Difficulties for enjoyment of public spaces by residents: Maldonado-Punta del Este conurbation

María Dolores Sánchez-Fernández, Daniel Álvarez-Bassi and Jose Ramon Cardona

Abstract

Purpose – *The purpose of this paper is to determine whether the various types of negative impacts have an effect on the general attitude toward tourism and the difficulty for the enjoyment of public spaces.*

Design/methodology/approach – *It is a quantitative study that analyzes the causal relationships between variables through structural equation models. This study uses data from a sample of 420 residents from Maldonado and Punta del Este.*

Findings – *The result obtained shows that only the cultural loss is significant to explain the residents' attitudes. On the other hand, the cultural loss, the environmental deterioration and the saturation are significant to explain the difficulties for the enjoyment of public spaces.*

Research limitations/implications – *The main limitations are the fact of performing the analysis in a specific destination with peculiarities that may affect the results and the representativeness of the sample used.*

Practical implications – *The enjoyment of public spaces is a good indicator of the perception of negative impacts, so managers of urban tourist destinations can use this element as an indicator of quick consultation on residents' attitudes.*

Originality/value – *It is a study that focuses on the negative impacts of tourism and its effect on the public spaces. The importance of public spaces in tourist destinations is under studied.*

Keywords *Culture, Delinquency, City, Uruguay, Public space, Environmental*

Paper type *Research paper*

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1. Introduction

Tourism mainly depends on the goodwill of the residents and the support of them is essential for the tourism development (Fredline *et al.*, 2013; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Stylidis and Terzidou, 2014; Tovar and Lockwood, 2008; Vargas *et al.*, 2009), and it is a well-known fact that tourism developers should take into account the residents (Allen *et al.*, 1988; Ap and Crompton, 1998; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Byrd *et al.*, 2009; Gursoy *et al.*, 2010; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012).

Several studies on the residents' attitudes toward tourism have been undertaken since the 70s (Almeida *et al.*, 2015; Sharpley, 2014). At first, researchers focused on measuring attitudes and the impacts perceived (Akis *et al.*, 1996; Allen *et al.*, 1988, 1993; Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Faulkner and Tideswell, 1997; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Lindberg and Johnson, 1997; Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Perdue *et al.*, 1990). Subsequently, researchers have focused on determining the causes of residents' perceptions and attitudes.

Economic benefits are usually the most important drivers of tourism-friendly attitudes (Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Bruner, 1996; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Liu and Var, 1986; Madrigal, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Teye *et al.*, 2002). It should be noted that the main reason for developing the tourism sector is the need for economic development (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Brayley *et al.*, 1990; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Keogh, 1990a;

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Lankford and Howard, 1994; Liu and Var, 1986; Murphy, 1985; Prentice, 1993; Teye *et al.*, 2002; Um and Crompton, 1987). Normally, it is the story of an economically poor region that uses tourism development as a quick and easy way to improve their quality of life.

The economic benefits generated by tourism financially permits to make improvements in the standard of living of the residents by increasing the income and that of local companies and administrations. There are also improvements made in the commercial and leisure offer which are necessary to supply a good tourist experience of which both tourists and local residents can take advantage (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Keogh, 1990a; Liu and Var, 1986). Additionally, the administrations obtain higher revenues (Tyrrell and Spaulding, 1984) which in turn allows them to improve public services and public spaces (streets, squares, avenues, promenades, gardens, parks, etc.). The improvement of public spaces and the leisure offer allows for an increase of leisure activities in these areas for both tourists and residents. The importance of a promenade as a leisure activity in the origins of tourism explains the existence of urban elements such as the Promenade des Anglais of Nice. This promenade owes its remote origin to the presence of English aristocrats spending their summer holidays in the city (Nash, 1979). Although tourist preferences of leisure activities have changed over time, these spaces as tourist attractions and recreational areas for both the local residents and tourists continue being very important.

However, the tourist activity itself that powers and finances these improvements also causes problems which could restrict the enjoyment of these public spaces (Buslacchi, 2017; Carmo and Estevens, 2017; Temelová and Dvořáková, 2012). The most important would be: an increase in prices (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Liu and Var, 1986) which could reduce access to non-free activities (Brouder and Ioannides, 2014; Coll and Seguí, 2016; Cywiń ski, 2015); insecurity problems (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Long *et al.*, 1990; Mekinc *et al.*, 2017; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Pizam and Pokela, 1985; Teoman, 2017) such as terrorism, theft, prostitution, drug trafficking and aggression, etc.; overcrowding of public spaces (Álvarez, 2018; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Keogh, 1990a; Li *et al.*, 2017; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Ritchie, 1988), making it more difficult to enjoy these spaces and the activities carried out in them and which also effects transport networks such as roads, streets and other public spaces; a loss of local culture (Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Johnson *et al.*, 1994; Keogh, 1990b) which causes a feeling of cultural alienation among the local population and a feeling of being foreign in their own land (Mordue, 2017; Sofield *et al.*, 2017); deterioration of both urban and rural natural spaces (Hunter and Green, 1995; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Salvado *et al.*, 2017; Schweinsberg *et al.*, 2017) which affects the environment and residents' quality of life.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the five types of negative impacts (cultural loss, delinquency, environmental deterioration, high prices and inconvenience) have a causal effect on the two dependent variables raised: the general attitude toward tourism and the difficulty for the enjoyment of public spaces. In addition, the interaction between the two dependent variables proposed is analyzed. A sample of residents from Maldonado-Punta del Este obtained in 2016 has been analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM). The city of Maldonado is the capital of the department of Maldonado and Punta del Este is the main sun and beach tourism destination in the Oriental Republic of Uruguay and one of them main destinations in South America. Both cities form an urban continuum or conurbation with more than 100,000 residents, distributed in a little dense urban space. The tourism demand in this area is mainly aimed at tourists from Argentina. Punta del Este receives more than 620,000 tourists annually during high season from December to February (Ministerio de Turismo, 2016). It is a mature destination and characterized by a high weight of tourism activity, which is located in the consolidation phase of the Tourist Area Life Cycle (Butler, 1980). The analysis of the data has been carried out through the Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression, specifically the statistical software SmartPLS 2.0M3 (Ringle *et al.*, 2005).

