millions of tourists every year. While this influx is economically beneficial, it has also led to significant challenges, particularly in terms of housing and the displacement of locals. The rapid growth of short-term rentals via platforms such as Airbnb has further worsened the city's housing crisis, leading to rising rents, the displacement of long-term residents and changes to the social fabric of neighbourhoods.<sup>18</sup>

To address these issues, Barcelona has introduced a series of strict regulations for short-term rental platforms. At the centre of these efforts is the Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT), which sets out strict guidelines for the operation of short-term rentals. As part of this plan, the city has limited the number of tourist accommodations and imposed a ban on new licences in certain areas. The PEUAT policy encourages zero growth in new short-term rental licences and only allows new licences when existing licences expire. This approach aims to curb the proliferation of tourist accommodation in hard-hit neighbourhoods and spread the tourist burden across the city. Furthermore, Barcelona has implemented stringent control mechanisms to guarantee full compliance with the regulations. In order to identify and close down illegal tourist flats, the city has employed over one hundred inspectors and spotters. From 2016 to 2018, these measures resulted in the closure of over 2,355 illegal rentals, with ongoing inspections targeting new violations. The city collaborates with the tax authorities and uses digital tools to monitor and prosecute unlicensed rentals, making it one of the most proactive cities in Europe in regulating short-term rentals.<sup>19</sup> The success of these measures can be attributed to Barcelona's comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to regulating short-term rentals. This strategy not only targets the operators of illicit tourist accommodation but also encompasses the education of both tourists and residents regarding the legalities and consequences of short-term rentals. The municipal government has facilitated the reporting of illegal tourist activities by residents through online complaint forms, thereby enhancing community engagement in the monitoring and regulation of tourism in their neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, to

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<sup>17</sup> Guy, 'Barcelona Anti-Tourism Protesters Fire Water Pistols at Visitors'.

<sup>18</sup> Harold Goodwin, 'Managing Tourism in Barcelona: Responsible Tourism Partnership Working Paper 1', October 2018, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Goodwin, 26f.

reinforce the impact of the preceding restrictions, a prohibition on all AirBnBs in Barcelona until 2028 was only announced this year. This action exceeds the most stringent regulations that have been established globally, including those in New York, Berlin, and Amsterdam. While the precise implementation of this legislation remains uncertain, it is anticipated that the prohibition on short-term rentals will be enacted in phases over the next four years, leading to the eventual revocation of all licenses.<sup>20</sup>

Barcelona's approach to managing the housing and displacement impacts of overtourism exemplifies the crucial role of government regulation in safeguarding the quality of life of residents in tourism-intensive cities. By implementing strict regulatory controls, reaching as far as complete bans on short-term rentals, and guaranteeing compliance through rigorous inspections, Barcelona is taking proactive steps to achieve a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the social needs of communities. These efforts not only help to preserve the city's cultural and social fabric, but also contribute to the sustainability of the tourism industry in the future.

#### **7.4 Environmental Degradation: Cinque Terre's "5 Terre Card"**

In contrast to heritage sites such as Dubrovnik, Amsterdam and Barcelona, there are also UNESCO sites located in less urban areas. Listed in 1997, Porto Venere, Cinque Terre and its islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto), with its picturesque coastline, includes not only beautiful towns but also popular walking routes. The trails take visitors from one Italian small town to the next.<sup>21</sup> However, as word of the beauty of the Cinque Terre has spread, the region has had to struggle with overtourism in recent years. The villages built into the mountains and the narrow paths do not have an infinite capacity for curious tourists, which means that the locals have to suffer under the weight of the masses of people. But overtourism can have negative effects not only on the inhabitants, but also on the characteristic nature of the Cinque Terre, which is not designed for large numbers of visitors. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee initially identified the Cinque Terre area for its harmonious interaction between humans and nature, which has resulted in a landscape of exceptional scenic quality. This landscape illustrates the traditional way of life that has existed for thousands of years and continues to play an important socio-economic role in the life of the community. However, in the cultural landscape of Cinque Terre, this very concept of continuity appears to have been significantly undermined by

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<sup>20</sup> Miquelle Radich, 'What to Know About Barcelona's Upcoming Short-Term Rental Ban', Vacation Rental Owners & Property Managers Blog - Lodgify, 27 June 2024, <https://www.lodgify.com/blog/barcelona-short-term-rental-ban/>.

<sup>21</sup> 'Il Sito Unesco | Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre', accessed 4 September 2024, <https://www.parconazionale5terre.it/pagina.php?id=10>.

tourism. ICOMOS had already identified the potential threat to the preservation of Cinque Terre when the UNESCO site was inscribed in 1997. The explicit inscription on the World Heritage List was considered to provide an unintended incentive for tourism in this sensitive site.<sup>22</sup> The region, which was once a relatively isolated area with a small agricultural population, has experienced pressure on its natural and cultural landscapes from mass tourism. The heavy foot traffic on hiking trails has resulted in erosion and damage to the fragile terraced landscape. Moreover, the concentration of visitors during the peak tourist season has overloaded the local infrastructure, leading to difficulties with waste disposal and the degradation of the natural environment.<sup>23</sup> One of the most visible effects has been the overuse of the Sentiero Azzurro, the most famous hiking trail linking the five villages. The popularity of the trail, combined with a lack of maintenance due to the decline in agricultural labour, has led to an increase in soil erosion and a heightened risk of landslides. Furthermore, the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices has resulted in a gradual reforestation of the terraced slopes. While this may appear to be a positive outcome, it actually poses a significant biogeological risk due to the weakening of the stone walls that support the terraces.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> V. Bertini, 'Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre. Turismo, paesaggio e identità', QUADERNI DELLA RICERCA DEL DIPARTIMENTO DI CULTURE DEL PROGETTO (Milano: Mimesis Edizioni, 2018), 370, <https://iris.uniroma1.it/handle/11573/1658377?mode=complete>.

<sup>23</sup> Ministero dell'Ambiente e della tutela del territorio e del mare, 'Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre. Adesione alla Carta Europea per il Turismo Sostenibile nelle Aree Protette. Strategia e Piano di Azione', December 2014, 13, [https://www.parconazionale5terre.it/pdf/Piano\\_azione\\_5\\_terre\\_29-12.pdf](https://www.parconazionale5terre.it/pdf/Piano_azione_5_terre_29-12.pdf).

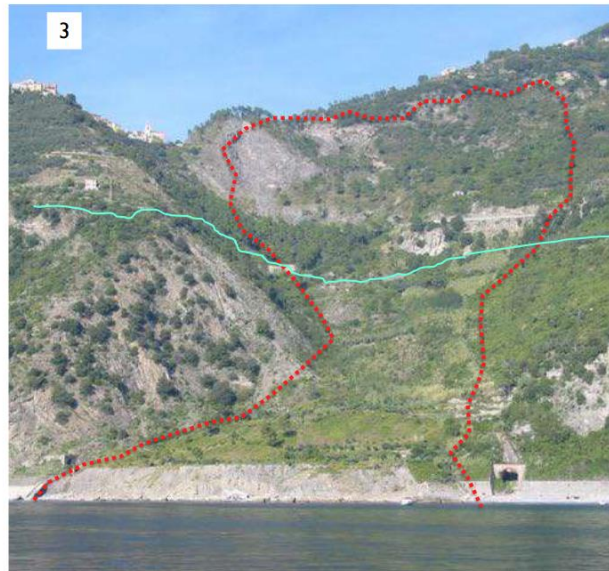
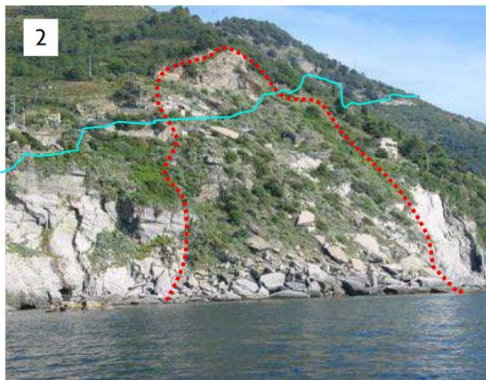
<sup>24</sup> Bertini, 'Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre. Turismo, paesaggio e identità', 375.

