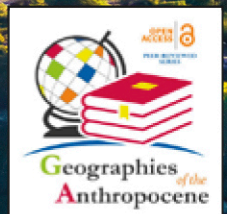


# HUMAN MOBILITY, MIGRATION & TOURISM IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Gian Luigi Corinto, Glen Farrugia (Editors)

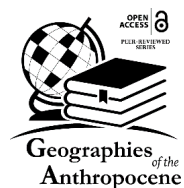
Foreword by Geoffrey Lipman

IL Sileno  
Edizioni



# Human Mobility, Migration and Tourism in the Anthropocene

Gian Luigi Corinto, Glen Farrugia  
*Editors*



IL Sileno  
Edizioni

*Human Mobility, Migration and Tourism in the Anthropocene*  
Gian Luigi Corinto, Glen Farrugia (Eds.)

is a collective volume of the Open Access and peer-reviewed series  
“Geographies of the Anthropocene”  
(Il Sileno Edizioni), ISSN 2611-3171.

[www.ilsileno.it/geographiesoftheanthropocene](http://www.ilsileno.it/geographiesoftheanthropocene)



© *Cover photo by Daniel Cilia: urbanisation of Tigne Point with the countryside at Dingli Cliffs in the foreground.*

Copyright © 2023 by Il Sileno Edizioni  
International Scientific Publisher “Il Sileno”, VAT 03716380781  
Via Piave, 3/A, 87035 - Lago (CS), Italy, e-mail: [ilsilenoedizioni@gmail.com](mailto:ilsilenoedizioni@gmail.com)

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs  
3.0 Italy License.



The work, including all its parts, is protected by copyright law. The user at the time of  
downloading the work accepts all the conditions of the license to use the work, provided  
and communicated on the website

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/it/legalcode>

ISBN 979-12-80064-52-3

*Vol. 6, No. 1 (May 2023)*



# Geographies of the Anthropocene

OPEN  
ACCESS



PEER-REVIEWED  
SERIES

ISSN 2611-3171

## Geographies of the Anthropocene

Open Access and Peer-Reviewed series

**Editor-In-Chief:** Francesco De Pascale (Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Modern Cultures, University of Turin, Italy).

**Associate Editors:** Salvatore Cannizzaro (Department of Humanities, University of Catania, Italy); Sebastiano D'Amico (Head of Department of Geosciences, University of Malta, Malta); Fausto Marincioni (Department of Life and Environmental Sciences, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy), Leonardo Mercatanti (Department of Culture and Society, University of Palermo, Italy); Francesco Muto (Department of Biology, Ecology and Earth Sciences, University of Calabria, Italy), Charles Travis (School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin; University of Texas, Arlington, U.S.A.).

**Editorial Board:** Mohamed Abioui (Ibn Zohr University, Morocco), Valentina Castronuovo (Italian National Research Council – Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development, Italy); Andrea Cerase (Sapienza University of Rome, Italy), Lorenzo D'Agostino (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, U.S.A.), Valeria Dattilo (University "G. D'Annunzio" Chieti-Pescara, Italy), Dante Di Matteo (University E-Campus, Italy); Jonathan Gómez Cantero (Departamento de Meteorología de Castilla-La Mancha Media, Spain), Eleonora Guadagno (University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy); Davide Mastroianni (University of Siena, Italy), Giovanni Messina (University of Messina, Italy), Joan Rossello Geli (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain), Gaetano Sabato (University of Palermo, Italy), Carmine Vacca (University of Calabria, Italy), Nikoleta Zampaki (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece).

**International Scientific Board:** Marie-Theres Albert (UNESCO Chair in Heritage Studies, University of Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany), David Alexander (University College London, England), Lina Maria Calandra (University of L'Aquila, Italy); Salvatore Cannizzaro (University of Catania, Italy), Fabio Carnelli (EURAC Research, Bolzano, Italy); Carlo Colloca (University of Catania, Italy), Gian Luigi Corinto (University of Macerata, Italy), Girolamo Cusimano (University of Palermo, Italy), Bharat Dahiya (Director, Research Center for Integrated Sustainable Development, College of Interdisciplinary Studies Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand); Sebastiano D'Amico (University of Malta, Malta), Armida de La Garza (University College Cork, Ireland), Elena Dell'Agnese (University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy; Vice President of IGU), Piero Farabollini (University of Camerino, Italy), Massimiliano Fazzini (University of Camerino; University of Ferrara, Italy; Chair of the "Climate Risk" Area of the Italian Society of Environmental Geology); Giuseppe Forino (Bangor University, Wales, UK), Virginia García Acosta (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, CIESAS, México); Cristiano Giorda (University of Turin, Italy), Giovanni Gugg (LESC, Laboratoire d'Ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparative, CNRS – Université Paris-Nanterre, France), Luca Jourdan (University of Bologna, Italy), Francesca Romana Lugeri (ISPRA, University of Camerino, Italy), Cary J. Mock (University of South Carolina, U.S.A.; Member of IGU Commission on Hazard and Risk), Enrico Nicosia (University of Messina, Italy); Gilberto Pambianchi (University of Camerino, Italy), Silvia Peppoloni (Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Italy; Secretary General of IAPG; Councillor of IUGS), Isabel Maria Cogumbreiro Estrela Rego (University of the Azores, Portugal), Andrea Riggio (University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, Italy), Jean-Claude Roger (University of Maryland, College Park, U.S.A.; Terrestrial Information Systems Laboratory, Code 619, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, U.S.A.); Vito Teti (University of Calabria, Italy), Bruno Vecchio (University of Florence, Italy), Masumi Zaiki (Seikei University, Japan; Secretary of IGU Commission on Hazard and Risk).

