

The Intersection of Literature and Urban Spaces

Examining how literary events transform public spaces in Barcelona and their role in promoting literary tourism

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines how literary events in Barcelona contribute to the socio-cultural transformation of public spaces and the development of literary tourism. In a city shaped by both a rich cultural identity and the challenges of over-tourism, literature offers a way to rethink how spaces are used, who they are for, and how culture can connect residents and visitors alike. Barcelona's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature provides a meaningful context to explore these questions, especially as the city seeks more sustainable and inclusive cultural strategies.

The research is guided by one main question: *In what ways do literary events in Barcelona socio-culturally transform public spaces and contribute to the promotion of literary tourism?* This is explored through three dimensions: sustainable tourism, culture-led urban regeneration, and community engagement. Methodologically, the study combines four expert interviews with two multilingual public surveys, analysed through Atlas.ti and supported by theoretical perspectives on urban spaces, cultural governance, and community participation.

Findings show that literary events decentralise culture, activate everyday spaces, and foster belonging. They reveal tensions between institutional goals and grassroots practices, however, also show residents welcome tourism that supports local culture and shared experiences. More than attractions, literary events serve as platforms for dialogue, visibility, and balanced tourism. Their success depends on stronger coordination between top-down policy and bottom-up initiatives. As public space regeneration advances, this collaboration can deepen community engagement and position literary tourism as a sustainable, community-rooted alternative to mass tourism.

The thesis contributes to discussions on sustainable urban development and cultural policy, offering a model for how literature can support more inclusive and community-oriented city-making.

Keywords: literary tourism; sustainable tourism; literary events; culture-led urban regeneration; public spaces; community engagement; community identity; Barcelona

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The Erasmus Mundus GLOCAL programme has deeply shaped how I understand the world, teaching me to recognise the local within the global, and to connect culture, place, and identity across borders. It was in Barcelona that this perspective became personal. What began as a passion for literature grew into a deeper interest in how stories and public spaces shape communities. This thesis reflects that journey, an attempt to creatively bring together my love for reading with a city that became close to my heart through GLOCAL. It represents not only academic research, but also personal growth rooted in curiosity, connection, and belonging.

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Chapter I - Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In a world shaped by global flows and local identities, cities are rethinking how public spaces can foster not just tourism but also connection, creativity, and cultural life. Literary events reflect this shift: they bring people together through shared stories, animate everyday places, and turn familiar settings into meaningful experiences. Rooted in local communities yet linked to broader cultural networks, they exemplify how global and local dynamics converge in place. Can these events help reimagine urban spaces not just as places to visit, but as places to belong?

Barcelona, known for its literary heritage and cultural identity, offers a compelling context to explore these questions. Since the urban regeneration linked to the 1992 Olympic Games¹, the city has redefined its public spaces, often prioritising tourism. However, over-tourism now strains infrastructure and affects residents' quality of life². Literary tourism, a niche but meaningful form of cultural tourism³, opens new possibilities. By activating overlooked locations through literary events, the city can promote community-building, cultural exchange, and more sustainable tourism models.

This thesis investigates how literary events in Barcelona animate public space, reinforce local identity, and support sustainable tourism. It aligns with municipal efforts to reduce tourism pressure by promoting community-driven alternatives⁴. Socially, it offers strategies to ease resident discontent and deepen cultural participation; academically, it contributes to literary tourism studies by framing literature as a catalyst for urban regeneration and community engagement.

The research aims to inform a range of actors shaping Barcelona's urban and cultural future. Policymakers and planners may apply its findings to integrate literary events into cultural and tourism development. Institutions, libraries, and bookshops may find practical insights for inclusive programming. Residents, whose experiences are central to this research, are approached as co-producers of the city's

¹ João Romão, Antoni Domènech, and Peter Nijkamp, "Tourism in Common: Policy Flows and Participatory Management in the Tourism Council of Barcelona," *Urban Research & Practice* 16, no. 2 (March 15, 2023): 228-305, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2021.2001039>.

² Antonio Álvarez Sousa, "La Percepción de Los Problemas Del Overtourism En Barcelona," *RECERCA. Revista de Pensament i Anàlisi* 26, no. 1 (November 3, 2020): 59–92, <https://doi.org/10.6035/Recerca.2021.26.1.4>.

³ Sílvia Quinteiro, Vivina Carreira, and Alexandra Rodrigues Gonçalves, "Coimbra as a Literary Tourism Destination: Landscapes of Literature," *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 14, no. 3 (June 13, 2020): 363, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-10-2019-0176>.

⁴ Albert Arias et al., "Barcelona Tourism for 2020 A Collective Strategy for Sustainable Tourism," *Turisme 2020 Plan Estratègic* (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona Direcció de Turisme, 2017), 16, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/barcelona_tourism_for_2020.pdf.

cultural fabric. By examining the intersection of literature, public spaces, and tourism, the thesis offers a model for cities seeking to balance visitor presence with cultural vitality and quality of life.

The thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter 2 explores how literary events support sustainable tourism. Chapter 3 analyses their role in urban regeneration, and Chapter 4 examines community engagement. Chapter 5 integrates empirical data across these themes, followed by Chapter 6, which presents conclusions and policy recommendations.

1.2 Research Questions and Subquestions

The central question guiding this thesis is: *In what ways do literary events in Barcelona socio-culturally transform public spaces and contribute to the promotion of literary tourism?*

This research hypothesises that well-planned literary tourism fosters community, revitalises underused urban spaces, and promotes sustainable practices. By attracting niche literary audiences, these events may ease pressure on over-visited areas, supporting a more balanced urban experience for residents and visitors alike.

While recognising tourism's importance, this study centres on the perspectives of residents and local stakeholders. It investigates how literary events contribute to sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement, focusing on those directly involved or affected. To explore this, the research is structured around three subquestions aligned with the thesis' key themes:

1. Sustainable Tourism: How do literary events support sustainable tourism practices in Barcelona?

Explored in Chapter 2, this subquestion assesses whether literary events decentralise visitor flows, promote local identity, and attract culturally engaged tourists. It evaluates how these activities align with Barcelona's sustainability goals by balancing tourism with everyday urban life and community well-being.

2. Urban Regeneration: How do literary events contribute to the regeneration and reimagining of Barcelona's public spaces?

Addressed in Chapter 3, this subquestion examines how events activate spaces, such as libraries, bookshops, and civic centres, add cultural meaning and social use to them. It analyses how literature acts as both content and a spatial tool for inclusive urban regeneration.

3. Community Engagement: How do literary events foster community engagement in Barcelona?

Discussed in Chapter 4, this subquestion explores how literary events promote participation, belonging, and intercultural dialogue. It considers the role of libraries, bookshops, and festivals in strengthening social connections and encouraging collaboration between communities and institutions.

Together, these subquestions offer a framework to analyse how literary events support sustainable tourism, enhance public spaces, and foster inclusion, positioning Barcelona as a potential model for integrating literature into urban development.

1.3 Definition of Theoretical Concepts

This thesis explores how literary events reshape urban spaces, promote cultural tourism, and foster local social values. As a UNESCO City of Literature (CoL)⁵, Barcelona is well-positioned to develop literary tourism as a sustainable, complementary alternative to mass tourism. In 2022, the city welcomed 18 million international tourists⁶, boosting the economy but also creating issues such as overcrowding, gentrification, and the commodification of culture⁷. In response, city policies have increasingly favoured sustainable tourism models that balance economic benefit with cultural preservation, community engagement, and urban regeneration⁸. Literary tourism, rooted in Barcelona's rich literary heritage⁹, has the potential to contribute meaningfully to this transition.

⁵ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Oficina UNESCO,” Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/oficina-unesco#la_candidatura_unesco; Barcelona Turisme, “Literary Tradition,” Barcelona Experience, *Barcelona Turisme* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/4403/literary-.html>; UNESCO, “Cities of Literature - Barcelona,” accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.citiesoflit.com/barcelona>.

⁶ Statista, “INDUSTRIES & MARKETS Travel and Tourism in Barcelona” (Statista, 2024), 6-7, <https://www-statista-com.ezproxy1.lib.gla.ac.uk/study/31329/tourism-in-barcelona-statista-dossier/>.

⁷ Romão, Domènech, and Nijkamp, “Tourism in Common,” 223.

⁸ Arturo A. Paredes-Rodriguez and Bas Spierings, “Dynamics of Protest and Participation in the Governance of Tourism in Barcelona: A Strategic Action Field Perspective,” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 28, no. 12 (December 1, 2020): 2128, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1791891>.

⁹ L. Marques, “The Making of the Literary City: Edinburgh, Barcelona and Óbidos.,” in *Literary Tourism: Theories, Practice and Case Studies*, ed. I. Jenkins and L. A. Lund, 1st ed. (UK: CABI, 2019), 57–70, <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781786394590.0057>.

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism, a form of tourism with several niche segments¹⁰, seeks to balance economic growth with environmental and socio-cultural well-being¹¹. It promotes intentional travel that respects local cultures and supports community-oriented development¹², thus offering an alternative to mass-tourism¹³. This aligns with projects like 22@Barcelona¹⁴ and encourages practices such as supporting local businesses, preserving cultural resources, and fostering public interaction¹⁵. Integrating literary events into this framework strengthens the city's cultural narrative while promoting sustainability.

Cultural, Heritage, and Literary Tourism

Cultural and heritage tourism are key to Barcelona's identity. Heritage tourism links visitors to landscapes, architecture, and traditions, while cultural tourism includes broader experiences, from festivals to performances, which are less rooted in a specific location¹⁶. Literary tourism, a niche within both, focuses on places linked to authors, books, or literary culture¹⁷. Barcelona's offerings include

¹⁰ UN Tourism, "Sustainable Development," *UNTWO* (blog), n.d., <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>.

¹¹ Walker, Thomas, Ender Demir, Gabrielle Machnik-Kekesi, and Victoria Kelly. "Sustainable Tourism: An Introduction." In *Sustainable Tourism*, edited by Thomas Walker, Ender Demir, Gabrielle Machnik-Kekesi, and Victoria Kelly, 4. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-43528-7_1.

¹² Antonio Alvarez-Sousa, "The Problems of Tourist Sustainability in Cultural Cities: Socio-Political Perceptions and Interests Management," *Sustainability* 10, no. 2 (February 13, 2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10020503>.

¹³ Deborah Kangai, Elias Ebrahim Aman, and Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry, "Ecotourism Practices, Perspectives, and Consumer Preferences, Attitudes, and Expectations: Post-COVID-19 Review," in *Tourist Behaviour and the New Normal, Volume II*, ed. Shem Wambugu Maingi, Vanessa Gb Gowreesunkar, and Maximiliano E Korstanje (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024), 152, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45866-8_9.

¹⁴ Ignasi Capdevila and Mattas I. Zarlenga, "Smart City or Smart Citizens? The Barcelona Case," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2585682>; Montserrat Pareja-Eastaway and Josep Miquel Piqué, 'Urban Regeneration and the Creative Knowledge Economy: The Case of 22@ in Barcelona', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal* 4, no. 4 (1 June 2011), <https://doi.org/10.69554/DSXU2002>.

¹⁵ See table 3 in Romão, Domènec, and Nijkamp, "Tourism in Common," 238.

¹⁶ Anne Hoppen, Lorraine Brown, and Alan Fyall, "Literary Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges for the Marketing and Branding of Destinations?," *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 3, no. 1 (March 2014): 39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2013.12.009>.

¹⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "La Ciudad Narrada," Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/barcelona/la-ciudad-narrada>.

references in works like *Don Quixote*¹⁸ and *The Cemetery of Forgotten Books*¹⁹, as well as a vibrant network of festivals, bookshops, and institutions like the Institut de les Lletres Catalanes (Institute of Catalan Letters) and Instituto Ramon Llull (Institute Ramon Llull)²⁰. To address challenges like overcrowding²¹, literary activities can be decentralised to lesser-known areas²², supporting local culture and community cohesion.

Culture-Led Urban Regeneration

Culture-led regeneration revitalises urban areas through cultural investment. Barcelona's post-Olympic²³ transformation is a prime example, with festivals and cultural programming rebranding marginalised spaces²⁴ and fostering local pride²⁵. Literary events, such as public readings, festivals, and workshops, can similarly revitalise parks, libraries, and bookshops²⁶, turning them into cultural hubs²⁷. This approach reinforces local identity while aligning with broader urban regeneration goals²⁸.

¹⁸ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Barcelona Ciudad de La Literature - Candidatura Para La Red de Ciudades Creativas UNESCO - Dossier de Candidatura', Barcelona Ciudad de La Literatura (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, July 2015), 24-25, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/sites/default/files/upload-files/dossier_de_candidatura_es_0.pdf; Turisme de Catalunya, "Quijote y Cervantes En Barcelona," *Turisme de Catalunya* (blog), accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.catalunya.com/es/continguts/rutes-itineraris/quiero-y-cervantes-en-barcelona-24-1-68>.

¹⁹ Planeta, "Tetralogía El Cementerio de Los Libros Olvidados (Pack)," *Planeta de Libros* (blog), n.d., <https://www.planetadelibros.com/libro-tetralogia-el-cementerio-de-los-libros-olvidados-pack/243819>.

²⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura,' 27-28.

²¹ Sara González, "Bilbao and Barcelona 'in Motion'. How Urban Regeneration 'Models' Travel and Mutate in the Global Flows of Policy Tourism," *Urban Studies* 48, no. 7 (May 2011): 1398, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098010374510>; Romão, Domènec, and Nijkamp, "Tourism in Common," 232.

²² Danielle Bishop, Montserrat Pareja-Eastaway, and Montserrat Simó Solsona, "The End of 'Business As Usual'? Reimagining Barcelona Tourism After (COVID)-19," *Tourism Culture & Communication* 23, no. 2 (September 1, 2023): 291, <https://doi.org/10.3727/109830422X16600594683328>.

²³ Romão, Domènec, and Nijkamp, "Tourism in Common," 228.

²⁴ Graeme Evans, "Measure for Measure: Evaluating the Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration," *Urban Studies* 42, no. 5-6 (May 2005): 968, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107102>.

²⁵ Alessandra Ricciardelli and Nicola Raimo, "Culture as Driver of Urban Regeneration: The Role of Organisational Aesthetics from Design to Social Innovation Model," in *Assessing Sustainability and Organizational Innovation of Urban Regeneration Projects*, by Alessandra Ricciardelli and Nicola Raimo, vol. 3, The City Project (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 39, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20200-1_3.

²⁶ Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona, "Redefining Strategies for Consolidated Destinations: Proposals for Literary Tourism," *Estudios Turísticos*, no. 226 (December 30, 2023): 44, <https://doi.org/10.61520/et.2262023.1220>.

²⁷ Evans, "Measure for Measure," 968.

²⁸ Mónica Degen and Marisol García, "The Transformation of the 'Barcelona Model': An Analysis of Culture, Urban Regeneration and Governance," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36, no. 5 (September 2012): 1022-38, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01152.x>.

Urban Spaces and Community Engagement

Public spaces encompass both natural and constructed environments, such as squares, parks, and libraries²⁹, facilitate social interaction and cultural participation by remaining broadly accessible, though access is sometimes limited³⁰. Community engagement involves collaboration between individuals, institutions, and local authorities to collaborate to an inclusive, sustainable urban life³¹. Literary events offer both residents and visitors meaningful encounters with the city's identity³². To ensure cultural initiatives reflect diverse needs³³, participatory planning must address issues like commercialisation, displacement, and environmental impact. Collaboration across public and private sectors³⁴, as seen in partnerships with the Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (Barcelona City Council)³⁵, can support development.

Table 1.1 below summarises the main concepts used throughout the thesis, including definitions, examples, and key references.

²⁹ Joaquim Rius Ulldemolins, “Culture and Authenticity in Urban Regeneration Processes: Place Branding in Central Barcelona,” *Urban Studies* 51, no. 14 (November 2014): 3026–45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098013515762>.

³⁰ Hooman Ghahremani et al., “Transformation of Urban Spaces within Cities in the Context of Globalization and Urban Competitiveness,” *Journal of Urban Planning and Development* 147, no. 3 (September 2021): 3, [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)UP.1943-5444.0000703](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)UP.1943-5444.0000703).

³¹ Medina, Benedict Omandap. “Community Engagement Of State Universities And Colleges In The Philippines: Towards Socially And Culturally Responsible Research And Extension Initiatives,” Vol. 3. 4. International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications IJARP, 2019, 20, <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:212746786>.

³² Crespi-Vallbona, “Redefining Strategies for Consolidated Destinations.”

³³ Crespi-Vallbona, “Redefining Strategies for Consolidated Destinations,” 47.

³⁴ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Dossier de Candidatura,” 17.

³⁵ Agustín Cocola-Gant and Antonio Lopez-Gay, “Transnational Gentrification, Tourism and the Formation of ‘Foreign Only’ Enclaves in Barcelona,” *Urban Studies* 57, no. 15 (November 2020): 3026, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020916111>; Barcelona Turisme, “SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY” (Barcelona: Barcelona Turisme, 2023), 9, https://barcelonaturisme.com/uploads/web/bst/EstrategiaTurismeSostenibleBarcelonaTurisme23-25_ENG.pdf; Javier Luis Fernández Fernández, “El Turismo Sostenible En España. Análisis de Los Planes Estratégicos de Sostenibilidad de Zaragoza y Barcelona,” *ROTUR. Revista de Ocio y Turismo* 14, no. 1 (February 8, 2020): 99, <https://doi.org/10.17979/rotur.2020.14.1.5942>; González, “Bilbao and Barcelona ‘in Motion’. How Urban Regeneration ‘Models’ Travel and Mutate in the Global Flows of Policy Tourism,” 1398; José A. Mansilla and Claudio Milano, “Becoming Centre: Tourism Placemaking and Space Production in Two Neighborhoods in Barcelona,” *Tourism Geographies* 24, no. 4–5 (July 29, 2022): 599–620, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2019.1571097>; Neil Hughes, “‘Tourists Go Home’: Anti-Tourism Industry Protest in Barcelona,” *Social Movement Studies* 17, no. 4 (July 4, 2018): 474, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1468244>; Romão, Domènech, and Nijkamp, “Tourism in Common,” 232; Anett Tózsér, “Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Using Barcelona as A Case Study,” *Turisztikai És Vidékfejlesztési Tanulmányok* 6, no. 2 (2021): 123, <https://doi.org/10.15170/tvt.2021.06.02.08>.

Table 1.1 Summary of this Thesis' Main Concepts

Concept	Definition	Example	References
Sustainable tourism	A sustainable alternative to mass tourism, balancing environmental, economic, and socio-cultural priorities through stakeholder participation and meaningful experiences.	In Barcelona: To promote key cultural celebrations and highlight tourism experiences that help recover and preserve the city's natural, cultural, and heritage assets.	Barcelona Turisme, "SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY," 21–22; Kangai, Aman, and Papp–Váry, "Ecotourism Practices, Perspectives, and Consumer Preferences, Attitudes, and Expectations," 152; UN Tourism, "Sustainable Development."
Heritage tourism	Place-based travel rooted in local landscapes, architecture, people, and stories, engaging with tangible and intangible heritage to preserve cultural legacies for future generations.	Visiting the home of an author; Visiting historic libraries or archives (e.g. Biblioteca de Catalunya); Exploring places featured in or that inspired literary works (e.g. Passeig de Gràcia)	Hoppen, Brown, and Fyall, "Literary Tourism," 39–40; Jordan and Jolliffe, "Heritage Tourism in the Caribbean," 1.
Cultural tourism	Travel to experience a destination's artistic, historical, and cultural life, focusing less on place-based heritage and more on the meanings shaped by cultural figures and narratives.	Viewing the author's writing as part of the experience of visiting their home; Attending a literary-themed theatre adaptation or performance	Hoppen, Brown, and Fyall, "Literary Tourism," 39–40; Richa and Prof. B. P. Naithani, "A Review of Cultural Tourism," 45–50.
Literary tourism	Travel to places linked to literary works, authors, or events, offering site-specific experiences that blend cultural and heritage tourism to preserve literary heritage and support local economies.	Includes real or fictional sites, author-related locations, literary festivals, bookshop tourism, travel writing, and film-inspired literary experiences.	Çevik, "Literary Tourism as a Field of Research over the Period 1997–2016;" Hoppen, Brown, and Fyall, 'Literary Tourism' Quintero, Carreira, and Rodrigues Gonçalves, 'Coimbra as a Literary Tourism Destination'.
Culture-led urban regeneration	Strategically planned cultural initiatives that drive urban change, foster belonging, and engage local communities through high-profile, place-making projects.	EXPO sites, festivals; museums, cultural centres, former warehouses; cultural programs.	Evans, "Measure for Measure," 968; Healy, "Bilbao City– A Global Leader in Culture Led Urban Regeneration," Lin and Hsing, "Culture–Led Urban Regeneration and Community Mobilisation," 1318.
Public urban spaces	Publicly accessible natural or built spaces that reflect urban culture, shape identities, and express evolving social dynamics and power relations.	Streets, squares, open spaces, parks, suburbs, private shopping malls, major public buildings where activities of leisure and social interaction take place.	Ghahremani et al., "Transformation of Urban Spaces within Cities in the Context of Globalization and Urban Competitiveness," 3; Low, "Urban Public Spaces as Representations of Culture," 5; Siláčí and Vitková, "Public Spaces as the Reflection of Society and Its Culture," 2.
Community engagement	Involves collaboration among individuals and groups to address issues, foster positive change, and build partnerships that benefit both communities and institutions over time; community is involved in decision-making processes.	Through public libraries; volunteering; communities with a history of successful collaboration.	Blackburn, "Community Engagement, Cultural Competence and Two Australian Public Libraries and Indigenous Communities," 288–301; Medina, "Community Engagement Of State Universities And Colleges In The Philippines: Towards Socially And Culturally Responsible Research And Extension Initiatives," 20; Sanders Thompson et al., "Strategies of Community Engagement in Research," 441–51; Usmaedi et al., "CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT A NEW PARADIGM FOR SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY," 54.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature discussed in Chapter 1, Sections 1.3–1.4.

1.4 Literature Review

Historical Development of Tourism in Barcelona since 1992

Barcelona underwent significant transformations after the 1992 Summer Olympics, revitalising infrastructure and rebranding itself as a global tourist destination³⁶. Hotel guests rose from 1.73 million in

³⁶ Romão, Domènech, and Nijkamp, "Tourism in Common," 228–30.

1990 to approximately 7.8 million by 2023³⁷. While tourism boosted employment and investment³⁸, it also brought challenges: overcrowding, infrastructural challenges, and cultural commodification³⁹.

In response to unsustainable mass tourism⁴⁰, the Barcelona City Council introduced strategies like the Barcelona Tourism 2020 Plan⁴¹ and the current Tourism 2023–2027 Plan⁴². These initiatives promote sustainable models by managing tourist flows, encouraging decentralisation, and fostering coexistence between visitors and residents. Niche forms like cultural tourism, responsible for 20.9 million visits in 2013⁴³, and literary tourism align with this approach by deepening visitor engagement and highlighting local identity.

Literary tourism, a subset of cultural tourism which is central to Barcelona's appeal⁴⁴, links visitors with the city's literary heritage while promoting sustainability⁴⁵. Municipal efforts such as the 1998 Library Plan⁴⁶ and the Barcelona Libraries 2023 Master Plan 2030⁴⁷ have modernised the library

³⁷ Ana M López, “Number of Tourists in Hotels in Barcelona, Spain from 1990 to 2023 (in 1,000s),” *Statista* (blog), May 29, 2024, <https://www-statista-com.ezproxy2.lib.gla.ac.uk/statistics/452060/number-of-tourists-in-barcelona-spain/>.

³⁸ Ana M López, “Contribution of the Tourism Sector to the Gross Domestic Product in Spain from 2006 to 2022, with a Forecast for 2023 (in Billion Euros),” *Statista* (blog), May 24, 2024, <https://www-statista-com.ezproxy2.lib.gla.ac.uk/statistics/640440/travel-tourism-total-gdp-contribution-spain/>.

³⁹ See table 2 in Francesc González-Reverté and Anna Soliguer-Guix, “Tourismification Narratives and the ‘Transformative Turn’ in Tourism. An Analysis Derived from the Spanish Press Debate on the Barcelona Tourism Model,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 25, no. 5 (October 2022): 1330-31, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494221084119>; Bishop, Pareja-Eastaway, and Solsona, “The End of ‘Business As Usual’?”

⁴⁰ Maria Abril Sellares, M. C. Azpelicueta, and María Dolores Sánchez-Fernandez, “TURISMO SOSTENIBLE: LUGAREÑOS FRENTE A TURISTAS. EL CASO DE LA CIUDAD DE BARCELONA,” *HOLOS* 3 (July 24, 2015): 333, <https://doi.org/10.15628/holos.2015.2809>.

⁴¹ Arias et al., “Barcelona Tourism for 2020 A Collective Strategy for Sustainable Tourism.”

⁴² Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Mesura de Govern per a La Gestió Turística 2024 - 2027,” Àrea d’Economia, Hisenda, Promoció, Econòmica i Turisme (Barcelona, September 2024), https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/241017_mdgturisme.pdf.

⁴³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Dossier de Candidatura;” 16.

⁴⁴ Ana M López, “Number of Trips for Cultural Reasons Made by International Tourists to Spain from 2010 to 2022 (in 1,000s),” *Statista* (blog), May 22, 2024, <https://www-statista-com.ezproxy2.lib.gla.ac.uk/statistics/772607/international-tourists-for-cultural-reasons-in-spain/>; Statista, “INDUSTRIES & MARKETS Travel and Tourism in Barcelona,” 23.

⁴⁵ Jordi Arcos-Pumarola, Eugeni Osácar Marzal, and Nayra Llonch-Molina, “Literary Urban Landscape in a Sustainable Tourism Context,” *HUMAN GEOGRAPHIES – JOURNAL OF STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY* 12, no. 2 (November 27, 2018): 180-81, <https://doi.org/10.5719/hgeo.2018.122.3>.

⁴⁶ Marta Pérez, “BARCELONA CULTURE 07 REPORT” (Barcelona: Barcelona City Council Institute of Culture, 2007), <https://www.bcn.cat/cultura/docs/MemoriaICUB07Eng.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Barcelona Libraries Consortium, “BARCELONA LIBRARIES 2030 MASTER PLAN Right to Read and to Access to Information and Knowledge. Fostering Creative Practices and Community Participation” (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, July 2023), <https://bcnroc.ajuntament.barcelona.cat/jspui/handle/11703/132026>.

network, promoted reading, and supported literary programming, drawing up to 79,000 participants in 2014⁴⁸.

Major events like Sant Jordi's Day, celebrated every April 23rd⁴⁹ since 1929⁵⁰, transform the city into a vibrant open-air book market, attracting both locals and tourists⁵¹. Other prominent festivals include BCNegra (crime fiction, since 2005; 10,000 participants in 2015, 8,700 in 2024)⁵², Barcelona Poesia (est. 1985)⁵³, and Món Llibre (children's festival since 2005; 25,000 attendees in 2015)⁵⁴. By 2019, Barcelona had distributed 10,000 copies of its literary map with 274 sites, organised 633 literary activities with 15,000 participants, and taken part in 15 international book festivals⁵⁵.

Looking ahead, new initiatives like the Book & Music Festival (2025)⁵⁶ and the city's role as Guest of Honour at the 2025 Guadalajara International Book Fair⁵⁷ further position Barcelona as a global

⁴⁸ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 46.

⁴⁹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 44.

⁵⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Sant Jordi', Cultura Popular, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelona.cat/culturapopular/en/festivals-and-traditions/sant-jordi>.

⁵¹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Sant Jordi'; Amparo Pérez, "Barcelona Celebra Sant Jordi 2024 Con La Vista Puesta En El Cielo," *El País*, April 23, 2024, <https://elpais.com/espana/catalunya/2024-04-23/barcelona-celebra-sant-jordi-2024-con-la-vista-puesta-en-el-cielo.html>.

⁵² Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 40.

⁵³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Barcelona Poesia', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), 2025, <https://www.barcelona.cat/barcelonapoesia/ca/>; Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Festivales," Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), n.d., https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/difusion-literaria/festivales#sant_jordi - 23 de abril.

