

Management of Tourist Flows. The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

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Abstract: The end of the 1980s witnessed the revival of the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, popularly known as “el camino”, a fact that brought with it the development of tourism in the city. However, pilgrims have not been the only source of such growth as there have been cultural tourists too. Flows particularly increase during the Compostela Holy Years, i.e., when the 25th of July, St. James’ festivity, falls on a Sunday. The increased track record of visitors in the city since the holy year of 1993 already foresaw a high volume of visitors for the 2010 Holy Year. In order to avoid excessive overcrowding of the cathedral and all its negative effects, a study was developed for proposals to manage tourist flows. This article explains the methodology used for this study and analyses the results of its implementation. We highlight the problems encountered, not only due to the partial implementation of the measures proposed, but also due to the concentration of actions in the cathedral and not in the destination as a whole.

Key Words: Santiago de Compostela, Cathedral, Carrying Capacity, Tourism, Tourist Flows.

La gestión de flujos turísticos. El caso de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela

Resumen: La recuperación a finales de la década de 1980 del Camino de Santiago supuso un importante desarrollo turístico de la ciudad de Santiago de Compostela. Su crecimiento no ha estado vinculado exclusivamente a la afluencia de peregrinos sino también, y sobre todo, a la llegada de turistas de motivación fundamentalmente cultural. El incremento de los flujos se produce de forma especial en los Años Santos, cuando el 25 de Julio coincide en domingo. El significativo incremento de visitantes que se venía produciendo desde el año jubilar de 1993 hacía prever un volumen muy elevado para el que se celebraría en 2010. Con el fin de evitar una masificación excesiva de la catedral, con todos los efectos negativos que eso generaría, se puso en marcha un estudio del que habrían de salir propuestas de gestión de flujos. En este artículo se explica la metodología de dicho estudio y se analizan los resultados de su puesta en práctica. Destacamos los problemas surgidos no sólo por una aplicación parcial de las medidas sugeridas sino también por la concentración de las acciones en el templo catedralicio y no en el conjunto del destino.

Palabras Clave: Santiago de Compostela, Catedral, Capacidad de Carga, Turismo, Flujos Turísticos.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the literature focusing on historic towns as tourist attractions has significantly increased (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; van der

Borg, Costa & Gotti, 1996; Maitland, 2006; Page, 1992...). This is particularly true for Spain, where the focus on sun and beach tourism cast a shadow on research on other types of destinations (de la Calle, 2002; Troitiño Vinuesa, 2009; Marchena,

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1998;...). However, this does not mean to say that tourism in Spanish cities did not exist, in whatever marginal extent, if we compare with other alternatives. At the end of the 1980s several factors brought towns back under the tourist gaze. Some of these factors included the decentralisation of regional governments' tourism policies, the alleged crisis of the sun and beach model, and the transition to new forms of capitalism, favouring processes of industrial restructuring and urban renewal in areas which had, in general, suffered high degradation. Troitiño Vinuesa & Troitiño Torralba (2010) highlight that since the mid 1990s until 2005, the number of visitors in Spanish historic towns had increased at a rate of 6% per annum.

However, such recent interest in urban tourism in Spain, and more particular, in town centres, is not far from what has happened in other European countries. This matter has already been addressed by authors such as Edwards *et al.* (2008), Pearce (2001), Ashworth (1989, 2003), Page (1995) or Ashworth & Page (2011). Page (1995), in his reference study regarding urban tourism delved deeper into this situation. In particular, he referred to the scarce attention that research on tourism had ever devoted to urban spaces, something he first dated in his bibliography at the end of the 1980s. Furthermore, he insisted that, in any case, his interest was triggered by processes of urban regeneration that looked at tourism as an engine for the town's development.

One of the arguments used by Page (1995), taking Ashworth's words, is that tourism was not valued as an urban attribute – the attraction of visitors could be a consequence of other urban functions such as trade, culture or business. Page (1995) also reminds us that tourism, a temporary and transient activity, was not considered a serious field and therefore research focused on topics such as urban regeneration. All these aspects led to the invisibility of urban tourism in the academia.

Industrial growth was also behind the desertion and/or degradation of Spanish historic centres, as they increasingly lost their traditional role within the city. Therefore, as Ferrer (2003) points out in his truly interesting study on such urban spaces, "by the mid and end of the 19th century, almost all European countries had issued legislation to protect historic towns" (Ferrer, 2003: 59). Spain was no exception with its Heritage Act of 1933. In spite of this, the deterioration process failed to be stopped, at least in Spain.

2. Tourism and Historical Cities

From the point of view of tourism, although not exclusively, focus at that time was mainly on mo-

numents, as in the case of Santiago de Compostela where the cathedral was, and to some extent still is, undeniably the focal point. This would be the raw material that is conveniently transformed into the backbone for tourist development (Ashworth 1990, 1994, 1995; de la Calle, 2002; Jansen-Verbeke, 1997). The vision of tourism as being linked to heritage and the historic centre in general is still very much seen today in spite of growing trends towards more comprehensive approaches (Prats, 2003). Proof of this trend can be clearly found in the posters fostering tourism in Spain during the first part of the 20th century - few focused on city tourism, and those that did only showed individual heritage elements. In the years following the Civil War (1936-39) this trend became the norm, together with the developing importance of sun and beach tourism, the ever-growing importance of religious and folkloric attractions (Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio, 2005). Gali and Donaire (2005) confirm that: *Most places are 'prisoners' of their images.... in such a way that the changes in the management models, the kind of visitors or the changes in physical area itself only partially modify the old topics* (p. 784), often created from influences dating back to the Romantic period.

A word of caution, however, must be said regarding the presence of urban elements in promotional tourism posters. Despite their printed presence, such elements did not mean that tourism in historic centres developed at that time. Several reasons can be found for this. Firstly, visitor flows during this historic period were significantly minimal, and, therefore, so were their impact on the destinations. In this respect Silberberg (1995) reminds us of the changes in preference undergone by American tourists and which can be prevalent, with certain nuances, in other countries. Secondly, there were no active tourism policies, inexistent at local level, and were little more than that of promotion. We must bear in mind, around 1963, when the sun and beach model was becoming a stable mass phenomenon, there were still strong voices, such as the World Bank, claiming that this was just a passing fancy prompted by extraordinary circumstances (Barrado & Galiana, 2006); even more if we look at spaces with significantly lower visitor frequency rate.