## Cinque Terre: Landslides and overcrowding affecting hiking trails



The popular “blue trail” is closer to the coastline and, therefore, to the edge of degradation scarp

1 = Queue on a middle-slope Cinque Terre hiking trail  
2,3 = Trails cutting high and low intensity landslides



[www.parconazionale5terre.it](http://www.parconazionale5terre.it)

Figure 13: Cinque Terre: Landslides and overcrowding affecting hiking trails<sup>25</sup>

In response to these environmental challenges, the National Park of the Cinque Terre has implemented several strategies aimed at mitigating the effects of overtourism and promoting sustainable tourism practices. A key component of this strategy is the introduction of a ticketing system, introduced in 2019, that limits the number of tourists permitted on the trails at any given time. The ticket is called “5 Terre Card” and regulates the visitor flow, reduces overcrowding and minimises the environmental impact on the trails and surrounding landscapes. In addition to the ticketing system, the park authorities have promoted environmentally friendly transport options, for example, the use of trains instead of cars to reach the villages. The narrow roads and limited parking facilities in Cinque Terre render travelling by car impractical. The emphasis on train travel helps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and traffic congestion. Bike sharing is also offered as a sustainable and emission-free alternative in the villages. The park has also initiated educational programmes aimed at both tourists and locals to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the region's unique

<sup>25</sup> Emanuele Raso, ‘Setting the Scene: Tourism Impacts on Our Social and Cultural Assets. How Should Sustainable Tourism Respond? Managing Culture and Social Impacts: The 5 Terre Experience’ (Pramanta, 8 April 2019), 10, [https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Managing-culture-and-social-impacts-the-5Terre-National-Park\\_Emanuele-Raso\\_CNM-2019.pdf](https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Managing-culture-and-social-impacts-the-5Terre-National-Park_Emanuele-Raso_CNM-2019.pdf).



cultural and natural heritage.<sup>26</sup> These measures are part of a strategy plan that is aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (CETS), of which the Cinque Terre is a member. The Park's dedication to sustainable tourism is reflected in its ongoing efforts to maintain a balance between tourism development and the conservation of the region's environmental and cultural resources.<sup>27</sup>

The strategies implemented by the Cinque Terre National Park appear to have had a beneficial overall impact on the region. The implementation of a ticketing system has effectively reduced the number of visitors on the most vulnerable trails, thereby reducing erosion and minimising damage to the terraces. However, the introduction of the ticketing system can also have undesirable side effects, with the social impact becoming a crucial consideration. While tourists are required to bear the financial burden of the ticket, it is also important to acknowledge its impact on the local population, including low-income households. Introducing a ticketing system can therefore potentially lead to social marginalisation. Nevertheless, the strategy to promote sustainable modes of transport has led to a reduction in transport-related pollution and an improvement in the overall quality of the environment in the region.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the efficacy of these strategies is not without limitations. The enduring popularity of Cinque Terre presents a challenge in managing tourist numbers, particularly during the high season. In light of these considerations, the Park has enlisted the services of Mic Hub to conduct a preliminary study on mobility and accessibility to the Park in 2023. The study focused on the peak days of the high season and important holiday days, as these still saw a considerable number of tourists, despite the existing ticket system. Since the 2024 season, the number of people on the hiking routes has been subjected to even more rigorous monitoring, with the assistance of electronic counters. Furthermore, inspections will be conducted to ensure that hikers are wearing appropriate footwear to safeguard the terrain and prevent inexperienced visitors from placing themselves in dangerous situations on the challenging routes.<sup>29</sup> Overall, the proactive response to overtourism is a promising indication of a positive future outcome. In the Cinque Terre, in addition to the villages, it is primarily the hiking trails and natural environment that are adversely affected by the influx of tourists. However, it is also a geographically confined area that can be effectively monitored and regulated. The implementation of visitor controls, sustainable transport solutions and

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<sup>26</sup> Beatrice Foresti, 'Cinque Terre: una sfida continua tra overtourism e cambiamenti climatici', *la Repubblica*, 20 October 2023, [https://www.repubblica.it/economia/rapporti/osserva-italia/osserva-viaggi/2023/10/20/news/cinque\\_terre\\_una\\_sfid\\_a\\_continua\\_tra\\_overtourism\\_e\\_cambiamenti\\_climatici-418334041/](https://www.repubblica.it/economia/rapporti/osserva-italia/osserva-viaggi/2023/10/20/news/cinque_terre_una_sfid_a_continua_tra_overtourism_e_cambiamenti_climatici-418334041/).

<sup>27</sup> Ministero dell'Ambiente e della tutela del territorio e del mare, 'Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre. Adesione alla Carta Europea per il Turismo Sostenibile nelle Aree Protette. Strategia e Piano di Azione', 19.

<sup>28</sup> Manuela Vanoli, 'Cinque Terre, un modello vincente di land reputation', *L'Eco della Stampa* (blog), 18 July 2020, <https://www.ecostampa.it/blog/cinque-terre-un-modello-vincente-di-land-reputation/>.

<sup>29</sup> Marco Magi, 'Cinque Terre, il Parco: "Con queste misure gestiremo i flussi turistici"', *La Nazione*, 8 April 2024, <https://www.lanazione.it/la-spezia/cronaca/cinque-terre-turisti-a3e523f8>.

educational initiatives represents a promising approach to addressing the issue of overtourism. These strategies have demonstrated the potential to mitigate the environmental impacts associated with tourism. However, it is evident that continued efforts and innovation are necessary to preserve the distinctive cultural landscape of the Cinque Terre for future generations.

### **7.5 Preservation of cultural and archaeological sites: Machu Picchu's visitor caps and circuits**

Although situated outside of Europe, the Inca city of Machu Picchu is a notable example of architectural excellence, situated within the Peruvian Andes. The site's global reputation has resulted in it becoming one of the most significant tourist destinations, with the potential for overtourism becoming a significant issue. Machu Picchu has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983 and is widely regarded as one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. The Inca city, situated on a mountain top in the Andes, was constructed in the 15th century. It was subsequently rediscovered in 1911 by the American explorer Hiram Bingham. The site has become a symbol of Peru's cultural heritage, attracting over a million visitors annually.<sup>30</sup> However, this global popularity has resulted in significant challenges associated with overtourism, which have the potential to compromise the long-term preservation of the site. Machu Picchu's significance is derived from its unique combination of cultural, religious, and architectural significance. The site represents the peak of Inca engineering and religious devotion, showcasing a well-preserved citadel and temples that reflect the spiritual and political influence of the Inca Empire. Its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List serves to underscore the exceptional universal value of the site, owed to its unique location and the harmonious relationship between its architectural features and the surrounding landscape. Following its designation as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007, the number of tourists visiting Machu Picchu increased significantly. This resulted in a range of negative effects, including environmental degradation, erosion of the terraced landscapes and damage to the ruins themselves. In response, UNESCO has intervened on several occasions, urging the Peruvian government to implement stricter measures to protect the site from further deterioration.<sup>31</sup>

In response to these challenges, the Peruvian government has implemented a series of strategies with the objective of reducing the pressure on Machu Picchu and preserving the integrity of the site. One of the most significant measures is the implementation of a daily visitor cap, which places a limit on

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<sup>30</sup> Expediciones Quechuas, 'Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu', *Quechuas Expeditions* (blog), 15 March 2023, <https://www.quechuasexpeditions.com/historic-sanctuary-of-machu-picchu/>.

<sup>31</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'State of Conservation (SOC 2023) Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu (Peru)', UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed 7 September 2024, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/4482/>.

the number of tourists permitted to enter the site. The permitted number of visitors per day is 4,500, to be increased to 5,600 during the high season. All visitors are required to purchase timed entry tickets, which are divided into different time slots. This system facilitates the regulation of tourist flow, the prevention of overcrowding during peak periods and the assurance that the site does not exceed its capacity. In addition, the site's authorities have established specific itineraries for visitors to follow, thereby ensuring a more uniform distribution of visitors across the site. With the purchased ticket, only the designated circuits may be accessed in order to equalise the flow of visitors. This mitigates the risk of damage to the ruins and reduces the likelihood of erosion along the trails.<sup>32</sup>