⁵⁴ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 41; MÓN LLIBRE, "Festa Del Llibre per a Nens i Nenes," *Mac Ba* (blog), abril 2010, <https://www.macba.cat/ca/activitats/mon-llibre-2/>.

⁵⁵ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Barcelona Ciutat de La Literatura UNESCO 2016-2019 Memòria d'Activitats," Barcelona Ciudad de La Literatura UNESCO (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019), 32, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/sites/default/files/upload-files/memoria_bcn_ciutat_de_literatura-26-9-19.pdf.

⁵⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Literatura y Música Unidas En Un Nuevo Festival," Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), December 19, 2024, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/noticia/literatura-i-musica-unides-en-un-nou-festival_1466605; Book Musical Festival, "FESTIVAL OF MUSICAL LITERATURE," 2024, <https://www.bookmusicfestival.com/en>.

⁵⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "The Countdown Begins for an Edition of the International Book Fair with Barcelona as Guest of Honour," Barcelona Cultura, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), September 12, 2024, https://www.barcelona.cat/barcelonacultura/en/barcelona-cultura/guadalajara-estafeta_1463104; Adam Critchley, "Guadalajara's Guest of Honor Spain Announces Its Program," *Publishing Perspectives* (blog), July 10, 2024, <https://publishingperspectives.com/2024/07/guadalajara-guest-of-honor-spain-announces-its-program/>.

literary hub. Literary tours⁵⁸, book clubs, publishing houses, and bookstore collaborations continue to reinforce this identity⁵⁹.

Barcelona's tourism evolution highlights the urgency of cultural, sustainable⁶⁰, and community-centred approaches⁶¹. Literary tourism, through events like Sant Jordi's Day⁶², BCNegra⁶³, and Barcelona Poesia⁶⁴, demonstrates how cities can preserve cultural identity, decentralise tourism, and promote inclusive urban development⁶⁵.

Towards Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism offers a framework for managing travel and cultural experiences in cities like Barcelona, balancing environmental protection with economic and social sustainability⁶⁶. Unlike mass tourism⁶⁷, it prioritises local communities' cultural authenticity and longterm benefits for all

⁵⁸ Barcelona Turisme, "Literary Tour of Barcelona," Barcelona Tickets, *Barcelona Turisme* (blog), n.d., <https://bcnshop.barcelonaturisme.com/shopv3/en/product/19880/literary-tour-of-barcelona.html>; Barcelona Turisme, "Literary Trails," Barcelona Experience, *Barcelona Turisme* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/4405/trails.html>; CCCB, 'Literary Tours through Orwell's Barcelona', CCCB (blog), June 2024, <https://www.cccb.org/en/activities/file/literary-tours-through-orwells-barcelona/244926>.

⁵⁹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 31-35; Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Mapa Literario," Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), 2023, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/difusion-literaria/mapa-literario>; Ajuntament de Barcelona, "2025 Llega Con Nuevos Clubs de Lectura En Las Bibliotecas de Barcelona," Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), January 10, 2025, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/noticia/en-el-2025-llega-con-nuevos-clubes-de-lectura-2-2_1470437; Barcelona Secreta, "Las Mejores Librerías de Barcelona Para Encontrar Tu Libro Ideal," *Barcelona Secreta* (blog), May 13, 2024, <https://barcelonasecreta.com/mejores-librerias-de-barcelona/>; Barcelona Turisme, "Literary Corner," Barcelona Experience, *Barcelona Turisme* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/5649/literary-corner.html>; Barcelona Turisme, "Literary Tradition."

⁶⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 17; José Antonio Donaire Benito et al., "Do Not Cross the Line: Planning the Limits of Tourism in Barcelona," *Boletín de La Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles*, no. 83 (December 12, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.21138/bage.2835>.

⁶¹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 22.

⁶² Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Diálogos de Sant Jordi', *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelona.cat/santjordi/es/dialogos-de-sant-jordi>.

⁶³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'BCNegra Actividades Destacadas', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), 2025, <https://www.barcelona.cat/bcnegra/es>.

⁶⁴ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Barcelona Poesia'.

⁶⁵ Arcos-Pumarola, Marzal, and Llonch-Molina, "Literary Urban Landscape in a Sustainable Tourism Context," 180-81.

⁶⁶ Fernández Fernández, "El Turismo Sostenible En España. Análisis de Los Planes Estratégicos de Sostenibilidad de Zaragoza y Barcelona."

⁶⁷ Tőzsér, "Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Using Barcelona as A Case Study."

stakeholders⁶⁸. In Spain, sustainability has become central to tourism policy, reflecting a national shift toward more responsible practices⁶⁹.

In Barcelona, sustainable tourism aligns with literary tourism by emphasising cultural preservation and authentic engagement. Events like Sant Jordi's Day celebrate literature and tradition⁷⁰, transforming public spaces like Las Ramblas and Plaça de Catalunya into vibrant cultural hubs. However, their popularity often leads to overcrowding, challenging infrastructure capacity and affecting residents' daily lives⁷¹, highlighting the need for better tourism management⁷².

Sustainable tourism pursues three goals: improving residents' quality of life, meeting tourist demand, and protecting the environment⁷³. Socio-cultural sustainability focuses on tourism's impact on host communities⁷⁴, involving local actors like Instituto de Cultura de Barcelona (Cultural Institute of Barcelona, ICUB)⁷⁵ in planning processes to align tourism benefits with community needs⁷⁶. Events like Sant Jordi foster pride and belonging while showcasing local traditions⁷⁷.

Economically, sustainable tourism promotes job creation, fair trade, and investment in eco-friendly infrastructure⁷⁸. Still, governance challenges, shifting tourist preferences, and inconsistent

⁶⁸ Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona and Shannon Gail Smith, "Managing Sociocultural Sustainability in Public Heritage Spaces," *Tourism Planning & Development* 17, no. 6 (November 1, 2020): 636–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2019.1683885>; Zhenhua Liu, "Sustainable Tourism Development: A Critique," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11, no. 6 (December 20, 2003): 460, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580308667216>.

⁶⁹ Fernández Fernández, "El Turismo Sostenible En España. Análisis de Los Planes Estratégicos de Sostenibilidad de Zaragoza y Barcelona," 98.

⁷⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "The Tradition," *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.barcelona.cat/santjordi/en/tradition>.

⁷¹ Bishop, Pareja-Eastaway, and Solsona, "The End of 'Business As Usual'?", 282.

⁷² Tőzsér, "Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Using Barcelona as A Case Study."

⁷³ Liu, "Sustainable Tourism Development," 460.

⁷⁴ Crespi-Vallbona and Smith, "Managing Sociocultural Sustainability in Public Heritage Spaces."

⁷⁵ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 27.

⁷⁶ Agusta Ika Prihanti et al., "The Social Dimensions' Aspects of Sustainable Tourism Development Analysis: A Systematic Literature Review," *Digital Press Social Sciences and Humanities* 4 (2020): 7, <https://doi.org/10.29037/digitalpress.44348>; Pol Pareto Boada et al., "Sostenibilidad Social Del Turismo En Barcelona: Un Análisis Geoespacial," 2020, <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:229270664>.

⁷⁷ Ramdhan Kurniawan, "Sustainable Tourism Development: A Systematic Literature Review of Best Practices and Emerging Trends," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach Sciences and Technologies* 1, no. 2 (March 24, 2024): 97–119, <https://doi.org/10.62207/8qsmcg37>.

⁷⁸ Kurniawan, "Sustainable Tourism Development."

policies complicate implementation. As locals and travellers increasingly seek localised experiences⁷⁹, destinations must adapt to new expectations. Overcrowding and social tension further challenge the balance between resident and visitor needs⁸⁰.

To address these pressures, Barcelona must adopt longterm governance approaches⁸¹ that involve communities, balance stakeholder interests, and integrate sustainable planning⁸². Literary tourism, when designed inclusively, supports these goals by leveraging the city's identity as a UNESCO CoL⁸³, promoting cultural participation, and ensuring tourism coexists with local life.

By reducing overcrowding and encouraging inclusive use of public spaces, Barcelona can protect its cultural identity while offering enriching travel experiences. Sustainable tourism provides a pathway for balancing economic development with socio-cultural and environmental preservation⁸⁴.

Literary Tourism as Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Literary tourism, a niche⁸⁵ within cultural and heritage tourism⁸⁶, connects visitors to destinations through real or fictional literary associations⁸⁷, via landmarks, festivals, or bookshops⁸⁸. It transforms places into cultural attractions while bridging intangible heritage (stories, practices) with tangible elements (sites, objects), creating immersive experiences that link visitors to local identity⁸⁹. Events like literary

⁷⁹ Liu, “Sustainable Tourism Development,” 462-63.

⁸⁰ Blanca Aliaga et al., “The Sociocultural Impacts of Language Tourism in Barcelona,” *Ottoman Journal of Tourism and Management Research* 4, no. 1 (February 28, 2019): 415-16, <https://doi.org/10.26465/ojtmr.2018339519>.

⁸¹ Liu, “Sustainable Tourism Development,” 462-63.

⁸² Kurniawan, “Sustainable Tourism Development.”

⁸³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Dossier de Candidatura,” 12; UNESCO, “Cities of Literature - Barcelona.”

⁸⁴ Fernández Fernández, “El Turismo Sostenible En España. Análisis de Los Planes Estratégicos de Sostenibilidad de Zaragoza y Barcelona.”

⁸⁵ Quinteiro, Carreira, and Rodrigues Gonçalves, “Coimbra as a Literary Tourism Destination,” 363.

⁸⁶ Hoppen, Brown, and Fyall, “Literary Tourism,” 37–47.

⁸⁷ Hoppen, Brown, and Fyall, “Literary Tourism.”

⁸⁸ Samet Çevik, “Literary Tourism as a Field of Research over the Period 1997-2016,” *European Journal of Tourism Research* 24, no. 2407 (March 1, 2020), 11, <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v24i.409>.

⁸⁹ Susan Carson et al., “Literature, Tourism and the City: Writing and Cultural Change,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 15, no. 4 (August 8, 2017): 381, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2016.1165237>.

festivals⁹⁰ foster cultural engagement and sustainability by balancing economic benefit with cultural preservation⁹¹. Still, challenges like overcrowding⁹² and overdevelopment require careful management⁹³.

Barcelona offers a rich case for literary tourism. Its literary heritage includes authors like Jacint Verdaguer⁹⁴, Montserrat Roig⁹⁵, George Orwell⁹⁶, and Gabriel García Márquez⁹⁷. Events like Sant Jordi's Day⁹⁸, BCNegra⁹⁹, and Barcelona Poesia¹⁰⁰ integrate literature into public life and support identity-building and cultural storytelling. While such promotion helps cities attract cultural tourists¹⁰¹, it can also risk reducing identity to a single narrative¹⁰². Balancing celebration with diversity is key.

As a UNESCO CoL, Barcelona leverages literary tourism for sustainable development and international collaboration¹⁰³. City branding efforts involve publishers, cultural institutions¹⁰⁴, and digital

⁹⁰ Çevik, "Literary Tourism as a Field of Research over the Period 1997-2016."

⁹¹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 12; Shelagh J. Squire, "Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism: Promoting 'Anne of Green Gables' in Prince Edward Island," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 4, no. 3 (October 1, 1996): 119-34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669589608667263>.

⁹² Squire, "Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism," 127-30.

⁹³ Squire, "Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism," 129.

⁹⁴ Generalitat de Catalunya, 'Jacint Verdaguer: The Poet of the People', *Patrimoni Cultural* (blog), accessed 8 June 2025, <https://patrimoni.gencat.cat/en/collection/jacint-verdaguer>.

⁹⁵ Mercè Ibarz, 'Montserrat Roig, up-Close and from Afar', *Barcelona Metropolis* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelona.cat/bcnmetropolis/2007-2017/en/calaixera/biografies/montserrat-roig-de-lluny-i-de-prop/>.

⁹⁶ Turisme de Barcelona, "Vive La Barcelona Más Literaria," *Barcelona Experience* (blog), March 24, 2017, <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/es/enjoy/52/vive-la-barcelona-mas-literaria.html>.

⁹⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 25.

⁹⁸ Barcelona Turisme, "Sant Jordi, UNESCO World Book Day," *Barcelona Experience*, *Barcelona Turisme* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/3409/sant-jordi-unesco-world-book-day-.html>.

⁹⁹ Barcelona Turisme, "Resultats Cerca d'agenda - Literature," *Barcelona Experience*, *Barcelona Turisme* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/categorias/91/literature.html>; Julia Cuesta, "Vuelve BCNegra 2024: Programa, Horarios y Actividades Inmersivas," *Barcelona Secreta* (blog), February 8, 2024, <https://barcelonasecreta.com/bcnegra-2024-festival-novela-negra-barcelona/>.

¹⁰⁰ Barcelona Cultura, "Barcelona Poesia 15-22 Maig 2024," *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.barcelona.cat/barcelonapoesia/ca/home>.

¹⁰¹ Carson et al., "Literature, Tourism and the City," 380.

¹⁰² Carson et al., "Literature, Tourism and the City," 388.

¹⁰³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 12, 31-32, 58-59; Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Empieza La Cuenta Atrás Para Una Edición de La Feria Internacional Del Libro Con Barcelona Como Invitada," *Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO*, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), September 12, 2024, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/noticia/comenca-el-compte-enrere-per-a-una-edicio-de-la-feria-internacional-del-libro-amb-barcelona-com-a-convidada_1461692.

¹⁰⁴ Squire, "Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism."

platforms¹⁰⁵ to create authentic campaigns that appeal to both locals and visitors¹⁰⁶. Interactive maps¹⁰⁷, apps like Literapolis¹⁰⁸, and augmented reality experiences enhance engagement¹⁰⁹, while libraries¹¹⁰, bookshops¹¹¹, and cultural centres serve as venues¹¹² for events like *Letra Petita* (Small Letter; 41,000 participants in 2014)¹¹³, preserving manuscripts and literary landmarks¹¹⁴.

Despite limited academic literature on literary tourism, its interdisciplinary nature calls for deeper investigation into its intersections with urban regeneration, cultural diversity, and sustainability. The framework below (Diagram 1.1) illustrates this approach.

¹⁰⁵ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Dossier de Candidatura,” 62.

¹⁰⁶ Bishop, Pareja-Eastaway, and Solsona, “The End of ‘Business As Usual’?,” 281; Greg Richards, “Culture and Authenticity in a Traditional Event: The Views of Producers, Residents, and Visitors in Barcelona,” *Event Management* 11, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 33, <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599508783943228>.

¹⁰⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Barcelona Ciutat de La Literatura UNESCO 2016-2019 Memòria d’Activitats,” 17-20; Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Literary Map of Barcelona*, Barcelona Ciutat de La Literatura (Barcelona: Barcelona Cultura, 2023), https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelliteratura/sites/default/files/upload-files/mapa_eng_2023_cara_0.pdf; Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Mapa Literario.”

¹⁰⁸ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Barcelona Ciutat de La Literatura UNESCO 2016-2019 Memòria d’Activitats,” 21; Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Literapolisbcn,” Barcelona Ciudad de la Literatura UNESCO, *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelliteratura/es/bibliotecas-y-lectura/programa-de-accion-lectora/programa-de-accion-lectora-1920/literapolisbcn>

¹⁰⁹ Carson et al., “Literature, Tourism and the City,” 381; Fernando García Naharro, “Branding like a City: Barcelona and Its Literature at the Buenos Aires Book Fair1,” *Mémoires Du Livre* 11, no. 2 (June 18, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.7202/1070265ar>.

¹¹⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Libraries of Barcelona - Activities,” *Ajuntament de Barcelona* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/biblioteques/ca/bibelclot/activitats>; Biblioteca de Catalunya, “Biblioteca de Catalunya - Home,” *Biblioteca de Catalunya* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.bnc.cat/eng>; Meet Barcelona, “Jaume Fuster Library,” *Meet Barcelona* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.meet.barcelona/en/visit-and-love-it/points-interest-city/biblioteca-jaume-fuster-99400143851>.

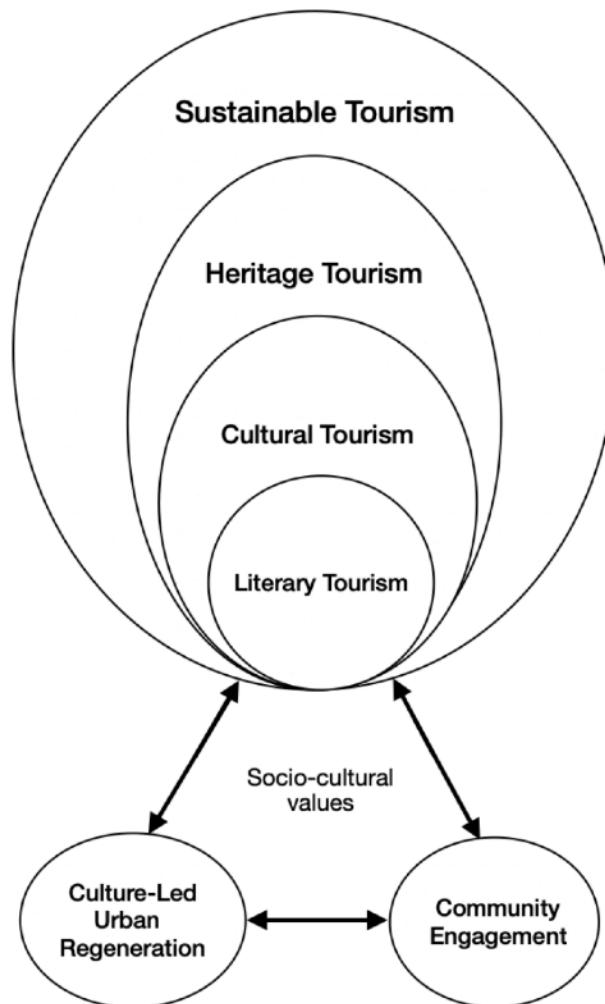
¹¹¹ backstory, “backstory - home,” *backstory* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.backstorybookshop.com>; La Central Librería, “LA CENTRAL LIBRERÍA - Nada Como Un Buen Libro - Agenda,” *La Central Librería* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.lacentral.com/agenda/barcelona>; Laie, “Laie - Agenda de Actividades,” *Laie* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.laie.es/es/agenda>; My Space Barcelona, “BARCELONA’S LITERARY SCENE: FAMOUS AUTHORS AND LITERARY LANDMARKS,” *My Space Barcelona* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, https://www.myspacebarcelona.com/agenda/barcelona-s-literary-scene:-famous-authors-and-literary-landmarks_n1451_a2.aspx.

¹¹² Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Dossier de Candidatura,” 36-37; Ateneu Barcelonès, “Agenda d’activitats,” *Ateneu Barcelonès* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://ateneubcn.cat/programacio/>; CCCB, “CCCB - Main Page,” *CCCB* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.cccb.org/en>; My Space Barcelona, “BARCELONA’S LITERARY SCENE: FAMOUS AUTHORS AND LITERARY LANDMARKS.”

¹¹³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, “Dossier de Candidatura,” 53.

¹¹⁴ David Herbert, “Literary Places, Tourism and the Heritage Experience,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 28, no. 2 (January 2001): 312-33, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(00\)00048-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00048-7).

Diagram 1.1 Theoretical Framework on the Sustainability of Literary Tourism and its Socio-cultural Impacts



Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.3 and 1.4.

This model positions literary tourism within broader cultural and heritage tourism, linking it to sustainable development goals. It demonstrates how literature-based experiences foster decentralised tourism aligned with Barcelona's sustainability strategy and UNESCO guidelines.

By generating socio-cultural values like identity, participation, and belonging, literary tourism bridges tourism policy and urban planning. These values support two urban outcomes: culture-led urban regeneration and community engagement. Literary events help revitalise underused spaces, give meaning to places, and promote inclusive participation.

The framework guides the thesis structure: Chapters 2 to 4 each explore one thematic pillar, sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement, drawing on events and policy

documents from the Barcelona City Council¹¹⁵. Chapter 5 synthesises these insights using interviews and survey data to evaluate literary tourism as an urban strategy.

This approach positions literary tourism not just as a niche activity, but as a tool for sustainable and urban transformation when supported by inclusive policies and community-led practices. By linking literature to cultural preservation, regeneration, and community life, Barcelona offers a compelling model for cities seeking to balance tourism growth with cultural sustainability¹¹⁶. Additionally, literary tourism also supports the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 11 (UN's SDG) by promoting inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities through cultural participation, accessibility, and the revitalisation of public spaces¹¹⁷.

Culture-Led Regeneration and Urban Spaces

Urban spaces are central to literary tourism, functioning as cultural platforms¹¹⁸ that foster community well-being, inclusion, and social interaction¹¹⁹. These spaces, both natural and constructed, such as parks and libraries, offer broad, though not unlimited, public access¹²⁰. In Barcelona, spaces like Passeig de Gràcia¹²¹ are transformed during literary festivals into vibrant arenas for cultural exchange.

Culture-led urban regeneration revitalises cities through strategically planned cultural initiatives¹²² that enhance public spaces, strengthen local identity¹²³, and foster a sense of belonging. High-profile

¹¹⁵ Ajuntament de Barcelona stands for Barcelona's town hall.

¹¹⁶ Squire, "Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism," 130.

¹¹⁷ Dorotea Ottaviani, Claudia De Luca, and Hanna Elisabet Åberg, "Achieving the SDGs through Cultural Tourism: Evidence from Practice in the TExTOUR Project," *European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy* 14 (January 31, 2024): 11, <https://doi.org/10.3389/ejcmp.2024.12238>.

¹¹⁸ Umut Doğan, "A Comparison of Space Quality in Streets in the Context of Public Open Space Design: The Example of Izmir, Barcelona, and Liverpool," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 45, no. 7 (August 9, 2023): 1282–1315, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2021.1919018>.

¹¹⁹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 12.

¹²⁰ Ghahremani et al., "Transformation of Urban Spaces within Cities in the Context of Globalization and Urban Competitiveness," 3.

¹²¹ Turespaña, "Festival of Sant Jordi in Barcelona," *Spain's Official Tourism Website* (blog), accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.spain.info/en/discover-spain/fiesta-sant-jordi-barcelona/>.

¹²² Ü. E. Uysal and P. Özden, "Cultural Tourism as a Tool for Urban Regeneration in Istanbul," 2011, 389–400, <https://doi.org/10.2495/ST110351>.

¹²³ Azadeh Lak, Mahdi Gheitasi, and Dallen J. Timothy, "Urban Regeneration through Heritage Tourism: Cultural Policies and Strategic Management," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 18, no. 4 (July 3, 2020): 386–403, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2019.1668002>.

events create distinct landmarks and experiences that reconnect communities with places¹²⁴. However, this model also brings risks: gentrification can displace residents and businesses¹²⁵; privatisation can limit access to public spaces¹²⁶; and commodification may replace authentic narratives with commercial appeal¹²⁷. Superficial participation further weakens trust and longterm success¹²⁸. In Barcelona, managing tourism's spatial impact is essential to protecting community life and urban well-being¹²⁹.

A community-led approach to regeneration prioritises local participation and aligns cultural projects with residents' aspirations¹³⁰. By integrating social and cultural dimensions¹³¹, this model encourages diverse use of shared urban spaces. Combining top-down support with bottom-up involvement fosters accountability, trust, and sustainability¹³².

Despite its challenges, culture-led regeneration can amplify community voices, foster intercultural dialogue, and generate intangible assets such as trust, creativity, and social capital¹³³. Cultural projects, when inclusive, help preserve local identity and build connected communities¹³⁴.

¹²⁴ Evans, "Measure for Measure," 968.

¹²⁵ Bishop, Pareja-Eastaway, and Solsona, "The End of 'Business As Usual'?", 282.

¹²⁶ González-Reverté and Soliquer-Guix, "Tourismification Narratives and the 'Transformative Turn' in Tourism. An Analysis Derived from the Spanish Press Debate on the Barcelona Tourism Model."

¹²⁷ Mansilla and Milano, "Becoming Centre;" Richards, "Culture and Authenticity in a Traditional Event."

¹²⁸ George C. Homsy and Siobhan Hart, "Sustainability Backfire: The Unintended Consequences of Failing to Engage Neighborhood Residents in Policymaking," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 43, no. 3 (March 16, 2021): 414–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2019.1607746>.

¹²⁹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Mesura de Govern per a La Gestió Turística 2024 - 2027;" Àrea d'Economia, Hisenda, Promoció, Econòmica i Turisme (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, September 2024), 57, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/241017_mdgturisme.pdf.

¹³⁰ Sepideh Afsari Bajestani and Ehsan Ranjbar, "Culture-Led Regeneration in Historical and Cultural Areas: The Case of a Historical Quarter in Mashhad, Iran," *Culture Unbound* 16, no. 2 (December 6, 2024), 7, <https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.4551>.

¹³¹ Afsari Bajestani and Ranjbar, "Culture-Led Regeneration in Historical and Cultural Areas," 8.

¹³² Guido Ferilli et al., "Power to the People: When Culture Works as a Social Catalyst in Urban Regeneration Processes (and When It Does Not)," *European Planning Studies* 25, no. 2 (February 2017): 246, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2016.1259397>.

¹³³ Alessandra Ricciardelli and Nicola Raimo, "Urban Regeneration and Sustainability," in *Assessing Sustainability and Organizational Innovation of Urban Regeneration Projects*, by Alessandra Ricciardelli and Nicola Raimo, vol. 3, The City Project (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20200-1_1.

¹³⁴ Ferilli et al., "Power to the People," 245-46.

Balancing cultural preservation with economic development is key to sustainable regeneration. Events like Sant Jordi's Day¹³⁵ transform iconic or underused areas into cultural marketplaces, blending tradition with tourism. Institutions like Biblioteca de Catalunya (Catalonia's Library)¹³⁶ and Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Contemporary Culture Centre of Barcelona, CCCB)¹³⁷ further contribute by hosting inclusive programming that bridges literature with community life.

By including literary tourism into regeneration strategies, Barcelona enhances its public spaces, strengthens community bonds¹³⁸, and reinforces its identity as a UNESCO CoL¹³⁹ and cultural branding¹⁴⁰. Addressing risks like commodification and gentrification while promoting authenticity and inclusion ensures that regeneration remains both culturally rich and socially sustainable, for residents and visitors alike.

Community Engagement Through Literary Tourism

Community engagement is essential to successful literary tourism¹⁴¹. Libraries, bookshops, and literary festivals serve as hubs that connect diverse groups, host cultural activities, and foster cross-sector collaboration. Their reliance on volunteers further strengthens local ties and community engagement¹⁴².

¹³⁵ Tourist Guide Barcelona, "Sant Jordi Festival in Barcelona 2024 - Catalonia's Valentine's Day. The 'Rose and Book' Festival.," *Barcelona Tourist Guide* (blog), accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.barcelona-tourist-guide.com/en/events/sant-jordi/sant-jordi-festival-barcelona.html>.

¹³⁶ Biblioteca de Catalunya stands for Catalonia's Library. Biblioteca de Catalunya, "Biblioteca de Catalunya - Home."

¹³⁷ CCCB, "CCCB - Main Page."

¹³⁸ Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins and Ricardo Klein, "From Top-down Urban Planning to Culturally Sensitive Planning? Urban Renewal and Artistic Activism in a Neo-Bohemian District in Barcelona," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 44, no. 4–5 (May 28, 2022): 524–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2020.1811114>.

¹³⁹ UNESCO, "Cities of Literature - Barcelona."

¹⁴⁰ Rius Ulldemolins, "Culture and Authenticity in Urban Regeneration Processes."

¹⁴¹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 9.

¹⁴² Daisy Fancourt et al., "Social, Cultural and Community Engagement and Mental Health: Cross-Disciplinary, Co-Produced Research Agenda," *BJPsych Open* 7, no. 1 (January 2021): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2020.133>.

Engagement empowers communities¹⁴³ by fostering collaboration to address shared challenges, build partnerships, and promote positive change¹⁴⁴. In cultural tourism, it plays a crucial role in developing inclusive experiences¹⁴⁵ that benefit both residents and visitors.

