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**Cita bibliográfica:** Muler González, V.M, Galí Espelt, N. y Coromina, LL. (2023). Residents' perceptions of tourism social exchange relations a case study in a small heritage town. *Investigaciones Turísticas* (25), pp. 100-120. <https://doi.org/10.14198/INTURI.19376>

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## Residents' perceptions of tourism social exchange relations: a case study in a small heritage town

### Las percepciones por parte de residentes de las relaciones de intercambio social: un caso de estudio en un pequeño pueblo patrimonial

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#### ABSTRACT

Studies of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts under social exchange theory have mostly focused on the costs and rewards of tourism in a one-sided manner. The purpose of this study is to examine these perceptions taking social exchange relations, which are dyadic, as the unit of analysis instead. Social exchange relations offer a more accurate understanding of tourism exchanges as they pair costs with rewards. The literature review analyses previous studies of resident impact perceptions in which exchange relations had been suggested. Based on this review, a survey was carried out among the residents of Besalú. Four social exchange relations were identified using factor analysis. The results show that perceptions about exchanges that specifically involve the resources of space, which tends to be a scarce resource in heritage towns, and retailing areas are linked to the willingness of residents to accept tourism. This suggests that these are critical resources affecting residents' general perception of the tourism exchange. The results also show that residents strongly perceive tourism as a contribution to heritage conservation.

**KEYWORDS:** Social exchange theory; resources; tourism impacts; social carrying capacity; costs.

#### RESUMEN

Los estudios de las percepciones de impactos turísticos por parte de residentes utilizando la teoría de intercambio social se han enfocado en los costes y los beneficios del turismo tomándolos por separado. El propósito de esta investigación es el de estudiar estas percepciones tomando las relaciones de intercambio social las cuales son duales como unidad de análisis. Las relaciones de intercambio social ofrecen un entendimiento más acertado de los intercambios turísticos ya que emparejan los costes con los beneficios. La revisión de la literatura cubre estudios anteriores sobre percepciones de impactos turísticos en los cuales se identifican intercambios, aunque ésta no sea textual. Basado en esta revisión, se realizó una encuesta con los residentes del pueblo patrimonial de Besalú. Cuatro relaciones de

Fecha de recepción: 15/03/2021 Fecha de aceptación: 19/01/2022

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intercambio fueron identificadas utilizando análisis factorial. Los resultados muestran que las percepciones sobre los intercambios que involucran los recursos del espacio público, el cual tiende a ser escaso en los pueblos patrimoniales, y el comercio, están vinculados con la voluntad de los residentes de aceptar más turistas. Esto sugiere que estos recursos son críticos ya que afectan las percepciones que los residentes tienen del intercambio turístico. Los resultados también demuestran que los residentes perciben que el turismo contribuye de manera significativa a la conservación del patrimonio.

**Palabras clave:** Teoría de intercambio social; recursos; impactos del turismo; capacidad de carga social; costes

## I. INTRODUCCIÓN

The attitudes of local residents towards visitors and their corresponding levels of hospitality are identified as a factor which shapes the attractiveness of a destination. Negative attitudes towards tourists may be a key factor in determining an area's capacity to absorb tourism (Getz, 1994). Residents play a vital role in developing sustainable tourism as they are the cultural agents and the social group through which tourism is delivered (Muler et al., 2018). This concept has led to an established line of research regarding residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism. These perceptions have largely been explained through the theoretical framework of social exchange theory (SET) (Gursoy et al., 2010; Kang y Lee, 2018; Nunkoo y Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo y Ramkissoon, 2012).

SET is the most widely used theory in research aimed at understanding residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism; however, many aspects of the theory are, as yet, underemployed. So far, most studies on this topic have focused on residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism (Kang y Lee, 2018; Nunkoo y Gursoy, 2012; Ritchie y Inkari, 2006; Perdue et al., 1990; Smith y Krannich, 1998) in a way which is one-sided and fails to take into account that exchanges are dyadic or paired. In contrast, SET literature places social exchange relations which are patterns that link costs to resources at the centre of the social exchange system (Blau, 1983; Emerson, 1976; Turner, 1986; Ap, 1992). As Turner (1986, 292) points out '[t]he behaviour is no longer the dependent variable in propositions rather the exchange relation becomes the variable to be explained. The goal is to discover the laws that help account for particular patterns of exchange relations'.

The purpose of this article is to undertake this line of research which focuses on exchange relations or dyads as it was proposed by those authors but focused on the tourism host-guest exchange. The justification for taking this approach is that, even though it is well aligned with the foundational literature of SET as explained by its early authors, it has been seldom undertaken as a line of research in the topic of resident impact perceptions. Up to date, SET applied to resident impact perceptions has focused on identifying the perceived benefits and costs of tourism for residents and their evaluation of the trade-offs. A positive evaluation is expected to align with acceptance of tourism and, to the contrary, a negative evaluation is expected to align with a negative perception of tourism (Ap, 1992; Jurowski et al., 1997; Homans, 1961; Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014). The point where there is an imbalance between the rewards and costs indicate an approach to social carrying capacity limits (Muler et al., 2018). Within this context, some authors have challenged the applicability

of SET to resident impact perceptions. However, it must be highlighted that, as Emerson (1976) stated, SET cannot be proven nor disproven empirically since it is locked or tautological.