The literature review can be found in the following section. A causal model is also proposed to explain the reasons why residents have difficulties in enjoying the public spaces in the area. Subsequently, the methodology used and the results obtained from the analysis of the causal model are explained. The main conclusions and implications of the analysis are also reviewed.

2. Literature review

Many studies have been conducted concerning the residents' attitudes toward tourism in general or toward its development in a specific destination (Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Brida *et al.*, 2014; Choi and Murray, 2010; Del Chiappa and Abbate, 2016; Figueroa and Rotarou, 2016; Gursoy and Kendall, 2006; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Hernández and Mercader, 2015; Hunt and Stronza, 2014; Látková and Vogt, 2012; Lepp, 2007; Núñez *et al.*, 2014; Park *et al.*, 2015; Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar, 2016; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2013; Sharpley, 2014; Vargas *et al.*, 2011; Wang and Pfister, 2008; Weaver and Lawton, 2013; Woosnam, 2012; Woosnam and Erul, 2017; Yu *et al.*, 2011; Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012). Since the end of the 1990s, there have been frequent research works carried out that seek to determine the cause-effect relationships in the creation of attitudes toward tourism.

When it is spoken about positive economic impacts, it makes reference to an increase in the income of physical and legal persons (Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Bruner, 1996; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Liu and Var, 1986; Madrigal, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Teye *et al.*, 2002). This means an increase in economic activity which is based on: increasing employment opportunities (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Bruner, 1996; Davis *et al.*, 1988; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Teye *et al.*, 2002; Tyrrell and Spaulding, 1984); increasing entrepreneurship opportunities; and higher revenues for public administrations (Davis *et al.*, 1988; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Tyrrell and Spaulding, 1984). Public administration's revenue is not limited to the possible tourist taxes which are implemented since the impact of tourism will become noticeable in the whole structure of taxes and rates.

Tourism entails the creation of a powerful infrastructure (roads, ports and airports), water supply and sanitation systems (sewers, sewage plants, etc.) to be able to cope with the demand of tourists (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Liu and Var, 1986; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Pizam, 1978; Sardá and Fluvià, 1999). Other infrastructures made by public administrations of tourist destinations are improvements in public spaces (parks, avenues, promenades, square, etc.) and public buildings (swimming pools, administrative services, etc.). The possibility of using the resources and infrastructure destined for tourists can influence the residents' attitudes (Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Keogh, 1990a; Perdue *et al.*, 1987; Rezaei, 2017; Temelová and Dvořáková, 2012), and for Lankford and Howard (1994) it is the element which has more capacity to predict the residents' attitudes.

Tourism improves services and public infrastructure. Businesses and other private entities also improve their infrastructures and services and the commercial and leisure offer of the region is exceptionally high and is also available for the residents (Allen *et al.*, 1988; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Davis *et al.*, 1988; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Keogh, 1990a; Liu and Var, 1986; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Long *et al.*, 1990; Perdue *et al.*, 1990; Temelová and Dvořáková, 2012). All this means that in the consolidated tourist destinations there is an important leisure activity in the urban public spaces, with the presence of residents, tourists and visitors.

As a counterpart of the benefits, the perceived costs have significant and negative effect on attitudes toward tourism (Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Keogh, 1990a; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Prentice, 1993). The negative impacts generated by tourism are of various types. In the economic field, the main negative impact is the increase in prices that occurs in all types of goods, especially in renting and purchasing properties (Álvarez, 2018; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Honkanen *et al.*, 2016; Liu and Var, 1986; Ye *et al.*, 2012) as is the case of commercial spaces in central areas. Tourist destinations tend to differ a little from other destinations thanks to their image and this makes it possible for them to have a price increase that translates into higher price indexes in tourist regions. In addition, the existence of high prices can hinder the enjoyment of public spaces by increasing the cost of activities that involve a payment (foods and drinks in bars and restaurants, access to facilities that require an entry price, etc.). This makes it possible to propose the following hypotheses:

H1. The perception of high prices has a positive effect on the perception of difficulty to enjoy in public spaces.

H2. The perception of high prices has a negative effect on the general attitude toward tourism.