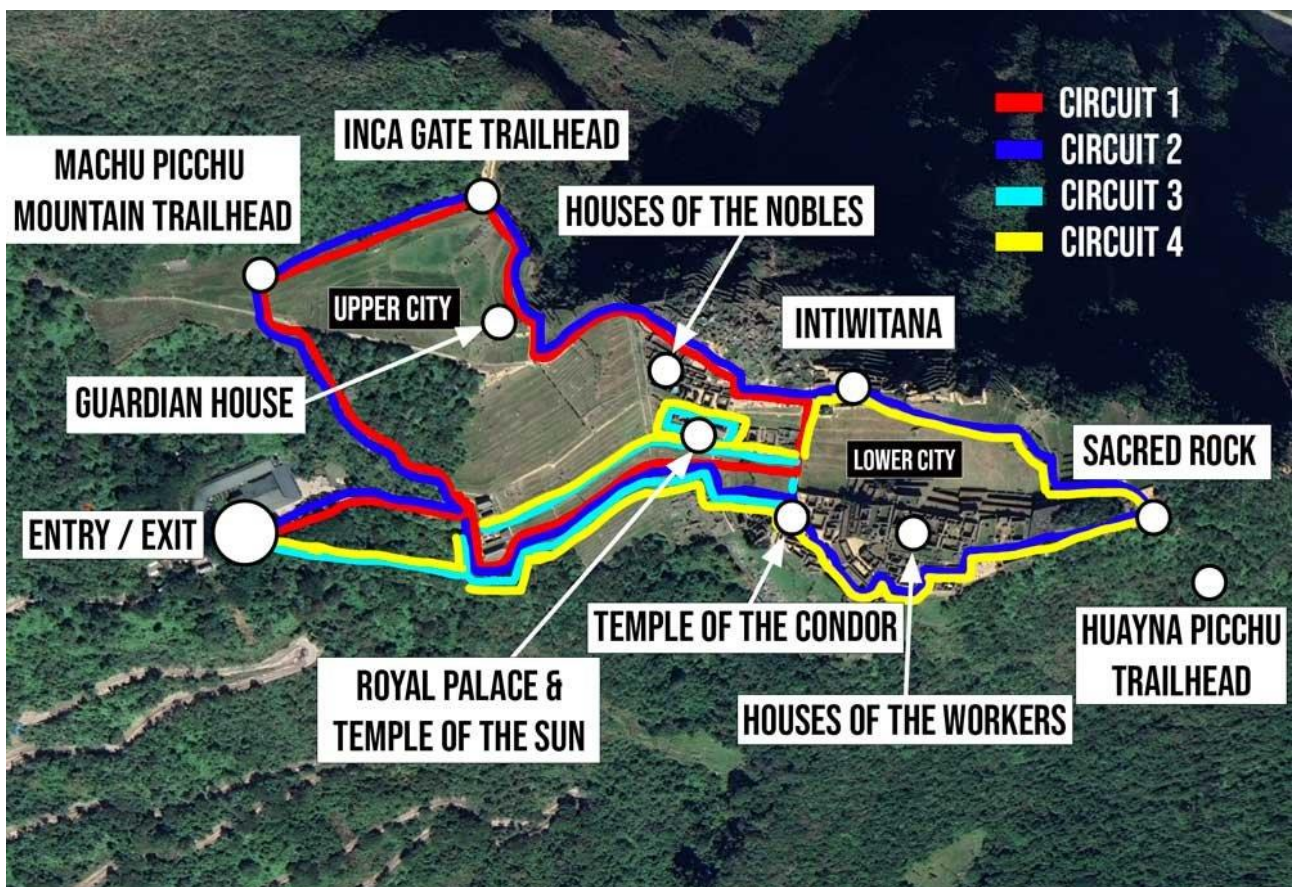


Figure 14: The four circuits on the cultural heritage site of Machu Picchu (state of August 2023 still includes The Temple of the Condor and the Temple of the Sun)<sup>33</sup>

However, as a consequence of the erosion and increased fragility of some structures, which had unfortunately already occurred by 2023, the country's Ministry of Culture had banned access to certain parts of the site. The Temple of the Condor and the Temple of the Sun remain inaccessible to

<sup>32</sup> Fanny, 'Machu Picchu Rules 2024', *Setours* (blog), 30 August 2024, <https://www.setours.com/machu-picchu-new-rules/>.

<sup>33</sup> Cat Smith and Joe Bird, 'We Walked Every Circuit in Machu Picchu: Here's What You Need to Know', *Walk My World* (blog), 20 August 2023, <https://www.walkmyworld.com/posts/machu-picchu-circuits>.

the public, as the structures are considered too vulnerable to be exposed to such a large influx of visitors on a daily basis.<sup>34</sup>

The strategies implemented in Machu Picchu are, for the most part, met with approval. The measures that have been put in place are proving effective in reducing the impact of overtourism. The implementation of visitor caps and time-limited tickets has effectively mitigated the issue of overcrowding, which was previously a significant challenge. By regulating the number of visitors permitted at any given time, the Peruvian government has been able to reduce the strain on the vulnerable ruins and prevent further decline in the condition of the site. It is of the utmost importance that the site limits the impact of tourism while simultaneously maintaining the economic benefits that tourism brings to the local economy. It is therefore evident that the permanent closure of the site is not a realistic option. However, it is probable that partial closures will continue to be enforced in serious cases. Nevertheless, despite these improvements, challenges remain. The sheer volume of tourists continues to pose a risk, and constant monitoring is required to ensure that existing policies are adapted to the changing dynamics of tourism. Experts argue that more stringent measures, such as a further reduction in visitor numbers or the introduction of closed periods for restoration, may be necessary to ensure the long-term preservation of Machu Picchu.<sup>35</sup> The experience of Machu Picchu with overtourism illustrates the challenge of striking a balance between the preservation of a world-famous cultural heritage site and the maintenance of the economic benefits that tourism provides. The Peruvian government's strategies, including visitor caps, time-limited entry and specified circuits, have proved effective in addressing the most immediate threats posed by mass tourism. These measures can serve as valuable examples for other heritage sites, and demonstrate sustainable tourism management in sensitive cultural and natural landscapes. Machu Picchu remains a key example of how responsible tourism practices can help preserve cultural heritage for future generations while allowing millions of people to experience its historical and spiritual significance.

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<sup>34</sup> Evelyn Lau, 'Peru Shuts Parts of Machu Picchu from Tourists Due to Erosion', *The National*, 29 September 2023, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/travel/2023/09/29/peru-machu-picchu-overtourism/>.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Bywater, 'Machu Picchu Open to Additional 700 a Day after Year of Protests', *NZ Herald*, 21 December 2023, sec. Travel, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/machu-picchu-visitor-cap-increased-to-5600-a-day-to-bolster-peru-tourism/Y4JVXFHP5ZGUTB2PD757QLJQKA/>.

## **7.6 Small-Scale Destination Overcrowding: Rigi's infrastructure management and community engagement**

Mount Rigi, also known as the 'Queen of the Mountains' in Switzerland, is a popular destination in the Swiss Alps. Situated between Lake Lucerne and Lake Zug, Rigi provides visitors with spectacular panoramic views, hiking trails and historic railways that transport tourists to the mountaintop. Rigi serves as a notable example of overtourism, despite the fact that it is not included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The case of Rigi demonstrates how a small natural destination, similarly subjected to pressures as cultural and natural heritage sites, can implement effective strategies to address overtourism. Despite not being an official UNESCO World Heritage Site, Rigi's approach to balancing tourist demand with environmental conservation offers valuable insights into sustainable tourism practices that can also be applied to heritage sites seeking to protect their universal value while managing visitor numbers.

The rise in visitor numbers has placed considerable strain on local infrastructure, with potential environmental consequences and a notable impact on the quality of life for local residents. For centuries, Rigi has been a well-known destination for visitors seeking to experience the Alpine scenery. Following the inauguration of Europe's first mountain railway in 1871, the appeal of Rigi increased, resulting in a significant rise in tourism in the region. The convenient accessibility by rail, cable car and cog railway has contributed to the popularity of Rigi as a destination for domestic and international visitors. However, in recent decades, the number of tourists has increased to such an extent that the destination is no longer sustainable. Over the last decade, marketing in China has been remarkably effective, resulting in a large inflow of Chinese tourists to Rigi. As documented in the 'Rigi 2030 Future Report', the mountain receives over 800,000 visitors a year, a figure that raises concerns about environmental degradation and overtourism.<sup>36</sup> The influx of tourists also places considerable pressure on the transport infrastructure. Frequently, trains and cable cars are operating at full capacity, which results in extended waiting periods and a crowded experience at the summit. Local residents have expressed concern regarding the impact of tourism on their quality of life. The impact on residents is the most significant issue, although the impact on the environment is also notable but has not yet been quantified. The fragile alpine ecosystem is vulnerable to damage from excessive foot traffic, and the lack of proper waste disposal during peak periods can intensify the

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<sup>36</sup> M. Egeter, L. Ketterer Bonnelame, and D. Siegrist, 'Zukunft Rigi 2030+. Wege zu einem nachhaltigen, klimaverträglichen und ökologischen Tourismus auf der Königin der Berge' (Rapperswil: OST Ostschweizer Fachhochschule, June 2022), 19, [https://www.ost.ch/fileadmin/dateiliste/3\\_forschung\\_dienstleistung/institute/ilf/bericht\\_zukunft\\_rigi\\_2030\\_final.pdf](https://www.ost.ch/fileadmin/dateiliste/3_forschung_dienstleistung/institute/ilf/bericht_zukunft_rigi_2030_final.pdf).