In Barcelona, community involvement is central to literary tourism. Independent bookshops like La Central¹⁴⁶ and libraries such as Biblioteca Jaume Fuster (Jaume Fuster Library)¹⁴⁷ act as gathering spaces offering programs that connect people to literature and the arts. Events like Kosmopolis at the CCCB¹⁴⁸ involve citizens through workshops, performances, and debates, encouraging public dialogue and reflecting the city's cultural vibrancy.

By collaborating with residents, literary tourism fosters authenticity¹⁴⁹ and cultural preservation¹⁵⁰ while attracting engaged visitors¹⁵¹. This approach reinforces Barcelona's identity as a community-driven cultural destination¹⁵² and strengthens its sustainability. Prioritising participation and partnerships empowers locals and enhances the richness and integrity of literary tourism experiences.

¹⁴³ Gianpaolo Basile et al., "Community Participation as a Driver of Sustainable Tourism. The Case of an Italian Village: Marettimo Island," *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management* 39, no. 1 (May 5, 2021): 82, <https://doi.org/10.7433/s114.2021.06>.

¹⁴⁴ Medina, "Community Engagement Of State Universities And Colleges In The Philippines: Towards Socially And Culturally Responsible Research And Extension Initiatives," 20.

¹⁴⁵ Arcos-Pumarola, Marzal, and Llonch-Molina, "Literary Urban Landscape in a Sustainable Tourism Context," 175–89.

¹⁴⁶ La Central Librería, "LA CENTRAL LIBRERÍA - Nada Como Un Buen Libro - Agenda."

¹⁴⁷ Biblioteca Jaume Fuster stands for Jaume Fuster Library. Meet Barcelona, "Jaume Fuster Library."

¹⁴⁸ Kosmolopis CCCB, "Kosmopolis," *Kosmopolis CCCB* (blog), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://kosmopolis.cccb.org/en/>.

¹⁴⁹ Basile et al., "Community Participation as a Driver of Sustainable Tourism. The Case of an Italian Village," 84.

¹⁵⁰ Basile et al., "Community Participation as a Driver of Sustainable Tourism. The Case of an Italian Village," 86; Biju Gopal, "THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES," *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i2.2023.3196>.

¹⁵¹ Samet Çevik, "How Literary Tourism Changes the Tourists' 'Baggage': A Conceptual Framework for the Educational Function of Literary Tourism," *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism* 24, no. 3 (July 2, 2024): 269–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2024.2341614>.

¹⁵² Richards, "Culture and Authenticity in a Traditional Event."

The Role of Literary Tourism in Sustainable Urban Development

Literary tourism merges heritage, culture, and creativity, turning urban spaces into vibrant cultural hubs¹⁵³. When aligned with sustainable tourism, it helps cities like Barcelona balance economic growth with cultural preservation and community well-being.

To support sustainability, Barcelona must address overcrowding at iconic sites¹⁵⁴, such as during Sant Jordi's Day, by investing in cultural venues in peripheral neighbourhoods. This decentralisation can ease pressure on areas like Las Ramblas, promote inclusion, foster local pride, and stimulate local economies¹⁵⁵. It aligns with sustainable development goals by broadening access to culture and diversifying the visitor experience.

By reimagining urban spaces through literature, embracing digital tools¹⁵⁶, and fostering community engagement, Barcelona enhances its literary appeal while reinforcing community identity¹⁵⁷. Strategic planning rooted in sustainability ensures the city's longterm success as a literary destination and cultural leader.

1.5 Innovative Aspects and Literature Gap

Barcelona, a UNESCO CoL, offers a rich case to explore the intersection of literature, urban space, community engagement, and sustainable tourism. Events like Sant Jordi's Day and BCNegra transform public areas into cultural arenas, blending tradition with contemporary engagement. This research investigates how such events reconfigure spaces to foster community identity, attract cultural tourism, and respond to over-tourism. It examines the potential of literary events to balance cultural heritage, urban development, and tourism while deepening interaction between residents and visitors.

As a global tourist hub, Barcelona faces pressures from overcrowding, infrastructure strain, and a weakening of local identity. This study highlights literary events as a complementary model of sustainable tourism that promotes cultural appreciation. Their ability to redirect visitor flows and encourage resident participation positions them as tools to mitigate the social and spatial impacts of mass tourism.

¹⁵³ Blanca García Henche, Erica Salvaj, and Pedro Cuesta-Valiño, 'A Sustainable Management Model for Cultural Creative Tourism Ecosystems', *Sustainability* 12, no. 22 (17 November 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12229554>.

¹⁵⁴ Tőzsér, "Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Using Barcelona as A Case Study."

¹⁵⁵ Bishop, Pareja-Eastaway, and Solsona, "The End of 'Business As Usual'?", 284, 289.

¹⁵⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 61.

¹⁵⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, "Dossier de Candidatura," 12.

This thesis contributes to growing research linking literature, urban studies, and sustainable tourism. It shows how literary events activate space for cultural exchange, stimulate local pride, and attract diverse publics. Through an interdisciplinary lens, it explores how tangible and intangible heritage shape spatial and community dynamics.

By framing literary tourism as a response to over-tourism, the research advances debates on tourism diversification and decentralisation. Events like Sant Jordi illustrate how cultural programming can redistribute tourism benefits and animate neighbourhoods while maintaining authenticity. The study adds to discussions on how tourism can respect local culture and foster more sustainable urban growth.

Finally, the thesis supports emerging work on community-driven tourism. It positions literary events as participatory tools that empower local actors over extractive models. Ultimately, it offers theoretical and practical insights, presenting Barcelona as a reference for cities seeking to use literature to drive cultural innovation and sustainable tourism development.

1.6 Sources and Challenges of Research

This research draws on oral, written, and visual sources to examine how literary events in Barcelona shape urban spaces and influence cultural and tourism dynamics. Each type contributes to a holistic view of the city's literary tourism ecosystem.

The study uses a qualitative, multi-source methodology combining primary data with document and visual analysis. Core insights stem from four semi-structured interviews with cultural stakeholders from public institutions, libraries, and grassroots spaces. Three were conducted orally (online or in person), one via email. All were transcribed and thematically coded in Atlas.ti¹⁵⁸, generating co-occurrence tables and thematic maps to reveal overlaps and tensions between institutional and community perspectives.

Interviews were complemented by two surveys in Spanish and English (Feb–Apr 2025), collecting 86 valid responses (68 in Spanish, 18 in English). The surveys combined multiple-choice and open-ended questions to assess awareness, participation, and public perception. Open-ended responses were coded in Atlas.ti, enabling comparison with interview data and reinforcing the study's multi-perspective approach.

Written sources, academic literature, policy documents, and blogs (notably from the Ayuntamiento de Barcelona), provided background on local strategies and discourse. While informative, these required critical reading to account for bias and institutional framing.

¹⁵⁸ See Appendix 1, Table 1 for step-by-step explanation of how the coding scheme was conducted.

Visual materials, photographs, festival posters, and literary maps, offered insight into how literary events reshape space and construct narratives. However, as curated materials, they demand cautious interpretation to avoid overstatement.

By critically integrating diverse materials and acknowledging their limitations, the thesis builds a nuanced analysis of literary tourism's role in transforming public spaces and supporting cultural participation and sustainable tourism in Barcelona.

1.7 Methodology

This thesis uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to explore how literary events transform public spaces and support literary tourism in Barcelona. Semi-structured interviews with cultural stakeholders and multilingual surveys of residents and regular visitors enabled a multi-perspective, locally grounded analysis. General tourists were excluded to focus on the city's socio-cultural transformation through the eyes of those most connected to it.

All qualitative data, including interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses, were coded and analysed using Atlas.ti to identify recurring themes, co-occurrences, and conceptual patterns. This coding structure shaped the thematic organisation of subsequent chapters.

Research Design

This design captures both strategic intent and realities. Two groups were studied: institutional and grassroots actors (via interviews) and residents or regular visitors (via surveys). Interviewees included organisers, librarians, and bookshop owners, whose perspectives reflect spatial and policy frameworks. Surveys captured bottom-up experiences, focusing on participation, perceptions, and expectations.

This segmentation enabled a balanced analysis of how literary tourism is shaped from above and negotiated from below, without privileging either perspective.

Online Surveys

Surveys provided primary quantitative data and open-ended insights. Conducted via Google Forms between February and April 2025, they were available in Spanish (n=68) and English (n=18). Distribution through social media, messaging apps, and academic networks ensured broad reach across districts.

Questions included closed and open-ended formats, capturing trends in event awareness, spatial preferences, and views on decentralisation, inclusion, and cultural authenticity. Residents and literary-minded visitors were prioritised for their proximity to and perspectives on everyday urban life.

Challenges included variability in response quality, language imbalance, and an overrepresentation of younger, educated participants. These were mitigated by triangulating findings with interview data and Atlas.ti thematic coding to surface patterns and blind spots.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with key actors in Barcelona's literary ecosystem:

1. Carme Galve Montore (Biblioteca Jaume Fuster)¹⁵⁹
2. Jaume Muñoz Jofre (ICUB)¹⁶⁰
3. Fran Cobo Caballero (Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez)¹⁶¹
4. Abbie Hibler (Backstory Bookshop)¹⁶²

These interviews, conducted online, in person, or via email, explored the strategic, cultural, and infrastructural dimensions of literary events in Barcelona. Key themes included decentralisation, the evolving role of public spaces, and community participation. All interviews were transcribed and thematically coded using Atlas.ti, enabling co-occurrence mapping between codes such as *Urban Regeneration*, *Sustainable Tourism*, and *Community Engagement*. This structured analysis clarified how different stakeholders conceptualise literature's role in urban transformation.

The exclusion of residents and visitors from the interview phase was intentional. Their insights were gathered through surveys, while interviews targeted those responsible for designing, curating, or institutionalising literary programming. This ensured a clear analytical distinction between producers and participants, allowing for a more precise comparison of intentions and outcomes.

This approach came with challenges. Institutional actors may offer strategic, skeptical, overly optimistic narratives, and coordinating interviews with busy stakeholders required persistence. These limitations were mitigated through careful question design, transparent communication, and comparison with survey data to validate claims.

¹⁵⁹ Online interview via Google Meet.

¹⁶⁰ ICUB is the abbreviation for the Cultural Institute of Barcelona. Online interview via Ajuntament Barcelona Webex.

¹⁶¹ Biblioteca Gabriel García Marquéz stands for Gabriel García Marquéz Library. In-person interview in the Library Gabriel García Marquéz.

¹⁶² Email interview due to limited availability of the interviewee.

Chapter II - The Shift Towards Sustainable Tourism

2.1 The Evolution of Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Dimensions

Understanding literary tourism's role in sustainable urban development requires tracing the evolution of sustainable tourism itself, from its ecological roots in the 1960s–70s¹⁶³ to a broader focus on culture¹⁶⁴ and governance¹⁶⁵. Early frameworks such as the 1987 Brundtland Report¹⁶⁶ and Agenda 21¹⁶⁷ emphasised environmental protection, community inclusion, and growth, particularly in the Global South.

As mass tourism intensified in heritage-rich cities, concerns shifted to cultural commodification¹⁶⁸, housing pressures, and identity loss¹⁶⁹. Scholars like Oppermann and Jafari reframed sustainable tourism as a tool for heritage protection and community resilience¹⁷⁰. Since 2010, the field has grown to address governance, access to space, ways to measure impact¹⁷¹.

However, implementation remains uneven. While institutions like the UNWTO¹⁷² promote sustainability, tourism policies still favour growth. Contemporary literature calls for community-based

¹⁶³ Lane, 'Sustainable Tourism,' 11; Shu-Yuan Pan et al., 'Advances and Challenges in Sustainable Tourism toward a Green Economy', *Science of The Total Environment* 635 (September 2018): 453-4, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.04.134>.

¹⁶⁴ Larry Dwyer, 'Tourism Development to Enhance Resident Well-Being: A Strong Sustainability Perspective', *Sustainability* 15, no. 4 (10 February 2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043321>.

¹⁶⁵ Lane, 'Sustainable Tourism'.

¹⁶⁶ Laura Serrano, Antonio Sianes, and Antonio Ariza-Montes, 'Using Bibliometric Methods to Shed Light on the Concept of Sustainable Tourism', *Sustainability* 11, no. 24 (6 December 2019), 2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11246964>.

¹⁶⁷ Anna Torres-Delgado and Francesc López Palomeque, 'The Growth and Spread of the Concept of Sustainable Tourism: The Contribution of Institutional Initiatives to Tourism Policy', *Tourism Management Perspectives* 4 (October 2012): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2012.05.001>; Vasja Roblek et al., 'Evolution of Sustainable Tourism Concepts', *Sustainability* 13, no. 22 (19 November 2021): 15, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212829>; United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, 'Agenda 21', *United Nations Sustainable Development* (blog), 1992, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21>.

¹⁶⁸ Tazim Jamal et al., 'Tourism and Cultural Sustainability: Towards an Eco-Cultural Justice for Place and People', *Tourism Recreation Research* 35, no. 3 (January 2010): 269–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2010.11081643>.

¹⁶⁹ Jamal et al., 'Tourism and Cultural Sustainability'; Sun-Young Park and Jerome Agrusa, 'Short-Term Rental: Disruptively Innovative or Disturbingly Annoying for Residents?', *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 25, no. 8 (2 August 2020): 877-78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2020.1778049>.

¹⁷⁰ Anne Hardy, Robert J. S. Beeton, and Leonie Pearson, 'Sustainable Tourism: An Overview of the Concept and Its Position in Relation to Conceptualisations of Tourism', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10, no. 6 (December 2002): 484-87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580208667183>.

¹⁷¹ Lane, 'Sustainable Tourism'.

¹⁷² Serrano, Sianes, and Ariza-Montes, 'Using Bibliometric Methods to Shed Light on the Concept of Sustainable Tourism,' 11; Torres-Delgado and López Palomeque, 'The Growth and Spread of the Concept of Sustainable Tourism,' 4.

approaches¹⁷³ that integrate cultural identity and place-making, while aligning with global agendas such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals¹⁷⁴.

Within this context, the chapter addresses the first sub-question guiding the research: *How do literary events support sustainable tourism practices in Barcelona?* This question allows for a critical understanding of how literature-based initiatives can contribute to decentralised tourism. As sustainable tourism evolves into a multidimensional concept linking environmental, cultural, and community priorities, the chapter explores how cultural and literary tourism have emerged as strategic responses within this shift. In doing so, it contributes to the broader aim of this thesis: to examine how literary events socio-culturally transform public spaces and support sustainable forms of literary tourism.

The Role of Cultural Tourism in Sustainability

As ideas of sustainability have expanded, culture is increasingly recognised not only as heritage to preserve but as a dynamic force supporting identity, community cohesion, and local economies. Cultural tourism connects environmental, economic, and social goals¹⁷⁵, especially in cities like Barcelona, where culture influences both branding and everyday life.

Initially focused on tangible heritage¹⁷⁶, cultural tourism gained momentum through the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention¹⁷⁷. The 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage

¹⁷³ Dwyer, 'Tourism Development to Enhance Resident Well-Being,' 7-10.

¹⁷⁴ Dwyer, 'Tourism Development to Enhance Resident Well-Being,' 1.

¹⁷⁵ Irene Hanna H. Sihombing, Ni Made Suastini, and Ida Bagus Putu Puja, 'SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE ERA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT', *International Journal of Sustainable Competitiveness on Tourism* 3, no. 02 (31 October 2024): 101, <https://doi.org/10.34013/ijscot.v3i02.1601>.

¹⁷⁶ Jordi Arcos-Pumarola, Nayra Llonch-Molina, and Eugeni Osácar Marzal, 'The Concept of Literary Heritage: A Definition through Bibliographic Review', *Forum for World Literature Studies* 11, no. 1 (January 2019): 99.

¹⁷⁷ Călin Veghes, 'Does Presence on the UNESCO World Heritage List Support Sustainable Development? A Market-Driven Exploratory Approach', *European Journal of Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (1 June 2023), 274-75, <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2023.v12n2p274>.

broadened this scope to include oral traditions and communal practices¹⁷⁸, though it also raised concerns about authenticity when adapted for tourism¹⁷⁹.

By the 2000s, sustainable cultural tourism emerged as an integrated model emphasising governance, authenticity, and community participation. More recently, digitalisation¹⁸⁰ and post-pandemic strategies¹⁸¹ have promoted low-impact, interactive¹⁸² cultural engagement while supporting longterm environmental sustainability¹⁸³.

This evolution, from ecological preservation to inclusive, place-based strategies, is summarised in Table 2.1 below.

¹⁷⁸ Jaime José Orts-Cardador et al., ‘HERITAGE TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OVER THREE DECADES (1994-2023)’, *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* 55, no. 3 (30 September 2024): 1164-65, <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.55317-1289>; Sadanand Gaonkar and Sitaram V. Sukthankar, ‘Measuring and Evaluating the Influence of Cultural Sustainability Indicators on Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development: Scale Development and Validation’, *Helijon* 11, no. 4 (February 2025): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2025.e42514>; Sihombing, Suastini, and Puja, ‘SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE ERA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,’ 106; Veghes, ‘Does Presence on the UNESCO World Heritage List Support Sustainable Development?’, 274-75.

¹⁷⁹ Gaonkar and Sukthankar, ‘Measuring and Evaluating the Influence of Cultural Sustainability Indicators on Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development,’ 3.

¹⁸⁰ Georgiana Daniela Stoica et al., ‘Perspectives for the Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism’, *Sustainability* 14, no. 9 (8 May 2022), 14, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14095678>.

¹⁸¹ Mikel Zubiaga et al., ‘Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Proposal for a Comparative Indicator-Based Framework in European Destinations’, *Sustainability* 16, no. 5 (1 March 2024), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16052062>.

¹⁸² Marina Strepetova and Jordi Arcos-Pumarola, ‘Literary Heritage in Museum Exhibitions: Identifying Its Main Challenges in the European Context’, *Muzeológia a Kultúrne Dedičstvo* 8, no. 3 (September 2020): 107, <https://doi.org/10.46284/mkd.2020.8.3.5>.

¹⁸³ Gaonkar and Sukthankar, ‘Measuring and Evaluating the Influence of Cultural Sustainability Indicators on Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development,’ 4.

Table 2.1 Evolution of Sustainable Tourism Thinking

Phase 1: Environmental Preservation (1980s-1990s)	Phase 2: Cultural Sustainability & Heritage (2000s)	Phase 3: Governance, Inclusivity & Spatial Justice (2010s-present)
<p>Main focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological protection • Minimising negative environmental impact • Early reaction to mass tourism and its ecological degradation <p>Reference points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brundtland Report (1987) • UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992) • Agenda 21 <p>Keywords: Carrying capacity, conservation, environmental footprint</p>	<p>Main focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of local cultures, traditions, and built heritage • Community identity, authenticity, and symbolic value • Emphasis on tourism as cultural expression, not just economic activity <p>Reference points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO's Cultural Heritage conventions • Rise of cultural tourism, creative tourism <p>Keywords: Cultural identity, heritage, authenticity, placemaking</p>	<p>Main focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory tourism governance and rights to the city • Focus on who benefits from tourism and how space is used • Aligning tourism with the UN Agenda 2030 (SDGs) <p>Reference points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDGs (2015) • Post-COVID tourism reforms (Barcelona Tourism Strategy 2023) • Rethinking over-tourism, proximity tourism, slow tourism <p>Keywords: Decentralisation, inclusion, commons, spatial equity, regenerative tourism</p>

Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature discussed in Section 2.1.

These global shifts frame the following section, which explores how Barcelona's tourism and cultural policies have responded to these paradigms, and how literary tourism might yet be integrated into its strategic planning.

Barcelona's Tourism Policies from a Historiographical Perspective

Barcelona's tourism strategy has undergone major shifts since the 1992 Olympic Games¹⁸⁴, which launched the "Barcelona Model" of public-private cultural branding aimed at urban revitalisation¹⁸⁵. While boosting global appeal¹⁸⁶, this model also stimulated gentrification, commercialisation, and

¹⁸⁴ Antònia Casellas, Esteve Dot Jutglà, and Montserrat Pallares-Barbera, 'Creación de imagen, visibilidad y turismo como estrategias de crecimiento económico de la ciudad', *Finisterra*, 13 December 2012, vol. 45 n.º 90 (2010), 154-55, <https://doi.org/10.18055/FINIS1345>; Nadia Fava, 'Tourism and the City Image: The Barcelona Olympic Case' (A: Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism. '6th Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU): TOURBANISM, Barcelona, 25-27 gener', Barcelona, IFoU: International Forum on Urbanism Escola Técnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona, 2012), 3, <http://hdl.handle.net/2099/12154>.

¹⁸⁵ Antonio Paolo Russo and Alessandro Scarnato, "Barcelona in Common": A New Urban Regime for the 21st-Century Tourist City?", *Journal of Urban Affairs* 40, no. 4 (19 May 2018): 9-10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2017.1373023>.

¹⁸⁶ Esteve Dot Jutglà, 'Mutación Del Espacio Económico a Partir de La Actividad Turística: El Caso de Los Barrios El Poblenou y Sants En Barcelona (2005-2016)', *Cuadernos de Turismo*, no. 43 (6 May 2019): 272, <https://doi.org/10.6018/turismo.43.11>; Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins and María Sánchez Belando, 'Barcelona's Model and Cultural Policy: The Uses and Abuses of Culture by an Enterprising Local Development Model', *EURE. Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Urbanos Regionales* 41 (January 2015): 103-23.

growing local resistance¹⁸⁷. The creation of the *Consorci de Turisme de Barcelona* (Barcelona Tourism Consortium, CTB)¹⁸⁸ in 1993 marked a more institutional approach to balancing tourism growth¹⁸⁹ with community concerns¹⁹⁰.

By the 2000s, tourism-related pressures intensified, especially in central districts like La Barceloneta and Las Ramblas. Rising rents, short-term rentals, and cultural displacement¹⁹¹ led to widespread protests in the 2010s¹⁹². In response, the city adopted new regulatory tools, culminating in the 2015 Strategic Tourism Plan¹⁹³ and later frameworks, *Barcelona Tourism 2020*¹⁹⁴ and the 2023 Sustainable Tourism Strategy¹⁹⁵, which prioritise decentralisation, governance, and cultural sustainability, in line with the UN's Agenda 2030¹⁹⁶.

However, despite these efforts, and Barcelona's 2015 designation as a UNESCO CoL, literary tourism remains largely absent from formal policy. Often included in broader cultural tourism, it misses key opportunities for decentralisation, community engagement, and reinforcing local identity, particularly in peripheral areas.

The Timeline 2.1 below synthesises key moments in Barcelona's tourism and cultural policy evolution, tracing how sustainability discourses have emerged and where literary strategies remain marginal.

¹⁸⁷ Bishop, Pareja-Eastaway, and Solsona, 'The End of "Business As Usual"?' ; Dot Jutglà, 'Mutación Del Espacio Económico a Partir de La Actividad Turística,' 274-75; Montserrat Pareja Eastaway and Montse Simó Solsona, 'Dinámicas En El Entorno Construido: Renovación, Gentrificación y Turismo. El Caso de La Barceloneta', *ACE: Architecture, City and Environment* 9, no. 26 (October 2014): 201–22, <https://doi.org/10.5821/ace.9.26.3688>; Silvana Pirillo Ramos and Lluis Mundet, 'Tourism-Phobia in Barcelona: Dismantling Discursive Strategies and Power Games in the Construction of a Sustainable Tourist City', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 19, no. 1 (2 January 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2020.1752224>.

¹⁸⁸ Consorci de Turisme de Barcelona stands for Barcelona Tourism Consortium.

¹⁸⁹ Dot Jutglà, 'Mutación Del Espacio Económico a Partir de La Actividad Turística,' 281-82.

¹⁹⁰ Dot Jutglà, 'Mutación Del Espacio Económico a Partir de La Actividad Turística,' 281-82; Jeong-Ook Kim, 'Barcelona's Cultural Tourism Promotion Strategy', *International Journal of Tourism Sciences* 8, no. 1 (January 2008): 89–105, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15980634.2008.11434606>.

¹⁹¹ Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona and Cristina López-Villanueva, 'Citizen Actions in Touristic Neighbourhoods: Barcelona as a Case Study', *Current Issues in Tourism* 27, no. 1 (2 January 2024): 20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2218603>.

¹⁹² Ramos and Mundet, 'Tourism-Phobia in Barcelona'.

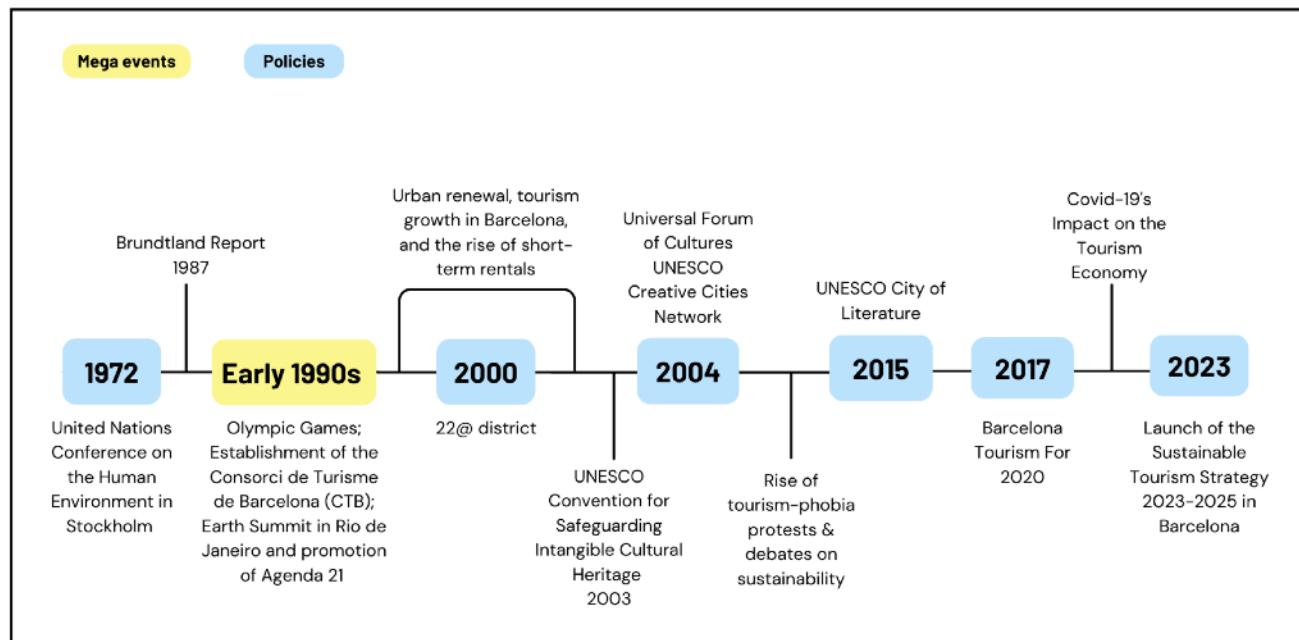
¹⁹³ Dot Jutglà, 'Mutación Del Espacio Económico a Partir de La Actividad Turística,' 282-83.

¹⁹⁴ Arias et al., 'Barcelona Tourism for 2020 A Collective Strategy for Sustainable Tourism'; Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona and Óscar Mascarilla-Miró, 'La Transformación y Gentrificación Turística Del Espacio Urbano. El Caso de La Barceloneta (Barcelona)', *EURE (Santiago)* 44, no. 133 (September 2018): 64, <https://doi.org/10.4067/s0250-71612018000300051>.

¹⁹⁵ Barcelona Turisme, 'SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY'.

¹⁹⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Informe Anual de Seguimiento y Evaluación de La Agenda 2030 de Barcelona (Voluntary Local Review 2023)' (Barcelona: Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, n.d.), accessed 28 February 2025.

Timeline 2.1 Barcelona's Key Cultural Events and the Evolution of Sustainable Tourism



Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature in Chapter 2.1.

This trajectory highlights both advances and gaps. As Barcelona seeks alternatives to mass tourism, literary tourism offers a promising, under-explored path toward culturally grounded models. The next section considers its potential to translate policy ideals into decentralised, community-based practices.