Despite the fact that over 300 historic centres had some level of protection after the Civil War (Ferrer, 2003), there were many cases in which degradation or deterioration became irreversible. Some Spanish regions, such as the whole Mediterranean coast, were deeply affected by this trend, as urban growth coincided with the expansion of mass sun and beach tourism. Besides, the solution for the increasing city growth, based on high birth rates and intensive migration from the countryside was

the widespread construction of high-rise buildings (Precedo, 1996).

It was not until the 1980s that changes started to be seen in trends observed in Spain. The reasons behind these changes are many, so we would like to outline but a few. Firstly, the 1970s oil crisis did not affect Spain until the 1980s, a time when many reforms were introduced for the country's access into the European Union in 1986. This meant that traditional industrial sectors had to undergo forced restructuring, something that also had an impact on city landscapes. The third sector was the easy way out for much of this workforce, so tourism became the preferred option for the renewal of urban spaces. At the same time, the sun and beach tourism model was becoming problematic therefore a White Paper on Tourism in Spain was drafted (Secretaría General de Turismo, 1990). This, in turn, led to the implementation of destination plans (Secretaría General de Turismo, 1992). The need to diversify supply through the creation of new products was a new opportunity for cities. Mass cultural consumption, including shows and exhibitions (Urry, 2002), also increased in importance during this period and cities became their natural environment. Culture thus becomes one more business for the urban economy (Hamnett & Shoval, 2003).

A final element completing the picture actually came from outside the country: the concept of World Heritage Sites developed by UNESCO in 1972. This gave explicit recognition to the universality of some monuments and urban or natural spaces, and was increasingly used in tourism marketing campaigns (Li *et al.*, 2008; Yang *et al.*, 2010). Historic centres could enjoy greater visibility thanks to this focus on heritage. With the other factors mentioned, this measure was the final push in making historic centres attractive for tourism. The former WTO Secretary General indicated the demarcation *line* that UNESCO recognition implies in relation to the visit of these places (Frangialli, 2003). In their research, Yang *et al.* (2010) clearly point out that, at least in China, UNESCO designated cultural heritage sites, including historic sites, are more relevant in terms of tourist attractions than UNESCO listed natural spaces in terms of attracting international visitors. Spain has become the second country in the world with more sites declared as World Heritage and its relationship with the tourist offer is more than evident (Troitiño Vinuesa, 2009; de la Calle, 2002) as shown, for instance, in the fact that there is a Tourism Observatory within the group of world heritage city sites in Spain (Troitiño Vinuesa, de la Calle Vaquero, García Hernández and Troitiño Torralba, 2009). Furthermore, one of the group's two objectives is: '*...to promote cultural tourism...*'.

As we have seen so far, historic centres had already been deserted by the population, who preferred to move elsewhere to live. It should be borne in mind that many historic centres had begun a process of abandonment and marginalisation (Ferrer, 2003; Precedo, 1996). Once tourism became a shaping force in towns, this trend was further aggravated as buildings were indeed rehabilitated but not in a way that attracted people to resettle in them. Even in places such as Santiago de Compostela, where measures in this direction were taken, the outcome was not as expected. Tourism further contributed to the disappearance of convenience stores, while increased restrictions were imposed due to the symbolic value of such spaces; for example, restricted access for cars, strict regulations on renovating or rebuilding houses, a lack of facilities due to old structures, etc. (González & Santos, 2007).

Conflicting uses and the problem of sustainability due to an excessive tourist load become central questions that have not always been properly addressed (Li *et al.*, 2008). This is particularly true for public instances which are often under pressure from sector-based interests that advocate an idea of unlimited growth. Studies on hosting capacity are common for monuments (García Hernández, 2001, 2004), but due to their complexity they are scarcer for outdoor spaces, such as historic centres, even if we have some remarkable examples from Venice, Bruges or Oxford, which are subsequently partly enriched by numerous case studies. Therefore, it is often extremely difficult to reconcile tourism and the preservation of the historic, artistic and symbolic values of town centres. However, as Russo and Van der Borg (2002) claim, the mere presence of heritage is not enough to guarantee success of a tourist destination. Lack of attention, for example, to intangible elements, these authors claim, can render all efforts to create destinations based only on monumental wealth pointless. In Spain, as Troitiño Vinuesa and Troitiño Torralba (2010) claim, architecture and museums have been the two focal points.

Keeping a historic appearance is undoubtedly very important (Naoi *et al.*, 2011), and this explains the efforts to rehabilitate heritage and eliminate all that, regardless of other factors, may mean *modernity*, such as cars or electrical cables. Naoi *et al.* (2011) also mention that a pedestrian environment introduces a certain feeling of discovery that is not just temporal but spatial too. However, this value of the ancient has come face to face with the demands of the visitors themselves, who expect some services that may lead to a loss in singularity (Russo & van der Borg, 2002).

In whichever case, historic centres in general and historic-artistic heritage in particular have become the main object of the tourist gaze. This happens in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States or China (Li *et al.*, 2008) and has led authors such as Williams (2010) to claim that “The challenge of tourism in historic cities is, in many instances, the challenge of mass tourism” (p.9), with all the implications this has on the experiences of each visitor, and on the management of each destination. Literature on the relationships between tourism, heritage and historic cities leaves us many interesting reflections. Perhaps the work by Russo (2002) on the formation of the *vicious circle* and its application to the case of Venice deserves special attention. It is true that, despite some similarities, Santiago de Compostela cannot be compared to the Italian city. There is indeed a problem of overcrowding and an attempt was made to solve it with a flow management plan. However, the plan was only partially applied to a monument and, in which case, the problem was not solved and even new ones were created. In short, it came down to giving a satisfactory answer to one of the critical issues in the historic city’s development and the balance between the needs of the host community (social, cultural and economic), visitors and heritage conservation (Stuart-Hoyle & Lovell, 2006).

3. Santiago de Compostela in Perspective. Problems and Tourism Management

Santiago de Compostela is part of a broader context of mass cultural and religious tourism. This means devaluation in the meaning of the destination in favour of the signifier. In other words, and according to the classification established by Poria *et al* (2003), it is the increasing loss of importance of visitors whose motivation reflects a feeling of identity with heritage. It is true that a study on this topic has not been done. However, the data from the Tourism Observatory of Santiago de Compostela (information consulted but not yet publicly available) allow us to see that this behaviour, even among pilgrims for whom Santiago is not the destination but the end of the way, is not the main one besides that of the religious reason (Santos & Lois, 2011). Therefore, they would be cultural tourists or even religious tourists with partial or accidental motivation, according to the Lord classification (Timothy, 2011). Richards (2002) also states that surveys carried out among tourists visiting cultural sites showed that cultural motivation was relatively low.