environmental impact.<sup>37</sup> Local residents and environmental groups have expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of mass tourism on the mountain.<sup>38</sup>

In light of these concerns, the local authorities have implemented various strategies to manage the number of tourists and mitigate the effects of overtourism. The Rigi has implemented a comprehensive visitor management system, which is primarily managed by RigiPlus AG and Rigi Bahnen AG. The objective of these measures is to improve communication and provide essential information to tourists, residents and service providers. A principal strategy is to distribute visitor flows across the whole mountain area. This incorporates the use of signs to direct tourists to less crowded areas, also in Chinese, the promotion of alternative attractions and the dispersal of visitors across the mountain. For instance, visitors to Rigi Kulm are encouraged to make use of designated photographic locations and picnic areas with a view to reducing congestion at the mountain top. Furthermore, the plan entails the establishment of new attractions in less frequented regions, with the objective of further dispersing tourists. The local community is to be involved by encouraging residents to participate in the tourism industry through the provision of valuable assistance in tourism management as volunteers, referred to as 'oRIGInals'. In addition, the focus is on developing a co-creation process and workshops that engage locals, tourists and tourism service providers in the development of creative new products and experiences. The region has divided the strategies into two categories: short-term and long-term measures. The short-term measures include the distribution of space, the installation of additional toilets and the implementation of additional signage in Asian languages. The medium-term measures are designed to enhance the visitor experience at the mountain summit, with the introduction of culinary offerings and the implementation of augmented reality technology.<sup>39</sup> The strategies implemented so far have shown positive results in curbing over-tourism. The participatory approach, which involved key stakeholders, was crucial to the success of sustainable development and targeted visitor management. However, the long-term sustainability of these strategies is uncertain due to the need for continuous investment and cooperation.<sup>40</sup> Despite these hurdles, the Rigi's shift towards qualitative tourism provides a strong model for the management of smaller destinations struggling with overtourism. The case of Mount Rigi demonstrates the difficulties encountered by small tourist destinations in managing the consequences of overtourism. While the Strategic Plan has reduced some of the immediate pressures, continued monitoring and adaptation are essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry on Mount Rigi.

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<sup>37</sup> Sven Gross et al., 'Tourism Destinations under Pressure - Challenges and Innovative Solutions', 2017, 132f, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.31472.66566>.

<sup>38</sup> 'Wann ist viel zu viel? - Widerstand an der Rigi gegen zu viele Touristen', Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF), 29 July 2017, <https://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/wann-ist-viel-zu-viel-widerstand-an-der-rigi-gegen-zu-viele-touristen>.

<sup>39</sup> Gross et al., 'Tourism Destinations under Pressure - Challenges and Innovative Solutions', 135f.

<sup>40</sup> Gross et al., 138.

## **7.7 Solution-catalogue for the heritage sites of Rome and Regensburg and other sites under pressure of overtourism**

The previous tourism destinations have all implemented different strategies in order to combat the increasing phenomenon of overtourism. The adoption of these strategies at heritage sites facing overtourism offers insights that can be applied to address the specific issues faced by other similar destinations. The effectiveness of these strategies is dependent on their capacity to strike a balance between the preservation of cultural and historical integrity and the accommodation of large numbers of visitors while still offering a quality experience. By examining the challenges and successes of cities with World Heritage status, such as Dubrovnik, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Cinque Terre, Machu Picchu and Rigi, it becomes evident that the implementation of effective tourism management strategies can serve to mitigate the negative effects of overcrowding, environmental degradation, and social displacement. These strategies offer proven solutions that can also be adapted to other UNESCO World Heritage Sites that are experiencing similar challenges. It must be acknowledged that each World Heritage site is characterised by its own distinctive features, which makes it challenging to implement uniform solutions across all sites. However, given the shared nature of the overtourism-related problems, this thesis presents a catalogue of strategies that can be adapted to address the specific challenges faced by individual sites. The strategies are drawn from previous case studies and, where suitable, applied to the World Heritage sites of Rome and Regensburg. Nevertheless, the catalogue is intended to serve as a general recommendation for other heritage sites similarly affected by the challenges of overtourism.

The six tourist destinations are experiencing the challenges of overtourism for a variety of reasons and have therefore implemented a range of strategies to address this issue. In Dubrovnik, the principal cause of overtourism is the arrival of cruise ships, which bring thousands of tourists into the city in a relatively short period of time, thereby placing significant strain on the city's infrastructure. The 'Respect the City' programme addresses this issue by establishing limits on the number of cruise ships permitted to dock per day and the number of passengers they may carry. Furthermore, the city coordinates with cruise lines to schedule their arrivals in a staggered manner, which serves to minimise overcrowding in the historic centre and enhance both the tourist experience and the quality of life for residents. This strategy has facilitated the management of significant tourist inflows while ensuring the preservation of Dubrovnik's cultural integrity.

The city of Amsterdam has introduced the 'Stay Away' campaign as a means of addressing the issue of party tourism, which has been identified as a negative influence on the city. This strategy is specifically directed towards young tourists who engage in disruptive behaviour. The measures implemented by the city include the introduction of more stringent regulations, fines, and the

prohibition of certain actions in public spaces. These measures are coupled with a digital advertising campaign designed to deter or even prevent unwanted tourism. The campaign represents a direct approach to limiting certain forms of overtourism, which is in line with broader sustainability goals. In Barcelona, the rise in short-term rentals facilitated by platforms such as Airbnb has led to a displacement of housing in the city centre. In response, the city government introduced the PEUAT policy, which places restrictions on the number of short-term rental licenses that can be issued and imposes penalties for rentals that are conducted without the necessary authorization. By implementing these regulatory measures, the city of Barcelona has been able to improve the situation of its residents while also reducing the negative social impacts of overtourism, such as gentrification and displacement.

The Cinque Terre National Park is experiencing environmental degradation as a result of overtourism, particularly on its overcrowded hiking trails. In order to address this issue, the park has implemented a visitor management system, known as the 5 Terre Card, which places limits on the number of individuals permitted on the trails. The promotion of sustainable transportation options, such as trains and bicycles, is also encouraged with the objective of reducing car traffic and pollution. The park is also implementing educational initiatives with the goal of enhancing public awareness of environmental protection. These measures have resulted in a reduction in erosion and a notable improvement in the sustainability of tourism in the area.

The World Heritage Site of Machu Picchu has also been experiencing considerable pressure from overtourism for a considerable period of time, which has the potential to compromise the preservation of the archaeological and cultural heritage. In response, the Peruvian government implemented visitor caps and began selling time-limited tickets with the purpose of regulating the number of daily visitors. The implementation of designated visitor routes has also been effective in ensuring that tourist flows are distributed across the entire site, thereby preventing overcrowding in sensitive areas.

In conclusion, the case of Mount Rigi in Switzerland provides an example of effective management of overtourism in a small destination. The strategies employed by Rigi include the limitation of the cogwheel railway's capacity and the promotion of tourism outside of the peak season. The Rigi's participatory approach, which involves local stakeholders in the planning of tourism initiatives, also ensures that the concerns of residents are taken into account. This model has been effective in reducing the concentration of tourist crowds while simultaneously enhancing the visitor experience, thereby establishing it as a sustainable exemplar for smaller destinations.

The case studies presented here showcase a variety of strategies, including visitor caps, targeted web campaigns, short-term rental policies, and conservation initiatives. Each strategy is tailored to address the specific challenges of overtourism in a unique context. These solutions, particularly those that balance tourist flows with the needs of the local population, are also applicable to other heritage sites



that face similar issues, such as Rome and Regensburg. The UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Rome and Regensburg have both been confronted with the challenges of tourism and the phenomenon of overtourism. In Rome, the annual influx of millions of tourists places considerable strain on the city's infrastructure, with historic sites reaching the limits of their capacity and the quality of life for residents being significantly affected. Ancient sites such as the Colosseum and the Pantheon are experiencing the negative effects of overcrowding, environmental degradation and deterioration from the impact of excessive tourism arrivals. Furthermore, the housing market has been significantly impacted by the emergence of short-term rental platforms such as Airbnb, resulting in the displacement of long-term residents. Similarly, the city of Regensburg, which is of a smaller scale, also experiences considerable pressure during the peak tourist season, particularly in the medieval city centre. The extent of the issue is less dramatic than in Rome, but the compact nature of the historic city centre of Regensburg renders it particularly vulnerable to overcrowding, which has the potential to disrupt the daily lives of residents and damage cultural heritage sites. The practice of short-term rentals has also been identified as a contributing factor in the displacement of residents from the old town, thereby disrupting the socio-economic balance. It is therefore evident that both cities can benefit from further strategies to manage tourism sustainably and protect their cultural heritage.