**Editorial Assistant, Graphic Project and Layout Design:** Ambra Benvenuto, Rosetta Capolupo, Luigi Frascino.

**Website:** [www.ilsileno.it/geographiesoftheanthropocene](http://www.ilsileno.it/geographiesoftheanthropocene);

The book series “Geographies of the Anthropocene” edited by the Scientific International Publisher “Il Sileno” (Il Sileno Edizioni) will discuss the new processes of the Anthropocene epoch through the various worldviews of geoscientists and humanists, intersecting disciplines of Geosciences, Geography, Geoethics, Philosophy, Socio-Anthropology, Sociology of Environment and Territory, Psychology, Economics, Environmental Humanities and cognate disciplines.

Geoethics focuses on how scientists (natural and social), arts and humanities scholars working in tandem can become more aware of their ethical responsibilities to guide society on matters related to public safety in the face of natural hazards, sustainable use of resources, climate change and protection of the environment. Furthermore, the integrated and multiple perspectives of the Environmental Humanities, can help to more fully understand the cultures of, and the cultures which frame the Anthropocene. Indeed, the focus of Geoethics and Environmental Humanities research, that is, the analysis of the way humans think and act for the purpose of advising and suggesting appropriate behaviors where human activities interact with the geosphere, is dialectically linked to the complex concept of Anthropocene.

The book series “Geographies of the Anthropocene” publishes online volumes, both collective volumes and monographs, which are set in the perspective of providing reflections, work materials and experimentation in the fields of research and education about the new geographies of the Anthropocene.

“Geographies of the Anthropocene” encourages proposals that address one or more themes, including case studies, but welcome all volumes related to the interdisciplinary context of the Anthropocene. Published volumes are subject to a review process (**double blind peer review**) to ensure their scientific rigor.

The volume proposals can be presented in English, Italian, French or Spanish.

The choice of digital Open Access format is coherent with the flexible structure of the series, in order to facilitate the direct accessibility and usability by both authors and readers.



# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	Pag.	9
<b>Introduction</b>	»	13
Gian Luigi Corinto, Glen Farrugia - <i>Contextualizing Human Mobility, Migration, and Tourism</i>	»	15
<b>Tourism and Mobility</b>	»	23
Gian Luigi Corinto - <i>Tourism in the Era of Anthropocene. Only Clumsy Solutions for a Wicked Problem</i>	»	25
Tohidur Rahaman - <i>Runaway in and out as a Compulsive Migration in Anuradha Roy's The Folded Earth: Exploring the Multi-layered Cultural Geography of the Himalayan North</i>	»	39
Alberto Catania - <i>Mobility and tourism opportunities in an isolated geographical exclave: the case of Ceuta</i>	»	55
<b>Sustainable Management of Touristic Resources</b>	»	71
Antoni Quetglas, Joan Rosselló - <i>From local owners to international hotel groups: the transformation of the hotel industry in Sóller (Mallorca) from 1950 to 2022</i>	»	73
Michela Bonato - <i>Yangtze River Cruise: a journey through the promotion of liquid developing places and controversial models of sustainability</i>	»	93
<b>Responsible Tourism and Recovery After Crisis</b>	»	113
Beatrice Ruggieri and Elisa Magnani - <i>COVID-19 pandemic and tourism. (Not) Getting back to normal in tourism-dependent Pacific island economies</i>	»	115
Simon Caruana - <i>Stakeholder Involvement in Tourism Education Design</i>	»	135
Glen Farrugia - <i>Responsible Tourism in Theory and Practice: Past, Present, and Future</i>	»	157

## **4. From local owners to international hotel groups: the transformation of the hotel industry in Sóller (Mallorca) from 1950 to 2022**

*Antoni Quetglas<sup>1</sup>, Joan Rosselló Geli<sup>2</sup>*

### **Abstract**

The research focus on the evolution of the hotels ownership on a coastal municipality located in NW Mallorca. The city of Sóller welcomed tourist as early as the 1930's but the largest increase of the hotel trade arrived in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, hotels were locally owned and offered basic services, which were focused on families looking for a “sun and beach” offer. Since the arrival of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been a change on ownership and international companies own nowadays a large number of hotels. Furthermore, the quality of the lodging has increased towards luxury thus increasing the cost of stay and changing the kind of tourist attracted, which is not only looking for sun and beaches but for other interests, like culture or gastronomy.

The chapter will present how those changes have shaped the current hotel industry in the area and how such modifications have had social and economic effects too.

### **Keywords:**

20th-21st centuries, local owners, hotel industry, Mallorca, tourism

---

<sup>1</sup> Antoni Quetglas, University of the Balearic Islands, Spain, e-mail: antoni\_q@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Joan Rosselló, Corresponding Author, Open University of Catalonia (UOC), Spain, e-mail: jrosselloge@uoc.edu



## 1. Introduction

The definition of tourism is not easy. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2008), tourism is “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entrails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or professional purposes”. Another option defines tourism as “the act and process of spending time away from home in pursuit of recreation, relaxation, and pleasure, while making use of the commercial provision of services.” (Walton, 2022).

Nowadays a global phenomenon, tourism activities can be related to the Classical period when wealthy population travelled for leisure (Gyr, 2010). After the middle Ages, a precursor of modern tourism appeared with the Grand Tours but it was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when tourism became an activity to demonstrate power and money, thus being only available for nobility and upper middle classes. Mass tourism started during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was widely available after World War II.

Tourism is a term that encompasses a wide range of activities and occupations, including the concept of hospitality, closely related to the concept of travelling. The word derives from Latin and it means “providing lodging for a visitor”. A modern definition of hospitality is “the business of helping people to feel welcome and relaxed and to enjoy themselves (Westcott & Anderson, 2020). Whilst in the past accommodation and food were provided in private homes, monasteries and guest houses, the concept of hotel to lodge clients appears during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the development of traveling technical advances and the return of the leisure voyages. Inns to accommodate travellers were regulated by laws in England so they should be registered and keep a guest register (Tourism Teacher, 2022). During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, as holidays and leisure travel became common, the number of hotels increased and different types of hotels existed to accommodate different kinds of tourism. International chains appeared during the 1920s when corporate ownership models substituted individual owners as a result of the increasing cost to run the business but its main grow started after 1945, the result being that, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main hotel chains controlled 75% of the large hotels worldwide (Salvioni, 2015).