2.2 Literary Tourism as a Pathway to Sustainable Tourism in Barcelona

Although Barcelona emphasises sustainability in its tourism strategies, literary tourism remains largely absent from policy agendas. However, it aligns with key principles of sustainable tourism, decentralisation¹⁹⁷, and cultural engagement¹⁹⁸. As shown in Table 2.2, major frameworks have overlooked its potential as a low-impact, community-driven model.

¹⁹⁷ Jordi Arcos-Pumarola, Nayra Llonch-Molina, and Estela Mariné-Roig, 'Analysing the Literary Tourist Experience in Urban Literary Neighbourhoods', *Her&Mus. Heritage & Museography* Vol. 24 (31 December 2023): 79, <https://doi.org/10.60940/HERMUSV24ID422974>.

¹⁹⁸ Jordi Arcos-Pumarola, 'Assessing Literary Heritage Policies in the Context of Creative Cities', *Journal of Spatial and Organizational Dynamics* 7, no. 4 (2019): 275.

Table 2.2 Policy vs. Literary Tourism in Barcelona

Policy/Strategy	Year	Literary Tourism Mentioned?	Nature of Inclusion
Forum of Cultures	2004	No	No direct mention
UNESCO City of Literature	2015	Yes (indirectly)	Cultural prestige, symbolic
Barcelona Tourism for 2020	2017	No	Focus on sustainability and heritage broadly
Sustainable Tourism Strategy	2023	No	Emphasis on decentralisation and cultural tourism, but no targeted literary tourism strategy

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Chapter 1 and Sections 2.1–2.2.

Despite its alignment with decentralised and inclusive goals, literary tourism remains under-explored. While sustainability is part of institutional agendas, implementation often favours large-scale projects. In practice, literary tourism¹⁹⁹ has grown from the bottom-up²⁰⁰, through neighbourhood festivals, library programming, and independent bookshops that reimagine public spaces and promote cultural identity. These initiatives offer meaningful alternatives to mass tourism²⁰¹, addressing issues like overcrowding, displacement, and pressure on infrastructure²⁰².

¹⁹⁹ Crespi-Vallbona, 'Redefining Strategies for Consolidated Destinations,' 37.

²⁰⁰ Arcos-Pumarola, 'Assessing Literary Heritage Policies in the Context of Creative Cities,' 278; Arcos-Pumarola, Marzal, and Llonch-Molina, 'Literary Urban Landscape in a Sustainable Tourism Context,' 178.

²⁰¹ Ramos and Mundet, 'Tourism-Phobia in Barcelona'.

²⁰² Gaonkar and Sukthankar, 'Measuring and Evaluating the Influence of Cultural Sustainability Indicators on Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development,' 3.

Internationally recognised as a form of slow tourism²⁰³, literary travel encourages narrative-based engagement with places²⁰⁴. Barcelona's literary heritage, from Orwell and Rodoreda to Zafón²⁰⁵, offers rich material, however, opportunities remain fragmented due to a lack of strategic integration.

Literary tourism contributes to sustainability by redirecting visitors to districts like Gràcia, Sant Andreu, and Sants-Montjuïc²⁰⁶. Activities such as walking tours, readings, and festivals²⁰⁷ strengthen neighbourhood identity²⁰⁸, support local economies²⁰⁹, and ease pressure on city-centre landmarks²¹⁰, preserving both tangible and intangible heritage²¹¹.

As shown in Table 2.3, mass tourism tends to concentrate on iconic sites, leading to congestion and commodification. In contrast, literary tourism promotes decentralisation and cultural connection, though it requires careful governance to avoid overuse, such as that observed in the Gothic Quarter's *Shadow of the Wind* routes²¹².

²⁰³ Slow tourism advocates for prolonged stays and deeper cultural immersion that resist the extractive pace of mass tourism and aligns closely with literary tourism. See in Haemoon Oh, A. George Assaf, and Seyhmus Baloglu, 'Motivations and Goals of Slow Tourism', *Journal of Travel Research* 55, no. 2 (February 2016): 205–19, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514546228>.

²⁰⁴ Squire, 'Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism,' 120.

²⁰⁵ Maria Patricio Mulero, 'Les ciutats literàries Estudi comparat de la gestió de la creació literària, el patrimoni, la lectura i l'edició en el marc local' (Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, 2012), 101, https://deposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/32126/1/TesinaCIUTATS%20LITERARIES_MPatricio_v2.pdf.

²⁰⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Literary Map of Barcelona'; Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Agenda de Ciudad', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/agendas/agenda-de-ciudad?&pg=search&wtarget=&ajax=1&xout=1&nr=10&c=0063301000>;

²⁰⁷ Nicola E. MacLeod, *Literary Fiction Tourism: Understanding the Practice of Fiction-Inspired Travel*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2024), 141, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003041740>.

²⁰⁸ Survey responses from this thesis will be briefly introduced in the last section of this chapter, 2.4, and extensively analysed in chapter 5.

²⁰⁹ Clara Sortsøe Søndergaard, 'From Independent Publishers to Literary Festivals: Exploring the Challenges and Changes in the Publishing Industry and the Impact of Cultural Policy', *Leviathan: Interdisciplinary Journal in English*, no. 7 (12 March 2021), 116, <https://doi.org/10.7146/lev.v0i7.125184>.

²¹⁰ Arcos-Pumarola, Marzal, and Llonch-Molina, 'Literary Urban Landscape in a Sustainable Tourism Context,' 188.

²¹¹ Arcos-Pumarola, 'Assessing Literary Heritage Policies in the Context of Creative Cities,' 278.

²¹² Catalunya, 'Ruta La Sombra Del Viento', *Catalunya* (blog), n.d., <https://www.catalunya.com/es/continguts/rutes-itineraris/ruta-la-sombra-del-viento-24-1-22>.

Table 2.3 Mass Tourism versus. Literary Tourism in Barcelona

	Mass Tourism	Literary Tourism
Visitor Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick, checklist-style tourism • High turnover, low depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersive, interest-based travel • Slower pace, deeper engagement
Urban Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration in central zones • Overcrowding, public space strain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralisation to local districts • Uses under-visited spaces
Economic Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global hotel and retail chains • Tourism monopolies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local bookstores, cafés, libraries • Independent cultural institutions
Socio-cultural Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High environmental and social impact • Interaction with cultural sites through guided tours in big groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of Barcelona's identity as UNESCO City of Literature • Cultural engagement
Cultural Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commodification of heritage • Displacement of local identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-commercialisation of literary sites • Potential gentrification (e.g. The Shadow of the Wind – Tour)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature in Chapter 2.

In sum, literary tourism aligns with Barcelona's sustainability goals, supporting participation and place-based engagement, however, remains underutilised. Including it into policy could foster a more balanced model as the city seeks alternatives to mass tourism. Literary tourism thus represents a viable pathway toward locally grounded cultural tourism²¹³.

2.3 Broader Impacts of Literary Tourism in Barcelona

While the previous section outlined literary tourism's potential, this section examines its broader spatial, cultural, and economic impacts. It highlights both its capacity to reinforce local identity and the challenges of commodification and narrative control.

²¹³ MacLeod, *Literary Fiction Tourism*, 197.

Literary tourism plays a dual role in Barcelona, shaping urban experiences through storytelling and supporting the cultural²¹⁴ and creative²¹⁵ economy²¹⁶ by connecting local publishers, bookshops, and events. It helps distribute tourist flows beyond central areas, but when reduced to entertainment, it risks narrative oversimplification and commercialisation, as seen in criticism of Sant Jordi's evolving format²¹⁷.

Barcelona's UNESCO CoL status reflects international recognition, however, its local implementation remains limited²¹⁸. This pattern mirrors gaps in other cultural sectors, where strong potential is often undermined by weak community integration²¹⁹. Policy Snapshot 2.1 maps this trajectory, from event-led branding and designations to recent decentralisation efforts, illustrating the separation between global visibility and local engagement in literary tourism.

²¹⁴ Jeni Paay et al., 'Location-Based Storytelling in the Urban Environment', in *Proceedings of the 20th Australasian Conference on Computer-Human Interaction: Designing for Habitus and Habitat* (OZCHI '08: Proceedings of the 20th conference of the computer-human interaction special interest group of Australia on Computer-human interaction: design, Cairns Australia: ACM, 2008), 122–29, <https://doi.org/10.1145/1517744.1517786>.

²¹⁵ UNESCO, 'Barcelona', *Creative Cities Network* (blog), n.d., <https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/barcelona>.

²¹⁶ Paay et al., 'Location-Based Storytelling in the Urban Environment'.

²¹⁷ Ona Van Dyck Colomer, 'Barcelona to Restore La Rambla Splendor for Sant Jordi 2024 Celebrations', *Catalan News* (blog), 22 April 2024, <https://www.catalannews.com/culture/item/barcelona-to-restore-la-rambla-splendor-for-sant-jordi-2024-celebrations>.

²¹⁸ Jaume Muñoz Jofre, Interview Transcript: Jaume Muñoz Jofre, Ajuntament Barcelona Webex, 24 March 2025.

²¹⁹ Eva Alcázar et al., 'The Integration of Idiomatic Tourists in Barcelona', *Tourism and Heritage Journal* 1 (22 July 2019): 90–112, <https://doi.org/10.1344/thj.2019.1.6>.

Policy Snapshot 2.1 *Literary Tourism and Cultural Implementation in Barcelona*

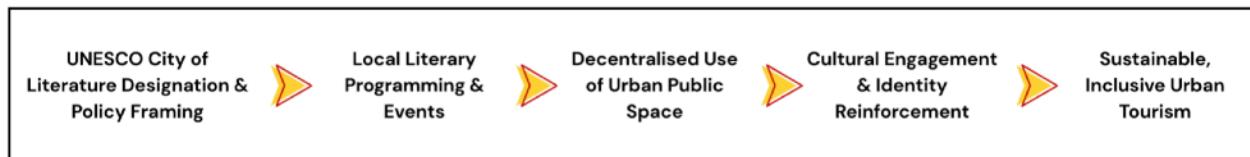
Policy Snapshot: Barcelona's Literary Tourism Policies in Context

- **2004 Universal Forum of Cultures:** Large-scale events aimed at promoting cultural sustainability, later criticised for its economic focus and limited longterm benefit to local communities.
- **2015 UNESCO City of Literature:** Boosted funding and international recognition but received mixed responses from local cultural institutions e.g. Galve: "no hay un antes y un después".
- **2020 Strategic Tourism Plan & 2023 Sustainable Tourism Strategy:** Emphasised decentralisation, slow tourism, and proximity tourism as responses to over-tourism.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Chapter 1 and Sections 2.1–2.2.

Sustainable literary tourism depends on governance²²⁰, on who curates, who benefits, and which stories are told. Without inclusive planning, it risks reproducing mass tourism models rather than encouraging cultural connection. Participatory approaches that prioritise local voices are essential for ensuring that literary tourism serves community purposes²²¹. Flow Chart 2.1 below visualises this trajectory, showing how literary tourism can evolve from aspirational policy into transformative practice when rooted in sustainable urban frameworks.

Flow Chart 2.1 *Pathway from Literary to Sustainable Tourism*



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Chapter 2, Sections 2.1–2.3.

²²⁰ Nurlisa Ginting et al., 'Towards a Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Tourism Governance: A Literature Review', *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal* 9, no. 28 (16 March 2024): 332, <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v9i28.5859>.

²²¹ Bill Bramwell, 'Participative Planning and Governance for Sustainable Tourism', *Tourism Recreation Research* 35, no. 3 (January 2010): 239–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2010.11081640>.

Ultimately, literary tourism has the structural potential to activate public spaces, strengthen identity, and support inclusive local economies, but this requires shared decision-making and resistance to profit-driven models.

2.4 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter traced the evolution of sustainable tourism from ecological origins to more integrated models that include cultural, spatial, and participatory dimensions. It addressed the first sub-question of this thesis, *How do literary events support sustainable tourism practices in Barcelona?*, by showing that literary tourism, though marginal in policy, offers a pathway toward decentralised tourism. While it does not seek to replace mass tourism, literary tourism offers a complementary model that supports diversification, encourages local cultural participation, and mitigates pressure on centralised tourist hotspots.

Barcelona's UNESCO CoL status, combined with its vibrant literary scene, positions the city to integrate literary tourism into sustainability strategies. As the literature and policy review show, literature-based initiatives can redirect tourist flows, support local economies, and promote cultural preservation, especially when rooted in community participation and inclusive governance. In doing so, literary tourism has the potential to shift from symbolic policy to transformative practice by promoting participatory, decentralised, and locally meaningful forms of cultural engagement.

While this chapter established the theoretical foundations, Chapter 5 will assess how these dynamics play out in practice through empirical data. The next chapter explores another dimension of sustainability: the role of literary events in culture-led urban regeneration across Barcelona's neighbourhoods.

Chapter III - The Importance of Culture-Led Urban Regeneration

3.1 Literary Tourism as a Tool for Urban Regeneration

Literary tourism in Barcelona has emerged not only as a cultural practice but as a strategic tool in the city's shift from entertainment-oriented planning to more participatory, decentralised urban regeneration. This chapter addresses the sub-question: *How do literary events contribute to the regeneration and reimaging of Barcelona's public spaces?* In recent years, literature has been mobilised not just for storytelling, but for space-making, transforming libraries, bookshops, festivals, and squares into instruments of cultural policy and urban renewal. This section examines how literary events reshape public spaces, foster community connection, and promote cultural sustainability, contributing to the broader inquiry into how literature transforms the physical structure of the city.

Barcelona's urban identity was long shaped by events like the 1992 Olympics²²² and the 2004 Forum of Cultures²²³, which helped define the so-called Barcelona Model, using large-scale cultural investment to project global prestige. While successful in terms of visibility, these strategies often brought displacement and gentrification, especially in neighbourhoods like El Raval²²⁴ and Poblenou²²⁵. In response, the city has increasingly adopted decentralised cultural governance, particularly since its 2015 designation as a UNESCO CoL. Literary tourism potentially engages residents through place-based programming that transforms everyday spaces, such as libraries, bookshops, and public squares, as platforms for participation.

To illustrate how literary tourism intersects with regeneration, Diagram 3.1 visualises four interdependent dimensions: cultural infrastructure, governance, spatial impact, and community engagement.

²²² Laia Colomer and Ana Pastor Pérez, 'City Governance, Participatory Democracy, and Cultural Heritage in Barcelona, 1986–2022', *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 15, no. 1 (2 January 2024): 85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2023.2298546>.

²²³ Rius-Ulldemolins and Sánchez Belando, 'Barcelona's Model and Cultural Policy: The Uses and Abuses of Culture by an Enterprising Local Development Model,' 115.

²²⁴ Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins and Matías Zarlenga, 'Industries, Districts, Institutions and Scenes. Typology of Cultural Clusters in Barcelona', *Revista Espanola de Sociologia* 21 (1 January 2014): 53-59.

²²⁵ Èlia Casals-Alsina, 'Can the "Creative City" Be Sustainable? Lessons from the Sant Martí District (Barcelona)', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 30, no. 4 (6 June 2024): 516-17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2222770>; Mónica Degen and Marisol García, 'The Transformation of the "Barcelona Model": An Analysis of Culture, Urban Regeneration and Governance', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36, no. 5 (September 2012): 11031, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01152.x>.

Diagram 3.1 *Literary Tourism in Culture-Led Urban Regeneration*



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Chapters 1–3.

Building on the theoretical model in Diagram 1.1, which situates literary tourism as a form of cultural sustainable tourism, Diagram 3.1 shows how these concepts materialise through cross-sector collaboration. Cultural venues, municipal policies, spatial strategies, and community actors intersect to shape how literary events unfold and generate urban impact. Their overlap suggests that sustainability is not driven by isolated actions but by multi-actor governance.

In Barcelona, these dynamics become evident in decentralised literary programming and partnerships between public institutions and independent actors. Diagram 3.1 thus reinforces this thesis's central claim: literary tourism supports regeneration when diverse actors align spatial and cultural priorities.

Events like Festival 42²²⁶ and BCNegra²²⁷ exemplify this model. Both collaborate with public libraries, cultural institutions, and local venues, spreading literary activity across districts and expanding audience access. These festivals contribute to placemaking, reinforcing local identity and spatial inclusion. The ongoing decentralisation of Sant Jordi's Day²²⁸, Barcelona's most iconic literary event, reflects a similar logic. Mainly centralised in zones like Passeig de Gràcia, the event now extends into

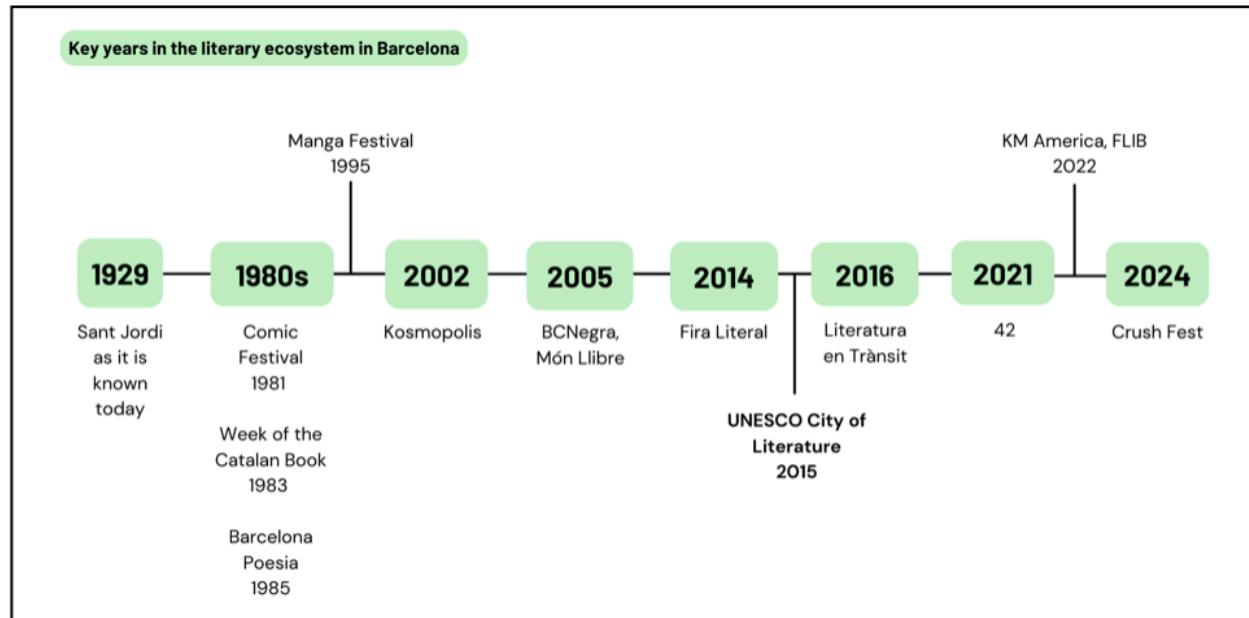
²²⁶ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, '42 Barcelona Fantastic Genres Festival', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelona.cat/festival42/en>.

²²⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'BCNegra Actividades Destacadas'.

²²⁸ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'The Tradition'.

districts like Nou Barris and Les Corts, allowing broader community participation and easing pressure on tourist-saturated areas²²⁹.

Timeline 3.1 *The Emergence of Literary Events in Barcelona (1929–2024)*



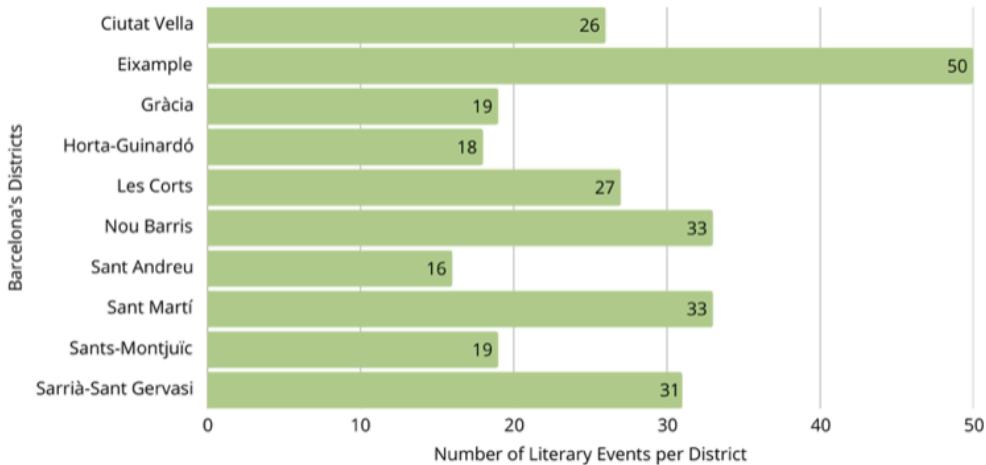
Source: Author's own timeline based on event websites and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura.'²³⁰

Timeline 3.1 outlines the shift from centralised festivals to a growing ecosystem of neighbourhood-based events, illustrating how literary programming has diversified both spatially and institutionally. This trajectory is further reflected in Graph 3.1, which maps the current district-level distribution of events.

²²⁹ Rius-Ulldemolins and Klein, 'From Top-down Urban Planning to Culturally Sensitive Planning?,' 530-31.

²³⁰ Author's own timeline based on event websites and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura.' Event websites in chronological order: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Sant Jordi,' Europe Comics, 'Events,' La Setmana del Llibre en Català, 'Història (Esborrany),' Arias, 'Barcelona Poesia,' Manga Barcelona, 'MANGA BARCELONA CELEBRARÁ SU 30 CUMPLEAÑOS A PARTIR ESTE JUEVES SUPERANDO RÉCORDS,' Borges, 'Kosmopolis La Fiesta de La Literatura Amplificada,' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'BCNegra Celebra Su 20.º Aniversario Con Una Edición Muy Mediterránea,' Ajuntament de Barcelona, '¡Món Llibre Vuelve Más Juguetón Que Nunca!,' Literal, 'Fira d'idees i Llibres Radicals,' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Oficina UNESCO,' Ajuntament de Barcelona, '8ª Edición de "Literatura En Trànsit," Un Encuentro de Palabra, Arte y Reflexión,' Escur, 'Nace En Barcelona El 42, Un Festival Dedicado a La Literatura Fantástica,' Casa Amèrica Catalunya, 'El Festival KM Amèrica, La Reunión de Voces y Relatos Que Entusiasma Cada Año a Barcelona,' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Llega La Tercera Edición Del Festival de Literatura Italiana de Barcelona (FLIB),' Crush Fest, 'Crush Fest'.

Graph 3.1 Distribution of Literary Events by District in Barcelona (2025)



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Agenda de Ciudad,' events from March 2025.

While investment has increased in districts like Sant Martí and Sant Andreu, Ciutat Vella and Eixample remain cultural strongholds, indicating that although decentralisation is underway, urban regeneration is still incomplete.

Public libraries like Gabriel García Márquez and Jaume Fuster are key nodes in this process²³¹. By hosting events such as BCNegra²³² or the Festival de Literatura Italiana²³³, they decentralise cultural capital and foster neighbourhood identity²³⁴. Independent bookshops like Backstory²³⁵ and Ateneu Barcelonès²³⁶ also serve as informal literary hubs²³⁷. Meanwhile, large-scale festivals such as

²³¹ Maria Patricio Mulero and Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins, 'From Creative City to Generative Governance of the Cultural Policy System? The Case of Barcelona's Candidature as UNESCO City of Literature', *City, Culture and Society* 10 (September 2017): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2017.05.001>.

²³² Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'BCNegra Marks Its 20th Anniversary with a Highly Mediterranean Editionn with the Mediterranean', *Ajuntament de Barcelona* (blog), 24 January 2025, https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/arxiu_municipal_arxiuhistoric/en/news/bcnegra-marks-its-20th-anniversary-with-a-highly-mediterranean-editionn-with-the-mediterranean-1475341.

²³³ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Festival de Literatura Italiana de Barcelona', *Biblioteques de Barcelona* (blog), 2024, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/biblioteques/es/actividades/festivales-literarios/festival-de-literatura-italiana-de-barcelona>.

²³⁴ Rius-Ulldemolins and Klein, 'From Top-down Urban Planning to Culturally Sensitive Planning?,' 530-31.

²³⁵ Backstory, 'Events at the Bookshop', *Backstory* (blog), accessed 12 March 2025, <https://www.backstorybookshop.com/events>.

²³⁶ Ateneu Barcelonès, 'Agenda d'activitats'.

²³⁷ Sophie Noël, 'At Home in Bookshops: The Rhetoric of the Domestic Sphere in French Independent Bookshops', *Logos* 32, no. 4 (8 April 2022): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18784712-03104025>.

Kosmopolis²³⁸ and KM Amèrica²³⁹ activate public spaces across the city, including literature into Barcelona's everyday landscape.

Together, these elements show how literary tourism redefines public spaces not through entertainment, but through decentralisation and participatory practice. Literature becomes both a cultural and governance tool²⁴⁰, a medium through which urban identity is negotiated and public spaces reimagined²⁴¹.

As the next section explores, this transformation remains uneven, shaped by persistent tensions around visibility, access, and authenticity.

3.2 Literary Tourism and Urban Spaces: Tensions

As literary tourism becomes central to Barcelona's cultural and urban strategy, it must navigate interrelated tensions: visibility²⁴² vs. inclusion, entertainment vs. depth, and centrality vs. peripherality²⁴³. This section explores how decentralisation, linguistic inclusion, and cultural authenticity function as both policy goals and challenges within the city's evolving literary landscape.

Literary tourism is often framed as a sustainable alternative to mass cultural consumption, aligned with frameworks such as UNESCO's cultural diversity goals²⁴⁴ and UN's SDG 11²⁴⁵, as seen in initiatives

²³⁸ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Kosmopolis 2023, Cuando La Literatura Escucha a Los Océanos', *Barcelona Llibres* (blog), 22 October 2023, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/barcelonallibres/es/noticia/kosmopolis-2023-quan-la-literatura-escolta-els-oceans-1330861>.

²³⁹ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Festival de Géneros Fantásticos de Barcelona', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), 2024, <https://www.barcelona.cat/festival42/es>.

²⁴⁰ Patricio Mulero and Rius-Ulldemolins, 'From Creative City to Generative Governance of the Cultural Policy System?', 5.

²⁴¹ Nancy Duxbury, 'Cultural Governance in Sustainable Cities', *Kult-Ur* 1, no. 1 (16 July 2014): 165–82, <https://doi.org/10.6035/kult-ur.2014.1.1.7>.

²⁴² Arcos-Pumarola, 'Assessing Literary Heritage Policies in the Context of Creative Cities,' 280-81.

²⁴³ Crespi-Vallbona, 'Redefining Strategies for Consolidated Destinations'.

²⁴⁴ UNESCO, 'The Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies' (UNESCO, 2013), <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/hangzhou-congress>.

²⁴⁵ Sustainable development goal (SDG) 11 stands for sustainable cities and communities. United Nations, 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development* (blog), 2015, <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

like KM Amèrica²⁴⁶ and Món Llibre²⁴⁷. However, visibility-driven events can replicate the same dynamics they aim to replace, especially when concentrated in saturated tourist areas²⁴⁸.

Sant Jordi's Day, the city's flagship literary event, exemplifies these contradictions. While it celebrates books and Catalan identity²⁴⁹, its central location along Passeig de Gràcia and Las Ramblas²⁵⁰ fosters overcrowding, commercialisation, and detachment from local life²⁵¹. In recent years, decentralisation in, for instance, Les Corts²⁵² and Nou Barris²⁵³ have aimed to rebalance spatial participation, as summarised in Table 3.1 below:

²⁴⁶ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'KmAmèrica', *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), 2024, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/biblioteques/es/actividades/festivales-literarios/kmamerica>.

²⁴⁷ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Món Llibre.', *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), 2025, <https://www.barcelona.cat/monllibre/ca>.

²⁴⁸ Claudio Milano, Marina Novelli, and Antonio Paolo Russo, 'Anti-Tourism Activism and the Inconvenient Truths about Mass Tourism, Touristification and Overtourism', *Tourism Geographies* 26, no. 8 (16 November 2024): 1315, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2024.2391388>.