If we only focus on the modern period, the Cathedral of Santiago had already been the target of the tourist gaze from the first part of the 20th century onwards, something that was to be further intensified during the Franco regime. It is interesting that the religious character of this destination slowly changed into a tourism-based approach. The real transformation happened in the 1980s in the light of two interrelated circumstances. Firstly, the designation of the city as the regional capital of Galicia, which reinforced its symbolic value and, secondly, the St. James’ Way was fostered into a unique attraction throughout most of Europe. Coinciding with this, the historic centre was listed as World Heritage Site and urban and tourism policies had obvious effects on this piece of urban structure (Santos, 2006, 2010). So far the latest intervention has been the construction, at least in part, of the City of Culture. This is a site of an architectural project on the urban periphery which, nevertheless, can have a direct impact on the historic centre; the proposed access of cable cars travelling from one end of the historic city could increase pressure on this space rather than reduce it. Both the economic crisis and a negative report from ICOMOS (2008) have paralysed this proposal, thus adding one more problem to the difficult management of the City of Culture.

Urban policies were implemented in a Special Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the historic town, through the first draft of 1990 and its final approval of 1997. It was implemented by the city’s Consortium, a body that brought together the three public administrations (state, regional and local). An intensive rehabilitation and renewal programme was launched with the aim of going beyond mere physical regeneration and trying to address issues such as functional rehabilitation, both for shops and housing. Furthermore, it generated cultural centres and content for the city as a whole. Regarding aspects strictly related to tourism, a municipal tourism company was created in 1999 and a destination plan was developed and funded by the three public administrations in question. These were the pillars for a large share of the interventions undertaken.

The outcomes both of this tourism promotion policy, and urban development policies were dramatic. For example, between 1992 and 2006, the Consortium invested 195€ million, of which 33.9% were destined to the town centre and 25.7% to large facilities (Santos, 2010; Consorcio de Santiago and Grupo USC-PsiCOM, 2007). In practical terms, many houses and shops benefited from such funding, new parks were developed, unique buildings recovered, especially religious ones, and prestigious architects were employed for the design

and construction of author buildings for different purposes (such as social or cultural centres), etc. However, all these efforts did not put a stop to the demographic decline of the old walled town, with some 3,000 inhabitants today, compared with nearly 9,000 in 1965 or 4,300 in 1995, not to mention the 20,000 in the early twentieth century (Aldrey, 1999, 2006); neither have these efforts been able stop the alarming disappearance of convenience stores, key for daily life and now massively replaced by premises for tourism or symbolic uses.

If we focus on tourism, two parallel phenomena took place. Firstly, hotel supply increased through the introduction of large Spanish urban hotel chains, especially on the periphery; and also through the appearance of small lodgings in the city centre. In quantitative terms, there was an increase from 2,000 hotel beds in the mid 1990s to more than 5,000 at present, excluding other forms of accommodation. Of this total, 55% correspond to 4 and 5 star hotels. On the other hand, the second phenomenon was the increase in flows. Offering exact figures proves difficult. If we look at the statistics from the Spanish Statistics Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadística - INE) for 2012 we can speak of some 540,000 travellers and around 1 million overnight stays in hotels. To these figures must be added the tourists who use alternative accommodation and day trippers. What is clear is that flows have increased significantly in recent years. Further insights into this development include an increase in the international market, which is already between 35 and 40% of the total, and a very high concentration of the visit is in a reduced space, especially around the cathedral area even if the tourist gaze is currently expanding towards the whole historic centre. The cathedral as an attraction was the highest ranking in visitor numbers for the whole of Spain (over 3 million) in 2010, a Holy Year, surpassing even the Alhambra in Granada.

Similar to other Spanish destinations, in Santiago, heritage-based mass tourism has presented new challenges in terms of management and appropriate tourism use. New problems arise from the unique nature of the resource (Millar, 1989). An added difficulty lies in the need to incorporate actors with differing perspectives of tourism (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; McKercher *et al.*, 2005). This requires the use of new tools. In the Spanish case, the Catholic Church, as the owner of a huge number of highly and culturally valued estates (cathedrals, churches, artwork,...) has become an important agent to be considered in designing policies and relevant tourist value. For its part, and as Shackley (2005) claims, the most important challenge to be faced by managers in the case of religious heritage is to

achieve compatibility and the approach between its sacred vision and the secular viewpoint of many cultural tourists.

With regard to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, the problems derived from mass tourism became so obvious that it was necessary to design and implement a plan of use in order to combine its twin objective: a religious and a cultural/tourist one. According to the studies characterising tourist demand developed by the Tourism Observatory of Santiago de Compostela from 2005, around 92% of visitors to the city claim they wish to visit the cathedral, which often meant seeing the temple crowded with visitors, without following any order or taking any consideration during their visit. The need for a plan that would allow compatibility of uses was a view shared by both the religious authorities, who are responsible for managing the cathedral, and by the local and regional public tourist officials.

Thus, in 2007, it was decided to conduct a study on the conditions in which visits to the entire historic centre of Santiago took place. The aim was also to see how the pressure of tourism had an impact on the town's most significant resource. The fact that a Holy Year was to be held in 2010 with the subsequent arrival of visitors en masse, finally pushed, although slowly, the initiative forward. The above mentioned study was made possible by the signing of an agreement between the University of Santiago de Compostela and the regional government, with the participation of the cathedral's Chapter. In connection with the religious authorities, the initial reluctance arising, prior to the study, from some members of the Chapter, because of their eminently ecclesiastical use of the enclosure, were soon overcome due to the clear objective of the study being that of making suggestions for improvement. It should be noted that until now, however, only the first part of the work has been undertaken, i.e. the study of tourist pressure on the cathedral and the creation of measures to enable compatibility of use (religious and tourism-cultural), which are the most important details of this work and are shown below (1st phase). An analysis of the tourist visit and its impact on the spatial framework throughout the whole historic centre in Santiago remains pending.