The development of larger hotel chains is linked to the globalised product they offer. Hotels are by nature an international product and the saturation of domestic markets led to the exploitation of new ones, commonly located in developing countries (Breda et al, 2020).

Spain was no stranger to the tourism development. During the 19<sup>th</sup> centu-

ry, travellers arrived to the country even if a limited integration to the international tourism flow existed then (Vallejo Pousada et al, 2018). It is in the 1960's when Spain fully embraces the tourism industry. If at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the country had small numbers of an elite tourism, from 1960 onwards Spain consolidates its position among the world's leading tourist destinations (Vallejo Pousada, 2002). One of the main reasons is politically related; the country needed the foreign currency brought in by visitors and the national authorities allowed a large development of an industry based on a sun and beach offer even if it means a change on the quality of the arrivals, who were searching for cheaper destinations like Spain. In the 1980's the model of sun and beach tourism reaches its peak and consolidates as the main offer linked to new marketing policies to attract foreign visitors but to improve the national tourism as well (Vizcaino, 2015). From the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to our days, new tourism activities became available in Spain, such as cultural tourism, rural tourism or culinary tours with the aim to diversifying the national tourist offer.

In Mallorca, the first hotels appear around 1900. The offer of sun, sea and beach was paramount as is today and establishments devoted to rest and recreation are built in coastal areas of the island. In 1905, the Fomento del Turismo society is founded and an intense activity started, to convert Mallorca into a tourism mecca. During the 1930's a large number of hotels are opened in areas like Pollença, Alcúdia, Andratx, Calvià and Sóller, reaching 3317 beds in 1933 and a total of 30000 tourists. After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the Second World War, the mass tourism arrival starts, multiplying the number of beds and amount of visitors, almost 4 million in 1973 (Salvà, 1985). Despite some crisis, the same model exists today even if large changes have affected the tourism industry, such as the arrival of online platforms, the increase of rental lodgements and, recently, the apparition of investment funds that are buying establishments from national chains and from family owners. Such sales are often related to the need to improve the profit accounts, selling properties affected by losses after the COVID pandemic and previous crisis periods. Another factor leading to the sale of family owned hotels is the lack of generational replacement.

The objective of the research herein presented is to study the hotel ownership evolution and change in a tourism-related town in Mallorca to ascertain if the global growth of corporate hotel chains has also affected the area. The methodology uses historical data from archives, both from private business and public administrations, to gather information about the evolution of the industry and the main causes of changing ownership.

The chapter is structured as follows: first a description of the research area, followed by an overview of the historical activities related to the tourism industry. A third part is devoted to the current situation of the hotel activity including a section that presents the evolution of both the hotel plant and the ownership model as well as the changes on the type of tourist arriving to Sóller.

## 2. Research area

The municipality of Sóller lies within the Tramuntana mountain range, in Northwestern Mallorca (Figure 1).

The town is located on a valley, surrounded by mountains of medium and high altitude, one of them the highest peak of the island at 1453 meters above sea level. Such locations is important regarding tourism as a large number of hiking routes start or end in Sóller. Regarding the climate, the area belongs to the Mediterranean temperate variety, with hot summers and mild winters and an average of 779.4 mm of rain a year (Rosselló, 2015).

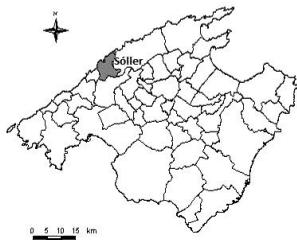


Figure 1. Location of Sóller within the island of Mallorca.

Also of paramount importance is the location of the municipality along the western coast. There is the lone large bay of that coast, thus allowing the existence of a harbor with capacity for small to medium size ships. Furthermore, the bay has a large beach, formerly made with pebbles and nowadays sandy, as tons of sand were dumped to create comfortable spaces for tourists. The harbor was intensively used during the 19<sup>th</sup> and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a commercial port, linking Sóller to the south of France and mainland Spain, with an important traffic of citrus fruits and other goods like olive oil (Figure 2). In that sense, for centuries, the main economic activity of the area was agriculture and the resulting export of products.



Figure 2. The port de Sóller at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Source: Fotos antigues de Mallorca.

The agricultural activity was heavily related to the large amount of springs located in the valley, which allowed an important development of orchards and fruit trees. An outstanding drainage system, originally related to Arab times, offers the opportunity to cultivate large tracts of land, which would otherwise be useless for agricultural purposes (Carbonero, 1986).

At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sóller main source of wealth was the agricultural sector as well as the orange trade and an artisanal cotton industry. This model was affected by a mid-century crisis that forced to migrate a large number of population, towards zones of Central America and France. Such process laid the foundation of the reconversion of the local economy as the reinvestment of the capitals arriving from abroad once the migrants returned, at the end of the century, allowed the creation of industrial enterprises (factories, railway, gas and electricity), banks and commerce. The society was transformed from a rural one to a bourgeois and advanced society, that saw the tourism as another way to gain money.

### **3. Historical evolution of tourism in Sóller**

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city of Sóller was ready to develop the tourism sector. Along with Palma and Pollença, Sóller was a pioneer in the development of an early passenger industry (Cirer, 2009). The causes of this rapid tourism progress were:

- The idyllic image that had been formed of Sóller, mostly from the writings of romantic travellers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This made the visit to the Valley particularly attractive.

- The marked improvement of transport lines and services.
- The existence of awareness among local entrepreneurs and notables of the potential the tourist industry could have for the town.
- The investment of capital in services-related businesses, such as restaurants and inns.
- The expansion of the French language due to the huge emigration to that country.
- The municipality had elements that favoured the arrival of visitors that were becoming fashionable across Europe, such as trails for hiking and a beach for bathing. All of these favoured the arrival of new waves of travellers, artists, tourists and scientists.