The Dubrovnik 'Respect the City' programme, which imposes restrictions on the number of cruise ships and their scheduled arrivals, could provide a model for the Roman port city of Civitavecchia. By limiting the number of cruise ships, Rome could more effectively manage the influx of day-trippers into the city centre and reduce congestion. While not a major cruise destination, the city of Regensburg does receive a significant number of river cruise tourists. Implementing comparable regulations to limit or stagger the arrival of river cruise passengers could assist in relieving the pressure on the medieval centre of Regensburg, particularly during the high season.

The Amsterdam 'Stay Away' campaign, which discourages problematic forms of tourism, could be employed in both cities to address specific behavioural issues. While not the primary concern, instances of public drunkenness and vandalism at historical sites in Rome could be addressed through educational initiatives and more stringent penalties. Prior to the construction of a fence with an entrance fee around the Trevi Fountain, which would prevent reckless tourists from emulating the famous 'Dolce Vita' scene, it would be more sustainable to implement a professional web campaign to sensitise visitors to the fragile cultural heritage.<sup>41</sup> It does not appear that the city of Regensburg experiences the same level of disrespectful behaviour from tourists as other locations. However, there is a potential benefit in strengthening awareness of the city's sensitivity and historical significance through the implementation of a similar campaign.

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<sup>41</sup> 'Giovane turista si fa il bagno nella fontana di Trevi', RomaToday, accessed 11 September 2024, <https://www.romatoday.it/cronaca/bagno-ragazza-fontana-di-trevi.html>.

Moreover, both UNESCO cities could benefit from the implementation of regulations governing short-term rentals. The Barcelona PEUAT policy, for instance, exemplifies a successful approach to this end, as it imposes rigorous controls on tourist accommodation with the objective of preventing the displacement of residents and safeguarding the housing market. In Rome, the proliferation of short-term rental platforms such as Airbnb has contributed to a housing shortage, leading to a rise in property prices and the displacement of locals from the city centre. By implementing more stringent regulations, as seen in Barcelona, Rome could ensure the continued viability of its historic neighbourhoods as liveable communities for residents. Similarly, the German city of Regensburg, which also has a significant presence of short-term rentals, could consider such measures to avoid increasing housing issues. The complete prohibition of holiday rentals in certain neighbourhoods could also help to maintain the stability of the socio-economic community.

The strategies of Cinque Terre are primarily focused on the geographical and natural features of the UNESCO site. Nevertheless, certain strategies, such as the promotion and development of sustainable modes of transport, including trains and bicycles, are also applicable to Rome and Regensburg. The city of Rome is particularly affected by the issue of traffic congestion and the presence of an excessive number of vehicles on the road. In light of the success of the Cinque Terre strategy, it would be beneficial for Rome to implement a similar approach, namely a significant reduction in the number of cars in the city centre, particularly for tourists. However, it is also crucial to prioritise investment in public transport, with the aim of creating attractive alternatives for drivers. The transport network in Regensburg is relatively efficient, yet the city's citizens voted against the construction of a tram line this summer. The introduction of a tram and enhanced connections to the suburbs could have a positive impact on the local population and on tourism.

The system of Machu Picchu, which imposes limits on visitor numbers, time slots and predetermined routes, serves to protect the ancient ruins from the threats of overcrowding and destruction. In Rome, time-slot tickets are already in use for the Colosseum and the Roman Forum. However, these tickets permit the holder to enter at any time within a 24-hour period. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable to consider implementing more restrictive time slots and precise entry times, with a maximum number of tickets sold per day. To facilitate a more regulated influx of visitors and to safeguard the ruins in a more sustainable manner, it would be advisable to consider the implementation of predetermined circuits. Such measures would not only serve to safeguard the historical integrity of these sites, but would also enhance the visitor experience by reducing the length of queues and the number of people in attendance. In Regensburg, the implementation of admission controls at key locations is not yet a viable strategy since the majority of visitors are concentrated outside in the city centre. The introduction of circuit-based tours has already been explored through the development of various thematic walks. However, there is potential to expand this approach by incorporating additional

variations and placing greater emphasis on cultural heritage, ranging from Roman ruins to medieval city palaces and culinary attractions, in order to enhance awareness and appreciation of these important historical and cultural assets.

Last but not least, Rigi presents a variety of approaches and strategies for addressing overtourism in small-scale heritage destinations. The communication between the various stakeholders and the integration of the population into tourism management could be transferred to Regensburg in this way to guarantee a balanced agreement. Although the involvement of the population is already encouraged for certain projects in Regensburg, it is evident that intensive and regular cooperation is the key, especially in a sensitive area that has to reconcile the needs of the population, the cultural heritage and the tourists. Furthermore, the strategy of promoting alternative attractions in Rigi is an effective method for Regensburg and Rome to spread the flow of visitors.

By adopting the proven strategies of other destinations affected by overtourism, Rome and Regensburg can better manage the influx of tourists while preserving their UNESCO sites. The implementation of visitor caps, targeted campaigns, regulations for short-term rentals, and sustainable transportation solutions are transferable measures that can assist these cities and other World Heritage sites in achieving a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the preservation of their cultural heritage. A sustainable and well managed tourism can enable Rome and Regensburg to safeguard the integrity of their historic sites and enhance the quality of life for their residents, ensuring the continued resilience of these cities as vibrant cultural centres and liveable spaces for future generations.

Table 3: Overtourism Strategy Catalogue

Overtourism Issue	Destination	Strategy	Potential Application in Rome	Potential Application in Regensburg
Cruise Ship Congestion	Dubrovnik	"Respect the City" program: limits on the number of cruise ships, staggered arrivals	Limit the number of cruise tourists from Civitavecchia to reduce pressure on the city centre	Limit and stagger river cruises to manage tourist inflow into the city centre
Party Tourism	Amsterdam	"Stay Away" campaign: targeting problematic behaviours with digital ads and fines	A campaign to target disrespectful behaviour at cultural heritage sites	A campaign to raise awareness for the historical significance of the city
Housing Displacement	Barcelona	PEUAT policy: strict regulations on short-term rentals	Implement strict regulations for short-term rentals to avoid resident displacement	Regulate short-term rentals to prevent increasing housing crises
Environmental Degradation (and Dissatisfaction of Locals)	Cinque Terre	"5 Terre Card": ticketing system limiting trail access; sustainable transportation	Promote and improve public transport, reduce vehicle access and number in the cultural heritage areas	Create a tramline and improve public transport connections to the suburbs
Preservation of Archaeological Sites	Machu Picchu	Visitor caps, time-slot tickets, and designated circuits	Stricter time slots, daily caps and circuits for the most visited sites like the Colosseum and Roman Forum	Expand thematic walking tours/circuits to distribute crowds and increase awareness for the cultural heritage
Small-Scale Overcrowding	Rigi	Capacity limits on trains; participatory stakeholder involvement; alternative attractions to distribute visitor flow	Engage local stakeholders in tourism management and promote alternative attractions	Involve local residents and businesses in tourism initiatives and management; Promote alternative attractions

## 8. Conclusion

The issue of overtourism has become a persistent challenge for cultural heritage sites. Cities such as Rome and Regensburg are experiencing difficulties in managing the influx of visitors while maintaining their historical and cultural integrity. This thesis has demonstrated that the physical, social and economic impacts of overtourism cannot be overlooked any longer, given the exponential growth of the tourism industry which exerts increasing pressure on both the sites themselves and the communities that support them. While the existing literature has already addressed the issue of overtourism in a number of popular destinations, including Venice, this thesis attempts to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by focusing on less researched heritage cities such as Regensburg and Rome. The principal objective of this thesis was to gain insight into the particular challenges that overtourism presents to these two UNESCO World Heritage Sites and to identify viable, long-term solutions. By conducting an in-depth analysis of tourism data, policies and site-specific strategies from other destinations, this thesis has made a significant contribution to the wider discourse by offering actionable recommendations that prioritise sustainability. By addressing the gaps in current research, this study emphasises the need for tailored solutions that respect the unique dynamics of each site and ultimately provide a foundation for future heritage protection efforts in an era of growing overtourism. The analysis of Rome and Regensburg demonstrates the ongoing challenge of balancing the maintenance of cultural integrity with the accommodation of tourist demand at cultural heritage sites. Despite the implementation of measures to regulate tourism, such as the introduction of entry fees to public sites like the Pantheon in Rome and educational initiatives in Regensburg, some of the strategies employed have proven only partially effective in addressing the root causes of overtourism. In particular, these measures tend to be reactive in nature, with the objective of reducing the immediate impacts of overtourism. They do still too rarely provide comprehensive, forward-looking solutions that anticipate future challenges.