²⁴⁹ Isabel Travancas and Marta Scherer, 'A Festa de Sant Jordi No Jornal La Vanguardia', *Intercom: Revista Brasileira de Ciências Da Comunicação* 41, no. 3 (September 2018): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-5844201837>.

²⁵⁰ Turespaña, 'Festival of Sant Jordi in Barcelona'.

²⁵¹ Jordi Sabaté, 'Sant Jordi a Debate: ¿feria Comercial Del Libro o Fiesta Popular Ciudadana?', *elDiario.Es* (blog), 23 March 2024, https://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/sant-jordi-debate-feria-comercial-libro-fiesta-popular-ciudadana_1_11227702.html.

²⁵² Alba Carnicé, 'Barcelona Recupera Por Completo La Rambla Para Este Sant Jordi', *Metropoli*, 8 April 2024, https://metropoliabierta.elespanol.com/economia/20240408/barcelona-recupera-por-completo-la-rambla-para-este-sant-jordi/846165395_0.html.

²⁵³ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, '¿Qué Puedes Hacer En Nou Barris Del 19 al 25 de Abril?', *Nou Barris* (blog), 18 April 2024, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/noubarris/es/noticia/que-puedes-hacer-a-nou-barris-del-19-al-25-de-abril-1390946>.

Table 3.1 Key Characteristics and Decentralisation of Sant Jordi

Aspect of Sant Jordi's Day	Policy Dimension	Urban Challenge	Cultural Outcome
Centralised format (e.g., Passeig de Gràcia, Las Ramblas)	International branding and cultural visibility	Overcrowding, reduced local access, pressure on historic core	Strong global visibility; risk of commodification
Decentralised programming (e.g., Les Corts, Sant Andreu)	Community engagement and spatial redistribution	Logistical complexity; uneven resource allocation	Enhanced neighbourhood participation; supports cultural equity

Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature and data from Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

Photo 3.1 below, taken on Sant Jordi's Day 2024, captures this spatial duality: vibrant cultural symbolism compared with overcrowding and commercial saturation in the city centre.

Photo 3.1 Sant Jordi's Day (2024)

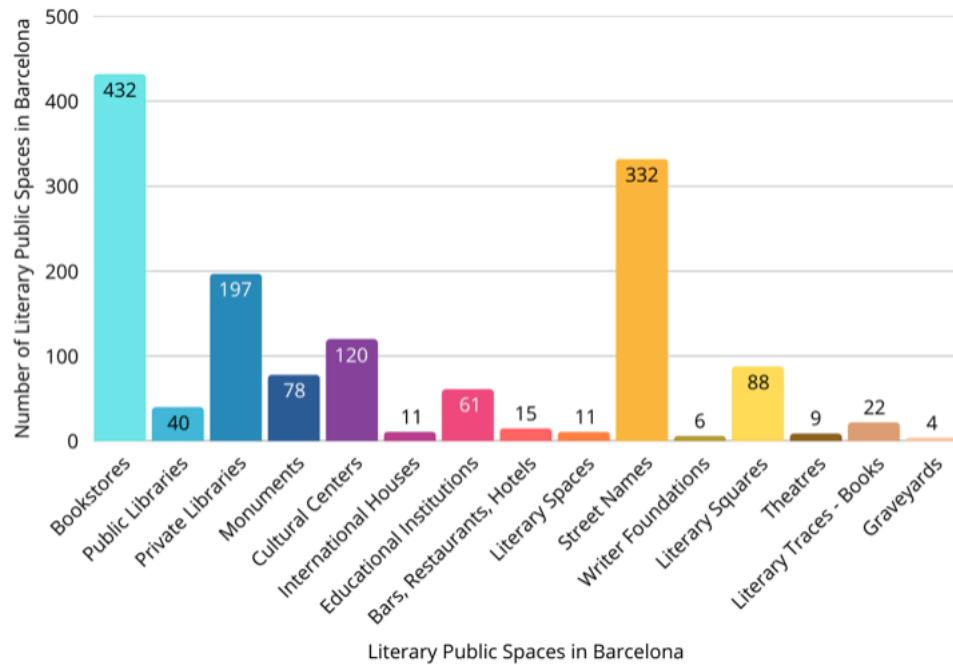


Source: Photograph taken by the author in Passeig de Gràcia, 2024.

This evolving planning logic reflects a shift toward participatory cultural governance. As Sant Jordi expands into peripheral districts, literary programming is redefined as a spatial intervention,

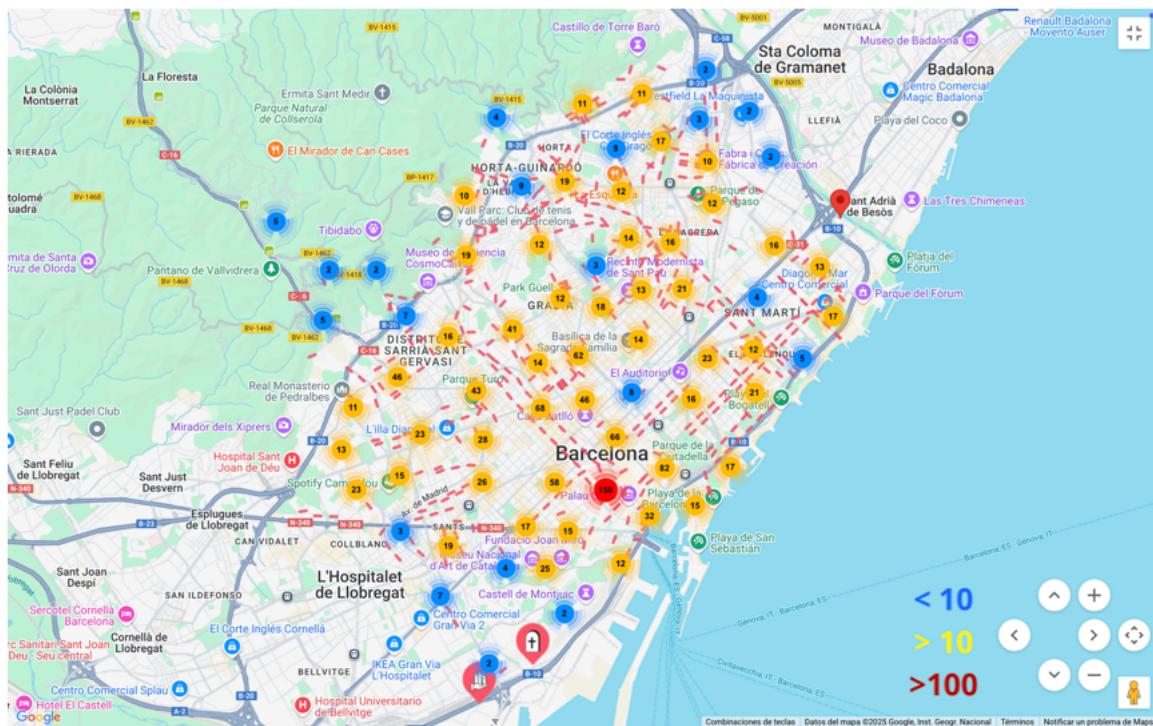
reshaping access and belonging. Graph 3.2 and Map 3.1 visualise this shift, showing both emerging intersections and the ongoing dominance of central areas:

Graph 3.2 Distribution of Literary-Related Public Spaces in Barcelona (2025)



Source: Author's elaboration based on Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Mapa Literario.'

Map 3.1 Literary Spaces and Cultural Institutions Across Barcelona



Source: Screenshot from Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Mapa Literario.'

Despite progress in districts like Sant Martí, Sant Andreu, and Nou Barris, central districts like Ciutat Vella and Eixample continue to dominate, and official data underrepresents informal, multilingual, and grassroots initiatives. This reveals the limits of institutional visibility and the need for more inclusive cultural planning.

The diversity of literary events also varies by scale, setting, and language. Table 3.2 categorises these events, showing how public literary culture spans large, centralised festivals to local, multilingual initiatives.

Table 3.2 Typology of Literary Events

	Local / Neighbourhood	City-wide / Centralised
Fixed Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading clubs at local libraries • Creative writing workshops in bookstores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public tributes in iconic plazas • Indoor author talks at CCCB
Spaces for Temporary Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flash poetry in parks • Pop-up literary zines • Walking tours in outer districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary routes linked to Sant Jordi • Festival-related performances in public squares
Language Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events in Catalan and Spanish • Multilingual poetry slams in libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilingual storytelling nights • Translation-focused performance

Source: Author's own elaboration based on information, literature, and data from Chapter 3.

Linguistic diversity remains a key tension. Despite symbolic promotion, Catalan accounted for just 24.2% of publications in 2021²⁵⁴. Survey and interview data reveal concern over this imbalance (see Chapter 5), suggesting that linguistic inclusion for improved social interactions, whether Catalan, Spanish, or other languages, is both a political and cultural imperative in a multilingual city.

Digital tools like Literapolis, a literary tourism app originally designed for schools, hold untapped²⁵⁵ potential²⁵⁶. Though underused, it could help decentralise engagement and highlight everyday literary spaces if adapted for wider audiences.

²⁵⁴ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Language Policy Report 2021' (Barcelona: Ministry for Culture. Catalan Government, January 2024), 30-32, <https://llengua.gencat.cat/web/.content/documents/informepl/arxius/IPL2021-en.pdf>.

²⁵⁵ Crespi-Vallbona, 'Redefining Strategies for Consolidated Destinations,' 44-50.

²⁵⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura'.

Ultimately, literary tourism can either include or exclude, depending on how it is governed. To clarify this, Table 3.3 outlines four modalities of literary regeneration, contrasting large-scale vs. low-scale formats and top-down vs. bottom-up approaches

Table 3.3 Modalities of Literary Regeneration in Barcelona

	Flagship Events	Cultural Foundations
Top-down	Sant Jordi, literary branding campaigns	UNESCO City of Literature strategy, ICUB programming
Bottom-up	Civic tributes, street readings	Libraries, neighbourhood bookstores, reading clubs

Source: Author's own elaboration based on literature and data from Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

As the matrix shows, while high-profile events like Kosmopolis and Sant Jordi dominate cultural narratives, more formats, neighbourhood readings, multilingual clubs, often have greater community impact. The challenge lies in balancing visibility with participation, and ensuring institutional frameworks remain open for collaboration with local actors.

In sum, this section has examined how sustainability and authenticity are negotiated within literary tourism in Barcelona. While decentralisation and inclusion are growing, tensions around urban spaces access, language, and governance persist. The next section turns to how these dynamics play out in practice through libraries, festivals, and bookshops, and how they shape literary life in the city.

3.3 Conclusion of the Chapter

As examined in this chapter, literary tourism in Barcelona has evolved beyond a cultural trend to become a strategic tool for urban regeneration. From events like Sant Jordi's Day and Festival 42 to everyday infrastructures such as libraries and bookshops, literature has been mobilised as a tool of public engagement, fostering spatial inclusion, neighbourhood identity, and community participation.

Initiatives like the decentralisation of Sant Jordi, literary programming in libraries such as Gabriel García Márquez and Jaume Fuster, and the rise of district-based festivals reflect a shift toward

participatory, distributed governance. These developments demonstrate how literature can reshape both the physical layout and symbolic meaning of public spaces.

In direct response to the sub-question, *How do literary events contribute to the regeneration and reimagining of Barcelona's public spaces?*, this chapter has shown that literary events drive urban regeneration by decentralising access, including literature in daily infrastructure, and reinforcing the socio-cultural function of places.

However, this transformation remains uneven. Evidence points to continued concentration in central districts and underrepresentation of peripheral, grassroots, and multilingual initiatives. While decentralisation has expanded reach, issues of commercialisation, particularly in cases like Sant Jordi, persist.

As shown in the chapter, literary tourism does not inherently democratise spaces. It must be guided by policies that support collaboration, recognise informal actors, and value linguistic diversity. Only then can literature meaningfully contribute to more inclusive cities.

The next chapter builds on these insights by focusing on community engagement. It explores how literature fosters participation, dialogue, and belonging in everyday settings, from libraries and bookshops to local festivals and citizen-led initiatives. Having addressed urban spaces, the next chapter focuses on those who shape the city's literary life.

Chapter IV - Community Engagement Through Literature

4.1 Literature and Belonging

In contemporary cities, literature functions not only as cultural expression but as a socio-cultural instrument that shapes collective experiences of spaces and identities²⁵⁷. In Barcelona, literary practices, activated through readings, festivals, or libraries, encourage residents to co-author the narratives of their neighbourhoods, transforming everyday spaces into sites of dialogue, memory, and belonging.

This chapter addresses the third sub-question of the thesis: *How do literary events foster community engagement in Barcelona?* This is key to understanding literature as a participatory force that strengthens social ties, promotes inclusion, and animates public spaces. It builds on the broader research aim by analysing how literary spaces contribute to community-making in the urban context.

This socio-cultural dimension of literature reflects the thesis's central view of it as a participatory, place-based practice that shapes urban life²⁵⁸ and supports sustainable development²⁵⁹. In Barcelona, literary events²⁶⁰ activate the social dimensions of public spaces, encouraging cultural participation, neighbourhood identity, and spatial inclusion. As discussed in Chapter 1, these practices align with the city's decentralisation and sustainable tourism goals by including literature into public spaces and fostering cultural connections.

Barcelona's designation as a UNESCO CoL has reinforced this approach, including literary programming into policy to promote inclusion²⁶¹, accessibility²⁶², and intercultural dialogue²⁶³. Public

²⁵⁷ Geertje Slingerland et al., 'The Power of Stories: A Framework to Orchestrate Reflection in Urban Storytelling to Form Stronger Communities', *Community Development* 54, no. 1 (2 January 2023): 18–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2021.1998169>.

²⁵⁸ Jason Finch, *Literary Urban Studies and How to Practice It*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003053903>.

²⁵⁹ See Diagram 1.1 in Chapter 1.

²⁶⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Other Literary Festivals', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/en/literary-dissemination/other-literary-festivals>.

²⁶¹ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura'.

²⁶² Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Reading Clubs', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/en/writers-and-barcelona/read/reading-clubs>.

²⁶³ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'International Literary Residency', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), 2025, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/en/international/international-literary-residency>.

libraries²⁶⁴, independent bookshops²⁶⁵, and district festivals²⁶⁶ now serve as decentralised sites of engagement, broadening access to cultural participation across neighbourhoods. These infrastructures include literature in daily life, reinforcing its role in shaping community identity.

Rather than functioning as static heritage, literature in Barcelona is mobilised as a participatory practice that connects people to places, amplifies marginalised voices, and contributes to an evolving sense of urban identity. The following sections examine how this vision is institutionalised through policy (4.2) and materialised in local infrastructures (4.3).

4.2 Institutionalising Literary Events

Barcelona's literary ecosystem is grounded in institutional frameworks that frame literature²⁶⁷ both as a communal right and a strategic asset. The city's 2015 designation as a UNESCO CoL formalised this dual aim, including literary activity into local governance²⁶⁸ and global networks²⁶⁹. However, implementation reveals ongoing tensions between centralised control and decentralised ambition.

From Cultural Branding to Socio-Cultural Infrastructure

Barcelona's candidacy for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network²⁷⁰ leveraged its literary foundations: globally recognised publishers (Planeta²⁷¹, Anagrama²⁷²), a strong library and bookshop network, and a

²⁶⁴ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Biblioteques de Barcelona', *Barcelona.Cat* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/biblioteques/ca>.

²⁶⁵ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Directorio de Librerías', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/directorio/directorio-de-librerias>.

²⁶⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Other Literary Festivals'.

²⁶⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura,' 25.

²⁶⁸ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Directories', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/en/directories>.

²⁶⁹ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'La Red UNESCO de Ciudades de La Literatura', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ciutatdelaliteratura/es/la-red-unesco-de-ciudades-de-la-literatura>.

²⁷⁰ UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 'Creative Cities Network' (UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 2025), <https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities>.

²⁷¹ Grupo Planeta, 'Conócenos', *Grupo Planeta* (blog), n.d., <https://planeta.es/es/conocenos>.

²⁷² Anagrama, 'Editorial Anagrama', *Anagrama* (blog), n.d., <https://www.anagrama-ed.es/editorial>.

dynamic calendar of events. Literature was framed not merely as heritage, but as a participatory force in community belonging²⁷³, promoting cultural access while enhancing international cooperation²⁷⁴.

Key institutions coordinate this infrastructure. The Institut de Cultura de Barcelona (ICUB) oversees literary strategy and major festivals like Kosmopolis, BCNegra, Festival 42, and Sant Jordi, aligning them with broader urban agendas. Partners such as CCCB²⁷⁵, Ateneu Barcelonès, and libraries like Gabriel García Márquez²⁷⁶ and Jaume Fuster²⁷⁷ serve as decentralised hubs of cultural and community activity. To visualise the multi-scalar governance structure, Tables 4.1–4.4 summarise key stakeholders across four sectors:

Table 4.1 Key Stakeholders - Government Bodies

Government Bodies	Task	Connections
Ajuntament de Barcelona (Barcelona City Council)	Oversees urban planning, cultural policies, and tourism management	
Catalan Tourism Board (Agència Catalana de Turisme)	Promotes Barcelona and Catalonia as cultural destinations internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate tourism policies to balance literary tourism growth and urban sustainability. Provide funding & incentives for literary festivals, book fairs, and heritage projects. Collaborate with cultural institutions & private sector to promote literary events.
ICUB (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona – Institution of Culture in Barcelona)	Oversees cultural policy implementation for literary and artistic projects	
UNESCO & Cultural Heritage Agencies	Supports heritage preservation, including Barcelona's status as a UNESCO City of Literature	

Source: Author's own elaboration based on institutional websites, interview data with Jaume Muñoz Jofre, and policy literature from Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Patricio Mulero and Rius-Ulldemolins, 'From Creative City to Generative Governance of the Cultural Policy System?'

²⁷⁴ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura'.

²⁷⁵ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura,' 40, 65; CCCB, 'Kosmopolis The Amplified Literature Fest' (Barcelona: CCCB, 2016), https://kosmopolis.cccb.org/wp-content/uploads/dossier_kosmopolis_340x240_mail_en.pdf.

²⁷⁶ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez', *Biblioteques de Barcelona* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/biblioteques/ca/bibgarciamarquez>.

²⁷⁷ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Biblioteca Jaume Fuster', *Biblioteques de Barcelona* (blog), n.d., <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/biblioteques/ca/bibjaumeuster/>.

²⁷⁸ Author's own elaboration based on institutional websites, interview data with Jaume Muñoz Jofre, and policy literature from Chapters 2 and 4. These are the institutional websites: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Ajuntament de Barcelona;' Agència Catalana de Turisme, 'Generalitat de Catalunya Agència Catalana de Turisme;' ICUB Institut de Cultura, 'Notícias;' UNESCO, 'Cities of Literature'.

Table 4.2 Key Stakeholders - Cultural Institutions

Cultural Institutions	Task	Connections
CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona)	Organises literary events, exhibitions, and academic discussions on literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with government bodies to develop educational and literary programs. Engage local authors and publishers to create interactive literary experiences.
Ateneu Barcelonès	A historic literary institution that supports local writers, readings, and cultural debates	
Libraries & Archives (e.g., Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, district libraries)	Preserve Barcelona's literary heritage and facilitate research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide physical spaces for literary engagement (e.g., book readings, conferences, writing workshops).

Source: Author's own elaboration based on institutional websites, policy reports, and Chapter 4.2.²⁷⁹

Table 4.3 Key Stakeholders - Private Sector

Private Sector	Task	Connections
Independent bookshops (e.g., La Central, Laie, Lata Peinada)	Offer curated literary selections and host author events	
Literary cafés & themed hotels (e.g., Café de l'Òpera, Casa de les Lletres)	Provide immersive literary experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with cultural institutions to promote literary festivals and special events.
Publishing houses (e.g., Edicions 62, Anagrama, Seix Barral)	Invest in local literary production, translation, and international outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with tourism boards to develop marketing campaigns for literary tourism. Support local authors through book promotions and sponsorships.
Tour operators (e.g., Context Travel, local literary walking tours)	Design experiential tourism activities focused on literature	

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Mapa Literario' as well as websites from Chapter 4.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Author's own elaboration based on institutional websites, policy reports, and Chapter 4.2. Institutional websites are: CCCB, 'CCCB - Main Page'; Ateneu Barcelonès, 'Ateneu Barcelonès'; Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Notícias'; Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Biblioteques de Barcelona'.

²⁸⁰ Author's own elaboration based on fieldwork, interview data, as well as literature and websites in Chapter 4. Websites that were looked at: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Directorio de Librerías'; Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Mapa Literario'; Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Instituciones'.

Table 4.4 Key Stakeholders - Community Groups and Residents

Community Groups, Residents, Tourists	Task	Connections
Local writers & poets	Play a key role in preserving and enriching Barcelona's literary identity	
Literary event organisers	Coordinate public events that attract both locals and tourists (e.g., Kosmopolis Festival, Sant Jordi's Day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with cultural institutions to host literary workshops, book fairs, and discussions. Engage residents and tourists in community-based storytelling projects. Collaborate with bookshops and publishers to promote independent authors. Interact with local businesses (bookshops, cafés, publishers) by purchasing books and attending events. Benefit from cultural policies
Storytellers & translators	Ensure Barcelona's literary culture is accessible to a global audience	
Sant Jordi's Day, literary festivals' visitors	Engage in book-buying traditions and literary celebrations	
Walking tour participants	Explore Barcelona through the lens of its literary heritage	

Source: Author's own elaboration based on surveys, interview data, and Chapter 4.

Together, the stakeholder tables show how Barcelona's literary governance spans public institutions, cultural organisations, private actors, and community participants, each contributing to literature as a public cultural asset. However, as the next section explores, this framework faces ongoing tensions around centralisation, accessibility, and uneven participation.

Persistent Policy Tensions

Despite its decentralised narrative, Barcelona's literary governance remains structurally centralised. Key institutions and citywide events still concentrate funding, visibility, and decision-making, limiting grassroots innovation. This reinforces broader criticism of the Barcelona Model, where cultural planning is often top-down, effective for global branding but disconnected from everyday socio-cultural dynamics²⁸¹.

²⁸¹ Degen and García, ‘The Transformation of the “Barcelona Model”’.

Public-private partnerships, while essential for financing major festivals, often prioritise commercial content²⁸². Sant Jordi, the city's flagship literary event, reflects this duality: both a celebration of local culture²⁸³ and a heavily marketed tourist attraction²⁸⁴.

Bureaucratic barriers also constrain smaller or experimental initiatives. Short-term funding, complex applications, and uneven access to decision-making disproportionately²⁸⁵ affect independent bookshops, community organisations, and multilingual projects outside Catalan or Spanish.

Accessibility remains a core challenge in Barcelona's literary ecosystem²⁸⁶. Despite wider distribution of literary spaces, barriers such as linguistic exclusion²⁸⁷ and limited venue access persist²⁸⁸. As summarised in Table 4.5, decentralisation alone does not ensure meaningful inclusion.

Table 4.5 Cultural Policy Outcomes

Ideal Policies	Policy Challenges	Implications for Community Engagement
Decentralised infrastructure (e.g., libraries, festivals)	Uneven implementation across districts	Enables spatial access but does not guarantee experiential inclusion
Multilingual programming	Language and cultural relevance gaps persist	Promotes cultural diversity but often excludes marginalised groups if not consistently applied
Public-private partnerships	Commercialisation risks (e.g., festival curation skewed toward marketable content)	Can support resource sustainability, but may limit grassroots authorship and local relevance
UNESCO designation enhances (international) visibility	Disconnect between global branding and local needs	Raises international profile, but community priorities (e.g., proximity, representation) risk being sidelined

Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews, survey responses, and Chapter 4.

²⁸² Richards, 'Culture and Authenticity in a Traditional Event'.

²⁸³ Lorcan Doherty, 'Sant Jordi Celebrations Charm Locals and Visitors Alike', *Catalan News*, 23 April 2025, <https://www.catalannews.com/culture/item/sant-jordi-celebrations-charm-locals-and-visitors-alike>.

²⁸⁴ Marta Gambín, 'Un Sant Jordi Regalado a Los Turistas Que Pueden Pagarlo', *ElNacional.Cat* (blog), 23 April 2025, https://www.elnacional.cat/es/cultura/sant-jordi-regalado-turistas-pueden-pagarlo_1403809_102.html.

²⁸⁵ Rebecca Finkel and Katherine Dashper, 'Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion in Events', in *The Routledge Handbook of Events*, ed. Stephen J. Page and Joanne Connell, 2nd ed. (Second edition. | Abingdon, Oxon ; New York : Routledge, 2020. |: Routledge, 2020), 478, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429280993-31>.

²⁸⁶ Finkel and Dashper, 'Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion in Events,' 478.

²⁸⁷ Beniamino Peruzzi Castellani, 'The European Ideal of an Inclusive City: Interculturalism and "Good Social Practices" in Barcelona', *Social Inclusion* 11, no. 3 (19 July 2023), 152-53, <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v11i3.6793>.

²⁸⁸ Finkel and Dashper, 'Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion in Events,' 476-77.

Barcelona's literary policy has laid a strong foundation for a decentralised, inclusive, and internationally connected cultural ecosystem. Nevertheless, bridging the gap between policy aspiration and experiences remains essential. The next section turns to libraries, bookshops, and festivals to examine how these dynamics are enacted and challenged, on the ground.

4.3 Spaces of Engagement: Everyday Literary Infrastructure

While the previous section focused on institutional frameworks such as the UNESCO designation, literary engagement in Barcelona is ultimately realised through everyday spaces, such as libraries, bookshops, and festivals, that decentralise cultural access and include literature into urban life. These infrastructures foster dialogue, inclusion, and community-building, translating policy into practice and embodying literature as a socio-cultural activity.

Libraries and Bookshops

Public libraries across Barcelona operationalise decentralisation by including literary engagement within neighbourhoods. More than archives, they serve as spaces of encounter and reflection, hosting multilingual book clubs, author talks, and community workshops.

Two notable examples are Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez in Sant Martí and Biblioteca Jaume Fuster in Gràcia. The former integrates Latin American voices, linking literature with migration and identity²⁸⁹. The latter merges Japanese literature and Italian events with local literature²⁹⁰.

Building on this, libraries like García Márquez and Jaume Fuster exemplify what scholars call social infrastructure: spaces that foster community trust, shared experience, and everyday interaction²⁹¹. Through multilingual programming, inclusive design, and neighbourhood-rooted events, they serve not only as service points but as institutions for community-based literary engagement.

As shown in Photo 4.1, the Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez's open design, warm materials, and informal seating areas reflect its socio-cultural role as a welcoming and inclusive cultural space. Its programming and architecture work support everyday engagement, particularly for underrepresented

²⁸⁹ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'The Gabriel García Márquez Library in Barcelona: Best Public Library of the Year, 2023', *Info Barcelona* (blog), 21 August 2023, https://www.barcelona.cat/infobarcelona/en/tema/city-council/the-gabriel-garcia-marquez-library-in-barcelona-best-public-library-of-the-year-2023_1313603.html.

²⁹⁰ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'Biblioteca Jaume Fuster'.

²⁹¹ Alan Latham and Jack Layton, 'Social Infrastructure and the Public Life of Cities: Studying Urban Sociality and Public Spaces', *Geography Compass* 13, no. 7 (July 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12444>.

communities and those located in the Sant Martí district. These dynamics are explored in greater detail in Chapter 5 through the interview with library manager Fran Cobo Caballero.

Photo 4.1 *Photo Collage of Gabriel García Marquéz Library (2025)²⁹²*



Source: Author's own photographs, taken in Gabriel García Marquéz Library on March 26, 2025.

The library's open design, natural light, and informal seating exemplify its inclusive character, particularly for disadvantaged communities. Its spatial design supports everyday engagement, a theme explored further in Chapter 5. The following Table 4.6 complements this visual by offering a comparative overview of public libraries in Barcelona.

²⁹² Left picture displays the entrance area of Biblioteca Gabriel García Marquéz, highlighting its ecological and hospitable environment. Right picture shows the open-plan interior of the library with seating areas designed for accessibility and comfort.