A major milestone for the tourist development of the town was the 1903 inauguration of the Grand Hotel Marina. The hotel had all the comforts and luxuries available: elevator (it was the second one to be installed in Balearics), billiard room, gardens, restroom and dining room, and a revealing picture room. The interiors were decorated with polychrome tiles of modernist style.

Another major driver of tourism was the *Ferrocarril de Sóller* company, as from the 1920s the railway boosted this new economic activity. Practically from the start of its operation, travels that combined rail and automobile started. Passengers arrived from Palma by train to Sóller and others by car from Valldemossa and Deià; on the return, the groups were exchanged and the journey reversed. These excursions were combined with boat visits to sa Calobra and Tuent. Related to the railway line, a new hotel establishment, the Grand Hotel Ferrocarril, was inaugurated in 1912. Thus, during the 1920s and 1930s, the town hosted the first tourist waves driven from the Railway of Sóller and the Promotion of Tourism. They were no longer sporadic travellers or small groups with scientific objectives, but more or less numerous groups, coordinated by various entities in order to come to the Valley to meet and enjoy the services offered. Visitors were mainly of French, German and English nationality; with the English arriving through Thomas Cook, the first travel agency working in Mallorca.

By the late 1920s, tourism was already rooted in the local economy. The increase in visitors led to the opening of new premises to accommodate them. The 1929 crisis also affected all productive sectors. A way out of the crisis was to support the tourism sector improving the offered services (Pérez, 2015). During these years, several hotels opened: Costa Brava (1929), Marina (1930), Costa d'Or (1933), Denis (1934) and Terramar (1934). Complementing the accommodation offer, there were the Hotels Ferrocarril and Marisol and the inns La Marina, El Guía, La Palmesana, Miramar, Las Delicias and

Sonnenhof. Among them were more than 150 beds, one of the largest number in the Balearic Islands.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War on 18 July 1936 broke this growing dynamic of the tourism sector. The war resulted in the closure of many of the establishments opened in the preceding years while some were expropriated by the military (Quetglas, 2012). Towards the end of the 1940s, the city experienced a major change in the tourism sector. There was a consensus that the economic dynamism should be restored, that tourism industry was key for the recovery and that a number of factors could help largely change the local economy.

These factors were:

- Nationally, the end of economic autarchy, with the change made by the regime to legitimize itself internationally.

- Within Mallorca, harbour infrastructure was improved and Palma Airport was created (1939).

- The end of international isolation led to the arrival of foreign agents representing charter and holiday companies, which were searching in Majorca a relatively untouched lands with competitive prices. This paralleled the liberalisation of air transport in several European countries and the creation of the first charter airline companies.

- From various tourist promotion institutions, notably the Promotion of Tourism, campaigns were promoted, prompting the arrival of visitors.

- At European level, there was also a progressive rise in the standard of living of the societies of the central and northern part of the continent, allowing their citizens to have free paid holidays and time for leisure activities.

- There was a shift of capitals from the industry to the tourism sector. This resulted on an increase of the available workforce, thanks to the gradual closure of textile factories and a major migration movement from the peninsula towards the island.

- The aforementioned changes led to an increase of improvements. In the late 1940s, new hotels (Costa Brava, Marbell, Espléndido, etc.) were built and existing ones (Marina) were expanded.

In this context, 1951 saw the true change in the area when tourists from *Club Les Hirondelles*, from Belgium, began to arrive. In the first year, more than a thousand tourists arrived to Sóller, in groups of 70–100 people. Not only did visitors of a family type come, but also university students. Tourists began coming in April and the last groups returned to September.

Those holidays were organized directly from their place of origin, with the club responsible for all the procedures. However, after 1955, the obligation

to manage travel was established through a Spanish agency. In this way, a delegation from the agency *Consignaciones y Representaciones Aéreas S.A.* (CYRASA) emerged in Sóller, which was responsible for managing the arrival of these new visitors, organising excursions and visits outside Mallorca.

The first to arrive in the Valley were accommodated in the already existing establishments, but due to the high demand, some visitors had to be moved to private houses, which were enabled to accommodate them. These houses were known as “Appendes” and each hotel had its own. Normally, there the clients could only sleep but not eat and they had to move to the hotels restaurants.

From 1953, from the same Belgian club, traveling parties were organized from the delegations that were held in other countries, and the arrival of groups of other nationalities began. In August 1953 a new group of tourists arrived and was composed by Germans, English, Luxembourgers, Dutch, French and Belgians.

In 1954, groups of German origin began to arrive through agencies such as *Aeropa* (Hamburg) or *Transeuropa* (Munich). These German agencies organized several visits to Majorca by journalists and travel house owners to know the island and Sóller was among the places they visited.

In those years, the model of management of the solleric hotels was established. They were family-run companies, both in terms of their creation and their management, based on exclusively local capital. Another trend was the strong conjunction between the places offered and those demanded by travel agencies, since there was a direct relationship with no intermediaries. In addition to the existing hotels – which were expanded at the same time – such as *Marbell*, *Espléndido*, *Costa Brava* and *Marina*, between the 1950s and 1960s, new ones were to be inaugurated, those being *Chez Generoso*, *Rome*, *Edén*, *Es Port*, *Miramar*, *Brisas* and *Mare Nostrum*, largely located in the seaside area (Table 1).

<b>Comparative table of tourist services in Sóller from 1948 to 1958</b>		
	<b>1948</b>	<b>1958</b>
Population	10.332	9.822
Municipal budget (pesetas)	731.724,86	2.481.868,63
Hotels	8	25
Number of hotel rooms	85	548
Bars and similar	24	48
Souvenir shops	8	24
Discotheque	0	6

Table 1. Tourist services between 1948 and 1958.