Other impacts make references to social and cultural aspects, such as problems of insecurity (Mekinc *et al.*, 2017; Teoman, 2017), overcrowding (Álvarez, 2018; Li *et al.*, 2017), bothering residents and the alteration of the local culture due to external influences (King *et al.*, 1993; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988).

The accumulation of tourists in a region is a great attraction for various types of illicit activities (Mekinc *et al.*, 2017; Teoman, 2017). Thieves and swindlers usually move to the tourist areas during high season, acting mainly on tourists. Tourists are easier targets for thieves than residents. Thieves, fraudsters and swindlers are usually seen in the main streets. Tourist areas tend to have an increase in misdemeanors which in turn could cause serious damage to the image of the destination. Criminals often avoid stealing from residents, and only in severe cases do residents suffer a greater number of these crimes. Other illicit activities where a significant increase can be seen in tourist destinations during the tourist season are prostitution (Yan *et al.*, 2017) and drug trafficking. Prostitution and drug trafficking are more common in holiday destinations with a younger tourist image and a great nightlife offer. Both activities tend to be focused on tourists; however, if there is a great presence, it also affects the local residents. The problems of insecurity and the proliferation of illegal activities can have a negative effect on the attitude of the residents toward tourism (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Pizam and Pokela, 1985) when considering tourism guilty of the increase of insecurity. These activities are usually carried out in public spaces (squares, streets, parks, etc.). A high presence of thieves, swindlers, prostitutes and drug dealers could drive out tourists and residents or limit their presence in the areas perceived as less secure (Teoman, 2017). Therefore, it is possible to propose the following hypotheses:

H3. The perception of insecurity (Delinquency) has a positive effect on the perception of difficulty to enjoy in public spaces.

H4. The perception of insecurity (Delinquency) has a negative effect on the general attitude toward tourism.

Although tourism generates income and benefits, it also demands improvements in infrastructure and services, both at public and private level. When tourism development occurs there is an important development of infrastructure and services to cater to tourists arriving in the region. However, in many cases the growth of the arrivals of tourists quickly equals or exceeds the capacity of the investments made. In these cases, saturation of infrastructures, public services and public spaces is produced (Álvarez, 2018; Li *et al.*, 2017). In addition, discomfort is often generated toward residents seeking tranquility and rest. Overcrowding and inconvenience to residents cause a worsened residents' attitudes toward tourism (Álvarez, 2018; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Keogh, 1990a; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Prentice, 1993; Ritchie, 1988; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Ye *et al.*, 2012). One of the main causes of this attitude is due to the fact that they have excellent infrastructures, services and public spaces thanks to tourism but they cannot enjoy them correctly due to the enormous presence of tourists. Subsequently, residents feel obligated to leave the overcrowded areas and facilities. Particularly noteworthy are the traffic congestion problems (Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Ye *et al.*, 2012). This makes it possible to propose the following hypotheses:

H5. The perception of inconveniences' increase has a positive effect on the perception of difficulty to enjoy in public spaces.

H6. The perception of inconveniences' increase has a negative effect on the general attitude toward tourism.

Tourism development implies a significant increase in the contact between residents and people from outside their region (tourists and workers). A change in the local culture is always caused by tourism whether the tourists are from a similar or completely different culture to that of residents. When the region is under developed, cultural change is more striking due to the contact between tourism development, the traditional world and the cosmopolitan vanguard. The contact between groups with different cultural backgrounds provides knowledge to all the parties involved although it can also have a negative effect on the attitudes of the residents (Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Buslacchi, 2017; Carmo and Estevens, 2017; Johnson *et al.*, 1994; Keogh, 1990b). This negative effect is related to the feeling of "stranger in your own land." This perception

appears mainly in public spaces considering that the local residents are the cultural minority. Therefore it is possible to propose the following hypotheses:

H7. The perception of cultural loss has a positive effect on the perception of difficulty to enjoy in public spaces.

H8. The perception of cultural loss has a negative effect on the general attitude toward tourism.

The main environmental problems generated by tourism are the consumption of natural resources and the deterioration of natural spaces (Hunter and Green, 1995; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Schweinsberg *et al.*, 2017). Environmental deterioration and a high level of consumption of natural resources result in having a visual impact on the public spaces in urban areas and in the rural areas surrounding the cities and residential areas. This deterioration results in public spaces losing attractiveness and usefulness and favors negative attitudes toward tourism (Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997). This makes it possible to propose the following hypotheses:

H9. The perception of environmental deterioration has a positive effect on the perception of difficulty to enjoy in public spaces.