This is because the success proposition which states that “for all actions taken by a person the more often a particular action is rewarded the more likely that person is to perform that action” cannot be tested. As Emerson (1976) explains, the concept of “reward” is tautological as the only way to discover whether something is a reward is after it is seen that it is such. If something is not a reward, this does not disprove SET, it only indicates that this particular thing is not a reward for that individual. Therefore, SET is a choice that researchers make to understand the host-guest interaction. It sets a frame of reference to understand the movement of rewards and costs throughout a system. As Blau (1986) states, studies applying SET cannot attempt to validate it but instead to characterize the exchange relation and its dynamics as Cozby (1972) did.

Parting from this premise, this article does not aim to prove SET, as several studies have done, but to identify the dynamics of the resident tourist exchange, and more specifically, the pairs or dyads of costs and benefits residents perceive and how these dyads link to variables such as their willingness to enter into the tourism exchange. The results of this study will improve the way SET is applied in this topic and give managers and researchers a more accurate understanding of the resources, costs, rewards, and benefits involved in the tourism exchange.

This study does two main contributions to existing knowledge of residents’ perceptions of the host-guest relationships in tourism. Firstly, it introduces the use of social exchange relations as a unit of analysis to study resident perceptions of tourism impacts. Social exchange relations emerging from daily tourism exchanges provide more accurate and meaningful information for policy makers and researchers interested in understanding the conditions under which residents accept tourism. The permanence of an individual in an exchange ‘depends not only on the rewards but also on the costs, or more specifically, the relation between these, as this is what determines the benefits of the social exchange relation for them’ (Blau, [1964] 1982, 123). The second contribution is that it links the perceptions by residents of the exchanges in tourism to their willingness to accept more tourism. For heritage tourism towns, in particular, it shows that perceptions of exchanges regarding space and retailing affect the level of tourism that residents are willing to accept. This suggests that exchanges that affect scarce key resources such as space might affect the acceptance by residents of tourism in these towns. This aligns with social exchange theory according to which demand for, and availability of exchange resources affect social relations (Blau, [1964] 1982).

## II. SOCIAL EXCHANGE RELATIONS IN SET

More than a theory, SET can be defined as ‘a frame of reference that takes the movement of valued things (resources) through social process as its focus... Resources are not possessions of the individual actors but rather attributes of the relationship between actors, and as such they should be studied within the exchange relation, (Emerson, 1976, 359). Resident communities exchange tourism resources such as the natural and cultural heritage of place and space in public areas. These are defined as resources when viewed within the context of tourism. Within SET, social exchange relations are structural units of analysis, and have been defined in the literature as patterns of resources linked to costs arising from daily social exchanges (Blau, [1964] 1983).

SET has been widely applied to study resident's perception of tourism impacts, but it has also been challenged. Many researchers have attempted to prove whether it is adequate to explain the host-guest exchange (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014; Paraskevaidis and Andriotis, 2017; Ryan and Montgomery, 2000). However, as it has been stated, SET is locked to empirical testing because the concept of "rewards" is tautological. This is not to say that SET can explain all of the aspects of host-guest relation but only the ones that refer to an exchange. In this sense, some authors have questioned the scope of SET saying that it is limited to mechanistic one-off actions made by isolated individuals instead of community interactions (Pearce, 1996; Monterrubio, 2008; Sharpley, 2014). While individual mechanistic exchanges are proper of an economic exchange system, SET theorists made an effort to distinguish economic exchanges from social exchanges based on the fact that the latter are based on longitudinal relations and mediated by social values that range from altruism to egotism (Blau, 1986; Homans, 1961). Blau (1986) was perhaps the social exchange theorist that emphasized the social aspects of exchanges such as values and social relations the most. In fact, he cautioned against taking a narrow individualistic approach since this "preoccupation with psychology can blind us to the important emergent aspects of social exchange." While Homans (1958) called "for a behavioural, psychological form of exchange theory in sociology", Blau (1986) called for a systematic approach to what he called "the exchange system".

Another interpretation of SET that limits its scope proposes that SET can only explain direct exchanges between residents and tourists and not the indirect ones when residents are not involved directly with tourists. The attitudes of these residents, they say, are based on factors other than direct experience and, thus, out of the scope of SET (Sharpley, 2014). It may suffice here to cite Blau (1982) when he states that since among the majority of members of a big community or a society there is no direct social relation, "there must be some other mechanism that serves as a mediator in the structure of social relations among them" (Blau, 1983:213). This mechanism, according to him, is the consensus about mediating values that serve as a base to extend the range of social interactions beyond direct social contact. Consensus about values in SET is "the base to extend the range of social transactions beyond the limits of direct social contact and to perpetuate social structures beyond the life of human beings" (Blau, 1983: 119). It is therefore somewhat inaccurate to state that SET does not explain indirect interactions of individuals who, in the case of tourism, do not engage in direct interaction with tourists.