The 1960s represented the start of mass tourism. The increase in the number of visitors came along the so-called “construction boom”. This rate of expansion continued to rise until the 1973 oil crisis, which, among other consequences, caused a sudden slowdown of the global economy.

In the 1960s, new elements appeared, particularly in terms of the rate of arrival of tourists, with the entry into operation of the charter flights and tour operators. This, even if it led to a significant increase in the number of visitors, did not alter the model of management of Soller hotels, which retained the family character. However, the qualitative change of new tourists was noted. It moved from a relatively minority and quality tourism of the 1950s, with a strong purchasing power, to become cheaper and more massive tourism, consisting mainly of people from the working classes of Western Europe.

It should be noted that tourists, especially those from Belgium, the Netherlands, France and England, showed a strong sense of fidelity towards Soller hotels. There were families or couples that repeated year in year out in the same establishment and often occupying the same room.

Regarding official policies, the Sun and Beach offer was generalized and promoted, as in the rest of the island, accompanied by other services that were only intended to satisfy visitors’ leisure moments. This also meant that the season focused on the good weather months, which ran from April and May until September and, sometimes, October. The offer was mostly full pension, but half pension was also a possibility. There was also some complicity among local hoteliers, particularly when there was an excess of clients, causing the so-called overbooking. It was usual among them to help with offering rooms if they were available in other establishments.

The increase in tourism led to a sharp increase in construction and urbanism, especially in the surrounding areas on the beach and the Port. This boosted several housing developments, which were intended to serve as the second residence or temporary residence of tourists with the most purchasing power (Bisson, 1977). Although the Port of Soller remained relatively untouched by the mass construction that affected other coastal locations on the island, the number of hotel buildings continued to increase. Due to the lack of available land on the first line of the sea, hotels began to be built in the new housing developments that arose at that time. The last ones built on the first line of the boardwalk were the Bahía Hotel (1962) and the Ladan Hotel (1966). In that sense, buildings were built in different locations near the Port, such as the Atalaya Hotel, the Rocamar Hotel, the Monte Azul Hotel (1966) and the Porto Soller Hotel (1970). From this period was the project of the

“Mini-Rancho” (1969), an American-style bungalows complex for visitors. In 1966, appeared the residence called “Les Belles Etapes”, promoted by the Frenchman Marcel Maillot, which lately became a house of colonies for young people.

In 1964, there were 2,043 beds and 39 tourist accommodation establishments in Sóller, 79.5% of whose seats were located in Port de Sóller (Table 2).

At the time, this municipality was the third in Majorca in terms of number of tourist beds, just behind Calvià, which tripled the solleric offer (Murray Mas, 2012).

<b>Accommodation capacity in hosting establishments in Sóller, 1964</b>			
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Hotels</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Places/Hotels</b>
Sóller	15	419	28
Port of Sóller	24	1.624	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2.043</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 2. The hotel industry in 1964.

Alongside this expansion, there was also important activity in the creation of new infrastructure. The two most important were the construction of the road from Sóller to Lluc between 1959 and 1962 and the improvement of the road to the Port between 1961 and 1962. Both served to facilitate the access by car and coach to the valley, thus increasing the capability to receive visitors from other areas of the island.

The Oil Crisis of the early 1970s caused a major recession in Mallorca’s tourism sector, although locally, Sóller endured a little better recession, thanks to its family tourism model and the consolidation of the hotel plant. Thus, the tourist seasons of these years were not as disastrous as expected. Most of the customers in the tourist establishments were French, Belgian, Danish, English and German, i.e. from countries traditionally related to the area.

However, a combination of the crisis effects, the impositions from tour-operators, the abuse of the overbooking practices and the pressure from large hotel chains led, to the closure of small, low-capacity establishments. On the other hand, the remaining hotels had to increase the number of rooms and beds, adapting to the “mass tourism” offer. In 1973, Sóller counted approximately 3,237 tourist accommodation places, having grown in previous years but with a lower intensity than the rest of the island – for example in Sóller

between 1964 and 1973 the number of places increased by 58.4% while in Muro the growth was 16,286.6% (Murray Mas, 2012).

In the 1970s, tourists wanted large hotels and smaller establishments – common within Sóller – were forced to operate only with one travel agency, which took advantage of this situation and imposed very tight prices and services thus leading to a decrease of the quality for tourists – which resulted in hotels having few benefits. The imposition of this model meant that Sóller could not compete with other areas of the island such as S’Arenal, Can Picafort, or Cala Ratjada, which had been organized to absorb huge numbers of tourists and possessed more modern infrastructures, built entirely for this concept of tourism. The hotel industry in Sóller was unable to compete thus it was used primarily as an alternative area that absorbed tourist surpluses from the areas above mentioned. According to the Plan of Tourism Offer of Mallorca, commissioned by the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism, one of the problems of the area was the lack of high-ranking establishments, with a large number of hotels of one star and, above all, hostels. However, this favoured not being considered a tourist saturated area.

From the end of the 1970s but especially during the 1980s, there was a strong decision to enlarge the tourist season. In that sense, the arrival of elderly associations, mainly from France, during the winter allowed opening some hotels during December and January. Another important milestone was the offer made to German Hiking Groups from some local owners, who travelled to Germany to show the trails of the area and the possibilities they offered. Should contacts allowed to start the season by mid-February and enlarge it towards the end of October. During that decade, it must be noted that little was invested to modernize the establishments, resulting in old and obsolete buildings in relation with the new demands of the clients. The fidelity of family-oriented visitors, searching for tranquillity and a known landscape, helped to maintain the tourist sector, even if the decline was clear and in the mid-1980s, the sector capacity was reduced to 2798 beds. During the 1980s, around 10 establishments were closed, among hotels and hostels, of which three were located in Sóller and seven in Port.