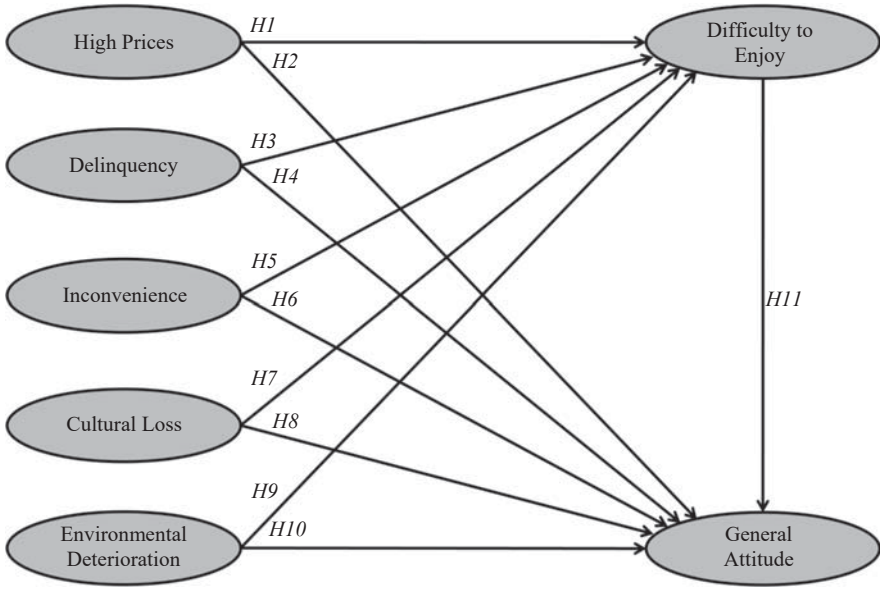
H10. The perception of environmental deterioration has a negative effect on the general attitude toward tourism.

The difficulties related to the enjoyment of public spaces which are suffered by the residents of the tourist destination and which they consider to be a result of tourism can alter the residents' attitudes toward tourism in a significant way (Álvarez, 2018; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Li *et al.*, 2017; Long *et al.*, 1990). In fact, the groups of residents opposed to tourism and that have appeared in various research works are characterized by not gaining direct benefits from tourism but feel that they suffer the disadvantages of tourism which affect their daily, mainly the overcrowding of public spaces in the region (Aguiló and Rosselló, 2005; Ali *et al.*, 2017; Brida *et al.*, 2010; Del Chiappa *et al.*, 2016; Presenza *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, it is possible to propose the following hypotheses:

H11. The perception of difficulty to enjoy in public spaces has a negative effect on the general attitude toward tourism.

The causal model proposed on the basis of the hypotheses is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Proposed structural model



Source: Own elaboration

3. Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire design and sampling

The objective of this paper is to determine which negative impacts have a significant effect on the two dependent variables, being therefore a causal study in which different concepts are measured by item scales. To test the hypotheses, a questionnaire has been designed containing scales that measured the various concepts proposed, adaptation of previous studies (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002) and others of own creation, all of them referring to tourism activity. The questionnaire was completed with questions about the demographic profile. Before engaging in full field research, the questionnaire was previously tested in order to detect potential weaknesses and problems of understanding. The fieldwork consisted of personal interviews and the sample was obtained through a convenience selection procedure. The data used, which were obtained between March and August 2016, are made up of a sample of 420 residents from Maldonado and Punta del Este. To achieve the highest level of representativeness of the sample, the demographic parameters of the collated questionnaires were checked to solve potential bias in the composition of the sample. This bias is due to the different propensities to answer that individuals have. The socio-demographic profile of the sample obtained is shown in Table I and the maximum margin of error allowed was 4.88 percent given a level of confidence of 95%. The sample does not have large differences with the profile of the population, although it should be noted that in a causal study it is not the most important element. The causal analysis used a set of items whose possibility of response consisted of a five-point Likert scale; 1 being "Totally disagree", 3 "Irrelevant" and 5 "Strongly agree."

The research model has been tested using the PLS technique, a variance-based SEM method and complemented using SPSS 20. The PLS technique is especially suitable for predictive research (Loureiro and Kastenholz, 2011) and theoretical developments, while methods based on covariance are better for confirmatory analysis. More precisely, this study uses SmartPLS 2.0M3 software (Ringle *et al.*, 2005) to process causal analysis. While the results differ little for the alternative weighting schemes, path weighting is the recommended approach and the one used in this study. This weighting scheme provides the highest R^2 value for endogenous latent variables and is generally applicable for all kinds of PLS path model specifications and estimations

Table I Socio-demographic profile of the samples

Socio-demographic variable	*Frequency*	*%*
Sex		
Man	230	54.76
Woman	190	45.24
Age		
Less than 25	104	24.76
From 25 to 34	67	15.95
From 35 to 44	81	19.29
From 45 to 54	80	19.05
From 55 to 64	49	11.67
65 or more	39	9.29
Level of studies		
No studies	8	1.90
Primary studies	39	9.29
Secondary studies	177	42.14
University studies	196	46.67
Birthplace		
In the region	181	43.10
Outside the region	239	56.90
Works in tourism		
Yes	243	57.86
No	177	42.14

Source: Own elaboration

(Henseler *et al.*, 2009). The PLS allows to prove causal relationships better than other methods when the proposed causal model has not been tested before. Specifically, by means of non-parametric methods and student's *t*-statistic allows to reject the null hypothesis (there is no causal relationship) at certain levels of statistical significance.

3.2 Data analysis

Before proceeding to the analysis of the proposed structural model it is necessary to previously analyze the measurement model. Individual item reliability is considered adequate when an item has a factor loading that is greater than 0.707 on its respective construct (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Construct reliability assessment allows the evaluation of the extent to which a variable or set of variables is consistent in what it intends to measure. Construct reliability is usually assessed using Cronbach's α (Cronbach, 1970) and composite reliability (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). When both values are greater than 0.7, it is usually considered as a good reliability (Nunnally, 1987). It can be observed in Table II that values for Cronbach's α and composite reliability are acceptable.