4. The Cathedral of Santiago's Carrying Capacity. Methodology and Main Results

The theoretical concept underlying the design of the study is that of carrying capacity, first coined in the United States in the 1960s (Getz, 1983; O'Reilly, 1986; Coccossis & Parnpaireis, 2000, among

others). According to Mexa & Collovini (2004), the most important objectives when developing a study on carrying capacity at present are related to the prevention of environmental pressure caused by tourism, increasing visitor satisfaction and, at the same time, ensuring the economic feasibility of tourism in the long run. The use of this term in the field of tourism has therefore been linked to that of sustainable management and it is one of the most widely quoted tools in the academia as a way to move towards environmentally friendly tourism in its widest sense. This tool implies, generically speaking, that tourism has to be looked at in a way in which some thresholds are never surpassed. Those thresholds must take various considerations into account such as the ecological, physical, economic, social and political dimensions, as well as the visitor experience (García Hernández, 2004). Estimating the carrying capacity implies, therefore, a definition of flow thresholds over which tourism does not only cause the deterioration of resources in physical or environmental terms, but also rejection by the community that should benefit from it. In this sense, stakeholders in tourism must not be reduced to public managers and the private tourism industry at destination point, but also include both locals and visitors. The latter should have the chance to enjoy their tourist experience in optimum conditions (O'Really, 1986). Estimating the carrying capacity of a destination or resource is therefore formulae to minimise the negative impact caused by tourism. The case studies developed, despite the difficulties of making the concept operational, have contributed to situating this tool as an added asset in the process of designing and implementing integrated policies for the planning of tourism spaces (Getz, 1983). This was precisely the objective initially set for Santiago de Compostela: to develop a study on the carrying capacity of the whole historic centre and the cathedral as its main resource. After the diagnosis from this study, a system of measures to guarantee the development of tourism was possible to be implemented, taking adequate management of visitor flows and sustainability criteria into account. Thus, we tried to follow the example of other historic towns suffering from the same kind of severe saturation problems caused by mass tourism such as Oxford (Glasson, 1994) or Venice (Cannestrelli & Costa, 1991), and making the concept work in practice.

Research, of which the results are presented below, began in March 2008 and lasted for approximately a year, was undertaken by the Centre for Studies and Research on Tourism at the Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (Cetur), under the guidance of experts belonging to the research group "Tourism, heritage and development" at the

Universidad Complutense de Madrid. The authors of this article, as members of Cetur, contributed their gathered knowledge on the destination and local tourist system in the Observatory for Tourism of Santiago, all belonging to the same centre. The methodology used was that designed by professors Miguel Ángel Troitiño Vinuesa and María García Hernández, at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and developed thanks to the knowledge gathered in previous studies on tourist use, carrying capacity levels and visitor flow management at other Spanish heritage sites of great relevance in tourism, for example the monumental ensemble of the Alhambra in Granada (García Hernández, 2001).

The main objective of this first phase, as has already been mentioned, was the analysis of the conditions in which tourist visits in the cathedral take place, as this is an enclosed location where saturation problems at particular times of the year required priority attention. The two axes around which this research was developed were, on the one hand, the study of the physical features of the cathedral and its equipment for public visits, and, on the other hand, the distinctive traces of its users and what each user type did in this space. As Shackley (2002) noted, there are different types of users among cathedral goers, establishing the primary distinction between those motivated by religious sentiment and those who fall within that of cultural or heritage tourism. These two motivations fall into the categories of viewpoints and different behaviours in relation to the same resource, and, in the case of Santiago de Compostela, threatened the very character of its sacred space.

The first aspect was analysed using the information provided by the Chapter, basically the cartographic data included in the Master plan for the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and its surroundings, as well as the relevant information gathered from field visits. The physical dimension of the carrying capacity enabled us to estimate the maximum number of people who could gather at the same time in the cathedral by using the relationship between the total available surface for movement and the minimum necessary space for a person to move freely around the cathedral. Although the standards of optimal pedestrian mobility are 4m^2 (García Hernández *et al.*, 2011) due to the limited available space, less restrictive criteria were used to establish a minimum area of 2m^2 per person.

The cartography study show that the available surface for movement within the temple was only 1.990m^2 approximately, in which case, the physical loading capacity was established in 995 people, as a maximum number of visitors who should be able to be inside at the same time. With regard to

the adequacy of the site for the public, the test's results revealed the clear absence of a policy for the cathedral's cultural tourist role. This is something that damaged the already complicated compatibility of uses due to its limited space. Some of the evidence revealing the absence of tourism management measures is:

The use, until then, of the four existing doors as exit and entry routes for visitors, together with long opening hours throughout the day. This fact favoured fast visitor access from any point of the historic centre, given the centre's small size and the temple's central location within the historic area.

The lack of information that would ease the visit and the visitors' spatial orientation in order to avoid crowding at busy times, and the lack of itinerary recommendations which would make the tour around the temple easier, with quick access to the most attractive elements.

The absence of dissuasive measures that would avoid the tourists' negative impact on other cathedral goers experience and which would tie in with the religious nature of the site.

The methodology used to study the profile and behaviour of cathedral visitors included techniques to find out both quantitative and qualitative data. Thus, analysis was performed to estimate the approximate number of people who enter the cathedral, with special focus on tackling which periods or particular days show higher figures. In terms of qualitative assessment, the characteristics and behaviours of different types of users inside the cathedral were also analysed. In order for us to reach a quantitative figure, six visitor counts were performed on particular days. The days were selected according to forecasts of visit levels (very high, average and low). The general cathedral entry counts were done manually by a team of eleven people, recording all entries and exits at the four

doors at fifteen minute intervals during the time the site was open to the public. Electronic counting mechanisms were discarded in order to obtain specific information on visitor groups accessing the cathedral (number of groups and number of people in each group). The result of the visitor counts show a higher than expected influx as no other study had previously achieved approximation of the daily visitor numbers. The average time spent inside the cathedral was estimated at around 20-30 minutes.

As mentioned above, the visitor counts took into account the distinction between individual visitors and visitor groups. This distinction was necessary in order to accurately measure the impact of group visits. Their characteristics (composition, behaviour, use and space occupation patterns, etc.) suggested that specific measures may need to be taken to manage their visits, especially at times when other groups or individual visitors are present. In the case of Santiago, many organised groups visiting the cathedral correspond to coach day trippers who spend a few hours in the city, so available statistics on the number of daily coach arrivals at the coach park close to the town centre (established as the mandatory drop off and pick up point for all tourist coaches) went towards helping programme specific visitor counts for studying the use they made of the site. The parameters studied for organised groups were the length and itinerary of the visit, most frequent entry times, places where they listened to the guide's explanations, entry and exit doors, etc. This information was obtained from monitoring and observing the behaviour of these visitor types throughout their visit, from the very moment the group entered the temple.