The case study of Rome demonstrates that the considerable influx of tourists, which reaches its zenith during significant events such as the forthcoming Jubilee in 2025, exerts considerable pressure on the city's infrastructure and cultural sites. The Tourism Area Life Cycle model indicates that Rome is currently in the stagnation phase, wherein the negative consequences of tourism, including overcrowding, infrastructure strain, and environmental degradation, are beginning to exceed the economic benefits. In this phase, prompt and comprehensive measures are essential to avert further deterioration of the visitor experience and local quality of life. The city's strategic tourism plan, "FUTOUROMA", seeks to address these challenges by promoting sustainable tourism, improving infrastructure, and managing visitor flows more effectively. However, the current policy often appears fragmented, reactive and lacking in action when it comes to the implementation of planned measures.

For example, entrance fees are being introduced for iconic sites such as the Pantheon and soon the Trevi Fountain, without a broader framework for managing the overall tourist influx in the city. Furthermore, the short-term rental market remains largely unregulated, contributing to housing shortages and displacement of residents, which has become a significant socio-economic problem worsened by platforms such as Airbnb. In line with the policies implemented in other destinations, such as Barcelona's PEUAT policy to regulate short-term rentals, it can be argued that Rome would benefit from a stricter enforcement of rental regulations in order to protect its local communities. Furthermore, the implementation of sustainable and improved transportation options, based on the traffic management strategies observed in Cinque Terre, could potentially reduce congestion within the city. Additionally, the introduction of more restrictive time slots and visitor caps at prominent cultural sites, inspired by the model employed at Machu Picchu, could help to alleviate overcrowding while ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage. The findings make it clear that Rome's long-term success in tackling overtourism depends on its ability to establish a competent and well-structured tourism management with realistic strategies. This includes putting sustainability at the heart of policy, increasing community involvement and ensuring that tourism growth does not come at the expense of cultural heritage or the well-being of local residents. Without a coherent approach, there is an increased risk of entering deeper into the stagnation phase and even experiencing the decline phase will increase.

In contrast, the city of Regensburg represents a distinctive case of a smaller heritage city, currently experiencing the early stages of overtourism. While the city does not attract the same number of visitors as Rome, it is facing an increasing level of pressure from the growth of tourism, particularly in its small but well-preserved medieval city centre, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The analysis indicates that the city's infrastructure is beginning to exhibit indications of saturation, particularly during the peak tourist season. The local shops and public spaces are undergoing a process of transformation to cater to the needs of tourists, which gives rise to concerns about the long-term sustainability of these developments. One of the most notable strategies employed by the city of Regensburg to manage tourism is the establishment of the World Heritage Visitor Centre. This initiative is designed to educate tourists about the cultural significance of the city. This initiative demonstrates a proactive approach to the management of tourism and the encouragement of responsible visitor behaviour. The 2017 and 2021 tourism concepts are similarly sustainable in their approach and provide solutions to some of the common issues caused by tourism. Nevertheless, the visitor centre and tourism concept, while innovative, may not be sufficient to mitigate the far-reaching effects of growing tourism demand. It is recommended that the city of Regensburg maintains a close observation of the developments in tourism and takes the necessary precautions to address the short-term and long-term challenges of overtourism. As indicated in the results of the analysis presented in

this thesis, it would also be beneficial for Regensburg to draw inspiration from other strategies that have been successfully implemented in other locations. These include the cruise ship regulation of Dubrovnik and the sustainable transport management of Cinque Terre. However, Rigi in particular can serve as a model with its various strategies for visitor distribution. By acting proactively, the city of Regensburg has the potential to prevent the more severe consequences faced by other destinations experiencing overtourism. In contrast to Rome, the situation in Regensburg remains relatively less critical, and it is possible to maintain a balance between the tourism sector and the protection of cultural heritage and residents through the implementation of well-defined and effective measures. By examining these two contrasting case studies, the thesis offers valuable insights into the impact of overtourism on globally recognised and lesser-known attractions, thus contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the problem. The proposed strategies and solutions, such as visitor management systems and stricter regulations on short-term rentals, address gaps in current research by offering practical, site-specific strategies that are both adaptable and forward-looking. While numerous studies have concentrated on the symptoms of overtourism, this work goes beyond the immediate issues and puts forth a long-term framework for sustainable tourism management that guarantees cultural assets are preserved for future generations. Furthermore, the application of the TALC model enables a structured approach to understanding the position of different destinations in relation to tourism growth. With regard to future research, there are a number of possibilities for further investigation that could build on this work. It would be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of the proposed strategies on both visitor experience and heritage conservation. Such studies could monitor the evolution of tourism management strategies over time, evaluating their effectiveness in curbing overtourism without compromising the local economy or cultural integrity. Furthermore, future research could expand the scope to encompass other heritage cities, particularly those in developing regions facing the challenges of mass tourism. By adopting a global perspective, scholars could examine how diverse cultural, economic, and geographical contexts shape the effectiveness of strategies to address overtourism.

In conclusion, this work not only contributes to the existing body of research but also establishes a foundation for further research on sustainable tourism practices and heritage protection in the context of an era of increasing global tourism. As the phenomenon of overtourism has only been the subject of serious academic study since 2017, it is still a field with considerable potential, with new characteristics emerging with each current development. In contrast with the predictions of numerous experts, even a global crisis such as the covid-19 pandemic has not been able to restart the tourism sector in the long term. Indeed, visitor numbers have already returned to their pre-covid levels for the majority of Europe's major destinations. This development should serve as a wake-up call to all tourism destinations that have not recognised the growth of tourism in recent decades as a warning

sign. The phenomenon of overtourism has become an integral aspect of the tourism sector, and there is no universal solution to address it. It is therefore essential that local administrations and tourism experts collaborate on the elaboration of proactive policies. The studies conducted in Regensburg and, more notably, in Rome have demonstrated that a reactive approach to management is insufficient in the long term, particularly when considering the annual growth in tourist numbers. In order to guarantee a sustainable tourism sector, all parties must collaborate, from the local population and cultural heritage administrators to tourism stakeholders and city officials. The success of any strategy is contingent on the participation and commitment of all parties. By working together, we can ensure that tourism enhances cultural experiences for visitors and locals while safeguarding heritage sites for future generations, thereby ensuring their continued vibrancy and historical significance.



## Appendix

Tavola 8.2 • Consistenza degli esercizi ricettivi alberghieri per categoria a Roma - Anno 2009

CATEGORIA	HOTEL	CAMERE	LETTI
5 stelle	25	3.562	7.602
4 stelle	232	24.498	49.991
3 stelle	335	13.105	25.558
2 stelle	213	4.135	8.148
1 stella	129	1.574	2.925
<b>Totale</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>46.874</b>	<b>94.224</b>

Fonte: Ente Bilaterale Territoriale di Roma e Provincia

Figure 15: Number of hotels, rooms (camere) and beds (letti) from 1 to 5 stars<sup>42</sup>

Tavola 8.4 • Arrivi e presenze negli esercizi ricettivi alberghieri e complementari per provenienza - Anno 2009

PROVENIENZA	ESERCIZI RICETTIVI ALBERGHIERI			ESERCIZI RICETTIVI COMPLEMENTARI (a)			TOTALE	
	Arrivi	Presenze	Permanenza media (giorni)	Arrivi	Presenze	Permanenza media (giorni)	Arrivi	Presenze
Italia	2.942.175	5.637.040	1,9	1.135.593	3.879.062	3,4	4.077.768	9.516.102
Europa	2.469.860	7.173.816	2,9	580.272	1.538.639	2,7	3.050.132	8.712.455
Nord America	1.223.511	3.199.842	2,6	34.159	98.702	2,9	1.257.670	3.298.544
Centro e Sud America	237.167	608.256	2,6	42.934	99.593	2,3	280.101	707.849
Sud Est Asia	559.393	1.249.561	2,2	38.979	102.887	2,6	598.372	1.352.448
Medio Oriente	90.461	237.078	2,6	1.935	5.650	2,9	92.396	242.728
Africa	34.105	85.360	2,5	1.892	4.877	2,6	35.997	90.237
Oceania	101.087	247.715	2,5	306	744	2,4	101.393	248.459
Altri extra europei	79.645	192.550	2,4	47.279	120.489	2,5	126.924	313.039
<b>Totale</b>	<b>7.737.404</b>	<b>18.631.218</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>1.883.349</b>	<b>5.850.643</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>9.620.753</b>	<b>24.481.861</b>

Fonte: Ente Bilaterale Territoriale di Roma e Provincia

(a) RTA, B&B, Case per ferie e Camping

Figure 16: Arrivals and presences in the hotel and complementary accommodation establishments by origin in 2009.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Comune di Roma, 'Annuario Statistico 2010', 157.