To assess convergent validity must be examined the average variance extracted (AVE). This quantifies the amount of variance that a construct captures from its indicators relative to the amount due to measurement error (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). AVE values should be greater than 0.50 (Baggozi and Yi, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which means that 50 percent or more of the variance of the indicators should be accounted for. AVE values for all latent variables are greater than 0.56 which proves the existence of a good level of convergent validity (Table II). Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a given construct differs from other constructs (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). There are two approaches to assess discriminant validity in PLS:

1. No item should load more highly on another construct than it does on the construct it intends to measure and each construct should load higher with its assigned indicators than other items. This condition is satisfied for all latent items and constructs (Table III).
2. The square root of the AVE of each latent variable should be greater than its correlations with any other latent variable in the assessment (Chin, 1998). This condition is satisfied for all latent variables (Table IV).

Table V illustrates the final measurement model proposed after carrying out the analysis of the measurement model.

After testing the measurement model, we proceeded to the analysis of the structural model and the proposed causal relationships. At this stage, values for path coefficients, student's *t* and R^2 are obtained. From the analysis of the R^2 (Table II) values it can be concluded that the amount of explained variance is moderate (greater than 0.333) in the case of "difficulty to enjoy" (0.394) and low in the case if "general attitude" (0.155).

PLS-SEM does not assume that the data are normally distributed, which implies that parametric significance tests cannot be applied to test whether coefficients such as outer loadings and path coefficients are significant. Instead, PLS-SEM relies on a nonparametric bootstrap procedure

Table II Reliability and convergent validity

	AVE	*Composite reliability*	R^2	*Cronbach's α*	*Communality*
High prices	0.796	0.886	0.000	0.744	0.796
Delinquency	0.723	0.839	0.000	0.716	0.723
Inconvenience	0.602	0.818	0.000	0.695	0.602
Cultural loss	0.560	0.835	0.000	0.748	0.560
Environmental deterioration	0.603	0.883	0.000	0.835	0.603
Difficulty to enjoy	1.000	1.000	0.394	1.000	1.000
General attitude	0.627	0.870	0.155	0.802	0.627

Source: Own elaboration

Table III Loadings and cross-loadings

	High prices	*Delinquency*	*Inconvenience*	*Cultural loss*	*Environmental deterioration*	*General attitude*	*Difficulty to enjoy*
High prices							
HiPr-1	*0.885*	0.221	0.347	0.205	0.235	0.043	0.257
HiPr-2	*0.899*	0.188	0.275	0.178	0.133	0.202	0.183
Delinquency							
Deli-1	0.145	*0.839*	0.303	0.279	0.330	−0.146	0.218
Deli-1	0.240	*0.861*	0.363	0.366	0.352	0.001	0.278
Inconvenience							
Inco-1	0.354	0.287	*0.707*	0.223	0.298	0.163	0.302
Inco-2	0.300	0.344	*0.779*	0.321	0.355	−0.009	0.324
Inco-3	0.197	0.295	*0.836*	0.430	0.387	−0.094	0.457
Cultural loss							
CuLo-1	0.165	0.317	0.399	*0.821*	0.345	−0.267	0.498
CuLo-2	0.105	0.309	0.246	*0.758*	0.356	−0.267	0.285
CuLo-3	0.255	0.270	0.298	*0.763*	0.247	−0.027	0.252
CuLo-4	0.160	0.251	0.332	*0.742*	0.434	−0.170	0.391
Environmental deterioration							
EnDe-1	0.143	0.265	0.356	0.377	*0.751*	−0.189	0.394
EnDe-2	0.096	0.335	0.286	0.367	*0.817*	−0.197	0.417
EnDe-3	0.192	0.343	0.399	0.330	*0.754*	−0.156	0.360
EnDe-4	0.142	0.310	0.352	0.406	*0.810*	−0.187	0.408
EnDe-5	0.237	0.309	0.369	0.334	*0.748*	−0.078	0.399
Difficulty to enjoy							
DiEn-1	0.246	0.293	0.478	0.503	0.510	−0.204	*1.000*
General attitude							
GeAt-1	0.187	−0.085	0.069	−0.159	−0.092	*0.738*	−0.062
GeAt-2	0.163	−0.034	0.051	−0.216	−0.161	*0.839*	−0.163
GeAt-3	0.088	−0.094	−0.031	−0.247	−0.191	*0.829*	−0.215
GeAt-4	0.010	−0.054	−0.071	−0.227	−0.215	*0.756*	−0.187

Source: Own elaboration

Table IV Correlations and AVE square root

	General attitude	*Cultural loss*	*High prices*	*Environmental deterioration*	*Inconvenience*	*Delinquency*	*Difficulty to enjoy*
General attitude	1.000						
Cultural loss	−0.268	1.000					
High prices	0.146	0.214	1.000				
Environmental deterioration	−0.207	0.468	0.204	1.000			
Inconvenience	0.010	0.433	0.348	0.451	1.000		
Delinquency	−0.083	0.381	0.228	0.401	0.393	1.000	
Difficulty to Enjoy	−0.199	0.503	0.245	0.510	0.478	0.293	1.000
AVE square root	0.792	0.748	0.892	0.776	0.776	0.850	1.000