Table 4.6 Public Libraries in Barcelona

Place	District	Focus Area	Key Activities	Impact on Community
Biblioteca Jaume Fuster	Gràcia	Global literature and culture	Author panels, debates, workshops	Encourages global-local dialogue
Biblioteca Gabriel García Marquéz	Sant Martí	Latin American literature, crime fiction and social justice	Book signings, discussions	Promotes reflection on urban crime
Biblioteca Sant Gervasi	Sarrià-Sant Gervasi	Promotes literary heritage in the neighbourhood where prominent authors once lived	Book presentations, book narrations	Connects literary heritage with modern society
Biblioteca Juan Marsé	Horta-Guinardó	Local literature	Children activities, workshops, book narrations, talks	Supports Catalan literary culture, thus attracting locals to events
Biblioteca Canyelles - M. Àngels Rivas	Nou Barris	Forensic sciences and crime	Exhibitions, narrations	Specialised audience finds a common place of interest
Biblioteca Ignasi Iglésias - Can Fabra	Sant Andreu	Dark novels	Workshops, multilingual talks, exhibitions	Specialised audience finds a common place of interest
Biblioteca Nacional de Cataluña	Ciutat Vella	Catalan bibliography	Theatre, concerts, presentations, exhibitions	Promotes Catalan culture

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Biblioteques de Barcelona.'

Independent bookshops extend Barcelona's decentralised literary infrastructure by activating culture from below. La Raposa (Sants-Montjuïc), with a feminist and LGTBIQ+ focus²⁹³, and Backstory (Eixample), serving English-speaking communities, host multilingual events, such as writing workshops, poetry readings, book clubs, that promote cross-cultural participation and belonging²⁹⁴. Backstory exemplifies this model with weekly activities spanning generations and languages, supported by an open layout that fosters dialogue and inclusion (see Photo 4.2 and Chapter 5).

²⁹³ La Raposa, 'La Raposa', *La Raposa* (blog), n.d., <https://www.laraposacoop.org>.

²⁹⁴ backstory, 'Backstory - Home'.

Photo 4.2 Photo Collage of Backstory Bookshop (2025)²⁹⁵



Source: Author's own photographs, taken in Backstory Bookshop on May 13, 2025.

Backstory's role as a multilingual, community-oriented space highlights the broader potential of independent bookshops to drive neighbourhood-level inclusion and dialogue. Table 4.7 below presents a comparative overview of such spaces across Barcelona.

Table 4.7 *Independent Bookshops in Barcelona*

Place	District	Focus Area	Key Activities	Impact on Community
Backstory	Eixample	Book in English, both from international and local authors	Book clubs, talks, presentations, voluntary work	Connects foreign residents with local culture
Llibreria Haiku Japó a Barcelona	Gràcia	Japanese books, products, gastronomy and culture	Book clubs, presentations, workshops	A little piece of Japan in Barcelona, merging two cultures
La Central	Ciutat Vella/Example	Philosophy, history, social sciences, anthropology, classical studies, art and contemporary thought	Presentations, readings, talks, children activities	Serves all publics
Librería Nollegiu	Sant Martí	Narratives, essays, graphic novels, selection of poetry	Courses, workshops, book presentations, performances	Spread the passion for reading, making a difference in people's lives
Librería +Bernat	Les Corts	Book sales, café, activities	Book clubs, book presentations, concerts, talks	Unites the community from the neighbourhood, creates a sense a belonging
La Raposa	Sants-Montjuïc	Feminism and LGTBIQ, children literature	Workshops, concerts, conversations, talks, exhibitions	Bar and bookstore at the same time, welcomes diverse audience
La Tribu	Sant Andreu	Books for the entire family	Book clubs, children activities, presentations	Connects literature with families

Source: Author's own elaboration, based on Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Directorio de Librerías.'

²⁹⁵ Left picture displays the entrance area of Backstory, highlighting its welcoming and inclusive design. Right picture demonstrates a book club taking place in the back of the underground room of Backstory, reinforcing how these events successfully builds a community feeling between book-passionates.

Together, libraries and bookshops form the foundation of Barcelona's participatory literary ecosystem. Their presence and decentralised distribution include literature into the neighbourhoods.

Festivals and Events

Literary festivals expand Barcelona's cultural infrastructure by transforming streets, plazas, and venues into platforms for collective literary experiences. These temporary events intensify community life, drawing diverse publics into conversations around storytelling, heritage, and social issues.

Kosmopolis, held biennially at the CCCB²⁹⁶, embraces global literature and interdisciplinary dialogue, addressing topics like migration, democracy, and climate change. Món Llibre, focused on children's literature²⁹⁷, fosters early cultural participation through storytelling, theatre, and workshops, engaging families and school networks. Photo 4.3 illustrates the city's strategy to promote youth participation in the literary festival. Sant Jordi²⁹⁸, Barcelona's most emblematic literary event, merges local tradition with international appeal but also raises concerns over overcrowding.

Photo 4.3 Món Llibre Announcement (2025)



Source: Author's own picture, taken close to Passeig de Gràcia on May 9, 2025.

²⁹⁶ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura,' 40, 65; CCCB, 'Kosmopolis The Amplified Literature Fest'.

²⁹⁷ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dossier de Candidatura,' 41; Ajuntament de Barcelona, '¡Te Damos La Bienvenida al Portal de Viajes Literarios Món Llibre!', *Barcelona Cultura* (blog), n.d., <https://www.barcelona.cat/monllibre/es>; Món Llibre, 'Món Llibre 2024 Festival Literario Para Niñas, Niños y Jóvenes', CCCB (blog), June 2024, <https://www.cccb.org/es/actividades/ficha/mon-llibre-2024/244916>.

²⁹⁸ Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Sant Jordi'.

Recent years have seen growing prominence of district-based festivals that support decentralisation and thematic innovation. KM Amèrica (Sant Martí) celebrates Latin American literature²⁹⁹, while Festival 42 (Sant Andreu) focuses on speculative fiction and ecological themes³⁰⁰. These festivals localise literary engagement and expand Barcelona's vision of literature as both heritage and horizon. The Table 4.8 below offers a comparative overview of these key events, summarising their district location, thematic orientation, and community impact:

Table 4.8 Literary Festivals in Barcelona

Festival	Thematic Focus	District Location	Community Impact	Month
Sant Jordi	Books exchange with roses	Across various districts	Promotes literature, friendship, and love	April (since 1929)
Salón del Cómic	Comics	Sants-Montjuïc	Most important comic books event in Spain, attracts both national and international audiences	May (since 1981)
Semana del Libro en Catalán	Catalan literature	Ciutat Vella	Local, Catalan residents have a free space to connect with their literary culture and other likeminded people	September (since 1983)
Barcelona Poesia	Poetry and social reflection	Across various districts	Encourages emotional and social connection	May (since 1985)
Salón del Manga	Japanese comics	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat	Largest manga and anime event in Spain and the second largest in Europe, attracts both national and international audiences	November (since 1995)
Kosmopolis	Global literature, social issues (migration, climate change)	Ciutat Vella (CCCB)	International visibility, civic dialogue	March/June/October (since 2002)
BCNegra	Crime fiction and social justice	Across various districts	Promotes reflection on urban crime	February (since 2005)
Món Llibre	Children's literature	Ciutat Vella (CCCB)	Family engagement, early cultural exposure	June (since 2005)
Fira Literal	Offers books with less dominant line of thoughts than large events usually do	Fabra i Coats	Cooperative festival, a testimony of the powerful capacity of literature to challenge, inspire and unite the community	May (since 2014)
Literatura en Trànsit	Focused on specialties of libraries in Horta - Guinardó	Horta - Guinardó	Invites the public to participate in the multiple languages of artistic creation	October (since 2016)
Festival 42	Science fiction, speculative genres	Sant Andreu (Fabra i Coats)	Civic reflection on urban futures, decentralisation	November (since 2021)
KM Amèrica	Latin American literature	Sant Martí (García Márquez Library)	Cultural plurality, district engagement	June (since 2022)
Festival de Literatura Italiana (FLIB)	Italian literature	Gràcia (Jaume Fuster Library)	Italian-Catalan literary exchange building Mediterranean bridges	October (since 2022)
Crush Fest	Young adult literature	L'Eixample	Connects young people with famous books on TikTok	February/March (since 2024)

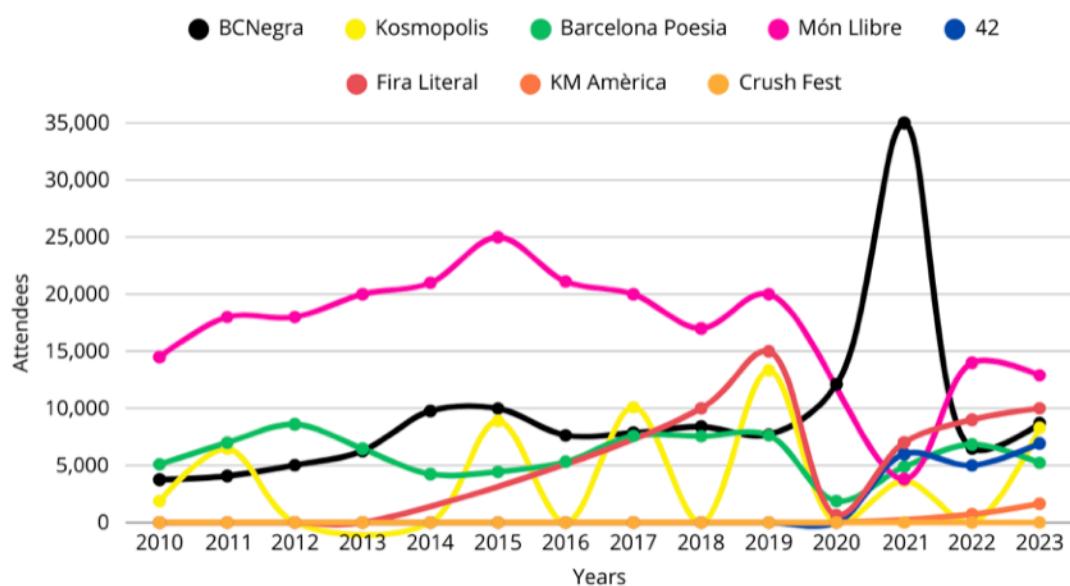
²⁹⁹ Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 'The Gabriel García Márquez Library in Barcelona: Best Public Library of the Year, 2023'.

³⁰⁰ Ajuntament de Barcelona, '42 Barcelona Fantastic Genres Festival'.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on festival websites.³⁰¹

Participation data further illustrates the city's decentralisation strategy. Graph 4.1 below shows steady turnout for flagship events like Món Llibre and a sharp 2021 spike for BCNegra (due to its online dissemination during the COVID-19 pandemic), while newer festivals such as Fira Literal, KM Amèrica, and Festival 42 display growing attendance, highlighting a shift toward more local, thematic, and inclusive cultural formats. These trends align with sustainable tourism goals and reinforce neighbourhood identity.

Graph 4.1 Literary Festival Participation Trends in Barcelona (2010–2023)



Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from *Barcelona Dades Cultura* (Ajuntament de Barcelona).³⁰²

Overall, libraries, bookshops, and festivals together embrace the everyday literary infrastructure that sustains community life through literature in Barcelona. Their spatial presence and thematic diversity operationalise decentralisation, making literature accessible.

³⁰¹ Author's own elaboration based on festival websites. Kosmopolis CCCB, 'Kosmopolis;' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Món Llibre;' Barcelona Cultura, 'BCNegra - Activitats Destacades;' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'KmAmèrica;' Ajuntament de Barcelona, '42 Barcelona Fantastic Genres Festival;' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Barcelona Poesia;' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Dialogues for Sant Jordi;' La Setmana del Llibre en Català, 'Agenda d'activitats 2024;' Fiomic, 'Comic Barcelona;' Manga Barcelona, '2024 Edition 30 Manga Barcelona;' Literal, 'Fira d'idees i Llibres Radicals;' Ajuntament de Barcelona, 'Literatura En Trànsit;' Crush Fest, 'Crush Fest'.

³⁰² Author's own elaboration based on data from *Barcelona Dades Cultura* (Ajuntament de Barcelona). Available at: <https://barcelonadadescultura.bcn.cat/festivals/dades/?lang=es>.

4.4 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter has explored how community engagement through literature in Barcelona is structured across three interrelated layers: as socio-cultural infrastructure, as a tool of decentralisation, and as a space shaped by challenges of access and inclusion. Literature in Barcelona is not just cultural expression, it is a participatory force shaping public spaces, fostering social ties, and supporting cultural rights.

Libraries and bookshops serve as neighbourhood anchors for intergenerational, multilingual, and intercultural engagement, while festivals like Sant Jordi, Festival 42, and KM Amèrica extend this infrastructure by activating urban spaces for cultural exchange and dialogue. Their decentralised presence reflects policy commitments to urban spaces.

Nevertheless, as policy analysis and Table 4.5 show, structural limitations, centralised funding, linguistic barriers, and bureaucracy, continue to constrain participation. Decentralisation alone does not ensure inclusion.

In answering the sub-question, *How do literary events foster community engagement in Barcelona?*, this chapter finds that such events create accessible, diverse spaces for everyday interaction and inclusion, though fundamental barriers must still be addressed.

Barcelona's literary infrastructures thus serve a dual role: building community while supporting cultural tourism. They reflect both the potential and tension of using literature to bridge local engagement with global visibility.

The next chapter turns to empirical data, interviews and multilingual surveys, to assess how these infrastructures are experienced, negotiated, and reimagined by communities across the city. Through this, the analysis will examine whether literature is socio-culturally transforming Barcelona not only in policy, but in practice.

Chapter V - Empirical Results and Analysis

5.1 Empirical Research Design

This chapter critically integrates the thesis's empirical findings to address the central research question: *In what ways do literary events in Barcelona socio-culturally transform public spaces and contribute to the promotion of literary tourism?* Drawing on four expert interviews and two public surveys, it analyses how literary events reshape urban space, strengthen community ties, and reframe tourism.

The interviews were conducted with four key stakeholders: Jaume Muñoz Jofre (ICUB)³⁰³ and Carme Galve Montore (Biblioteca Jaume Fuster)³⁰⁴, interviewed online; Fran Cobo Caballero (Gabriel García Márquez Library)³⁰⁵, interviewed in person; and Abbie Hibler (Backstory Bookshop)³⁰⁶, interviewed via email. All interviews were transcribed and thematically coded in Atlas.ti³⁰⁷, revealing patterns across institutional and grassroots actors.

Two anonymous surveys, conducted between February and April 2025, collected 86 valid responses (68 Spanish, 18 English). Combining multiple-choice and open-ended questions, they assessed awareness, participation, motivations, challenges, and suggestions. Distributed via social media³⁰⁸, messaging apps³⁰⁹, and university networks³¹⁰, the surveys reflect views from residents and frequent visitors. Qualitative responses were coded in Atlas.ti; quantitative data were analysed through Google Forms.

This chapter follows the analytical pillars developed in Chapters 2–4: (1) sustainable tourism, (2) culture-led urban regeneration, and (3) community engagement. By comparing institutional, grassroots, and public perspectives, it provides a grounded response to the research question and prepares the policy analysis in Chapter 6.

³⁰³ Interviewed on March 24, 2025. *Cultural Institute of Barcelona* stands for *Institut de Cultura de Barcelona* (ICUB).

³⁰⁴ Interviewed on March 14, 2025.

³⁰⁵ Interviewed on March 26, 2025.

³⁰⁶ Due to lack of availability for either an in-person or online interview, Abbie Hibler agreed upon answering the most relevant interview questions the thesis author had prepared and sent her answers back via email. Interview answers were received on April 28, 2025.

³⁰⁷ See Appendix 1, Diagram 1, Diagram 2, Diagram 3, Diagram 4, Diagram 5, and Diagram 6 to see the illustrations created with atlas.ti for all the four interviews and open-ended questions parts from both surveys.

³⁰⁸ Social media platforms such as personal Instagram and LinkedIn accounts.

³⁰⁹ Messaging apps such as personal WhatsApp.

³¹⁰ University networks, particularly the University of Barcelona email platform, where professors could be reached out.

5.2 Literary Events and Sustainable Tourism

Barcelona's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature in 2015 elevated its literary profile but introduced tensions between cultural authenticity and touristic entertainment. This section examines how literary tourism functions as a form of socio-cultural transformation, balancing visibility, crowding, and inclusion. Drawing on Atlas.ti-coded interviews and surveys, it reveals how literary tourism embodies both institutional ambitions for global prestige and grassroots demands for decentralisation and community participation.

Institutional versus Grassroots Policy Framing

Institutional and grassroots actors frame literary tourism differently. Institutions often present literary events as culturally enriching initiatives with symbolic value, while grassroots actors prioritise local connection and inclusion.

Jaume Muñoz Jofre (ICUB) downplays literary tourism as a policy aim, seeing it as a secondary outcome of citizen-focused projects:

*'We do not work with the hypothesis of generating literary tourism, but of generating projects of general interest for citizens.'*³¹¹

Nonetheless, his reference to collaborations with UNESCO CoL like Manchester and Guadalajara suggests Barcelona's cultural strategy also serves international positioning. This risks privileging international branding over community engagement.

In contrast, Abbie Hibler (Backstory Bookshop) embraces literary tourism as locally rooted and participatory:

*'Backstory was born from a shared passion for storytelling and a deep belief in the power of literature to create meaningful connections across cultures. We were inspired by the vibrant, diverse voices that often go unheard, and we wanted to create a space where those voices could not only be celebrated but truly nurtured.'*³¹²

Her approach fosters economic and cultural benefits for neighbourhoods by supporting local authors and small businesses, an alternative to institutional branding that may lack local redistribution mechanisms.

This institutional–grassroots divide underscores a central challenge: top-down cultural strategies often contrast with bottom-up calls for authenticity and shared governance. Designing sustainable literary

³¹¹ 'Nosotros no trabajamos con la hipótesis de generar turismo literario, sino de generar proyectos de interés general para la ciudadanía.' - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre.

³¹² Abbie Hibler, Interview Transcript: Abbie Hibler, Email, 28 April 2025.

tourism requires bridging this gap, balancing symbolic positioning with tangible benefits. The next section explores how public perceptions of literary tourism reflect these competing narratives.

Public Opinions on Literary Tourism

Building on institutional and grassroots insights, this section explores public perceptions of literary tourism in Barcelona. While concerns about over-tourism remain, there is broad support for sustainable, decentralised, and inclusive literary events that foster cultural exchange and community connection.

Survey responses show openness to international visitors when events remain local and community-focused. One Spanish participant noted literary events can

*'[open] the doors to know other cultures and their way of seeing and understanding reading and literature.'*³¹³

Hibler reinforces this, describing Backstory as:

*'[a] place where local writers and readers can engage with global perspectives, and international voices can find a home in our region.'*³¹⁴

Both perspectives support decentralised, district-level programming to spread events across time and space, easing overcrowding while deepening engagement.

Resistance to tourism is often linked more to congestion, low visibility of local initiatives, and limited resources than to culture itself. Events held in libraries and bookshops help manage visitor flows and reduce pressure on central landmarks.

Survey data aligns with Abbie Hibler's view: 44% of English respondents agreed literary tourism promotes culture and diversity, with another 44% acknowledging challenges. Comments like:

'Culturally: change perception from "party" tourism to a more cultural vibe.'

*'Bring "better" tourists.'*³¹⁵

reflect a preference for meaningful over mass tourism. Spanish respondents noted economic benefits and congestion relief:

*'It could [bring] economic benefit and [decongest] very tourist areas.'*³¹⁶

³¹³ *'[Abrir] las puertas a conocer otras culturas y su forma de ver y entender la lectura y literatura.'* - Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey', Google Form Survey, 31 May 2025.

³¹⁴ Hibler, Abbie Hibler.

³¹⁵ Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey', Google Form Survey, 31 May 2025.

³¹⁶ *'Podría [traer] beneficio económico y [descongestionar] zonas muy turísticas.'* - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

'Promotion of local trade.'

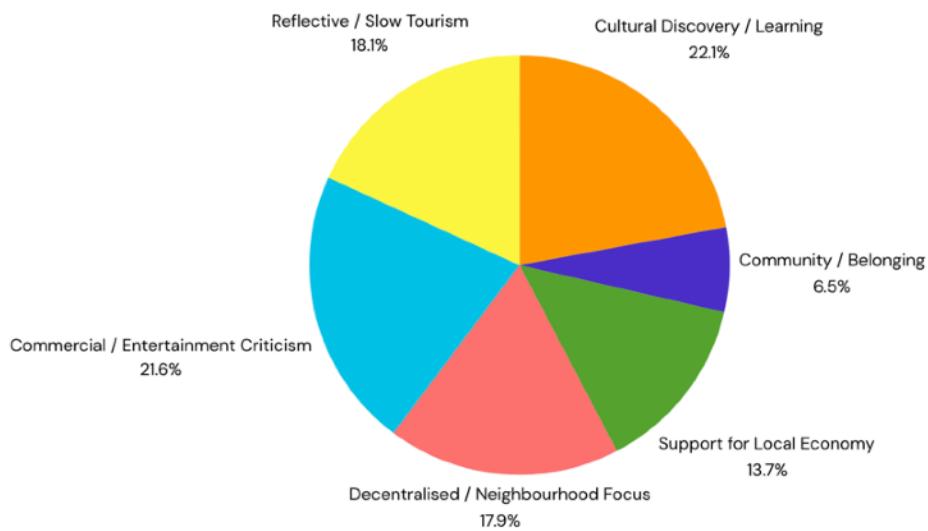
*'I think bookstores would sell more.'*³¹⁷

These highlight the need for equal distribution of tourism revenues to support local businesses, artists, and cultural workers.

Atlas.ti coding links *Sustainable Tourism* and *Literary Tourism* to *Community Engagement*, showing sustainability is understood as rooted in social participation³¹⁸. Both surveys suggest literary tourism should shift cultural participation away from overcrowded entertainment. However, limited infrastructure, visibility, and communication hinder this shift.

While institutional actors like Jaume Muñoz frame literary tourism symbolically, residents and visitors hold diverse meanings. Thematically analysed survey open responses (Chart 5.1) show associations with cultural discovery, commercialisation, entertainment, and slow tourism, with decentralisation emerging as a key theme, though community belonging is less frequent.

Chart 5.1 Interpretations of Literary Tourism



Source: Author's own elaboration based on survey data.

Overall, public opinion supports literary tourism that values openness, multilingualism, and local identity through decentralised programming. However, gaps between public expectations and event infrastructure highlight the need for governance that makes decentralisation tangible. The next section explores how libraries embody this more sustainable vision.

³¹⁷ 'Impulso al comercio local. Apoyaría al comercio local y a las librerías pequeñas.' and 'Creo que las librerías venderían más.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

³¹⁸ Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler', Atlas.ti Project, 31 May 2025.

Libraries as Community Destinations

Building on public support for decentralised literary tourism, this section highlights libraries as key cultural infrastructures. More than service venues, libraries like Gabriel García Márquez function as inclusive, climate-conscious spaces that promote everyday participation, challenging mass tourism's emphasis on entertainment. Fran Cobo Caballero, general manager, compares it to iconic city sites:

*'García Márquez has been incorporated [...] into that network [...] of mandatory visits: Cathedral, Sagrada Familia, Gaudí [...], and the library.'*³¹⁹

He emphasises the library as a community refuge:

*'You can [...] take refuge from the climate, [...] you can rest [...], it is a space of thought.'*³²⁰

Atlas.ti co-occurrences between *Sustainable Tourism*, *Cultural Sensibility*, and *Urban Regeneration*³²¹ reinforce the library's role as a response to over-tourism, designed for access, not entertainment. Cobo's view of the library as a site of encounter affirms its function as social infrastructure (see Chapter 4.3).

In contrast, Carme Galve Montore, director of Jaume Fuster Library, warns that cultural spaces risk instrumentalisation under the guise of sustainability. Still, her concept of '*biblioturismo*',³²² libraries as cultural destinations, reveals their dual role as both community anchors and potential tourist sites.

Public sentiment and data suggest these roles can coexist. Multilingual, decentralised, year-round programming draws locals across demographics, easing pressure on central sites and supporting cultural access. Survey results (Graph 5.1) show strong cross-linguistic support for neighbourhood literary programming, valued for being accessible, inclusive, and resistant to overcrowding.

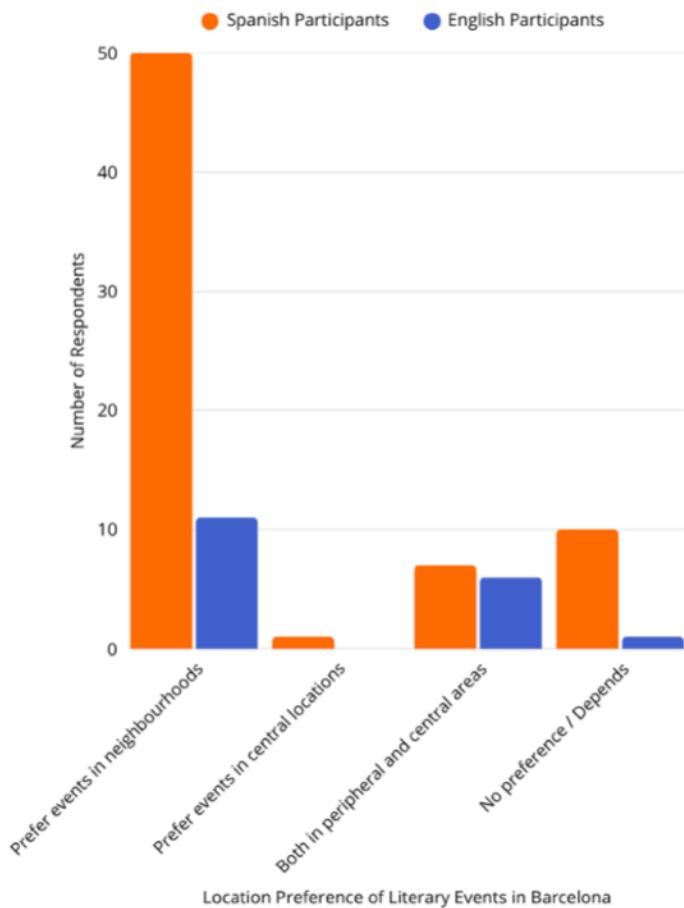
³¹⁹ 'Se ha incorporado la García Márquez [...] a esa red [...] de visitas obligadas: Catedral, Sagrada Familia, Gaudí [...] y la biblioteca.' - Fran Cobo Caballero, Interview Transcript: Fran Cobo Caballero, In person, 26 March 2025.

³²⁰ 'Puedes [...] refugiarte del clima, [...] puedes descansar [...], es un espacio de pensamiento.' - Cobo Caballero, Fran Cobo Caballero.

³²¹ Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero', Atlas.ti Project, 31 May 2025.

³²² 'Biblioturismo' stands for 'library tourism,' a concept introduced by Carme Galve Montore during the interview, introducing the idea that tourism in libraries is possible, especially among libraries of great architectural importance, such as François Mitterrand in Paris or New York Public Library.

Graph 5.1 Event Location Preferences by Language Group



Source: Author's own elaboration based on survey data.

Many Spanish respondents call for greater visibility and support for library events, viewing libraries as symbols of pride and legitimacy, not just service hubs. One English respondent remarked:

*'public libraries could play a key leading role.'*³²³

This reflects a shift in cultural legitimacy from visibility to trust, with libraries emerging as local landmarks rooted in proximity and participation. Unlike tourist hotspots, they offer comfort, reflection, and sustained engagement.

As Chapter 4 also notes, this shift redefines urban geography, privileging everyday infrastructure over iconic visibility. Libraries like García Márquez support literary tourism by hosting diverse publics without displacement. Survey data confirms this: 68% of Spanish respondents would join neighbourhood events, often suggesting libraries as ideal venues. Cobo's interview data (22 grounded co-occurrences (GR)) links *Community Engagement* and *Participation*³²⁴, underscoring libraries' role in preserving intangible heritage through storytelling.

³²³ Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

³²⁴ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero'.

Ultimately, libraries bridge cultural tourism and community needs, offering multilingual, year-round programming that redistributes visitors and fosters cohesion. As sustainable infrastructures of literary tourism, they embody a model where cultural value is grounded in everyday trust and accessibility, framing the challenges examined in the next section.