<sup>43</sup> Comune di Roma, 158.

Tavola 8.10 • Movimento degli arrivi negli esercizi alberghieri per mese e per municipio - Anno 2009

MUNICIPIO	MESI												TOTALE
	Gennaio	Febbraio	Marzo	Aprile	Maggio	Giugno	Luglio	Agosto	Settembre	Ottobre	Novembre	Dicembre	
I	264.936	295.995	353.719	375.520	417.980	383.267	396.615	357.285	456.163	470.080	379.623	332.145	4.483.328
II	19.869	23.852	31.107	34.140	40.469	36.283	37.613	32.769	46.889	46.693	43.090	36.739	429.513
III	15.176	17.771	20.803	21.556	22.018	21.332	21.868	19.916	23.396	26.526	22.254	18.528	251.144
IV	5.200	6.043	7.615	8.011	8.593	7.704	7.987	6.958	10.320	10.915	8.663	8.113	96.122
V	5.027	6.446	8.516	8.558	7.901	6.929	7.238	6.112	9.696	10.347	7.884	8.125	92.779
VI	905	990	877	1.336	1.428	1.322	1.356	1.233	1.415	1.586	1.317	1.912	15.677
VII	2.503	3.105	4.013	4.476	5.023	4.393	4.593	3.863	5.838	6.461	4.863	5.532	54.663
VIII	5.572	7.188	10.032	10.910	12.178	10.485	10.923	8.962	13.463	14.598	10.306	8.189	122.806
IX	2.195	2.649	3.984	4.314	3.788	3.241	3.415	2.782	4.235	4.601	3.216	2.140	40.560
X	5.560	7.030	11.664	13.440	12.703	11.131	11.631	9.811	13.288	16.042	12.058	9.421	133.779
XI	5.191	5.963	7.201	7.754	8.459	7.646	7.904	6.964	9.218	9.762	7.703	6.296	90.061
XII	9.055	13.046	20.284	22.251	25.686	21.493	22.526	17.673	29.818	32.627	22.005	19.508	255.972
XIII	10.203	11.953	14.906	15.980	17.574	15.736	16.320	14.192	19.276	20.508	15.851	12.545	185.004
XV	10.410	13.174	23.212	23.209	22.284	16.737	16.864	12.758	20.184	24.560	13.573	9.476	206.441
XVI	13.772	17.827	24.096	24.902	24.388	20.175	21.196	15.477	19.214	26.366	16.226	13.034	236.673
XVII	15.442	19.135	26.379	28.602	31.759	27.771	28.839	24.223	32.818	37.490	26.387	22.019	320.864
XVIII	13.749	19.674	31.147	34.703	39.923	34.542	36.370	28.985	45.938	50.212	32.047	24.297	391.587
XIX	8.972	11.353	15.438	16.835	18.912	16.406	17.102	14.201	20.861	22.540	16.190	12.777	191.587
XX	7.423	8.841	11.275	12.105	13.395	11.907	12.280	10.557	14.512	15.510	11.738	9.261	138.804
<b>Totale</b>	<b>421.160</b>	<b>492.035</b>	<b>626.268</b>	<b>668.602</b>	<b>734.461</b>	<b>658.500</b>	<b>682.640</b>	<b>594.721</b>	<b>796.542</b>	<b>847.424</b>	<b>654.994</b>	<b>560.057</b>	<b>7.737.404</b>

Fonte: Ente Bilaterale Territoriale di Roma e Provincia

Figure 17: Movement of arrivals in hotel establishments by month and municipality in 2009. (Excluding complementary accommodations such as AirBnB).<sup>44</sup>

Tavola 8.11 • Movimento delle presenze negli esercizi alberghieri per mese e per municipio - Anno 2009

MUNICIPIO	MESI												TOTALE
	Gennaio	Febbraio	Marzo	Aprile	Maggio	Giugno	Luglio	Agosto	Settembre	Ottobre	Novembre	Dicembre	
I	660.050	716.890	878.350	932.126	1.031.220	941.338	975.690	928.206	1.135.941	1.155.617	905.855	816.204	11.077.487
II	57.516	68.827	87.721	94.932	109.425	97.718	101.392	94.771	120.269	122.920	113.645	101.117	1.170.253
III	29.142	32.470	40.127	42.670	44.495	39.778	41.259	38.591	50.569	53.443	41.648	35.211	489.403
IV	12.058	14.318	18.411	19.946	19.961	17.476	18.256	16.850	22.226	23.214	16.998	15.825	215.539
V	10.054	12.991	17.676	19.027	18.232	15.513	16.366	14.828	21.273	22.353	15.552	16.502	200.367
VI	2.123	2.800	2.646	2.547	2.788	2.491	2.584	2.416	2.531	2.850	2.106	3.577	31.459
VII	5.470	7.227	10.576	10.710	12.140	10.377	10.930	9.933	13.463	15.164	10.754	12.610	129.354
VIII	8.311	13.183	21.648	23.202	27.044	22.306	23.793	19.114	29.430	32.481	19.633	15.635	255.780
IX	5.592	6.539	10.714	10.874	10.014	8.485	8.965	8.100	10.131	12.770	8.944	6.726	107.854
X	10.582	12.815	26.269	29.119	27.586	23.187	24.568	22.081	29.285	34.633	23.635	18.334	282.094
XI	12.031	13.643	17.467	18.496	20.240	17.966	18.680	17.394	20.145	23.049	17.364	14.518	210.993
XII	16.901	24.227	43.358	49.185	58.595	46.867	50.548	43.916	68.694	73.354	44.026	40.321	559.992
XIII	20.613	24.265	32.832	35.240	38.906	33.764	35.378	32.471	43.764	45.806	32.949	26.226	402.214
XV	29.369	35.137	61.098	63.128	65.268	45.345	46.460	40.849	56.712	64.654	34.842	27.265	570.127
XVI	24.881	32.255	47.465	51.355	56.543	47.555	50.377	41.295	53.286	62.857	35.383	28.017	531.269
XVII	26.916	34.621	54.971	60.513	69.458	58.303	60.804	54.496	76.826	81.258	47.365	39.410	664.941
XVIII	28.704	45.068	76.853	85.420	99.802	81.955	87.557	77.464	112.192	120.283	74.654	60.124	950.076
XIX	19.681	26.665	38.153	41.536	47.222	40.210	42.411	35.446	48.482	51.268	32.735	26.156	449.965
XX	16.465	20.409	27.391	29.260	32.637	28.472	29.780	27.425	35.761	37.416	26.002	21.033	332.051
<b>Totale</b>	<b>996.459</b>	<b>1.144.350</b>	<b>1.513.726</b>	<b>1.619.286</b>	<b>1.791.576</b>	<b>1.579.106</b>	<b>1.645.798</b>	<b>1.525.646</b>	<b>1.950.980</b>	<b>2.035.390</b>	<b>1.504.090</b>	<b>1.324.811</b>	<b>18.631.218</b>

Fonte: Ente Bilaterale Territoriale di Roma e Provincia

Figure 118: Movement of presences in hotel establishments by month and municipality in 2009. (Excluding complementary accommodations such as AirBnB).<sup>45</sup>

Figure 16: Number of accommodation facilities in Rome by type and municipality in 2019<sup>46</sup>

Municipio	Alberghi	Esercizi complementari (11.270 totale di 12.306 TOTAL)					Incidenza %
		Affittacamere	Bed & Breakfast	Casa per ferie	Case Vacanza	Altro	
I	724	2.446	704	64	3.797	57	63,3
II	70	187	155	32	241	6	5,6
III	19	19	28	8	81	3	1,3
IV	16	40	28	4	51	2	1,1
V	12	42	37	7	112	-	1,7
VI	17	12	31	3	18	2	0,7
VII	27	122	175	14	394	2	6,0
VIII	14	44	62	7	113	-	2,0
IX	29	16	39	3	18	3	0,9
X	15	28	57	1	164	7	2,2
XI	9	21	35	6	78	3	1,2
XII	16	62	89	29	237	-	3,5
XIII	36	143	161	48	578	5	7,9
XIV	16	19	57	29	89	2	1,7
XV	16	17	20	11	43	2	0,9
<b>Totale</b>	<b>1.036</b>	<b>3.218</b>	<b>1.678</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>6.014</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Fonte: Elaborazioni Ufficio di Statistica di Roma Capitale su dati SUAR - Sportello Unico Attività Ricettive

Table 4: Arrivals and presences in hotel and complementary accommodation establishments. Years 2015 – 2019.<sup>47</sup>

Anno	Esercizi Alberghieri					Esercizi Complementari				
	Arrivi		Presenze		Permanenza media (giorni)	Arrivi		Presenze		Permanenza media (giorni)
	v.a.	var.%	v.a.	var.%		v.a.	var.%	v.a.	var.%	
2015	11.298.298	-	26.420.620	-	2,3	2.646.031	-	7.582.747	-	2,9
2016	11.536.239	2,1	26.935.666	1,9	2,3	2.725.197	3,0	7.715.470	1,8	2,8
2017	12.403.488	7,5	29.293.952	8,8	2,4	2.290.876	-15,9	6.268.269	-18,8	2,7
2018	12.783.861	3,1	30.144.950	2,9	2,4	6.189.518	170,2	15.305.030	144,2	2,5
2019	13.036.638	2,0	30.682.988	1,8	2,4	6.417.716	3,7	15.856.109	3,6	2,5

Fonte: Elaborazioni Ufficio di Statistica di Roma Capitale su dati Ente Bilaterale Territoriale di Roma e Provincia.