Source: Own elaboration

(Davison and Hinkley, 1997; Efron and Tibshirani, 1993) to test the significance of estimated path coefficients in PLS-SEM. Through bootstrapping, subsamples are created with randomly drawn observations from the original set of data (with replacement). The subsample is then used to estimate the PLS path model by calculating the average values of the parameters obtained in the *N* samples and compared with those obtained from the original set of data. The parameters estimated from the subsamples are used to derive standard errors for the estimates. With this information, *t*-values are calculated to assess each estimate's significance (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Table V Loadings of structural model

Constructs	*Arithmetic average*	*SD*	*Loading*
High prices			
HiPr-1: tourism has led to an increase in prices and the cost of living	4.076	1.007	0.885
HiPr-2: tourism has led to an increase in the cost of housing and land	4.136	0.945	0.899
Delinquency			
Deli-1: tourism has increased the levels of citizen insecurity	3.119	1.149	0.839
Deli-1: tourism has increased the problems of prostitution and drugs	3.219	1.113	0.861
Inconvenience			
Inco-1: tourism has increased traffic congestion in the town	4.071	0.941	0.707
Inco-2: tourists collapse public services	3.445	1.071	0.779
Inco-3: tourism has increased the inconvenience to residents	3.548	1.106	0.836
Cultural loss			
CuLo-1: Tourism has made residents feel like strangers in their own town	2.817	1.145	0.821
CuLo-2: tourism has generated a negative effect on the local culture	2.588	1.023	0.758
CuLo-3: residents have changed their way of life by imitating tourists	3.033	1.146	0.763
CuLo-4: tourism has generated conflicts between visitors and residents	2.969	1.103	0.742
Environmental deterioration			
EnDe-1: tourism causes serious environmental pollution problems	3.057	1.052	0.751
EnDe-2: tourism leads to the loss of local ecosystems	3.002	1.025	0.817
EnDe-3: tourism consumes resources in excess	3.319	1.064	0.754
EnDe-4: tourism has contributed to the degradation of the natural environment of the town	3.062	1.063	0.810
EnDe-5: tourism has caused the saturation of some natural spaces	3.362	1.077	0.748
Difficulty to enjoy			
WaDi-1: Tourism hinders the enjoyment of public spaces	3.269	1.164	1.000
General attitude			
GeAt-1: tourism development has been very beneficial to the town and its inhabitants	4.093	0.836	0.738
GeAt-2: tourism must continue to be promoted as an essential part of the town	4.300	0.802	0.839
GeAt-3: tourism is beneficial for residents' day to day lives	3.988	0.930	0.829
GeAt-4: there is a better quality of life thanks to tourism	3.848	0.996	0.756

Source: Own elaboration

To determine the critical values a student's *t* distribution with 4,999 degrees of freedom and one tail has been used (as the direction of the relationship was defined). Significance analysis results for the different direct causal relationships, both through the use of student's *t*-values and using non-parametric techniques (Henseler *et al.*, 2009), are detailed in Table VI. If student's *t*-values are sufficiently high, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be affirmed that the causal relationship exists. In this paper, student's *t*-values those that allow a *p*-value lower than 0.1,

Table VI Path Coefficients of causal relations

	Path coefficients	*SE*	*t-statistic*	*p-value*
High prices → difficulty to enjoy (*H1*)	0.058	0.090	0.641	0.261
High prices → general attitude (*H2*)	0.201*	0.136	1.478	0.070
Delinquency → difficulty to enjoy (*H3*)	−0.024	0.094	0.254	0.400
Delinquency → general attitude (*H4*)	−0.007	0.127	0.058	0.477
Inconvenience → difficulty to enjoy (*H5*)	0.223**	0.103	2.165	0.015
Inconvenience → general attitude (*H6*)	0.179*	0.127	1.404	0.080
Cultural loss → difficulty to enjoy (*H7*)	0.272***	0.109	2.500	0.006
Cultural loss → general attitude (*H8*)	−0.254**	0.128	1.981	0.024
Environmental deterioration → difficulty to enjoy (*H9*)	0.280***	0.106	2.646	0.004
Environmental deterioration → general attitude (*H10*)	−0.138	0.128	1.085	0.139
Difficulty to enjoy → general attitude (*H11*)	−0.134	0.118	1.131	0.129

Notes: ns, not significant. *p o0.1; **p o0.05; ***p o0.01
Source: Own elaboration

0.05 and 0.01 (probability of rejecting the null hypothesis being true) were taken. In cases where the null hypothesis can be rejected, the path coefficient indicates the meaning and explanatory capacity of independent variable on variance of the dependent variable, on a maximum absolute value of 1.