The results of the cathedral visitor counts showed a higher than expected influx because, until then, no other study had hinted at even an approximation. This has allowed us to set the

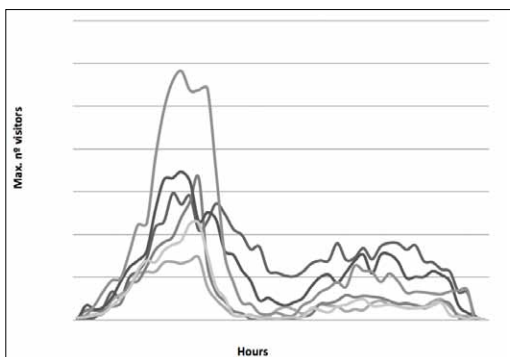
Table 1.- Visitor count - General Data

| | Date | Weekday | Total Number of inflow counted | % individual visitors | % Visitor Groups | Estimated inflow | Average time of stay |
|---|------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 22/03/2008 | Saturday (Holy Week) | 16,381 | 97,8% | 2,2% | High | 31 min. |
| 2 | 26/05/2008 | Monday | 6,069 | 81,4% | 18,6% | Low | 26 min. |
| 3 | 20/06/2008 | Friday | 8,942 | 82,0% | 18,7% | Medium | 24 min. |
| 4 | 16/08/2008 | Saturday | 23,377 | 97,3% | 2,7% | High | 18 min. |
| 5 | 11/10/2008 | Saturday | 16,181 | 93,3% | 6,7% | High | 31 min. |
| 6 | 14/10/2008 | Tuesday | 6,332 | 79,6% | 20,4% | Low | 29 min. |

minimum number at about 6,000 visitors entering the cathedral, with the weight of group visitors being higher on the days of low influx. For its part, the study led us to discover that in days of peak influx up to 23,000 people may visit the site. Tracking the groups, whose visit lasts about 45 minutes, also confirmed the impact free use and no space restrictions on their tour generated on the temple. This impact was greater on the days when there was also a large number of individual visitors whose transit was constantly conditioned by the movements of group visitors.

Likewise, the registration of entry at 15-minute intervals, from 9am to 9pm, allowed for the precise measurement of the rate at which visitors go into the cathedral, and the times in which the visitor numbers were higher. In all cases, the mornings were the most popular for cathedral visitors, both individually and in groups, while at 15 hours between 55 and 65 % of the total daily visits had already been completed. Maximum crowd levels corresponded with the time in which the religious ceremony known as “the Pilgrim’s mass” is conducted, between 12 and 13 hours and reaching some 3,000 people on some specific days. Furthermore, it is during this mass that the *Botafumeiro* (the incense burner) can be seen. Another rite that has become a tourist attraction in itself as it is quite spectacular (Murray & Graham, 1997). This often means that visitors and visiting groups enter the cathedral only at the moment when the *Botafumeiro* is used, as the registers prove.

Figure 1. Frequency of visitors entering the cathedral



In order to have an idea of the extent of the problems derived from the visitor crowds at particular times, we also have to analyse the relationship between the number of visitors inside the cathedral at any given point in time and the circulatory

surface available. According to our estimates, and using the data from the day counts conducted, at the highest peaks of visitor numbers inside the cathedral, the space available per person was never over 3 m²/person, and it even came down to 0.68 m²/person (the daily average was, however, between 2.82 and 8.97 m²/person). These figures clearly reveal the need to create measures to achieve a better redistribution of tourist flows throughout the whole day, as the visitor figures and the crowd levels were far lower in the afternoon and evening. These measures were needed, not just to preserve the religious function of the cathedral, but also to improve the quality of the tourist visit and contribute to a preservation of heritage and, needless to say, prevent public safety problems.

To complement the count information, the study included a survey carried out among the cathedral goers. Two questionnaires were used: one aimed at visitors who enter the cathedral for cultural reasons and another was for residents who came to the temple for religious or spiritual reasons. The aim was to find out the use that the two main types of visitors made and emphasise the social dimension of load capacity study (the one that referred to local people’s ability to accept the prejudices derived from tourism activity) and, also, to make an assessment of their experience in the temple by taking into account the attendance level on site at the time. In total there were 612 valid questionnaires, of which about one-fifth belonged to city residents. The ratio was determined by the results of a pilot survey conducted in cathedral some several months beforehand.

The information provided by visitors in Santiago and entering the cathedral (a total of 495) helped us to gather some information regarding the use they made of the site, apart from the demographic features of interest and others related to the journey to the city. They confirmed, in general, the data gathered by the Tourism Observatory of Santiago. The response analysis led to an identification of those must-see spots, and especially those where situations of incompatibility of use were common, situations derived from the different needs of tourists and those looking for some time to themselves or looking to attend mass. As expected, the resources highlighted as greater interest were the Pórtico da Gloria, the main altar, the Porta Santa or Holy Gate (only open in holy years), the Apostle’s crypt and the image of the saint, which is traditionally embraced by visitors. Except for the Portico, all other points are around the ambulatory, where the available space is considerably reduced and in which, therefore, crowds were frequent.

Table 2. – Activities carried out by residents and cathedral visitors

| | Residents | Visitors |
|---|------------------|-----------------|
| Listen to Mass | 41% | 33,1% |
| Stroll and take a visual tour and so on | 41,9% | 84,2% |
| Visit the Pórtico de la Gloria | 12% | 47,9% |
| Hug the Apostle | 12% | 49,9% |
| Visit the tomb of the Apostle | 15,4% | 59,2% |
| Visit the cathedral museum | 3,4% | 21,2% |
| Participate in a guided tour | 1,7% | 9,3% |
| Visit the cathedral rooftops | 5,1% | 9,9% |
| Show the cathedral to family or friends | 29,1% | - |
| Others (pray, confess, visit shrines and so on) | 28,2% | 12,7% |

In connection with the activities conducted within the temple it must be noted that in the responses given by both sets of visitors the majority's choice was: "to walk and take a visual tour around the cathedral", at 84% of all answers. This fact is in line with the estimated average time of 30 minutes spent visiting. Given the size of the cathedral this time is enough to take a tour of the points of greater interest. A relevant detail to be highlighted is the reduced role that the cathedral's museum has for tourism. In this sense, although around 20% of respondents claimed to have the intention of visiting it, in the days we checked, there were no more than 5.6% of cathedral visitors who finally did enter the museum. Thus, completing the survey data with the follow-up through direct observation of individual and group visitors, we prepared a catalogue of the different "critical", "sensitive" and "less conflictive" areas, according to the impact of visitors on the original religious function of the cathedral. We also identified the most frequent tours undertaken by organised groups as well as the spots chosen by guides to provide their explanations and where their prolonged presence acted as a "barrier" and

became an obstacle for the flow of the rest of the visitors. This analysis allowed us to truly identify the visiting patterns of the groups that contributed to an increase in congestion problems. Finally, we were able to estimate that 30-35 minutes is the average time that tourist guides spend giving explanations to their groups.