By the 1990s, the decline of the local offer was evident and between 1988 and 1994, Sóller lost 21% of tourist places. The need to invest and reform hotels was evident and several hotels were closed forever, becoming flats (Murray Mas, 2012). By 1994, only 10 hotels remained on business in the municipality.

By the end of the 1990s, a change in terms of management and tourism arrivals was noted in the area. A regional plan of Tourism Ordination was

approved in 1995 some key features of the plan included: implement alternative activities, determine the capacity of each area according to its population density, promote a territorial balance of the offer and renew obsolete establishments to improve the quality of the offer. The official planning related to tourism was improved with the Law 8/2012 of Tourism, in turn amended by Law 1/2020 against uncivic tourism and the degradation of tourist areas and applicable in some municipalities of the Balearics. In 2022 a Decree Law was approved, regarding sustainable tourism and circular economy, which modified aspects of the 2012 Law. The new decree addresses issues such as the quality of tourism service and the working conditions of employees (Moon et al, 2022).

As with the rest of the island, the tourism business expanded to rural areas. This was due to the confluence of various factors such as the disintegration of the farming world, the search for new tourist spaces far from the coast and the lines of subsidies provided by the European Union (ERDF, LEADER, etc.). Sóller was, between the 1990s and 2000s, one of the most populous municipalities on the island of rural tourist accommodation (Table 3).

Year	Rural Hotel	Agritourism	Home tourism	Total
1994	16	9	0	25
2002	16	79	26	121
2009	16	103	119	238

Table 3. Accommodation capacity in rural tourism (units/places)

Another important milestone was the opening of the Sóller Tunnel in 1999. This infrastructure ended the historic isolation of the Valley. Along with the tunnel, there were a series of public actions aimed at beautifying and improving the Port area. These interventions were managed through the Plan of Tourism Excellence of the Port of Sóller (2001) valued at € 6.76 million.

The new century brought a change in terms of generational replacement of the hotels ownership but also a shift as foreign companies started to buy hotels as an investment, even if the average of foreign proprietors was lower than the Majorcan average. Even so, by 2015, many of the existing hotels were in the hands of foreign owners or chains.

As regards the offer of the tourism model, the effort to extend the tourist season was evident – from February to November – mainly through hiking and nautical tourism. This policy was successful and during the first decades

of the 21st century, there was a gradual increase in reserves. The hotels of Sóller were among the few in Mallorca who did not have to resort to the “all included” formula to fill their seats (Murray Mas, 2012). Between 2009 and 2011, there was a decline in the number of visitors, related to the global crisis of 2008. However, as of 2012, there was a clear recovery and the results exceed even those of the years preceding the crisis. Such recovery led to an increase of the hotel’s capacity and of the total number of beds, moreover if the opening of new establishments, mostly small “boutique” hotels and agritourisms, is taken into account. The increase of the so-called “mass tourism” has led to concerns regarding sustainability and the need to balance the economic growth associated to tourism with a quality of life offer, to both residents and visitors (Moon, 2018).

The final years of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a continuous increase of the number of arrivals, which was stopped by the COVID pandemic. The results of 2021 and 2022 in terms of hotel occupation and number of tourists are encouraging and the pre-pandemic levels have been almost surpassed.

#### **4. Current hotel situation**

As of 2022, sixteen hotels are officially active in Sóller (Table 4). The oldest was opened in 1944 while the newest opened in 2017. The categories range from one star to a five star superior establishment.

Name	Opening	Category	Ownership
Jumeirah Port de Sóller	2012	5 stars superior	Jumeirah Port de Sóller SLU
Minister	2017	4 stars superior	A.J. Minister SL
Gran Hotel	2004	5 stars	Alvotel Mallorca SL
Cal Bisbe	2003	4 stars	Cal Bisbe SL
Aimia	1976	4 stars superior	Explotaciones Turísticas SA
Eden	1957	4 stars	Gestora Hotelera Mallorquina SL
Eden Nord	1970	3 stars	Gestora Hotelera Mallorquina SL
Bikini Island&Mountain Hotel Port de Sóller	1970	4 stars	Bikini Island SLU
Los Geranios	1964	4 stars	Rullan i Oliver Inversions SL
Pure Salt Port de Sóller	1952	4 stars	Hotel Marbell SL
Es Port	1960	4 stars	Montimar SA
Esplendido	1954	4 stars superior	Davant la Mar SL
El Guia	1944	4 stars	Falguera Inversions SL
Marina	1955	4 stars	Marimat SA
Miramar	1952	2 stars	Miraport SL
Citric Sóller	1956	1 star	Citric Turistic SL

Table 4. Active hotels in Sóller. Source: Consell de Mallorca, 2022

Taking into account the date of opening, there is a large group of hotels that are dating back to the 1950s and 60s while in the 21<sup>st</sup> century only four establishments have been opened. Two of them are the result of the rebuilding of old buildings, already devoted to the hospitality industry (Jumeirah and Gran Hotel) while another one, Hotel Minister, was built up in a vacant lot.

Finally, Cal Bisbe occupies an old townhouse, formerly residence of a bishop in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 3).

Regarding the other hotels, it is clear that all of them have undergone modifications aimed to improve its quality and change the provided service according to the demand evolution (Figure 4). In that sense, eleven of sixteen have a 4-star category, which is related to the offered services of accommodation (in room minibar, hair drier, bath amenities and bathrobe) and service (parking availability, internet access, daily room cleaning service, pool, spa and fitness center).

As of today, there are only six hotel establishments – not counting agri-tourisms – under the control of local hotel families: Cal Bisbe, El Guia, Es Port, Los Geranios, Marina and Miramar.



Figure 3. The future hotel Cal Bisbe as it was in 1985.