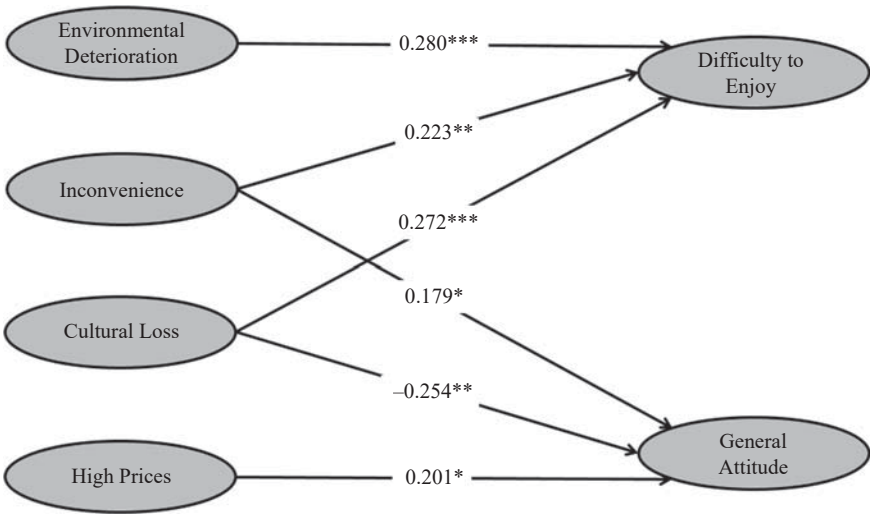
Based on the analysis results shown in Table VI, it can be indicated that the causal relationships raised in *H1-H4, H6, H10* and *H11* are not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis has not been rejected in these cases. The causal relationships raised in *H5, H7* and *H8* are significant at 0.05 level, as indicated by the *p*-value. Therefore, null hypothesis has been rejected in these cases. The resulting causal model is shown in Figure 2.

4. Results

In relation to price increase, the causal effects are minor and seemingly contradictory to the expected (Table VI). The effect of higher prices does not have a significant effect on the perception of difficulty in the enjoyment of public spaces (*H1*) and an insignificant positive effect (at 0.07) on the general residents' attitudes toward tourism (*H2*). The positive effect of residents' attitudes toward tourism in relation to price increase is surprising unless residents consider that price increase is an indication of economic bonanza (Yan *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, more tourism implies more economic growth and higher prices, high prices being an indication that the economy is going well and there is no recession. Another possible interpretation is that in reality there is no relationship between both variables and these data would be casual. This would be due to the strong economic dependence of the region that guarantees high values of the dependent.

The level of insecurity and illicit activities does not have any significant effects on either of the two dependent variables (Table VI), nor the enjoyment of public spaces (*H3*) nor the attitude toward tourism (*H4*), contrary to what might be expected based on existing literature (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Pizam and Pokela, 1985). It should be noted that the residents' perception toward this type of activities is close to 3 (Table V), in other words, indifference, indicating little public concern for this issue. In tourist destinations, illegal activities and burglaries are found in the areas with the highest tourist density, urban centers, leisure areas and the seafront. In Punta del Este there is a fairly scattered settlement behind the seafront and there are few areas, *a priori*, prone to suffering this type of problem. In other urban or vacation destinations with obvious insecurity problems it is to be expected that the results would be different.

Figure 2 Resulting structural model



Source: Own elaboration

The problems of overcrowding and inconvenience to residents have a significantly positive effect on the difficulty of enjoying public spaces (*H5*) and positive but only significantly to 0.08 on residents' attitudes (*H6*), contrary to what could be expected based on literature (Álvarez, 2018; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Keogh, 1990a; Long *et al.*, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Prentice, 1993; Ritchie, 1988; Sheldon and Var, 1984). The positive effect on residents' attitudes is only explicable for the same reason as in the case of price increases. Overcrowding would be seen as a negative element of a positive thing; the economic growth generated by tourism (Yan *et al.*, 2017). Likewise, it may also be due to the lack of a causal relationship between the variables, due to the economic dependence of tourism. In relation to the difficulties in the enjoyment of the public spaces, overcrowding and congestion of public services, especially road traffic, has a clear and logical positive effect. In all cases in which the creation of pedestrian areas has been boosted to promote shopping and social life, the redesign of road traffic is what has been the key to success or failure. Residents should be able to reach and leave pedestrian areas comfortably or, otherwise, they will not frequent these areas due to the hassle and time it takes to go back and forth. The result is that fluid traffic, abundance of parking spaces and efficient public transport are essential for pedestrian areas and parks to be frequented by residents and tourists.

The loss of local culture causes a significant and positive effect on the difficulties in enjoying public spaces (*H7*) and a significant and negative effect on residents' attitudes (*H8*), as determined by existing literature (Besculides *et al.*, 2002; Johnson *et al.*, 1994; Keogh, 1990b). The loss of local culture causes the local population to feel strange and displaced in their own city, making public spaces less attractive. Public spaces and mass events are where the cultural loss is most perceived as the presence of people from other cultures can be seen. Habitually, the loss of culture itself is one of the main elements of criticism toward tourist development, but in the case of Maldonado-Punta del Este the main issuing market is Argentina, a country which is culturally similar to Uruguay. This implies that cultural differences are minimal and, therefore, cultural change is not perceived, as can be seen in the data in Table V. In Punta del Este, there is no cultural change due to tourism but, if it occurred, it would have a significant impact on residents' attitudes and wellbeing.