Perhaps most of this critique of SET stems from the fact that the exchange system and the exchange relation in its longitudinal aspect have seldom been used to study the host guest exchange in tourism. The lines of research that have aligned best with this approach are the ones exploring perceptions of power and trust in the tourism exchange (Nunkoo and Ramikssoon, 2012; Kayat, 2002). These variables as well as exchange dyads are what Blau (1986) identified as emerging aspects of the exchange system.

### **2.1. Exchange relations linked to social aspects of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts**

Cultural exchange has been studied in heritage towns and other destination types (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Hammad et al., 2017.; Andereck et al., 2005; Liu et al., 1987; Ursache, 2015; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011). In terms of the benefits of this exchange for residents, cultural exchanges between locals and tourists are

linked to a deeper sense of cultural awareness among locals. Not only is their awareness heightened, but the organizational, cultural and social structures of their communities are reinforced as they are able to actively exhibit their culture (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014). The perception that residents stage their own culture appears to be linked to perceptions of cultural reinforcement, or pride through recognition (Hammad et al., 2017; Andereck et al. 2005; Liu et al., 1987; Ursache, 2015; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011). Other studies link the cost of support for tourism to cultural understanding and pride (Andereck et al., 2005; Boley et al., 2018; Hammad et al., 2017; Wang and Pfister, 2008). Residents stage their culture and create cultural activities for tourists, and this in turn is linked to the opportunity to meet foreigners, gain entertainment opportunities, and have educational and cultural experiences (Liu et al., 1987; Hammad et al., 2017; Andereck et al., 2005). In terms of costs, some studies suggest residents' engagement in this exchange depends on cultural affinity, as well as how positively they perceive the impacts of tourism and how good the communication is between them and the tourists (Liu et al., 1987; Dillette et al., 2016). For example, Liu et al. (1987) found no cultural exchange constructs in a study on Istanbul. The authors attributed this to the religious differences between tourists and residents.

Another similar perceived benefit of cultural exchange in the eyes of residents is the fact that tourism impacts the level of attractiveness and interest of a place (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014; Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Yoon et al., 2001; Garland, 1985). Along the same lines, residents can generally perceive the impacts of tourism on their heritage in destinations with a rich monumental heritage (Andereck et al., 2005; Getz, 1994; Hammad et al., 2017; Liu et al., 1987). Liu et al. (1987) analysed residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism in case studies on two destinations with a strong monumental heritage: North Wales and Istanbul. Results of the study showed that residents perceived the impacts of tourism on the preservation of historical buildings more than in other case studies. They also found that in Wales, residents were unwilling to invest in tourism development. This was linked to the perception that historical buildings were being spoiled and that tourists should be prevented from entering churches.

## **2.2. Exchange relations linked to perceptions of economic impacts of tourism**

Personal economic benefits are among the most pervasively studied perceived tourism impacts. Jobs and income are linked to support for tourism from residents (Andereck et al., 2005; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Lepp, 2007; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Pizam, 1978). The economic impacts of tourism can be beneficial as it generates employment, attracts investment and provides opportunities for small businesses (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014; Garland, 1985; Hammad et al., 2017; Kang and Lee, 2018; Liu et al., 1987). However, perceptions of costs include the view that tourism contributes to higher prices (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Garland, 1985; Ryan and Montgomery, 1994). Although higher prices are generally perceived as a negative impact, they have also been linked to empowerment through increased standards of living, increasing local awareness, empowerment, new learning opportunities, and a sense of ownership (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014; Hammad et al., 2017; Harvey et al., 1995).

A review of the literature shows that residents perceive the economic impacts of tourism together with a range of associated costs. Liu et al. (1987) found what they labelled the 'negative socio-environmental effects' of tourism in which residents appeared to link economic gains to a socio-environmental costs such as loss of identity, crowding, rudeness of

tourists and exploitation. On the other hand, the authors found a factor they labelled 'environment'. This factor showed that a lack of negative impacts on the environment was linked to a belief that the economic benefits were more important than any environmental impacts. Residents appeared to be more sensitive to the cultural costs, and were thus, less willing to exchange the economic benefits of tourism for the costs. However, they clearly accepted the environmental costs in exchange for jobs.

Finally, in terms of economic exchanges, residents perceive the impacts of tourism on shopping areas and shopping opportunities. Local shops become tourist shops which residents ultimately avoid, an impact that is considered negative *a priori* (Simpson, 2016; Getz, 1994; Liu, Sheldon, and Var, 1987). Tourism shopping spaces, however, are also perceived positively because they cater to residents' needs (Backman and Backman, 1997; Kim, Uysal, and Sirgy, 2013). Snepenger *et al.* (2003) specifies that these spaces may be useful to residents for a range of activities ranging from taking friends and relatives shopping or window shopping, eating out, or visiting art galleries, and that this varies depending on the stage of the lifecycle of the shopping space. This suggests that the manner in which residents use and value their resources in the tourism area is dynamic as suggested by Ap (1992) and Emerson (1976).