Finally, thanks to a series of specific questions included both in questionnaires for visitors and for residents, we were able to come closer to an assessment of their visit to the cathedral by taking the perception expressed by the goers themselves as a basis. In general terms, both groups gave a very high score when they were asked for a general assessment of their visit: 60% of visitors and 49.6% of residents graded it as "very good", while those grading it as "good" reached 35.6% and 43.6% respectively. Furthermore, they were exposed to six statements in order to know their level of agreement or disagreement (1 for "strongly disagree" and 4 for "strongly agree"). These opinions attempted to go deeper into the assessment that the church-goers made of their cathedral visit

Table 3. Resident and visitor opinions of possible control measures

| | Average Score (5) Residents | Average Score (5) Visitors |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| "There are too many people inside the cathedral" | 2,8 | 2,4 |
| "Access should be limited during mass" | 3,0 | 2,9 |
| "There should be more silence in the cathedral" | 3,3 | 3,0 |
| "I would like to visit other areas inside." | 2,9 | 3,2 |
| "They should regulate entry and allow guided visits only" | 1,3 | 1,5 |
| "A symbolic price should be charged for the visit" | 1,7 | 2,0 |

and their support for the possible introduction of measures to control visitor flow inside the site.

The results obtained were not as conclusive as had been expected. The differences between the views of residents and visitors cannot be considered clear on issues which should be more evident. In general, there is consensus on stating that the cultural tourist visit produces unwanted effects (too many visitors, noise, etc.). However, respondents are not in favour of extreme measures to regulate cathedral entry. Disincentives such as the requirement to pay a nominal fee or the requirement of a guided visit obtain a low degree of acceptance among both groups, and even, somewhat surprisingly, visitors seem to show a better understanding of these kinds of constraints.

As explanatory reasons for this lack of conclusive statements, we need to quote some things already highlighted by Gigirey in his 2003 study. There was evidence that many residents who are frequent users of the cathedral have had to modify their behaviour in order to avoid the negative effects that the tourist visit caused on their own use of the temple. Thus, they tend to avoid it in peak tourist hours, when the arrival of visitors in the city is greater. Likewise, among those who come to pray, the usual practice is to take refuge in the chapels where tourist access is prohibited. This allows them to achieve the desired atmosphere for meditation. The observance of these practices results in the maintenance of separate places for residents and visitors. This fact could explain the lack of a more emphatic viewpoint from the residents.

Those surveyed were asked about charging an entrance fee for cathedral access, although this measure has been rejected by ecclesiastical authorities for reasons of a different nature quoted by Shackley (2005). The justification for this refusal was that as it is a pilgrimage cathedral it is not appropriate to establish such a restrictive measure. They also consider that it would cause rejection among visitors who have already had to pay a small fee for museum access.

5. Management of Visitor Flows in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

The analysis undertaken led to the development of a diagnosis and a related set of measures to be introduced in an integrated implementation plan so that the significant problems identified could be solved. Such measures included both short-term and long-term interventions, as the latter required much time and effort due to the complexity of their implementation, both from a logistics as well as from an economic point of view. In any case,

implementation was in the hands of the Chapter and it was the Chapter who had given approval.

Regardless of the final implemented action, and before taking any further steps, the study team issued a recommendation to set up a communication campaign to disseminate the study, diagnosis and the plan of corrective measures. This campaign should address stakeholders of all kinds, with the aim of creating awareness around existing problems and try to avoid hypothetical rejection of the plan, due to the regulatory nature of the proposal. In fact, some concerns had already been shown during the organisation of the field work by some groups. In particular, the group of guides feared that the introduction of measures to arrange organised group visits (such as the need to arrange an appointment and the imposition of a maximum number of groups per day) would decrease the need for their services. The remaining proposals were the following:

- 1) The establishment of an information and interpretation centre as a prior step to any visits to the cathedral in the Palacio de Xelmírez, a building annexed to the cathedral, where historic and heritage information about the temple would be provided and tourist-related services that allowed for a better redistribution of tourist flows will be given: information on visiting times, recommended itineraries, usage norms, and an audio-guide service in order to reduce noise inside the cathedral, etc.
- 2) The rearrangement of mass times. The times of mass and other religious rituals inside different chapels should be reorganised so that there are clear time spans dedicated to only religious activities and some others specifically for tourism. Another recommendation was to have more masses during the day at particular periods, so that a better redistribution of visitors throughout the day would be possible. Access to the temple during mass would be absolutely prohibited to tourists.
- 3) A recommendation to have itineraries to visit the cathedral. The implementation of this measure would imply permanently closing the main gate on the façade of O Obradoiro (except, of course, on especially significant days) and using the side doors as exclusive access or exit points for visitors. This measure would try to ensure that tourists did not "invade" the spaces for religious rituals.
- 4) Specific management of organised tours. This would just be done through the setting up of a system of prior bookings through which their step-by-step entry could be organised, taking into account the average time these visits tend to last and the agreement with the policies

designed for this, which could be more or less restrictive depending on the time of the year and even depending on the number of visits on particular days. These planning tasks would help attenuate the impact of the groups going through the cathedral on days where individual visitors are expected en masse. At the same time, groups would have clearly set itineraries for their visit, as well as spots where tourist guides would have to compulsorily give their explanations. A requirement for their access to the cathedral would be that they use radio guides to lessen their noise pollution.

- 5) The setting up of e-counters for visitors. These tools could help us get to know the number of visitors in the cathedral at all times. This would help to temporarily stop entry once the established physical carrying capacity threshold was surpassed. According to the threshold set (1,000 people), the average duration of the tourist visit (some 30 minutes maximum), and considering that there were eight available hours for public visits, accessing the cathedral could not surpass 16,000 visitors per day.
- 6) The refurbishing of temple areas that are not currently open to the public and the redesign of other areas of interest and museum artifacts, after paying a fee could contribute to stopping the overcrowding of the central nave and improve the use of spaces. Such itineraries should include the Palacio de Xelmírez, the Crypt, the Portico da Gloria, the upper tribune and the current museum cloister area.
- 7) The creation of an office or specific unit in charge of managing the public's visits in the cathedral. This unit, is specifically designed to coordinate and plan all aspects related to this secondary use of the temple and could be inserted into the structure of the cathedral's Foundation, founded in 2008 by the Chapter. This would act as a preferential link with the rest of the tourist agents.