Critical Views

While decentralised literary tourism is broadly supported for its inclusion and sustainability, interviewees and survey respondents express concerns about its uneven implementation. Tensions emerge when visibility and tourism promotion overshadow accessibility, risking commodification that reproduces, rather than alleviates, urban inequalities.

Carme Galve Montore articulates this clearly:

*'Tourism is not a particularly sustainable industry.'*³²⁵

Her skepticism aligns with broader data indicating that literary events, while framed as inclusive, can legitimise urban models reliant on mass tourism and unequal development. Though decentralisation and diversity are policy goals, they often lack investment, planning, and community collaboration. Atlas.ti co-occurrences between Public Policy, Institutional Support, and Impact highlight these structural limits³²⁶.

As noted in Chapter 2, sustainability discourse can obscure governance that manages perceptions without redistributing power or resources. Without longterm infrastructure and shared responsibility, literary strategies risk reinforcing the inequalities they aim to address. Galve warns that literary events often serve branding rather than transformation. Inclusive governance is essential if literary tourism is to become genuine cultural practice.

Survey responses reinforce this criticism. English participants wrote:

*'Overcrowding at popular events and the commercialisation of book fairs sometimes overshadow the literary essence.'*³²⁷

Spanish participants criticised Sant Jordi's shift toward mass tourism:

'Too commercial events, especially Sant Jordi.'

³²⁵ *'El turismo no es una industria especialmente sostenible.'* - Carme Galve Montore, Interview Transcript: Carme Galve Montore, Google Meet, 14 March 2025.

³²⁶ Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore', Atlas.ti Project, 31 May 2025.

³²⁷ Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

*‘[Mass tourism] makes the city impracticable.’*³²⁸

These reflect Atlas.ti co-occurrences between Participation Barriers and Massification (GR = 6)³²⁹.

Criticism targets centralisation and commodification, not literary celebration itself.

Sant Jordi embodies this tension, widely beloved but increasingly seen as commercial and congested. What began as a grassroots literary tradition is now often perceived as entertainment, diminishing local authenticity and prompting some residents to avoid the city centre. This reinforces Chapter 2’s discussion on how cultural events can become branding tools, compromising principles like slow engagement and community relevance. Distributing events spatially and temporally could reduce pressure and foster sustainable participation. Without preserving communal character, literary events risk becoming curated tourist entertainment rather than participatory practices for residents. This criticism targets cultural strategies that value economic visibility over depth.

Table 5.1 (below) illustrates co-occurrences between Sustainable Tourism, Literary Tourism, and Tourism. While Galve and Muñoz express cautious idealism, Cobo and Hibler emphasise sustainability through decentralised, inclusive practices. Survey data reveals growing interest in slow tourism and local engagement, but low explicit association with literary events.

Table 5.1 Thematic Co-occurrence Matrix - Sustainable Tourism

Code 1	Code 2	GR (Co-occurrence Count)	Example Source
Sustainable Tourism	Sustainable Tourism	26	Carme Galve Montore
Sustainable Tourism	Literary Tourism	17	Jaume Muñoz Jofre
Sustainable Tourism	Tourism	8	Fran Cobo Caballero
Sustainable Tourism	Tourism	7	English Survey
Sustainable Tourism	Literary Tourism	5	Abbie Hibler
Literary Tourism	Literary Tourism	4	Spanish Survey

³²⁸ ‘Eventos demasiado comerciales, sobre todo Sant Jordi;’ ‘[La masificación turística] hace que la ciudad se vuelva impracticable.’ - Bruni Sousa, ‘Spanish-Language Survey’.

³²⁹ Sophia Bruni Sousa, ‘Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in Spanish-Language Survey’, Atlas.ti Project, 31 May 2025.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from *Atlas.ti*, extracted from interviews and open-ended questions in surveys.³³⁰

Ultimately, this section reveals the delicate balance between cultural branding and authentic participation. Addressing these concerns requires inclusive governance and longterm investment to ensure literary tourism genuinely supports sustainable, community-driven urban life. The next section explores how cultural infrastructure can advance this vision through participatory regeneration.

5.3 Literary Events and Culture-Led Urban Regeneration

This section explores how literary events and infrastructures in Barcelona drive urban regeneration not through major architectural interventions but through decentralised, socio-cultural practices that build neighbourhood identity, visibility, and belonging. Based on *Atlas.ti* co-occurrence analysis, particularly between *Urban Regeneration*, *Libraries*, and *Socio-Cultural Transformation*, the section shows how literature activates public space as a site of everyday cultural participation.

Libraries as Urban Foundations

Public libraries are foundational to Barcelona's culture-led regeneration. Beyond their educational role, they reshape neighbourhoods by pairing inclusive programming with infrastructural investment. The transformation of the Gabriel García Márquez Library illustrates how literary spaces reconfigure urban life, reinforcing the decentralised planning approach explored in Chapter 3.

Fran Cobo Caballero explains how the library's expansion from 270 m² to 4,000 m² catalysed urban change, including redesigned public streets. *Atlas.ti* data confirm co-occurrences between *Urban Regeneration* and *Public Spaces*³³¹, demonstrating how libraries function as spatial and social catalysts. While Cobo focuses on local impacts, Carme Galve Montore places this within a larger municipal strategy:

³³⁰ Author's own elaboration based on data from *Atlas.ti*, extracted from interviews and open-ended questions in surveys. Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Jaume Muñoz Jofre'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in English-Language Survey'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in Spanish-Language Survey'.

³³¹ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero'.

*‘The libraries [...] spread throughout the city. If you add progressive governments [...] the culture is gradually penetrating within the country.’*³³²

This reflects a longterm policy framework where libraries serve as everyday infrastructures of socio-cultural transformation, embodying both top-down vision and bottom-up engagement. They enhance neighbourhood identity and cohesion, attract diverse users, and indirectly support local economies, as illustrated in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Perspectives on Literary Libraries as Urban Infrastructure³³³

Atlas.ti Co-occurrences	Community	Symbolic Legitimacy
Regeneration	‘This pedestrian space [...] didn’t exist [now] there are benches, trees, a living space.’ – Fran Cobo Caballero	‘Libraries are open spaces. They are spaces that we can practically consider indoor public spaces. Then, what happens on the street goes inside the library.’ – Carme Galve Montore
Accessibility / Belonging	‘More routes and literary events both inside and outside libraries and bookstores.’ – Spanish Speaker Participant	‘Public libraries could play a key leading role.’ – English Speaker Participant

Source: Author’s own elaboration based on Fran Cobo Caballero’s, Carme Galve Montore’s interview, and survey data.

These perspectives reinforce libraries as participatory cultural hubs. Elevating the García Márquez Library to the status of landmarks like the Sagrada Família signals a shift in what constitutes urban prestige. Here, legitimacy stems from accessibility and community use, challenging the idea that cultural importance resides only in the city centre. This supports the thesis’s claim that literary spaces regenerate cities through routine engagement rather than entertainment, reducing spatial and social inequalities through decentralised access.

³³² ‘Las bibliotecas [...] se extendieron por toda la ciudad. Si sumas gobiernos progresistas [...] la cultura va penetrando poco a poco dentro del país.’ - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore

³³³ ‘Este espacio peatonal [...] no lo era [ahora] hay bancos, árboles, un espacio como de estar.’ - Cobo Caballero, Fran Cobo Caballero; ‘Las bibliotecas son espacios abiertos. Son espacios que prácticamente podemos considerar espacios públicos bajo techo. Entonces, lo que pasa en la calle entra dentro de la biblioteca.’ - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore; ‘Más rutas y eventos literarios tanto dentro como fuera de las bibliotecas y librerías.’ - Bruni Sousa, ‘Spanish-Language Survey’.

Atlas.ti coding of Galve's interview confirms strong links between *Urban Regeneration*, *Public Spaces*, and *Community Engagement* (GR=17), though survey recognition is lower (GR=1)³³⁴, suggesting a disconnect between institutional framing and public awareness.

Cobo presents libraries as welcoming, inclusive spaces serving retirees, digital nomads, newcomers, and families. Initiatives like flash reading clubs, KM Amèrica, and multilingual programs foster global-local dialogue. Crucially, their success depends on participatory governance and community input, making regeneration an ongoing, co-produced process rather than an episodic event.

As Chapter 3 argues, flagship events may generate visibility, but libraries sustain regeneration through consistent, localised engagement. Their impact lies not in scale, but in permanence and trust.

Barcelona's libraries thus exemplify how cultural infrastructure can drive urban regeneration grounded in inclusion, routine participation, and neighbourhood relevance. They provide viable alternatives to entertainment-based models, highlighting the transformative power of literature in everyday urban life. The next section turns to decentralised literary festivals, which extend these effects across city districts and further activate community life beyond iconic spaces.

Strategic Decentralisation

Building on libraries as local anchors, this section examines how decentralising literary festivals activates socio-cultural and urban regeneration beyond Barcelona's centre. ICUB's policy promotes distributing cultural infrastructure through events like Festival 42 and KM Amèrica. However, decentralisation involves more than relocating events; it requires inclusive governance and community participation to transform spatial redistribution into regeneration benefiting diverse districts and local economies.

Jaume Muñoz Jofre notes that urban change responds more to resident engagement than programming, however, placing festivals in non-central districts helps activate these areas and supports small businesses and cultural actors. Distributing events throughout the year also manages visitor flows and maintains cultural engagement. Atlas.ti co-occurrence data (e.g., *Urban Regeneration*, *Decentralisation*, *Literary Events*)³³⁵ in Muñoz's interview suggests that while decentralisation is more symbolic than systematic, it carries wider potential.

Muñoz emphasises curatorial inclusion and cultural policy's role in balancing participation. Co-occurrences between *Community Engagement*, *Urban Regeneration*, and *Decentralisation* (GR=4)³³⁶

³³⁴ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore'.

³³⁵ Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Jaume Muñoz Jofre', Atlas.ti Project, 31 May 2025.

³³⁶ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Jaume Muñoz Jofre'.

reflect shared views of decentralisation as both spatial and socio-cultural. Still, greater institutional commitment is needed to ensure regeneration reaches marginalised groups and supports inclusive participation.

Despite successful examples like Festival 42 and KM Amèrica, survey data show that relocating events doesn't ensure participatory decentralisation. Some large-scale festivals feel top-down even when hosted in neighbourhoods. Without inclusive formats that reflect local diversity, decentralised events risk reproducing centralised models. As Chapter 4 argues, true decentralisation requires multilingual, collaborative programming responsive to local contexts. Otherwise, while public spaces may improve, inclusion and participation lag behind.

Chapter 3 also noted the growing visibility of decentralised festivals, particularly those offering multilingual or family-focused programming, positioning decentralisation as both a cultural value and structural need for urban regeneration. Table 5.3 summarises this dynamic, aligning policy goals with public expectations for participatory depth.

Table 5.3 Decentralisation - Policy Intentions and Public Demand³³⁷

Category	Institutional Strategy (Jaume Muñoz, ICUB)	Survey Response (ENG/ESP)
Decentralisation Goals	'We work a lot with this logic of involvement of the entire territory.'	73,5% Spanish, 61,1% English strongly prefer decentralised events
Events	Festival 42 (Sant Andreu), KM Amèrica (Sant Martí)	'Yes, if there were more events in my neighbourhood I would always participate.' - Spanish-Speaking Participant
Symbolic Framing	Decentralisation as cultural right, territorial equity	'I live in the Born and there is already too much tourism. It would be positive to decentralise the offer and support actions in neighbourhoods.' - Spanish-Speaking Participant

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Jaume Muñoz Jofre's interview and survey data.

Decentralised literary festivals hold potential to revitalise neighbourhoods, but fulfilling this promise requires evolving event formats that prioritise collaboration. This aligns with broader arguments from Chapters 3 and 4, which advocate for cultural infrastructures and programming that enable

³³⁷ 'Trabajamos muchísimo con esta lógica de implicación de todo el territorio.' - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre, 'Sí, si hubieran mas eventos en mi barrio yo participaría siempre.' 'Vivo en el Born y ya existe demasiado turismo. Sería positivo descentralizar la oferta y apoyar acciones en barrios.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

inclusive, sustainable urban transformation. The next section explores how institutions and neighbourhood identity intersect to shape regeneration outcomes in context.

Institutions and District Identity

Expanding on decentralised cultural activation, this section examines how institutional infrastructures like libraries function as agents of culture-led regeneration in Barcelona's districts. Drawing on Carme Galve Montore's insights, it shows how libraries such as Biblioteca Jaume Fuster participate in local communities, fostering neighbourhood cohesion and transformation. Their emphasis on programming and belonging positions them as platforms for more equal cultural access beyond landmark infrastructure.

Carme Galve frames libraries as socio-cultural agents linked to public policy rather than market-driven design. She challenges the idea that regeneration requires architectural entertainment, emphasising programming and social integration. Atlas.ti data supports this, showing strong overlaps between *Urban Regeneration*, *Community Engagement*, and *Public Policy* (GR=23;15), pointing to transformation through infrastructures of belonging³³⁸.

The Jaume Fuster Library contributes not just through space, but also through specialised programming that responds to community interests, encouraging pedestrian-friendly improvements and revitalised public life. Galve explains:

*'In Gràcia we in the Jaume Fuster Library work on certain singularities of the collection. We specialise in travel. We have a centre of interest on Japan. We have a centre of interest on language self-learning.'*³³⁹

These thematic focuses root literature in the district's socio-cultural fabric, reinforcing identity and belonging, reinforcing libraries' broader inclusion role.

Survey responses reinforce this, with Spanish-speaking participants viewing local libraries as cultural homes fostering pride and proximity. Many call for programming in Catalan and featuring local authors:

*'Read in Catalan and attend presentations by local authors.'*³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore'.

³³⁹ *'En Gràcia nosotros en la Biblioteca Jaume Fuster trabajamos ciertas singularidades de la colección. Estamos especializados en viajes. Tenemos un centro de interés sobre Japón. Tenemos un centro de interés sobre el autoaprendizaje de lenguas.'* - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore.

³⁴⁰ *'Leer en catalán y asistir a presentaciones de autores locales.'* - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

Galve also highlights language and institutional partnerships as key to regeneration, co-creating spaces for underrepresented groups, such as migrants, youth, and elders, through alliances with schools and third-sector actors. This model aligns with the urban vision outlined in Chapter 3.

Table 5.4 District Libraries and Bookshops as Engines of Regeneration³⁴¹

Function	Quote	Source
Urban Regeneration	'The extension of cultural facilities throughout the city [were] the libraries.'	Carme Galve Montore
Community Engagement	'Our events often draw people who are curious, open-minded, and looking for meaningful connection—whether through literature, conversation, or creative collaboration.'	Abbie Hibler
Cultural Representation	'[Literary events] should embrace more of Barcelona's rich literature culture, as well as international works that relate to Barcelona'	English-Speaker Participant

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Carme Galve Montore's and Abbie Hibler's interview, as well as survey data.

Table 5.4 illustrates how libraries reshape urban life through proximity and relevant programming. Galve's vision, supported by survey data, affirms district libraries as infrastructures enabling sustained, inclusive urban regeneration.

The next section explores contrasts between institutional and grassroots perspectives, revealing ongoing tensions in Barcelona's literary regeneration landscape.

Points of Divergence

While decentralisation is widely supported in principle, significant divergences remain around the scale, legitimacy, and impact of literary events in Barcelona. Institutions prioritise infrastructure and visibility; grassroots actors emphasise accessibility and socio-economic inclusion. These tensions raise questions about who benefits, how authority is distributed, and the depth of community integration.

³⁴¹ 'La extensión de equipamientos culturales a lo largo de la ciudad [fueron] las bibliotecas.' - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore.

Fran Cobo Caballero and Carme Galve Montore frame libraries as neighbourhood anchors fostering physical and symbolic change. In contrast, Abbie Hibler highlights grassroots insecurity amid institutional power dynamics:

*'Making sure our events and publications remain accessible to a wide range of participants—regardless of language, background, or income—is something we think about constantly.'*³⁴²

Survey responses reinforce this gap. One notes:

*'Lack of diffusion in smaller or independent events, and massification in large events such as Sant Jordi, which worsen the visitor's experience.'*³⁴³

This reflects an Atlas.ti co-occurrence in the Spanish dataset between *Literary Events*, *Interactive Activities*, *Participation Barriers*, and *Accessibility*³⁴⁴, showing that inclusion often fails in practice.

These tensions reinforce Chapter 4's discussion of uneven cultural recognition. Institutions hold resources and visibility, while grassroots actors connect with diverse publics but lack funding and legitimacy. This imbalance undermines grassroots impact and economic sustainability, reflecting governance gaps where top-down control often overrides local needs.

Representation involves more than who performs; it includes who shapes the agenda. Cultural decisions should be shared between institutions and communities to ensure inclusivity and relevance. Without this shift, literary infrastructure risks symbolic function over transformative practice, core to Chapter 3's criticism of regeneration without redistribution.

Flagship events like Sant Jordi's Day, though celebrated, draw criticism for overcrowding and commercialisation, echoing broader concerns over tourism's sustainability. True regeneration requires material support, distributed visibility, and inclusive design. Without these, literary events risk becoming gestures, not engines of change.

While previous sections highlighted broad agreement on decentralisation, this subsection exposes divergences in how regeneration is enacted and experienced. Table 5.5 contrasts institutional narratives with grassroots and public perspectives, underscoring a key tension: urban regeneration may be planned from above, but its success depends on how inclusive, visible, and participatory literary spaces truly are.

³⁴² Hibler, Abbie Hibler.

³⁴³ 'Falta de difusión en eventos más pequeños o independientes, y masificación en grandes eventos como Sant Jordi, que empeoran la experiencia del visitante.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

³⁴⁴ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in Spanish-Language Survey'.

Table 5.5 *Limits of Literary Regeneration*³⁴⁵

Institutional View (Jaume Muñoz, Carme Galve)	Grassroots & Public View (Abbie Hibler, surveys)
<p>'The urban transformation of Barcelona responds a lot to neighbourhood requests and circuits that do not have so much to do with our literary activity.'</p> <p>- Jaume Muñoz Jofre</p>	<p>'Our scale allows us to be more curated, more responsive, and more in touch with the community we serve. We can take creative risks, spotlight emerging voices, and adapt quickly to the needs and interests of our audience in a way that larger institutions often can't.'</p> <p>- Abbie Hibler</p>
<p>'We need more people working in the library [...] we don't have enough people to be community leaders.' - Carme Galve Montore</p>	<p>'I never hear about these events, maybe they should be better announced.'</p> <p>-Spanish-Speaker Participant</p>
<p>'Yes, clearly yes. Festival 42, for example, is held in Sant Andreu, in the Fabra i Coats. The network of libraries in Barcelona, which are 41, works a lot with the logic of decentralisation, and the events are distributed. The dialogues of Sant Jordi do not all take place in a single library, but are itinerant between the different libraries. The America Kilometre Festival is held in Sant Martí, at the Gabriel García Márquez Library. The Italian Literature Flick is held in Gràcia. Yes, we work a lot with this logic of involvement of the entire territory.'</p> <p>- Jaume Muñoz Jofre</p>	<p>'We have not really collaborated with other bookshops and etc, but more with individuals and groups who use our space to facilitate their events'</p> <p>- Abbie Hibler</p>

Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews and survey data.

Addressing these gaps requires shifting from top-down planning to locally included cultural practices empowering diverse voices. The next subchapter explores this imperative through community engagement, showing how inclusive participation can transform literary culture into a catalyst for urban belonging.

5.4 Literary Events and Community Engagement

Community engagement emerges as the most interconnected theme in the empirical data. Despite differences in scale and resources, all interviewees view literary spaces and events as key to fostering inclusion, dialogue, and belonging. This section examines engagement not as an abstract principle but a

³⁴⁵ 'La transformación urbana de Barcelona responde mucho a las solicitudes vecinales y a unos circuitos que no tienen tanto que ver con nuestra actividad literaria.' 'Sí, claramente sí. El Festival 42, por ejemplo, se celebra en Sant Andreu, en la Fabra i Coats. La red de bibliotecas de Barcelona, que son 41, trabaja muchísimo con la lógica de la descentralización, y los eventos se reparten. Los diálogos de Sant Jordi no pasan todos en una sola biblioteca, sino que son itinerantes entre las distintas bibliotecas. El Festival Kilómetro América se celebra en Sant Martí, en la Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez. El Flick de literatura italiana se celebra en Gràcia. Sí que trabajamos muchísimo con esta lógica de implicación de todo el territorio.' - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre; 'Necesitamos más gente trabajando en la biblioteca [...] no tenemos personas suficientes para ser líderes de comunidad.' - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore; 'Nunca me entero de estos eventos, quizás deberían anunciararse mejor.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

practice shaped by policy, programming, and proximity, demonstrating literature's role as a participatory tool for cohesion and cultural ownership across Barcelona's urban fabric.

Libraries as Everyday Community Spaces

Building on urban regeneration, this section highlights libraries as socio-cultural infrastructures that extend beyond their physical function. As community anchors, they promote multilingual participation and participatory governance, fostering belonging and intergenerational exchange in diverse districts.

Carme Galve Montore presents libraries as responsive to local realities. At Jaume Fuster, programming such as reading clubs and language exchanges is tailored to often-excluded groups, reinforcing social ties and cultural democracy. Atlas.ti shows strong co-occurrences between *Community Engagement*, *Socio-Cultural Transformation*, and *Socio-Cultural Interaction* (GR=19), particularly in underserved areas like Gràcia and Sant Andreu³⁴⁶.

Libraries embody local governance by letting residents shape neighbourhood identity, a participatory logic also seen in their involvement in events like the Italian Literature Festival. This capacity to connect large-scale programming with local needs positions libraries as inclusive infrastructures. Galve also warns of digital exclusion for the elderly, migrants, or precarious groups:

*'We have to reach them with strategies that are not digital.'*³⁴⁷

Atlas.ti confirms links between *Public Policy*, *Institutional Support*, and *Community Engagement* (GR=8), showing inclusion demands multimodal infrastructures for multilingual, mobile public³⁴⁸.

These findings reinforce Chapter 4's argument that engagement hinges on programming rooted in lived experience. Libraries thrive not through size or prestige, but continuity, care, and cultural relevance. In a city where public space is often commercialised, libraries act as socio-cultural commons, offering unconditional access, quiet presence, and intergenerational inclusion.

As discussed in Chapter 4.3, this reflects a shift in how public spaces are defined: libraries become not just literary hubs but everyday sites of social inclusion. Their value lies in presence, routine, and recognition, highlighting how inclusive urban planning must maintain environments where belonging can grow organically.

In sum, Barcelona's libraries demonstrate how cultural infrastructures foster community engagement by linking citywide initiatives with local needs. Their inclusive, consistent programming

³⁴⁶ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore'.

³⁴⁷ *'Tenemos que llegar a ellos con estrategias que no son digitales.'* - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore.

³⁴⁸ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore'.

strengthens cohesion and cultural connection, supporting the thesis's claim that sustainable regeneration depends on everyday participation. The next section explores how inclusive programming further activates this infrastructure.

Inclusive Programming and Participatory Logic

Expanding on libraries as community anchors, this section explores how inclusive programming transforms them into dynamic sites of cultural collaboration. Participatory formats such as workshops foster engagement by offering interactive, culturally relevant experiences that reflect diverse identities.

Unlike centralised models, Barcelona's literary infrastructure emphasises shared initiatives and active involvement. Fran Cobo Caballero describes the Gabriel García Márquez Library as an open platform fostering proximity and inclusion:

'We are a focus of culture and leisure and social cohesion, of proximity and free.'

*'People recognise themselves as part of this.'*³⁴⁹

Atlas.ti confirms strong links between *Community Engagement* and *Empowerment* (GR=3) in Cobo's data, highlighting how libraries build cultural legitimacy through participatory practices³⁵⁰.

Survey respondents resonate this view, valuing collaboration and local relevance:

*'More support for emerging writers.'*³⁵¹

In the English survey, 68% supported participatory formats like workshops and multilingual storytelling that foster intergenerational knowledge exchange:

*'Meeting new people, enriching my net of connections. Also cultural reasons (learning more about myself and others, literature, etc.).'*³⁵²

Graph 5.2 shows public preference for large-scale festivals like Sant Jordi despite overcrowding, while smaller participatory events attract fewer due to information gaps, timing, or accessibility.

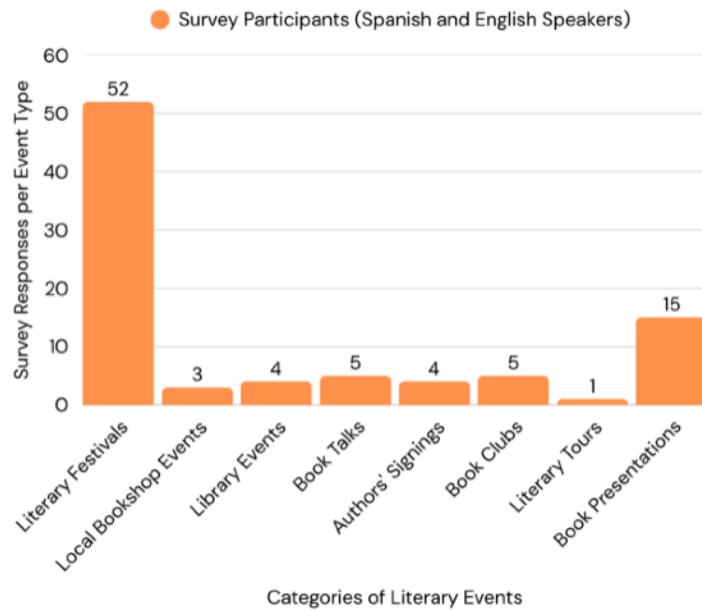
³⁴⁹ *'Somos un foco de cultura y de ocio y de cohesión social, de proximidad y gratuito.'* *'La gente se reconoce a sí misma como parte de esto.'* - Cobo Caballero, Fran Cobo Caballero.

³⁵⁰ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero'.

³⁵¹ *'Más apoyo a escritores emergentes.'* - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

³⁵² Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

Graph 5.2 Modes of Participation in Literary Events



Source: Author's own elaboration based on survey data.

This reveals a tension: collaborative formats are valued but overshadowed by large, centralised events curated top-down. Participation is often limited by digital exclusion and language barriers, underscoring the need for more visible, community-driven programming.

As Chapter 4 stresses, inclusive programming must build cultural agency and strengthen community capacity. However, findings suggest formal collaboration remains limited, maintaining institutional control and restricting space for diverse voices.

This dynamic reproduces barriers for emerging authors, youth, and migrants. Collaboration requires redistributing programming power, moving from passive attendance to active co-creation.

Cobo's example illustrates that trust and longterm engagement grow through sustained funding and continuous dialogue, especially for multilingual and mobile publics often excluded from mainstream programming.

Despite centralised event dominance, the data reveal strong public appetite for locally shaped initiatives addressing structural access gaps. Empowering community-led formats helps dismantle hierarchies and fosters deeper belonging. This sets the stage for the next section on grassroots literary actors sustaining these participatory dynamics from below.

Everyday Literary Placemaking

Complementing institutional efforts, grassroots initiatives present a vision of literary regeneration rooted in everyday cultural practice. This section explores Backstory Bookshop in Eixample as a case of community-driven placemaking through multilingual programming, narrative collaboration, and inclusive events tailored to neighbourhood needs. Informal cultural spaces like this foster identity, participation, and cohesion beyond formal policy.

Unlike festivals or libraries, Abbie Hibler operates outside institutional structures. Atlas.ti shows co-occurrences between *Community Engagement*, *Urban Regeneration*, and *Infrastructure* (GR=2)³⁵³, highlighting her emphasis on literature as shared connection, not branding. This aligns with English survey responses favouring smaller-scale, accessible formats:

*'They could be more diverse and accessible for people from all the different districts in Barcelona.'*³⁵⁴

Backstory addresses participation barriers, such as digital exclusion and geographic accessibility, through inclusive programming that considers language, cost, and social atmosphere. This fosters cross-cultural dialogue, community bonds, and active neighbourhood involvement.