### 2.3. Exchange relations linked to the environmental impacts of tourism

An important environmental impact perception for European heritage cities is crowding (Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Johnson, Snepenger, and Akis, 1994; Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Brunt and Courtney, 1999). Space tends to be a limited resource in destinations where demand is highly selective, i.e., they cannot be substituted by another place. This is illustrated in the cases of Besalú, Florence, Prague, Donostia and Venice (Muler and Fauró, 2019; Simpson, 2016; Pop, 2011; Canestrelli and Costa, 1991). Tourism in heritage cities has particular implications stemming from the irreplaceability of their heritage resources, which are concentrated in the heritage centre (Simpson, 2016; Russo, 2002, 2006). As mentioned earlier, SET indicates that the availability of resources affects social relations and perceptions. The perception of crowding may be thought of as an attitude in which an excessive level of tourism is perceived, and which may lead to a negative state of mind and a change in behaviour (Neuts and Nijkamp, 2012).. The only study to examine specific aspects of residents' perceptions in depth was by Liu *et al.* (1987). Their research revealed that residents who avoided shopping in places where tourists could be found also perceived unpleasant crowds in outdoor places and felt that tourists disrupted the peace and tranquility of public parks.

Recreational facilities are generally considered to be a benefit of tourism. This tourism impact has been linked to satisfaction and a sense of community well-being (Backman and Backman, 1997; Kim *et al.*, 2013). In terms of exchange relations, Abdollazadeh and Sharifzadeh (2014) found that effects of tourism perceived by residents were increased traffic and overcrowding. However, they also perceived having more parks, environmental conservation, recreation areas and the area having an improved appearance. Wang and Pfister (2017) showed similar results in that residents perceived negative impacts regarding outdoor recreation but linked these to positive environmental impacts such as higher standards of living, revitalization and special events in the downtown area, better public services, more recreational opportunities, higher quality of life, better jobs, and better shopping.

Noise and crime have been grouped into a generic set of negative impacts of tourism (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Garland, 1985; Hammad *et al.*, 2017; Haralambopoulos and Pizam,

1996; Kang and Lee, 2018; Mason and Cheyne, 2000). A number of studies have found that crime and noise are a negative impact of tourism perceived by residents, but to date, academics have paid this little attention (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Andereck et al., 2005; Boley et al., 2018; Getz, 1994; Gursoy et al., 2002; Hammad et al., 2017; Wang and Pfister, 2008).

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Study site

Besalú is a European small heritage town located in Catalonia, Spain (see map 1) with a population of approximately 2,467 inhabitants (IDESCAT, 2018). It received 109,662 visitors in 2018, as recorded by the tourist information office. The heritage town of Besalú has a tourism intensity (ratio of residents to tourists) of 261 for the city centre, and a tourist function index (ratio of beds to residents) of .049. A relatively high tourism intensity and a low tourist function index suggest that the city might be close to social carrying capacity levels (Muler et al., 2018). These indicators also suggest that it is mainly a day-tripper destination. In 1966, Besalú was declared a heritage site in the national inventory of heritage of Spain (MCSGS, 2019). It contains several Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque monuments, in addition to a medieval bridge and city walls. Besalú also contains one of the most important ensembles of Jewish monumental heritage in Spain as it was home to a consolidated and relatively powerful Jewish community for close to five centuries. The municipal government has implemented several strategies to manage both the positive and negative impacts of tourism on its municipal finances, and crowding and mobility (Muler et al., 2018).

Figure 1. Location of study area



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CCAA\\_of\\_Spain\\_\(Blank\\_map\).PNG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CCAA_of_Spain_(Blank_map).PNG)

#### 3.2. Study method

The first step in the elaboration of the questionnaire was an extensive literature review to identify questionnaire items that had been used in studies of impact perceptions in order to extract the main impacts. Secondly, five in-depth interviews were conducted to identify the impacts that are most relevant in Besalú and eliminate those that are not relevant. The impacts were classified according to the area of impact: economic, social and environmental. Once the interviews were carried out, factor analysis was done, and the factors were interpreted in the light of the articles of the literature review that presented similar constructs. The most relevant articles were Wang, et al. (2008); Hammad et al. (2017); Belisle

and Hoy (1980), Liu et al. (1987); Kang and Lee (2018); Boley et al. (2017); Zuo et al. (2017); Andereck et al. (2005); Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh (2014); Andereck (2005); Pizam (1978); Milman and Pizam (1988); Lankford and Howard (1994), and Lepp (2007). Responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 'totally disagree' to 5 'totally agree'.