The political change in the regional government in 2009 and the replacement of the heads of tourism brought with it a stop to all matters corresponding to the second phase of the study which would have looked at the area space for the whole historic centre of Compostela. However, at the insistence of the cathedral's Chapter, the new government finally agreed to fund the implementation of some of the proposed measures that have been gradually implemented, although in some cases not in the same way as suggested by the researchers.

The first measure that had the largest impact on public opinion was the imposition of restrictions of

free access to the cathedral during the 2010 Holy Year. The implementation of an electronic system to register entry and exit made concentration levels known at all times, and the company staff employed to this effect were able to control the doors and stop entry when a particular level was reached. A maximum gathering of 1,300 people was initially established, although this number was modified on special days due to the long queues formed around the cathedral. Specific doors were also established for entry and exit, together with specific routes for cathedral visits. Despite all these changes, images of crowds of visitors invading the neighbouring streets and squares eagerly waiting to enter the cathedral became habitual and meant disturbances and a significant nuisance, especially for residents and also for shops in the historic centre. The latter claimed that these queues not only hindered access to their shops, but also that the time visitors used in waiting to access the cathedral was time lost for other activities, such as visiting souvenir shops and restaurants, which meant lower expenditure by tourists at destination. From the point of view of residents, going for a walk or simply crossing the old town to reach other areas in the city became a hard and often stressful task. Even if the bodies responsible did not make a public statement regarding the total number of visitors accessing the cathedral throughout 2010, according to the estimates of an article published in the local newspaper, the annual figure could be placed at around 3.7 million.

In regard to the development of the visit inside the temple, from this study the problems of lack of information for the visitor were effectively resolved. This has been achieved through the launch of a visitor reception centre and the installation of information panels that give guidance on timetables for religious acts and warn about inadequate behaviours. Similarly, the Cathedral's Foundation has been chosen to be in charge of managing all the issues related to the tourist visit. Its latest act, surprising due to the reluctance initially shown to the proposals of 'the nature of the material' has been the creation of a set of itineraries upon request and with the payment of the corresponding fee. This allows the visitor to see spaces which are not available free of charge. With regard to the visitors' organised groups, their staggered entry now offers minimised impact on the temple. Their route is now defined and audio guide use is requested. As expected, these measures were not positively accepted by the group of tour guides who, in their opinion, were not responsible for the overcrowding in the cathedral.

6. Discussion and Conclusions– Santiago, More than a Cathedral

There is no doubt that the initiative aimed at regulating visitor flows in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela was interesting even if the results were not as expected. According to us, the most significant problem is that we cannot just act on an element, however important that may be. Having a vision of the destination as a whole is the key to successful management. Moreover, as we have already seen, partial implementation of the measures proposed may generate more conflict than it solves.

Santiago as a destination is characterised by a reduced space for tourism which is basically located around the cathedral and the surrounding squares and streets. Therefore, and knowing that over 90% of visitors go to see this monument, according to data from the Tourism Observatory of Santiago, it is only logical that efforts should focus on trying to take physical and perceptual pressure away from it. As measures cannot be of direct economic character, flow management becomes the only solution.

We are convinced of the fact that the proposals presented by the study group and analysed in previous sections could have solved a significant part of the problems. We believe, however, that there was no will to really confront the complexity of the matter from an integrated approach. Basically, what was done was to organise entry to different parts of the temple and prevent surpassing the maximum number of people inside with a figure that was not set according to the proposal made, but chosen according to the Chapter's criteria. As a consequence thereof, the external scenario significantly changed and gave way to a panorama where never-ending queues of visitors became the norm. All in all, pressure was maintained both inside and outside, with human barriers hindering free circulation through squares and streets.

Nevertheless, as we have already mentioned, the problem does not only lie in the management of the monument but in the city as a whole. The measures proposed for the cathedral were merely circumstantial in order to overcome the overcrowding expected for the 2010 Holy Year; after this critical period, everything has gone back to normal until the new 2021 Holy Year. We believe that a great opportunity has been missed for the presentation of deeper solutions that might have favoured an integrated vision of the destination.

The most significant problems the destination has to face are the pressure on the cathedral and its surroundings, day trippers and the loss of the traditional residential and shopping functions. Obviously, these are no easily solved immaterial matters but they require appropriate management

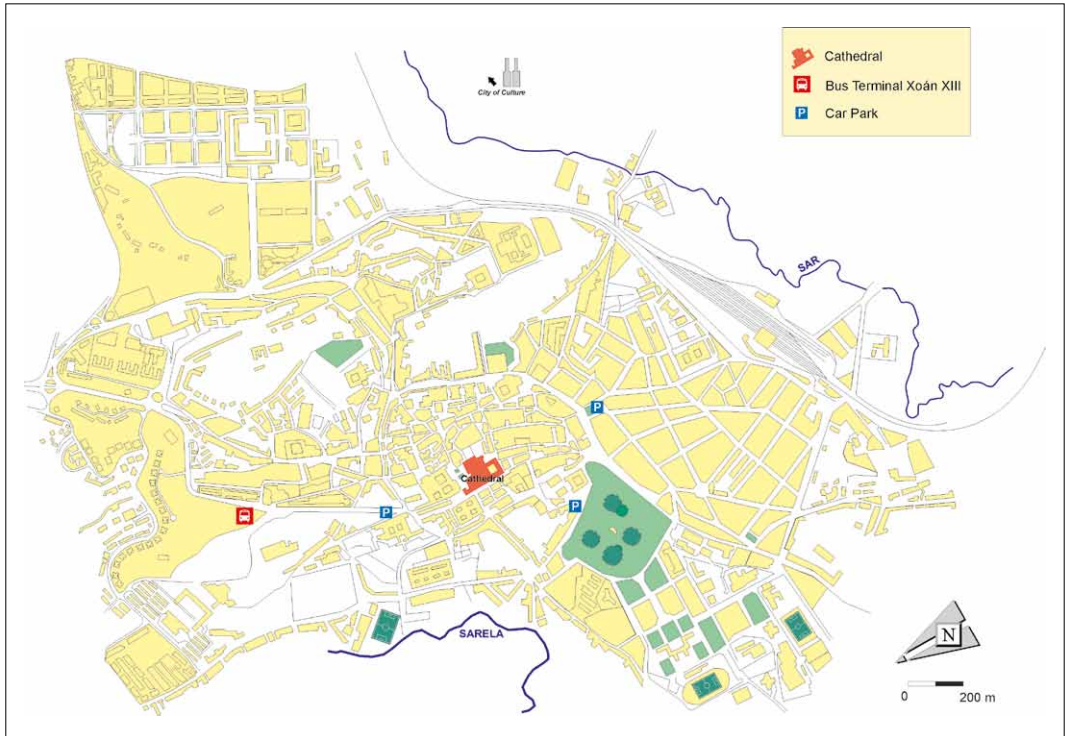
of the destination and the participation of all sectors involved, including the Church. The dialogue between the public administrations and this institution are not always smooth, at least from the point of view of tourism. We must not forget that, at least in Santiago, it is religious heritage that becomes the focus of the tourist offer and that the promotion of the city revolves around it, for example, with the 2010 Holy Year or the 800th anniversary of the consecration of the temple in 2011.