Environmental deterioration has the expected effects (Table VI), but it is only a significant effect in the case of difficulties to enjoy public spaces (*H9*). In the case of the general residents' attitudes, the effect is negative but not significant (*H10*). It should be noted that the low density of buildings in Maldonado-Punta del Este, compared to other urban spaces in the world, implies that green areas are very abundant. This dispersed distribution of habitat and the abundance of green areas makes any possible deterioration in the natural environment very visible, both within the urban area and neighboring areas. At the moment, the residents of Maldonado-Punta del Este do not agree with the environmental impacts except in the case of resource consumption and the saturation of natural spaces (Table V), although it is a low level of agreement.

Finally, it is necessary to indicate that the difficulties to enjoy public spaces have the expected effect on residents' attitudes (negative) but it is not significant (*H11*). Not being able to make proper use of public spaces has a negative effect on residents' attitudes toward tourism but it is not important enough in this study to be considered a significant effect.

The tourist destination of Punta del Este draws attention for its positive and very homogenous evaluations. In particular, there is little perception of the negative impacts (Table V) and positive attitudes toward tourism are almost irremovable. This explains possibly the few significant causal relationships detected in this paper.

5. Conclusions

With the development of tourism come several improvements. Some affect the lives and assets of individuals but others refer to infrastructure and public services. In the case of public goods and services, development is the result of higher income due to the increase in economic activity caused by tourism development, but also a need to serve a growing resident population and the floating population that is made up of seasonal workers and the tourists themselves. Therefore, the improvement in the public spaces of tourist areas and the adjacent urban areas is one of the most visible benefits.

As many of these spaces were created in order to cater for tourists, but also for residents, when tourist growth is very high they are negatively affected. This study sought to determine the relationship between the various types of negative impacts attributed to tourism and the difficulties to enjoy public spaces by residents. The general attitude toward tourism has been incorporated into the model to compare the effect of negative impacts on both dependent variables. The result obtained shows that only cultural loss, increase in prices and saturation are significant to explain residents' attitudes. On the other hand, cultural loss, environmental deterioration and saturation are significant to explain the difficulties for the enjoyment of public spaces. The result is that the proposed model makes it possible to explain the difficulties in enjoying public spaces better than general attitudes toward tourism. These results suggest that the enjoyment of public spaces could constitute a very reliable synthetic indicator to measure the negative impacts of a tourist destination. They also emphasize the importance of taking care of the public spaces of the urban tourist destinations, since it is the first point where the problems for tourists and residents are perceived.

If the enjoyment of public spaces has an important causal relation with the various types of impacts traditionally studied, it would be an important diagnostic tool for the managers of tourist destinations, especially in urban areas. Promenades, squares, pedestrian streets, etc. would become a quick and easy to use indicator. The observation of these public spaces (profile of the people who frequent them, presence of illicit activities, activity in neighboring shops, conservation of architectonic elements, state of landscaped areas, overcrowding, etc.) would give an initial diagnosis that would be easily corroborated by asking pedestrians. This converts a simple stroll through the public spaces of a city or town into a quick and simple, but very accurate, analysis of the negative impacts caused by tourism in the urban environment. Even so, more studies are needed in destinations located at different stages of development and with different urban configurations to know to what extent the enjoyment of public spaces can be considered a fundamental element for residents, and an element that reflects the residents' attitudes. It should be pointed out however that this would only be a complementary element to the rigorous analyses of the problems generated by tourism.

In any case, it is necessary to indicate that Maldonado-Punta del Este have a rather dispersed configuration with high presence of green areas, especially in Punta del Este and the outskirts of Maldonado. As far as negative impacts are concerned, there is little concern about delinquency among its residents and they do not perceive a cultural change caused by tourism. Finally, it is necessary to point out that there is a clearly positive attitude toward tourism and that it is apparently little affected by the various negative impacts attributable to tourism. The Maldonado-Punta del Este conurbation is a consolidated destination in which many residents depend directly or indirectly on tourism. This fact has a strong effect since it fosters more positive residents' attitudes, due to this economic dependence. All this implies that caution should be raised when generalizing the results, as in other urban nuclei which have different configurations, results different from those obtained in this case are possible. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the need to repeat this causal model in other tourist destinations with different phase of Tourist Area Life Cycle and urban configurations: large cities, small towns, destinations with high levels of overcrowding, regions with important cultural differences with tourists, etc.

Among the possible limitations of the study, it could be indicated the fact that the sample was taken between March and August and not during a whole calendar year, covering high and low season. There is also a high proportion of residents who work in tourism and have a different attitude from residents who do not have such a direct dependence on the sector. In any case, these variables should not affect in excess to the existence or not of the proposed causal relationships. They would affect in a purely descriptive analysis.

In future studies, it should be analyzed if the economic dependence of tourism, the time of year in which the fieldwork is carried out and the level of development of the destination affect this type of causal analysis. These analyzes should also be repeated in destinations with different speeds of development, since higher speeds are more likely opposite positions, and different urban distributions (little or high urban density, many or few public spaces, etc.). Public spaces should be more widely analyzed in future studies, because they are the point of contact between residents and tourists.

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