Apart from tourism impacts, the questionnaire included two important SET variables: employment in tourism and willingness to accept a higher number of tourists. Taking an economic stance under the rationality principle in SET, the importance of the employment variable lies in those individuals are expected to enter into an exchange if they receive or have a high probability of receiving personal economic benefit, or for their relatives to economically benefit from tourism (Emerson, 1976). Regarding willingness to accept more tourists, respondents were asked to state whether they wanted less tourists, more tourists, or the same number of tourists. Other studies have used questions on residents' perceptions of crowding as an indicator of what their potential responses and acceptance of tourism might be (Jurado et al., 2012; Severiades, 2000; Glasson, 1994). Perceptions of crowding elicits whether respondents want to enter the tourism exchange or not.

The data were collected between August 2015 and January 2016 in the streets of Besalú. In terms of seasonality, Besalú has a peak of visitors from March to May when close to 37% of the visitors come; there is second peak between October and November when 24% of the visitors come, and a third peak that is from June to September when close to 25% of the visitors come. The rest of the visits spread out during the rest of the year (Statistics of the Visitor Centre of Besalú, 2014). As the town is small, it was possible to distribute the survey in all the streets at various times of the day. Using a map, the streets where surveys were carried out were rotated in order to cover all the streets on each survey day. Survey days were alternated to cover all the days of the week. One respondent was chosen from every four pedestrians. Using a map, the respondent was first asked whether they lived in Besalú town centre for more than four months per year. If the answer was 'yes', the survey was carried out; if it was 'no', the next pedestrian was asked. The fact that the survey was conducted in the streets could possibly affect the level of representation of the sample since older residents, or those who are handicapped or ill tend to stroll in the streets less than other groups. However, the size of the sample was statistically representative for the size of the town.

According to the municipal government, the adult population (over 18s) in the historic centre of Besalú is 420. Accordingly, the sample size was 219, which represents a sampling error of  $\pm 4,6\%$  with 95% confidence level in a finite population of 420 residents in the centre of the town. Table 2 shows the results distributed according to sociodemographic variables. 49.1% of the sample were women and 50.1% were men, which shows a distribution similar to that of the whole town of Besalú, which is 53% women and 47% men (IDESCAT, 2018). The age distribution was as follows: 19-29 years (15.6%); 30-39 years (22.5%), 40-49 years (22%); +50-59 years (20,6%), and 60 or more (19.3%). Regarding educational level, the largest proportion had primary education (46.3%) followed by university degree (25%) vocational training (17.6%), secondary education (7.4%) and none (3.7%).



Table 1. Distribution of results according to sociodemographic variables

<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		
49.1%		50.9%		
<b>Age</b>				
<b>19-29 years</b>	<b>30-39 years</b>	<b>40-49 years</b>	<b>50-59 years</b>	<b>60 or more</b>
15.6%	22.5%	22%	20.6%	19.3%
<b>Education</b>				
<b>None</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Vocational training</b>	<b>University</b>
3.7%	46.3%	7.4%	17.6%	25%

Source: prepared by the authors

The results of the survey were analysed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify exchange dyads. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was then carried out in order to link the factors that emerged from the EFA to the sociodemographic variables.

#### IV. RESULTS

Results of the study revealed that the highest scores for agreement corresponded to the impact of tourism on heritage conservation, small shops are for tourists, and that tourism brings in more money than any other industry. The greatest disagreement concerns tourism causing crime and generating litter. Table 2 shows the mean values of the statements regarding the impacts of tourism. Residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism in the study area are positive. There is more agreement on the positive impacts of tourism such as heritage conservation and job creation, than disagreement on negative impacts such as crime or litter. The only negative impact showing strong agreement was tourists getting in the way. This highlights the influence the impact of crowding in heritage cities has on residents' perceptions. In general, however, residents perceive positive impacts more than negative impacts.

Table 2. Mean values of responses to statements regarding impacts of tourism

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Tourism brings in more money than any other industry	3.81	.899
1. Tourism generates money and jobs; this is more important than any inconvenience it might bring	3.88	.939
3. Small shops are for tourists	3.98	.919
4. Prices are high because of tourism	3.58	1.270
5. Tourists litter Besalú	2.81	1.117
6. Tourists get in our way in the town	3.39	1.207
7. Thanks to tourism we have more leisure facilities	3.42	1.104
8. Tourists really learn about the town when they visit us	3.64	.862
9. Thanks to tourism our heritage is better cared for	4.04	.911
10. Because of tourism there is more crime	1.38	.549
11. Because of tourism the town is more interesting and attractive	3.65	.986
12. Tourism-related noise makes life in the town less pleasant	1.87	.899

Source: prepared by the authors

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed in order to identify constructs that could indicate an exchange (Table 3). Based on the theoretical tenet that exchange relations

are repeated sets of exchanges of rewarding actions, four items were eliminated from the original twelve (Table 2, items 1, 2, 5 and 10), and only the factors that suggested an exchange were kept. EFA results show four factors, as shown in Table 3.