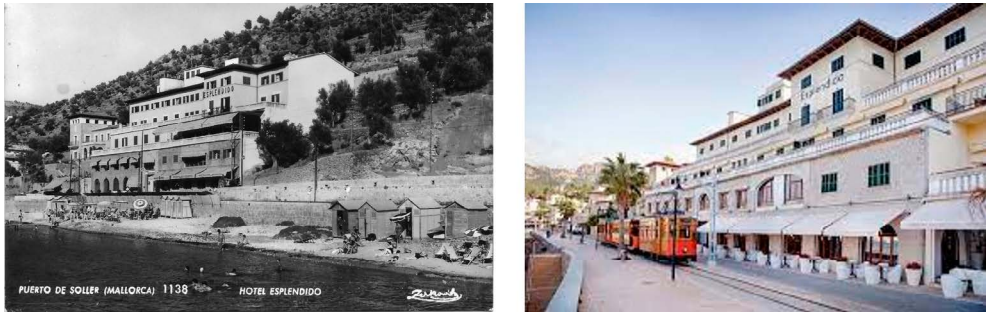


Figure 4. Hotel Esplendido during the 1970s (left) and today (right).

The above presented trends of the hotel business in Sóller show all the changes that currently shape the tourism-related industry.

On the one hand, the change of ownership is evident. Only six of sixteen hotels are on local hands when during the 1980s local proprietors represented the 100% of the sixteen hotels that were active. Foreign capital investments have bought establishments, following a global trend that has also affected the area. Even if, in some cases, day-by-day operations remain under local control, the main directives are controlled by relatively away headquarters.

On the other hand, a change regarding the type of the arriving client is also clear. Gone are families with children, nowadays only arriving during the summer months and residing only in some hotels. Now the largest group of tourists (90%) are young couples who search not only for a sun and beach offer, typical of the 1970s and 1980s, but arrive to Sóller attracted by other options and also its marketability as in 2021 the name Sóller was the one with more references in Instagram, becoming a trending spot for celebrities and visitors. Related to the type of client, another change is the duration of the holiday stay. Visitors during the early stages stayed for a month while now the median stay is four days, less than at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when it was twelve days. The nationality has also changed. If previously Belgians and French were the most common nationalities, it changed to German and British during the 1980s and 1990s. From 2005 onwards a large number of arrivals were from countries like Sweden and Norway and today there is a mix even if Germans, British and French are the three main countries of origin of the arrivals. Moreover, a change on how clients arrive to the hotels is identified since 2000 as nowadays 70% of the arrivals are direct (using online booking options) and only 30% arrive through tour operators. Before 2000, almost all the tourists came using services such as the French FRAM or the German Neckerman, which had contracts with all the hotels of Sóller.

The improvement of the hotels in the past decades led to an increase of the cost of stay. Nowadays, one night average is €140 for two people and including breakfast while at the start of the 1990s the cost was around €30. Such increase is related to the refurbishments of the establishments, now qualified as four stars, and its complementary offer. Tourists search for quality and, in some cases, luxury, and they pay for it.

Finally, another change regards the duration of the season. If in the past, hotels were opened from May to September, offering only sun and beach options, since the 1980s the arrival of hikers and cultural-related tourists allowed enlarging the season. It starts now at the end of January and ends in November, thus being one of the largest of Mallorca, with a large number of hotels opened for eleven months.

## **5. Conclusions**

The conversion of tourism into a worldwide phenomenon, with economic factors involved, has led to changes in the structure of the industry (Salvioni, 2016). Among these changes, there is the change of hotel ownership, from independent, family-owned business, to brand chains that own many establishments in different parts of the world.

Sóller is no stranger to this evolution and there has been a change in hotel ownership over the last decades. Nowadays, only six hotels remain as local family-owned establishments, while larger companies own ten, with capital arriving from Spain but also from countries like France or Sweden.

Another change is related to the type of client. Gone are the times when visitors stayed for a whole month in the hotel and were returning every year to the same establishment. Today, the medium stay is four days and the large increase of accommodation prizes led to a reduced demand, being common now the arrival of couples without children instead of whole families like happened during the 1960's and 70's. Moreover, the current visitors demand luxury services that led to an improvement of the hotel offer but increasing costs. Another change is related to the objective of the holidays as, in the past, it was the desire of a sun and beach destination while now there are many tourists searching for cultural activities and, during the coldest months of the season, Sóller has become a trekking hotspot.

The combination of all the above-mentioned factors has helped Sóller, which has become a trendy destination for abroad visitors of different nationalities. The future looks bright even if the effects of the pandemic and the

global increase of costs, together with the competition of other tourist areas, worries the local owners. Finally, regarding the future of the locally owned establishments, there is a consensus to maintain the status-quo and to proudly remain in hands of long-time Sóller residents.

Further lines of future research could be relating changes in GDP and hotel sales to foreign investors, as well as to study if economic factors influence the change in the pattern and quality of tourists. Moreover, another interesting avenue is the advent of online platforms, such as AirBnB, and its impact on tourist arrivals in the area.

## References

Bisson, J., 1977. *La terre et l'homme aux Îles Baléares*. Edisud, Aix-en-Provence (France).

Breda, Z.; Panyik, E.; Costa, C., 2020. "Internationalization of the hotel industry: evidence from Portugal". *Public Policy Portuguese Journal*, volume 5, n°2, 81-96

Carbonero, M.A., 1986. « La maîtrise de l'eau et l'évolution d'un espace rural : Soller ». *Revue Géographique de l'Est*, 3-4, 205-218

Cirer, J.C., 2009. *La invenció del turisme de masses a Mallorca*. Documenta Balear, Palma de Mallorca.

Consell de Mallorca, 2022. Registre d'empreses, activitats i establiments turístics. Online at: <https://www.caib.es/cathosfront/cens>. Accessed 29 September 2022.

Gyr, U., 2010. "The history of tourism: structures on the path to modernity". *EGO European History Online*. IEG, Mainz.

Moon, C.J., 2018, "Mass Tourism vs. Sustainable Tourism in the Balearic Islands: Measuring Social and Environmental Impact in Mallorca". *Tourism Hospit Ope Acc*. THOA-118, doi: 10.29011/THOA-118.100018.