The three problems mentioned in the paragraph above must be addressed together and not as isolated matters. In fact, the behaviour of day trippers, which make up around 30% of visits, is very much linked to the activity of the cathedral itself, especially during holy years, when overcrowding is more obvious. The operation of the huge incense burner called *botafumeiro* during the pilgrim's mass attracts groups that crowd the temple. It is because of this that the proposal to regulate flows foresaw not just a system of prior booking, but also a change in the timings of mass in order to prolong the stay of tourists for the whole day, especially as they would have to stay for lunch, and thus increase their expenditure in restaurants.

But the problem of day trippers is also present in the most important entry gate in the city. This is located some 200m away from the cathedral where buses have to park and leave their passengers. For individual day trippers, different locations around the old town can help locate the visitors very close to the central attraction point. All this means that in a highly reduced period of time they can see the cathedral, buy souvenirs in various shops on the street leading to the cathedral square and even walk around the monument's nearby streets where, no doubt, the most important material heritage of historic-artistic value is concentrated.

The document Plan de Marketing Estratégico del Turismo de Santiago de Compostela (2004) does not refer to changing this access point but it does, however, refer to the creation of a new tourism node to help stop overcrowding the cathedral. Nevertheless, this objective seems difficult to accomplish if we do not act on the other one. The proposal of a new spot is based on the presence of two important cultural centres, the Galician Modern Art Centre and the Galician Museum. Failure of this plan is shown in the decrease in visits to both museums in recent years, despite the fact that they are on the urban track of the Way to Santiago.

In recent years, this secondary node has been redesigned with the intention of establishing a cable car station connecting the town with the City of Culture, an architectural macro-project designed by the prestigious architect Peter Eisenman. Despite the overwhelming negative report of ICOMOS,

Figure 1 Santiago de Compostela: bus terminal and car parks around the historical city

local authorities still insist on the pertinence of the proposal and that it would help revitalise the sector in the historic centre and solve, in part, the question of the entry point as the vast number of parking spaces at the City of Culture could work as a car park for any visitors who want to access the centre.

The City of Culture (Fique, 2012; Dempsey, 2012) is also an opportunity to enlarge the tourism space in Santiago. At the beginning of 2011, the first buildings were officially opened in this ensemble and it has been designated by some local and regional politicians as the new cathedral of the 21st century. It is expected to become a new node with a high attraction capacity for visitors. This is a proposal based on the success of the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, which has generated much literature on the “Guggenheim effect” (Plaza, 1999, 2000; McNeill, 2000; Gómez & González, 2001; Esteban, 2007;...). This describes how a building becomes a central element, and it was later replicated in other Spanish cities. However, the difference between both examples is significant – the Guggenheim museum was opened in 1997 and became an innovative formula, of urban renewal, at least in Spain; the project in Bilbao was associated to a globally known brand name. Unlike, in this

case, the example of Santiago has not paved the way to a tool for urban regeneration (Hamnett & Shoval, 2003) and in fact it is physically separated from the city.

Therefore, the success of the Guggenheim Museum does not just rely on the spectacular character of the building unlike the City of Culture, which relies on appearance rather than the content, which seems to be a secondary matter. In fact, the buildings are not thought of in terms of tourism, at least those already opened: the Library and the Galician Archives. In several phases of development, some even at the outset, are the Museum of Galicia, the Centre for Music and Stage Arts, and the International Art Centre. In any case, we will have to observe how this is integrated in the consolidated tourism landscape. This is not just a physical matter of linking both nodes, but also, and especially, of supply compatibility between the historic centre that specifically attracts pilgrims, religious tourists and cultural visitors, and a second focus of exclusively architectural interest. The meeting point may be mass cultural tourism being triggered more by shape than by content, more by superficial consumption than matter.

One of the central debates that must be had on the topic of tourism in Santiago is the progressive physical expansion that this phenomenon is reaching. The measurement established by Glasson, Godfrey and Goodey in 1995 (van der Borg *et al.*, 1996) on the impact of tourism on a destination has, in the case of Santiago, moved from an individual attraction (the cathedral and its surroundings) to the whole old town. In terms of land use, this is translated into an alarming disappearance of local shops and the multiplication of tourist shops, which reduces the locals usage needs of this space. Even in a place as significant for locals as the food market place, located in the historic centre, visits have started increasing, which has led to an increase in the number of shops for visitors, although this is an incipient phenomenon that may accelerate over the coming years.

The relevant matter is whether visitor flows should be concentrated in a particular space, such as in Bruges (Beernaert & Desimpelaere, 2001), where the local authorities stimulated this concentration around the Golden Triangle to ease pressure on the local population (Bryon & Neuts, 2008). Santiago's clear option is the redistribution of visitors. In fact, the proposal of a second node had this in mind, the same as offering the market as a place for visitors. However, few efforts have been made to incorporate the 20th century city, there have only been proposals that have marginalised these sectors of the city. For example, an itinerary of parks and gardens is offered in the surroundings of town but this avoids exploring new developments; modern author architecture is another reference but looks again towards monuments. It is true that the neighbourhoods in the new development area (*ensanche*) are basically the fruit of the accelerated growth after 1960 and they do not offer much to see. Nevertheless, it is also true that there are some material and non material elements that, if value is attached to them, may become interesting, such as the university environment or alternative cultural movements. It is at least interesting to see how the no longer existing walls surrounding the historic centre still act physically and mentally: traffic filled streets set the boundaries that many visitors do not dare to cross.

To summarise, tourism in the City of Santiago de Compostela, as in many other heritage destinations, has to cope with many problems. Maybe the most important one is to release the tension on its most important attraction. However, the measures adopted can neither be circumstantial nor isolated for the whole destination. Everything that happens in relation to a visit to the cathedral has some significant impact on the whole space for tourism. That is why cooperation is also needed

across the public administrations and the Church, owner of the item that generates an activity of obvious economic, social and cultural impact.

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