The first factor is labelled *high prices in exchange for good shops*. This factor links the perception that prices are high due to tourism, and that shops are for tourists. It suggests that residents tend to perceive an exchange of high prices in exchange for small tourist shops. A second factor has been labelled *space usage exchange* because there seems to be an exchange of the use of space. The third factor was labelled *benefits to heritage* because it links a cost (the inconvenience that tourism brings) to a typical benefit in heritage destinations: heritage conservation. The fourth factor was labelled *cultural exchange* because it involves give-and-take in relation to culture: residents enjoy a more attractive and interesting city, while tourists learn about the city.

Table 3: Factors identified in perceptions of tourism impacts

Factor	Inter-item Correlations	Cronbach	Statements	Loadings
Factor 1 High prices in good shops	.416	.567	Small shops are for tourists	.840
			Prices are higher in Besalú because of tourism	.805
Factor 2 Space usage exchange	.289	.442	Thanks to tourism we have more leisure facilities.	.672
			Tourism-related noise makes life in the town less pleasant.	.848
Factor 3 Benefits to heritage	.220	.416	Tourism brings jobs and money, and this is more important than any inconvenience it may cause.	.816
			Thanks to tourism, heritage is better preserved.	.758
Factor 4 Cultural Exchange	.170	.289	The fact that tourists are of different nationalities makes the city more interesting and attractive.	.568
			Tourists really learn from Besalú.	.902

Source: prepared by the authors

Since there are few items for each factor, the mean-interim correlation for the items is calculated and the values chosen are between .2 and .4 following Briggs and Cheek (1986). Additionally, it is acceptable that the factor loading for newly developed items is lower than for established items (Awang, 2012).

Table 4 shows the mean values for the analysis of variance (Anova) between factors and sociodemographic variables 'gender', 'tourism dependence', 'age', 'education' and

'willingness to accept more tourism'. 'Gender' and 'tourism dependence' showed a relationship with the first factor *high prices in exchange for good shops*. In terms of gender, men tend to disagree more that prices are high, and also disagree that shops are for tourists. Regarding tourism dependence and the factor *high prices in tourism shops*, tourism dependent residents tended to perceive an exchange of high prices in tourism shops more than non-dependents.

Education showed a link to the relation of *space usage exchange*. The better educated and the less educated respondents tended to agree that tourism brings both more noise and leisure facilities. The factors *benefits to heritage* and *cultural exchange* showed no links to the sociodemographic variables, suggesting no intrinsic differences in the way that residents perceive this exchange.

Table 4: Analysis of variance between sociodemographic variables and factors  
\* p-value < 0.05 Source: prepared by the authors

			Factors			
			High prices in good shops	Space Usage	Benefits to heritage	Cultural Exchange
Mean Values	Gender	Male	2.015*	3.861	4.000	3.667
		Female	2.374*	3.681	3.867	3.354
	Tourism Dependence	Dependent	3.490*	3.806	3.988	3.554
		Non-dependent	2.107*	3.755	3.932	3.682
	Age	19-29	2.183	3.694	3.833	3.381
		30-49	2.083	3.874	4.007	3.693
		>50	2.335	3.676	3.938	3.682
	Education	Primary School	2.126	3.847*	3.915	3.623
		Secondary School & Vocational training	2.469	3.450*	3.894	3.689
		University degree	2.196	3.929*	4.088	3.645
	Quantity of tourists	More tourists	3.278*	2.857	4.039	3.750
		The current # is good	3.909*	2.567	3.982	3.679
		Less Tourists	3.938*	2.500	3.500	3.250

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results show a social exchange relationship involving the perception that tourism leads to high prices and that shops are for tourists. This exchange relation has been identified as *high prices for tourism shops*. Taking a SET approach, this relationship suggests that residents perceive the cost of higher prices as being related to the benefits of having tourist shops. Previous studies have found conflicting results regarding shops. Some studies portray tourism shops as being a negative impact and associated with a loss of connection to the place (Litvin, 2005; Getz, 1994). Other studies show that these places are valued by locals, that they may be considered as part of the community infrastructure, and that they improve social welfare (Stylidis and Terzidou, 2014; Wang and Pfister, 2008; Teye et al, 2002; Backman and Backman, 1997; Kim et al., 2013; Lee et al., 1997). Regarding high prices, there are also conflicting results in previous studies. Some show that high prices are a negative impact of tourism, while in others, high prices appear linked to empowerment (Abdollahzadeh and

Sharifzadeh, 2014; Hammad et al., 2017; Harvey et al., 1995). A synthesis of findings in the literature suggests that residents accept higher prices in exchange for empowerment through this retail offer as shopping districts shared with tourists provide a place for residents to go shopping, window shopping, eat out, or visit art galleries with friends and relatives (Snepenger et al., 2003) In terms of exchange of resources, the resource in this case is the retail shops, which otherwise, would sell other types of products tailored to residents' every day needs.