Moon, C., Batle, J., Morales, M., 2022, "Implications of the new Balearic Islands circularity Law for tourism practice and research". *Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Tourism Research*, 588-592.

Murray Mas, I., 2012. *Geografies del capitalisme balear. Poder, metabolisme socioeconòmic i petjada ecològica d'una superpotència turística*. PhD thesis, Universitat de les Illes Balears, Palma.

Pérez, P., 2015. "Sóller: evolució econòmica i social entre 1840 i 1936" In: *IX Jornades d'Estudis Locals a Sóller i Fornalutx*, Sóller, Ajuntament de Sóller i Ajuntament de Fornalutx.

Quetglas, A. 2012. *Sóller. La desfeta de la burgesia progressista*. Guerra Civil Poble a Poble nº 11, Edicions Documenta Balear, Palma.

Quetglas, A. 2013. *Societat, cultura i política a l'època dels moviments migratoris cap Amèrica i Europa. El cas de la Vall de Sóller (1830-1936)*. PhD thesis, Universitat de les Illes Balears, Palma.

Rosselló, J., 2015. *Precipitacions i escorrentia a les conques torrencials de Mallorca*. PhD thesis. Universitat de les Illes Balears, Palma de Mallorca.

Salvà, P., 1985. "Turisme i canvi a l'espai de les Illes Balears". *Treballs de la Societat Catalana de Geografia*, 2, 17-32

Salvioni, D. M., 2016. "Hotel chains and the sharing economy in global tourism". *Symphonia, Emerging Issues in Management*, 1, 31-44, doi: 10.4468/2016.1.04salvioni

TourismTeacher, 2022. The fascinating history of the hotel industry. Online at: <https://tourismteacher.com/the-history-of-the-hotel-industry-understanding-tourism/>. Accessed 30 September 2022.

UNTWO, 2008. Glossary of tourism terms. Online at: [www.untwo.org/glossary-tourism-terms](http://www.untwo.org/glossary-tourism-terms). Accessed 26 March 2023.

Vallejo Pousada, R., 2002. *Historia del turismo en España 1928-1962*. Sílex Ediciones, Madrid, 742 pages.

Vallejo Pousada, R.; Lindoso-Tato, E.; Vilar-Rodríguez, P., 2018. "Los orígenes históricos del turista y del turismo en España: la demanda turística en el siglo XIX". *Investigaciones de Historia Económica*, doi: 10.1016/j.ihe.2018.03.001

Vizcaino, M.L., 2015. "Evolución del turismo en España: El turismo cultural". *International Journal of Scientific Management and tourism*. Volume 4, 75-95

Walton, John K. (2022). Tourism. Encyclopedia Britannica. Online at: [www.britannica.com/topic/tourism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/tourism). Accessed 8 October 2022.

Westcott, M., Anderson, W. (eds) (2020), Introduction to tourism and hospitality in BC. BC Campus Open Ed. Online at: [opentextbc.ca/introtourism2e/](http://opentextbc.ca/introtourism2e/). Accessed 27 March 2023.

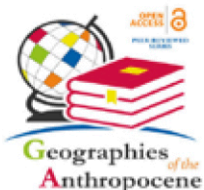
This book offers a comprehensive examination of the dynamic interplay between human mobility, migration, and tourism in the context of the Anthropocene era. The collection of eight chapters delves into various aspects of this complex relationship, shedding light on crucial issues, challenges, and opportunities in today's rapidly evolving global landscape. The concept of responsible tourism is a transversal element in this publication, exploring its significance in promoting sustainable practices and mitigating the environmental and socio-cultural impacts of movement of people. Another topic which is addressed here is the post-Covid regeneration of tourism-dependent island economies. The authors analyze the challenges faced by these regions and explore innovative approaches to sustainable recovery. The discussions here revolve around the importance of community engagement, diversification, and resilience in building a robust and sustainable tourism industry. Sustainability also takes a center stage in this edition. The discourse presented in various chapters examines the pressing environmental issues associated with the movement of people. It also delves into the transformation of the hotel industry and explores tourism opportunities in isolated geographical exclave, shedding light on unique destinations that face challenges related to accessibility and connectivity. Important analysis is also presented on cultural landscapes, heritage sites, and local traditions and how cultural authenticity and meaningful interactions between tourists and local communities can shape the tourist experience.

This book will be of great interest to scholars, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to understand and navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise in this rapidly changing global landscape.

**Gian Luigi Corinto** is Associate Professor of Geography, teacher of Sustainable Destinations in the Master Degree International Tourism and Destination Management; Geografia e marketing agroalimentare, and Geografia del turismo in the Degree Beni culturali e turismo at the University of Macerata, Italy. He is joined to the Environment and Territory Research Section of the Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism of the University of Macerata. His research focus is on media and geography, local development, and sustainability. His works are edited in national and international journals and books. He is editor of the International Journal of Anthropology. Fellow of AGel, Italian Society of Geographers.

**Glen Farrugia** is an Associate Professor in Cultural Heritage and Tourism Management at Triagon and lectures on subjects related to Tourism Management, Culture Heritage and Organisational Research at postgraduate and doctoral level in Malta and abroad. His academic responsibility also covers supervision of Doctoral theses and external examination. He is also the Chief Operating Officer of Academia at the Institute of Tourism Studies. Glen holds professorial chairs at the University of Vitez and the University of Applied Management in Acra. He is serving the Government of Malta through two boards; the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Appeals Board and the National Curriculum Framework Implementation Board. Glen is also specialized in undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum development and implementation and is currently the editor of the International Journal of Tour Guiding Research and the Editor-in-Chief of the Futouristic Journal. Professor Farrugia published several papers and books and his contribution to Heritage, Tourism & Higher Education is widely known.

Cover photo by **Daniel Cilia**



ISBN 979-12-80064-52-3

IL Sileno  
Edizioni