<sup>44</sup> Comune di Roma, 163.

<sup>45</sup> Comune di Roma, 164.

<sup>46</sup> Comune di Roma, 'Cap. 8 Turismo 2020'.

<sup>47</sup> Comune di Roma.

Table 5: Arrivals and presences in hotel and complementary accommodation establishments by origin. Year 2019.<sup>48</sup>

Provenienza	Esercizi ricettivi alberghieri			Esercizi ricettivi complementari			Totale	
	Arrivi	Presenze	Permanenza media (giorni)	Arrivi	Presenze	Permanenza media (giorni)	Arrivi	Presenze
Italia	4.692.502	9.057.958	1,9	4.480.539	11.404.668	2,5	9.173.041	20.462.626
Europa	3.921.570	11.097.511	2,8	1.627.081	3.730.425	2,3	5.548.651	14.827.936
Nord America	2.121.082	5.224.806	2,5	33.829	94.050	2,8	2.154.911	5.318.856
Centro e Sud America	559.304	1.451.847	2,6	70.139	153.584	2,2	629.443	1.605.431
Sud Est Asia	1.186.142	2.485.661	2,1	41.115	107.407	2,6	1.227.257	2.593.068
Medio Oriente	170.743	434.910	2,5	-	-	-	170.743	434.910
Africa	64.689	174.999	2,7	1.900	4.525	2,4	66.589	179.524
Altri extra europei	320.606	755.296	2,4	163.113	361.450	2,2	483.719	1.116.746
<b>Totale</b>	<b>13.036.638</b>	<b>30.682.988</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>6.417.716</b>	<b>15.856.109</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>19.454.354</b>	<b>46.539.097</b>

Fonte: Elaborazioni Ufficio di Statistica di Roma Capitale su dati Ente Bilaterale Territoriale di Roma e Provincia.

Table 6: Visitors to State-owned museums, monuments and archaeological areas in Rome. Years 2015-2019.<sup>49</sup>

Musei monumenti e aree archeologiche	Anni				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Circuito Archeologico "Colosseo, Palatino e Foro Romano"	6.551.046	6.408.779	7.036.104	7.650.519	7.399.168
Circuito Archeologico di Roma (Colosseo, Foro e Palatino, Pal. Massimo, Pal. Altemps, Caracalla, Crypta Balbi, Diocleziano, Metella, Quintili) (soppresso il 01/07/2017)	9.407	9.427	4.766	-	-
Circuito del Museo Nazionale Romano (Palazzo Massimo, Palazzo Altemps, Terme di Diocleziano, Crypta Balbi) - (Gli istituti componenti non hanno biglietto singolo fino al 16/12/2017)	356.344	339.755	322.364	45.836	44.556
Circuito Museale (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Corsini, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini)	1.743	1.839	67.224	85.599	92.713
Crypta Balbi (visitabile solo con biglietto del Circuito del Museo Nazionale Romano fino al 16/12/2017, dal 17/12/2017 anche biglietti singoli)	0	0	572	22.383	20.046
Domus Aurea	46.917	33.475	51.859	74.287	61.348
Foro Romano e Palatino (Visitabile anche col biglietto cumulativo del Circuito Archeologico "Colosseo, Foro Romano e Palatino")	-	-	-	-	157.133
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini (dal 23/3/2017 visitabile a pag. solo con il biglietto cumulativo del relativo Circuito. Gli ingressi gratuiti sono riportati nel singolo Istituto)	119.997	114.641	85.903	68.836	65.205
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Corsini (dal 23/3/2017 visitabile a pag. solo con il biglietto cumulativo del relativo Circuito. Gli ingressi gratuiti sono riportati nel singolo Istituto)	33.552	30.453	18.890	16.441	22.668
Galleria Spada	48.822	46.167	51.324	51.857	52.345
Istituto Centrale per la Grafica	9.337	10.370	12.499	11.821	6.662
Monumento a Vittorio Emanuele II (Vittoriano)	-	455.994	2.521.560	2.840.998	3.094.116
Museo Boncompagni Ludovisi per le Arti Decorative, Costume e Moda	4.652	7.255	9.716	9.782	9.754
Museo Mario Praz	3.568	2.359	2.699	2.046	2.430
Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci" (soppresso dal 01/11/2017)	16.132	14.211	12.533	-	-
Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia	24.051	30.959	56.225	58.754	53.978

<sup>48</sup> Comune di Roma.

<sup>49</sup> Compiled with the Comune di Roma. 24 in Centro storico/51 Museums in totale

Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo	1.047.326	1.234.506	1.155.244	1.113.373	1.207.091
Palazzo Altemps	-	-	-	71.679	55.591
Palazzo Massimo alle Terme ( <i>visitabile solo con biglietto del Circuito del Museo Nazionale Romano fino al 16/12/2017, dal 17/12/2017 anche biglietti singoli</i> )	-	-	3.702	124.108	125.033
Pantheon	7.496.188	7.944.505	8.012.861	8.955.569	9.330.835
Piramide di Caio Cestio	-	-	2.191	1.745	2.824
Terme di Caracalla ( <i>visitabile solo con biglietto del Circuito "Terme di Caracalla, Tomba di Cecilia Metella, Villa dei Quintili" fino al 30/06/2017, dal 01/07/2017 solo biglietti singoli</i> )	-	-	95.845	233.090	258.486
Terme di Diocleziano ( <i>visitabile solo con biglietto del Circuito del Museo Nazionale Romano fino al 16/12/2017, dal 17/12/2017 anche biglietti singoli</i> )	-	-	1.941	85.258	78.524
<b>Totale (for the 51 museums)</b>	<b>16.281.652</b>	<b>17.217.811</b>	<b>20.103.973</b>	<b>22.144.207</b>	<b>22.726.326</b>

Fonte: Elaborazioni Ufficio di statistica di Roma Capitale su dati Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali - Ufficio di Statistica

Table 7: Visitors to State-owned museums, monuments and archaeological areas in Rome. Year 2009.<sup>50</sup>

Museums, Monuments and Archaeological areas	Visitor numbers
Fototeca Nazionale	532
Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica	12.739
Museo Boncompagni Ludovisi	4.028
Pantheon	1.714.200
Domus Aurea	-
Galleria Corsini	17.224
Galleria d'Arte Antica - Palazzo Barberini	95.964
Galleria Spada	16.724
Museo della Via Ostiense	11.659
Museo Mario Praz	3.579
Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale	10.978
Museo Nazionale degli Strumenti Musicali	14.908
Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia	22.194
Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo	804.272
Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Etnografico "Luigi Pigorini"	31.047
Aerofototeca Nazionale	882
Museo Archivio di Fotografia Storica	276
Circuito Archeologico di Roma (a): Anfiteatro Flavio-Colosseo, Palatino, Foro Romano, Palazzo Massimo, Palazzo Altemps, Caracalla, Crypta Balbi, Terme di Diocleziano, Cecilia Metella, Villa dei Quintili	10.191
Circuito del Museo Nazionale Romano (b): Palazzo Massimo, Palazzo Altemps, Terme di Diocleziano, Crypta Balbi	232.324
Circuito Archeologico "Colosseo, Palatino e Foro Romano" (c)	4.655.203
<b>TOTALE:</b>	<b>8.956.751</b>

<sup>50</sup> Table created with sources from Comune di Roma, 'Annuario Statistico 2010', 106.

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