The social exchange relation *high prices for tourism shops* shows links to gender. Previous literature has shown that gender may influence residents' perceptions of tourism impacts. Some studies have shown differences in perceptions of tourism impacts between men and women and the way each gender is exposed to tourism impacts (Harvey et al., 1995; Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Williams and Lawson 2001; Ritchie and Inkari, 2006; Belisle and Hoy, 1980). The results in the present study show that women tend to agree more with this social exchange relationship, in which high prices are linked to tourist shops. This follows the same lines as a study by Wang and Pfister (2008), which shows that women tend to perceive the benefits of downtown revitalization more than men, stating 'this result suggests a difference between men and women in their use of the downtown core and/or their disposition toward new retail outlets' (Wang and Pfister, 2008, 238). The fact that women agree more than other groups about high prices, and that shops are for tourists, would suggest that they are more aware of this exchange relationship as they enjoy these spaces more than men.

The first factor, *high prices in tourism shops*, was also linked to the variable of willingness to accept more tourists. Studies of residents' perceptions of crowding have used the willingness of residents to accept more tourism as an indicator of a destination's capacity (Glasson, 1994; Saveriades, 2000; Jurado et al., 2012). Residents' impact perceptions have been linked to willingness to accept more tourism (Muler et al., 2018). This result highlights how crucial the resource of shopping spaces and inflation can be in small heritage towns. Results show that residents who want more tourists tended to disagree that there is an exchange of high prices for tourism shops, while those who want fewer tourists tended to agree. Under a SET approach exchange involving these resources (shopping spaces and low prices) may determine the willingness of residents to enter into an exchange and factors affecting the availability and level of these benefits and costs might affect the capacity of the destination to absorb more tourism to a greater extent (Blau, 1983).

The negative impact most clearly perceived was crowding. In European heritage cities such as Venice, Prague, Canterbury and Oxford, space is a crucial resource which residents tend to feel is taken from them by tourism (Simpson, 2016; Laws and Le Pelley, 2000; Glasson, 1994; Canestrelli and Costa, 1991). In terms of exchange relations there is also a social exchange relation related to crowding, in which a perceived increase in the number of leisure facilities as a benefit of tourism is linked to tourism-related noise. This relationship has been labelled *space usage* because it suggests an exchange of space in the city centre. In terms of SET, this suggests that residents exchange the negative environmental impact of tourism for better or more leisure facilities. Along the same lines, the literature review indicates exchanges in space and leisure facilities. Constructs in other studies show that perceptions of traffic and overcrowding are linked to an increased number of parks, recreation areas and the improved appearance of the area (Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014; Wang and Pfister, 2008).

The results of this study show that the social exchange relation *space usage* is linked to education: this exchange is perceived to a higher extent by residents with low or high levels of education than those with a medium level. This confirms findings in studies linking education to tourism impact perceptions (Husbands, 1989; Kayat, 2002). Kayat (2002) stated that residents with high and low levels of education have a higher perception of the benefits of tourism, suggesting that those with higher levels of education may be more empowered and better able to reap the benefits of tourism, while residents with lower educational levels felt more dependent on it (Kayat, 2002). The results of the present study show that respondents with low or high levels of education may also perceive the exchanges involved more than others. The benefits of improved recreational facilities such as improvement of the sense of community well-being might accrue more to respondents with these educational levels.

The third social exchange relationship is *benefits to heritage*. Heritage conservation appears in most studies on tourism impacts in heritage cities (Andereck et al., 2000; Getz, 1994; Hammad et al., 2017; Liu et al., 1987; Wang and Pfister, 2008). The literature review shows that positive impacts of tourism on heritage are linked to cultural exchange and learning; however, this was not confirmed in the results. Our results show that residents perceive that they exchange the general inconvenience of tourism for heritage conservation. Apart from having a far-reaching impact on heritage cities, residents may also see heritage conservation as a fundamental benefit associated with the costs related to tourism.

The fourth factor, cultural exchange, involves staging local culture in exchange for learning. This relation involves cultural resources and the perception of cultural impacts in a similar way to the third factor. More specifically, it suggests that residents exchange their culture for learning, which aligns with findings in other studies (Andereck et al., 2005; Getz, 1994; Hammad et al., 2017; Liu et al., 1987). As mentioned in the literature review, cultural exchange between residents and tourists is frequently cited as one of the values of tourism. However, residents' engagement in this exchange may depend on cultural affinity, how positive they perceive the impacts of tourism to be, and the quality of the communication between them and tourists (Liu et al., 1987; Dilletta et al., 2016). This sheds lights on the costs associated with this exchange. Considering that the permanence of an individual in an exchange depends on the relation between costs and rewards (Blau, 1964, p. 123), cultural exchange may only be possible if bridging the cultural gap in between residents and tourists is not too costly for the former. In terms of the benefits of this exchange for residents, the exchange appears to be linked to pride through recognition of the other, cultural awareness, reinforcement of organizational, social and cultural structures (Hammad et al., 2017; Andereck et al., 2005; Liu et al., 1987; Ursache, 2015; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh, 2014).

Understanding the motivations and perceptions of residents in a destination is a crucial area of research. Their participation in tourism and acceptance of tourists and tourism-related activities underpins the development of sustainable tourism. SET is one of the most fertile theories in this area of research, especially since Ap's (1990) seminal article. The present research aims to examine the application of SET in depth by focusing on social exchange relations emerging from individual daily exchanges. As Uehara (2016) notes in other topics of sociology, there are potential applications of SET that have not been explored related to the

structure and dynamics of the tourism destination exchange. Accordingly, this research studies the host guest exchange in a dyadic, relational form in terms of the resources involved.

Managers should pay close attention to how different segments of the resident community perceive the exchange relations involved in tourism how factors like scarcity or costliness affect their perceptions. Residents have different understanding of how the tourism industry works, which leads them to reject or accept tourism based on their perceptions of the specific exchange. The second dyad, *space usage exchange*, and the fourth dyad *cultural exchange* are fairly consistent in the literature. It appears that residents accept a certain level of degradation of environmental conditions in exchange for improved leisure facilities and are willing to stage cultural events and show their culture in exchange for learning. This is supported by literature, which suggests that tourists reinforce culture by recognising it. This result offers destination managers meaningful ways to engage residents and tourists in destinations with strong cultural components. The third exchange relation, *benefits to heritage*, is very relevant as its impact perception, restoration and conservation of monumental heritage is present in a large number of the resident impact perception studies focusing on heritage cities.

Multiple theories and approaches may combine in explaining residents attitudes to tourism since they are complementary and not exclusive (Hernandez et al., 1996; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2011). SET can be seen as a “frame of reference that takes the movement of valued things (resources) through social process as its focus” (Emerson, 1976:359). One limitation of this work is that the methods studying perceptions do not have a theoretical underpinning. In this sense, further studies of exchange dyads may be complemented with theories such as Social Representation Theory (SRT). For example, emancipatory social representation of a culture that represents itself as oppressed might enhance the understanding of a cultural exchange dyad in which residents stage their culture and, thus, reinforce it. SRT can thus serve as a frame to build a phenomenological interpretation of perceptions that enhances the understanding of exchange dyads. The combination of theories with a dyadic approach could also be complemented with mixed methods approaches since according some authors (Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2017) research in this topic can benefit from more qualitative research and methods where qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis are combined. A qualitative perspective of the exchange dyads identified would help characterize the exchange relation and its dynamics as Cozby (1972) did in the field of sociology.

Regarding the impacts of tourism on heritage towns, perceptions are generally positive, coinciding with similar studies in other destinations (Muler et al., 2018; Liu et al., 1987; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Glasson, 1994). More specifically, studies on residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on heritage cities show that residents tend to see tourism as a contribution to conservation building (Glasson, 1994; Liu et al., 1987). This study confirms this by showing that this impact generated the greatest agreement among residents. Furthermore, this impact was included in the exchange relation *benefits to heritage*, which links it to the perception that although tourism brings inconveniences, these are outstripped by the benefits. Heritage destinations might be more prone to cultural exchange relations. The space usage factor may also be specific to heritage towns where space is a scarce resource. The results show that this factor is linked to capacity, which indicates that residents who agree with exchanges in terms of space and noise also want more tourists. Under a SET

rationale, the fact that they perceive the exchanges involved leads them to expect more benefits in terms of more tourists. Future studies could link these dyads to values in order to expand understanding of the role of mediating values in the exchange system.

The results of this study present newly developed items; therefore, it is acceptable that the factor loadings are somehow lower than for established items (Awang, 2012). This study is, therefore, a first step towards developing established items showing exchange relations dyads with higher factor loadings. This can be used as a foundation for future research on exchange relations where the host-guest exchange relationship is studied as a reciprocal exchange of valuable resources and costs in a given context. The exchange relationship of heritage conservation should be worded more precisely in order to identify which costs in particular are associated with heritage conservation. Given the concerns regarding sustainability in tourism, a promising line of research would be to explore the links between exchange relationships and capacity, and the limits of tourism in more depth.

Another potential area of research would be to identify further properties of these exchanges and their specificities, depending on the destination. The exchanges related to heritage conservation may have specific characteristics related to the availability of resources, and demand and supply of these resources in small heritage towns. In the same line, the impacts of the type of tourism, in this case mainly day-trippers, on the perceptions of exchange compared to destinations with high levels of overnight stays should also be developed.

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Autor 1: la concepción original del trabajo, adquisición de datos, análisis e interpretación de los datos, la redacción y revisión crítica del contenido y la aprobación final de la versión a publicar.

Autor 2: la concepción original del trabajo, análisis e interpretación de los datos, la redacción y revisión crítica del contenido y la aprobación final de la versión a publicar.

Autor 3: análisis e interpretación de los datos, la redacción y revisión crítica del contenido y la aprobación final de la versión a publicar.

### **AGRADECIMIENTOS**

Queremos agradecer al Municipio de Besalú por habernos proveído los datos de su oficina de visitantes y apoyado en el proceso de adquisición de datos.

Esta investigación no ha contado con la financiación de ninguna agencia.