By transforming underused spaces into cultural hubs, Backstory weaves literature into daily life while supporting local businesses and creative projects through events and workshops. Illustration 5.1 shows how survey participants value such proximity-based literary engagement, highlighting regeneration through everyday practices.

Illustration 5.1 From Bookshop to Community Placemaking³⁵⁵

<p>Abbie Hibler</p> <p>'We're not trying to reach everyone; we're trying to create meaningful spaces for the people who find us.'</p>	<p>English-Speaker Survey Participant</p> <p>'Offering more specialised events to avoid overcrowding, and expanding to other areas in the city that may be more local.'</p>
<p>Spanish-Speaker Survey Participant</p> <p>'Organise them in neighbourhoods where normally only residents are.'</p>	<p>Abbie Hibler</p> <p>'We work with tight margins and staff our store where there is always work to do.'</p>

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Abbie Hibler's interview and survey data.

³⁵³ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler'.

³⁵⁴ Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

³⁵⁵ 'Organizarlos en barrios donde normalmente solo están residentes.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

Operating with limited funding and visibility, Backstory achieves impact through informal storytelling, multilingual dialogue, and social intimacy, contrasting with libraries' reliance on longterm institutional support. As Chapter 3 notes, this model of regeneration is grounded in care, repetition, and trust, often under-recognised in conventional urban planning.

This bottom-up approach challenges the assumption that regeneration requires formal infrastructure. It demonstrates that cultural transformation emerges from sustained presence and shared practice. Backstory exemplifies how grassroots literary actors drive urban renewal by including literature into daily life.

Multilingualism and Belonging

Expanding on grassroots placemaking, multilingualism emerges as a cornerstone of inclusive literary engagement in Barcelona. This section explores how linguistic diversity in programming enhances access, identity, and belonging across urban communities. Multilingual formats facilitate intercultural dialogue, making language a living cultural space where inclusion is continuously negotiated.

Both interviews and surveys confirm multilingualism as central to participation and cultural connection. Backstory Bookshop actively bridges Barcelona's layered linguistic publics, such as residents, newcomers, and visitors, through multilingual programming. Their approach contrasts with centralised, monolingual events by positioning language as a means of building community, not just transmitting content. Atlas.ti data links *Diverse Voices* with *Community Engagement* (GR=3)³⁵⁶.

Survey data, particularly from the English dataset (GR=5)³⁵⁷, shows that while local language use is appreciated, language remains a barrier. Respondents call for inclusive translation strategies, reflecting tensions between cultural authenticity and accessibility. Addressing these barriers also requires consideration of digital and spatial access.

Language in Barcelona's literary life functions both as a practical gateway and as a symbol of cultural identity. This dual role highlights power dynamics: who participates, whose expressions are validated, and how linguistic diversity is governed. While Catalan remains a vital cultural anchor, inclusive events must navigate the need for linguistic openness without marginalising local identity. Table 5.6 synthesises insights from interviews and surveys on how multilingualism supports cultural access and recognition.

³⁵⁶ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler'.

³⁵⁷ Sophia Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in English-Language Survey', Atlas.ti Project, 31 May 2025.

Table 5.6 Multilingualism and Literary Belonging³⁵⁸

Theme	Quote	Source
Belonging	'We've been intentional about creating programming that reflects the richness of cultures and languages in Barcelona... It's about creating meaningful spaces for the people who find us—and help shape what we do.'	Abbie Hibler – Backstory Bookshop
Access vs. Authenticity	'Maybe more in English because I do not speak Spanish, although that also takes away from the authenticity.'	English-Speaker Participant
Representation	'Events in both Spanish, Catalan and other languages for all types of residents.'	Spanish-Speaker Participant
Integration	'Backstory contributes to community engagement [...] by using literature as a bridge—connecting people across languages, backgrounds, and experiences.'	Abbie Hibler – Backstory Bookshop

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Abbie Hibler's interview and survey data.

Multilingualism supports shared initiatives and builds cultural legitimacy. Fran Cobo's flash reading clubs and language exchanges illustrate how multilingual formats welcome mobile publics. In a city where Catalan carries symbolic weight, the inclusion of Spanish, English, and other languages entails negotiation around identity and authority.

Backstory's model shows how multilingual programming fosters dialogue without reducing inclusion to surface-level outreach. Tone, atmosphere, and linguistic flexibility matter as much as content. These events encourage intergenerational and intercultural exchange, strengthening social cohesion and trust, as argued in Chapter 4.

Sustaining such initiatives requires institutional support and community involvement to adapt to shifting demographics. When residents participate in shaping language choices, policies gain legitimacy and deepen engagement. This affirms the thesis's argument that literature becomes truly communal when language accommodates identity, dialogue, and mutual recognition.

Ultimately, multilingual initiatives reflect the tension between cultural recognition and practical accessibility. They embody the power and identity dynamics explored in Chapter 4, showing that embracing linguistic diversity as both necessity and cultural practice strengthens participation and cohesion. The next section examines persistent barriers to these inclusive aims, highlighting gaps between ambitions and realities.

Contradictions and Critical Reflections

³⁵⁸ 'Eventos tanto en español, catalán y otros idiomas para todos los tipos de residentes.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

Despite widespread support for decentralisation, inclusion, and sustainable literary tourism, a gap persists between policy ideals and realities. Interviews and surveys reveal how structural barriers, communication gaps, linguistic exclusion, and uneven resource distribution undermine participation, resulting in symbolic rather than substantive inclusion.

Organisers acknowledge these challenges, as shown in Atlas.ti co-occurrences between *Community Engagement, Diverse Voices* (GR=3)³⁵⁹, and *Social Inclusion* (GR=26)³⁶⁰. Spanish-speaking residents note lack of promotion and youth-oriented events:

*'I never hear about these events, maybe they should be better announced.'*³⁶¹

English respondents note linguistic and communication barriers:

*'Lack of information about where, when, how will the event proceed etc.'*³⁶²

These align with survey co-occurrences (*Engagement Barriers and Accessibility*; GR=3;10)³⁶³, suggesting exclusion stems less from infrastructure than from access and representation.

Decentralisation remains partial: flagship events and resources still concentrate in central areas. Libraries, though key community infrastructures (Chapter 4), remain under-recognised and underfunded. Without stronger communication, linguistic inclusivity, and support for smaller actors, decentralised initiatives risk reproducing existing exclusions.

These challenges point to deeper symbolic marginalisation. Cultural participation is shaped by power structures that determine whose voices and narratives prevail. True engagement involves more than presence, it requires recognising community languages, experiences, and identities in programming, reinforcing Chapter 4's insights.

Limited awareness, language barriers, and lack of co-creation reflect broader imbalances in cultural production. Overcoming these requires redistributing symbolic authority and empowering communities to shape cultural narratives. Co-creation fosters local leadership and longterm participation.

Centralised events often reflect dominant norms, implicitly signalling who belongs. These subtle exclusions deter marginalised groups and reinforce existing hierarchies. Addressing them requires a shift toward shared decision-making and cultural infrastructure.

³⁵⁹ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler'.

³⁶⁰ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Carme Galve Montore'.

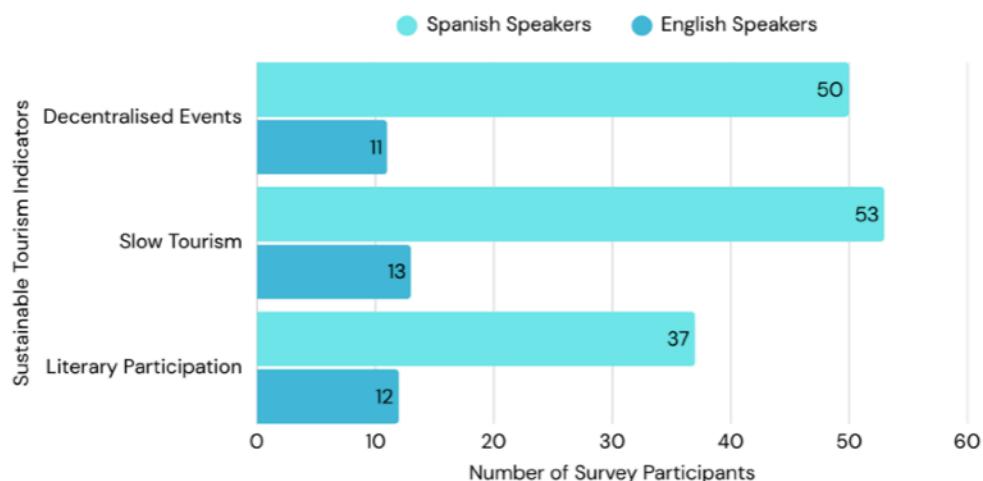
³⁶¹ *'Nunca me entero de estos eventos, quizás deberían anunciarse mejor.'* - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

³⁶² Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

³⁶³ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in English-Language Survey'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in Spanish-Language Survey'.

Graph 5.3 compares Spanish and English responses on literary tourism. Spanish speakers favour local, community-based models (closer to Hibler's vision), while English speakers reflect international experiences and greater access barriers.

Graph 5.3 Literary Tourism Preferences by Language Group



Source: Author's own elaboration based on survey data.

These divergences underscore how linguistic identity influences perceptions of legitimacy and access. Multilingual, culturally sensitive programming is crucial to bridging divides and building inclusive engagement.

Ultimately, without redistributing power and addressing inequalities, inclusion risks being performative. This critical reflection sets the stage for the next section, which explores how spatial and symbolic redistribution can foster genuine community engagement across Barcelona's literary landscape.

Decentralisation as a Common Value

Decentralisation emerges as a widely supported principle among institutions, grassroots actors, and residents, not only as a response to overcrowding but as a call for cultural recognition and participatory urban regeneration.

Jaume Muñoz Jofre identifies decentralisation as central to literary planning, citing events like Festival 42 and KM Amèrica. His Atlas.ti data shows co-occurrences between *Decentralisation*, *Policy*, and *Urban Regeneration*³⁶⁴, confirming its strategic role. Fran Cobo Caballero reinforces this, viewing decentralisation as cultural recognition that builds neighbourhood pride and proximity. Grassroots actors

³⁶⁴ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Jaume Muñoz Jofre'.

focus on deep, local engagement over wide visibility. Survey data affirms public support: 73.5% of Spanish and 61.1% of English respondents favour district-level events:

*'Host smaller events across different neighbourhoods to avoid overcrowding and make them more accessible to residents.'*³⁶⁵

Decentralisation positions residents as cultural co-creators, reflecting inclusive engagement and aligning with Chapter 3's view that regeneration depends on community-driven narratives.

Placing libraries, bookshops, and festivals within residents' daily geographies decentralises cultural capital, increasing access citywide. It reinforces identity by enabling communities to shape shared stories. Institutional and public voices highlight libraries as inclusive spaces and potential tourism hubs. Illustration 5.2 shows how libraries intersect regeneration, inclusion, and literary tourism.

Illustration 5.2 Libraries as Anchors of Regeneration, Inclusion, and Literary Tourism³⁶⁶

Regeneration 'People [...] know that in their neighbourhood they have a center of the same or higher level than in the city center.' - Fran Cobo Caballero	Belonging 'At the associative level, libraries are present in the sociocultural fabric.' - Carme Galve Montore
Accessibility 'The network of libraries in Barcelona, which are 41, works a lot with the logic of decentralisation, and the events are distributed' - Jaume Muñoz Jofre	Tourism 'Libraries should be protagonists in literary tourism.' - Spanish-Speaker Participant

Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews and survey data.

Libraries' neighbourhood presence, multilingual resources, and year-round programming make them key infrastructures for decentralised literary tourism that prioritises cultural exchange over entertainment. This supports a 'slow' model centred on proximity, language inclusivity, and everyday participation.

³⁶⁵ Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

³⁶⁶ *'La gente [...] sabe que en su barrio tienen un centro de igual o mayor nivel que en el centro de la ciudad.'* - Cobo Caballero, Fran Cobo Caballero; *'A nivel asociativo, las bibliotecas están presentes en el tejido sociocultural.'* - Galve Montore, Carme Galve Montore; *'La red de bibliotecas de Barcelona, que son 41, trabaja muchísimo con la lógica de la descentralización, y los eventos se reparten.'* - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre; *'Las bibliotecas deberían ser protagonistas en el turismo literario.'* - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

Despite agreement on decentralisation's importance, survey data reveal mismatches between intention and experience: limited outreach, uneven programming, and gaps in district-level engagement. Interviews expose resource asymmetries: institutions affirm decentralisation as a logic, while grassroots actors like Abbie Hibler navigate it with minimal support.

This disconnect signals a broader gap between cultural policy and lived experience. Without funding, multilingual communication, and co-created programming, decentralisation risks becoming symbolic. Chapter 4 stresses that effective decentralisation requires community partnerships and sustained infrastructure, not just geographic redistribution.

When realised, decentralisation fosters cohesion and access, advancing cultural and spatial equality. It also supports environmental goals by easing central congestion and promoting local cultural tourism. However, without longterm investment and inclusive frameworks, these benefits remain uneven.

Broad support exists for decentralisation, however, reality reveals persistent gaps. The next section examines how formal cultural policy frameworks promote inclusion via curated programming, however, often fall short of enabling true community collaboration.

Institutional Frameworks and Community Collaboration

This section examines how institutional policy shapes community engagement through formal programming, focusing on ICUB's top-down curatorial model. While aiming to reflect Barcelona's diversity, tensions arise between institutional goals and public perceptions, particularly around communication, collaboration, and empowerment.

Jaume Muñoz Jofre explains ICUB mandates inclusive programming, citing events like Món Llibre and Literapolis aimed at families:

*'We don't have the problem of the generational gap.'*³⁶⁷

Atlas.ti co-occurrences between *Community Engagement, Policies, and Cultural Promotion* (GR=14;9)³⁶⁸ confirm engagement is structurally integrated, but filtered through institutional frameworks. However, survey responses highlight barriers, especially around unclear communication and limited collaboration.

While some respondents appreciate inclusive programming, many cite poor promotion and lack of transparency. Table 5.7 contrasts institutional narratives with public critique, revealing a disconnection between inclusion as representation versus collaboration.

³⁶⁷ 'No tenemos el problema de brecha generacional.' - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre.

³⁶⁸ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Jaume Muñoz Jofre'.

Table 5.7 Inclusion in Practice³⁶⁹

Institutional Perspective	Public Experience & Criticism
'Here we work a lot with the curators, who have the explicit task of making a programming that is of the first literary level and that includes this diversity of potential audiences or themes. This is worked on throughout the design of the event.' - Jaume Muñoz Jofre	'When local commerce participates, it can help to make it known among neighbours. Local authors may see their audience increased.' - Spanish-Speaker Participant
Inclusion understood as demographic representation in programming	Inclusion experienced as top-down and symbolic rather than participatory
Món Libre and Literápolis cited as inclusive family events	Lack of communication and co-design cited as barriers to engagement

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Jaume Muñoz Jofre's interview and survey data.

This gap suggests that without community input and shared content development, inclusion risks being symbolic. Calls for initiatives like 'suggest activities' or 'introduce more local authors' reflect a desire for co-created programming. Chapter 4 likewise stresses that governance, participation, and collaborative design are crucial for translating cultural policy into reality.

Institutional support extends to private bookshops and independent actors through subsidies and logistical help. Muñoz notes:

*'We do not influence the programming of the private ones. We understand that our role is to give support [...] we help this to happen through subsidies.'*³⁷⁰

The city also promotes author residencies to extend engagement beyond flagship events. However, these supports reveal persistent resource imbalances, limiting grassroots visibility and autonomy.

Atlas.ti analysis from the Spanish survey shows strong links between Participation Barriers and Accessibility (GR=10)³⁷¹, reinforcing that even well-intended strategies can exclude if community agency is lacking.

³⁶⁹ 'Aquí trabajamos mucho con los comisarios, que tienen el encargo explícito de hacer una programación que sea de primer nivel literario y que incluya esta diversidad de públicos potenciales o de temáticas. Esto se trabaja durante todo el diseño del evento.' - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre; 'Cuando participa comercio local puede ayudar a dar a conocerlo entre vecinos. Los autores locales pueden ver aumentado su público.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

³⁷⁰ 'Nosotros no influimos en la programación de los privados. Entendemos que nuestro papel es dar el apoyo [...] ayudamos a que esto pueda pasar a través de las subvenciones.' - Muñoz Jofre, Jaume Muñoz Jofre.

³⁷¹ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in Spanish-Language Survey'.

Muñoz acknowledges collaboration beyond programming is essential, however, implementation remains uneven. While ICUB formally supports inclusion, real success depends on grassroots partnerships, shared control, and continuous feedback.

Despite these efforts, data reveal consistent gaps between institutional programming and lived participation. Without redistributing decision-making, inclusion remains performative. Addressing this requires a shift from representation to shared governance, setting the stage for the next section, which explores grassroots criticism and contradictions between policy and practice.

Tensions Between Aspirations and Reality

Building on institutional mandates for inclusive programming, this section examines persistent gaps between policy ideals and the lived realities of community engagement. While inclusion, accessibility, and decentralisation are promoted in principle, interview and survey data, especially from grassroots perspectives, reveal ongoing challenges with visibility, communication, and collaboration.

Abbie Hibler highlights literature's socio-cultural potential but stresses the insecurity of grassroots efforts. Atlas.ti co-occurrences between *Community Engagement* and *Sustainability* (GR=4)³⁷² reflect this fragile legitimacy. Survey data reinforce the disconnect: Spanish-speaking respondents note poor promotion of neighbourhood events, while English speakers find visible events hard to access or disconnected. Co-occurrences like *Participation Barriers*, *Insufficient Advertising*, and *Lack of Diversity* (GR=5;8), and *Engagement Barriers*, *Overcrowding*, and *Language Barriers* (GR=8;5)³⁷³ show that decentralisation alone does not ensure awareness or inclusion.

Open responses call for events to reflect neighbourhood voices, not just improve access. Chapter 4 links this to a visibility-focused inclusion, where institutions aim to be seen rather than to collaborate. Despite official emphasis on diversity, implementation is uneven, and policy often fails to reach audiences meaningfully. True engagement requires shared representation, agency, and resources.

These contradictions reveal that institutions may promote decentralisation and diversity without fully enacting them. As Chapter 4 argues, participation becomes symbolic when reduced to visibility or outreach without decision-making power. Grassroots actors like Hibler struggle for recognition and funding, while larger institutions often meet inclusion criteria superficially.

Table 5.8 summarises grassroots criticism around legitimacy, representation, and access:

³⁷² Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler'.

³⁷³ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in English-Language Survey'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Questions in Spanish-Language Survey'.

Table 5.8 Critical Perspectives from Below³⁷⁴

Perspective	Quote	Source
Grassroots Criticism	'Literary spaces are often run on passion and limited resources.'	Abbie Hibler
Call for Innovation	'It would be interesting to include gastronomic routes inspired by books.'	Spanish-Speaker Participant
Spatial Inclusion Failure	'Too many people participate in key spots like Las Ramblas, and it's hard to fully enjoy some events.'	English-Speaker Participant

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Abbie Hibler's interview and survey data.

These tensions reflect deeper power imbalances within Barcelona's literary ecosystem. Addressing them requires shifting from idealistic policies to practices that redistribute cultural authority and sustain community agency. The next subchapter explores how these intersections, gaps, and emerging trends inform future directions for literary urban engagement.

5.5 Intersections, Gaps, and Emerging Trends

This section synthesises findings from sustainable literary tourism (5.2), culture-led urban regeneration (5.3), and community engagement (5.4), revealing broader patterns in Barcelona's literary ecosystem. It identifies shared values, such as decentralisation, belonging, cultural identity, while exposing contradictions between policy ideals and practice, as well as structural gaps in representation and inclusion. This analysis provides a foundation for the policy discussion in Chapter 6.

Intersections of Decentralisation, Belonging, and Cultural Identity

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, decentralisation emerges as a core driver of socio-cultural transformation. Institutional and grassroots actors alike view it not just as logistical redistribution but as a tool for spatial inclusion and cultural expression, enabling communities to shape literary spaces and reinforce local identities.

Institutional voices like Jaume Muñoz and Carme Galve point to events like Festival 42 (Sant Andreu) and FLIB (Gràcia) as redistributing cultural capital and building neighbourhood pride. These

³⁷⁴ 'Sería interesante incluir rutas gastronómicas inspiradas en libros.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

events shift engagement from city-centre entertainment to locally meaningful cultural experiences. Grassroots actors like Fran Cobo and Abbie Hibler emphasise accessibility and proximity, showing how decentralised programming includes groups often marginalised in centralised spaces.

These insights align with Atlas.ti findings, especially in Galve's transcript, where *Community Engagement*, *Urban Regeneration*, and *Sustainable Tourism* co-occur³⁷⁵. Literary venues like libraries serve as infrastructures of belonging, connecting literature to everyday urban life (see Chapter 3).

Survey responses reinforce this: most participants prefer neighbourhood events (see Graph 5.1). English respondents, in particular, frame decentralised literary tourism as a form of sustainable tourism that counters mass tourism through localised, reflective engagement.

Table 5.9 synthesises these intersections, contrasting institutions' cautious embrace of sustainability with grassroots emphasis on inclusion and cultural care. Together, these findings support the thesis's claim: decentralisation, when paired with access and participatory design, transforms literary programming into an active form of urban belonging.

Table 5.9 *Converging Themes*

Interviewee	Key Co-Occurrence	GR
Carme Galve Montore	Community Engagement: Community Engagement X Urban Regeneration: Urban Regeneration	23
	Community Engagement: Community Engagement X Sustainable Tourism: Sustainable Tourism	22
	Urban Regeneration: Urban Regeneration X Sustainable Tourism: Sustainable Tourism	16
Jaume Muñoz Jofre	Community Engagement: Community Engagement X Urban Regeneration: Urban Spaces	12
	Community Engagement: Community Engagement X Sustainable Tourism: Literary Tourism	13
	Urban Regeneration: Urban Regeneration X Sustainable Tourism: Sustainable Tourism	6
Fran Cobo Caballero	Community Engagement: Community Participation X Urban Regeneration: Urban Regeneration	8
	Urban Regeneration: Urban Regeneration X Sustainable Tourism: Tourism	8
	Community Engagement: Community Participation X Sustainable Tourism: Tourism	4
Backstory Team	Community Engagement: Community Connections X Sustainable Tourism: Sustainability	5
	Community Engagement: Community Engagement X Urban Regeneration: Infrastructure	2
	Urban Regeneration: Infrastructure X Sustainable Tourism: Sustainability	2

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from Atlas.ti, extracted from interviews.

Through this lens, literary events express collective identity and challenge cultural centralisation, reinforcing community resilience. However, despite broad consensus, significant implementation challenges remain. The next section explores tensions between these ideals and practical barriers such as institutional capacity, resource gaps, and uneven visibility, underscoring the difficulty of translating inclusive aspirations into everyday reality.

Contradictions, Ideas, and Realities in Practice

While decentralisation and community engagement are widely supported, empirical data reveal persistent gaps between policy aspirations and lived realities. Institutional narratives emphasise inclusion through infrastructure and representation, but grassroots voices and survey responses point to barriers like limited visibility, funding disparities, and linguistic exclusion. These contradictions underscore a disconnect between top-down governance and uneven cultural participation, where symbolic inclusion often obscures structural inequalities.

A central tension lies between institutional efforts to expand access and grassroots struggles for visibility and resources. Hibler's concerns about limited recognition reflect this divide, reinforced by survey respondents calling for better promotion, especially via local media³⁷⁶. Language emerges as both a barrier and a bridge, negotiating multilingual access while preserving Catalan's cultural role³⁷⁷. Some prioritise Catalan as an identity marker, while others support multilingualism for broader inclusion, mirroring debates from Chapter 4 on language and belonging.

These challenges highlight the difficulty of translating inclusive policy into structural change. Continued reliance on established institutions and traditional communication strategies risks reinforcing centralisation and privileging dominant actors, as discussed in Chapter 2. Symbolic gestures coexist with material exclusions, where funding and visibility remain concentrated.

Flagship events like Sant Jordi embody these contradictions, celebrated yet criticised for overcrowding, accessibility issues, and commercialisation. Decentralised formats offer some improvement, however, often fall short in addressing deeper participation and representation gaps.

³⁷⁶ 'Promote literary events in local media' originally from 'Potenciar eventos literarios en medios locales' and 'I would like to participate if I were better informed' originally from 'Me gustaría participar si estuviera mejor informado.' - Spanish survey

³⁷⁷ Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'; 'Prioritise Catalan authors and not just translations' originally stands for 'Priorizar autores catalanes y no solo traducciones' and 'Add more languages and make them more inclusive for visitors and residents who are not of Catalan origin' originally stands for 'Añadir más lenguas y hacerlos más inclusivos para visitantes y residentes que no sean de origen catalán.' - Bruni Sousa, 'Spanish-Language Survey'.

Without sustained efforts to improve visibility, multilingual outreach, and redistributive support for cultural initiatives, literary events risk reinforcing rather than reducing socio-cultural inequalities. As Chapter 4 emphasises, meaningful inclusion requires infrastructure, shared governance, and community participation, not just symbolic gestures.

These tensions raise critical questions about whose voices are recognised in Barcelona's literary ecosystem. The next section explores these issues by identifying significant gaps, focusing on underrepresented communities and neglected stakeholders that challenge the inclusion and transformative potential of literary events.

Who Is Missing from the Conversation?

Despite decentralisation and inclusion being core values in Barcelona's literary ecosystem, significant groups remain underrepresented or excluded. These absences challenge the transformative potential of literary events and reveal the limits of current cultural strategies. Addressing them is essential to ensure literary programming reflects the city's full social diversity.

International residents and recent migrants, many of whom are culturally active, as shown in English survey responses³⁷⁸, remain largely outside institutional frameworks. While digitally literate, they face linguistic and informational barriers that hinder participation and belonging. Similarly, grassroots publishers, migrant writers, and informal cultural actors, despite their role in cultural innovation, receive little visibility or support. Spanish-speaking respondents note the dominance of major institutions and authors, underscoring the need for a decentralised cultural model that uplifts emerging, multilingual voices.

³⁷⁸ 'It would be great to have more events for people who are new to the city.' - Bruni Sousa, 'English-Language Survey'.

Table 5.10 Gaps in Representation

Underrepresented Public	Evidence of Absence or Marginalisation
Newcomers / International Residents	Mentioned across interviews with the libraries and the bookshop; English survey respondents (and some Spanish respondents) cite lack of multilingual access and visibility
Migrants / Diasporic Communities	Multilingual events like FLIB or KmAmèrica are mentioned in interviews with libraries but little is said about the foreign communities; Abbie Hibler addresses these communities more openly
Grassroots Publishers / Bookshops	Raised mostly by Abbie Hibler; briefly mentioned in Jaume Muñoz's interview; no policy strategies for private actors
Young Authors / Creatives	Survey comments request space for new writers; no institutional pathways mentioned aside from the participation in those events by the youth
Non-digital or Elderly Populations	Mentioned by Carme Galve; survey mentions lack of information dissemination

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from Atlas.ti, extracted from interviews and open-ended questions in surveys.

Table 5.10 synthesises these exclusions, showing that participation in Barcelona's literary landscape is shaped by a narrow cultural imagination. Both symbolic and practical marginalisation risks sidelining mobile and informal publics, denying them agency in shaping the city's cultural narratives and spatial practices.

As discussed in Chapters 2–4, decentralisation without symbolic inclusion and shared cultural power limits the impact of literary events. Inclusion must move beyond geography to embrace recognition, diversity, and representation. Without this, socio-cultural transformation remains incomplete.

Acknowledging who is absent reveals the shortcomings of current governance and pinpoints where interventions are most needed. Genuine transformation requires expanding participation to reflect Barcelona's evolving, diverse urban fabric.

The next section explores emerging practices and ideas that aim to bridge these gaps, offering more inclusive, community-rooted models for literary engagement.

Emerging Trends

Building on earlier analysis, this section outlines promising shifts toward a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable literary tourism in Barcelona. Interviews, surveys, and Atlas.ti coding reveal that literary events are increasingly evolving from top-down entertainment into collaborative cultural practices that foster local identity and community participation. These trends align with frameworks on cultural policy, urban development, and community-centred cultural infrastructure from Chapters 2–4.

First, libraries, independent bookshops, and district festivals are becoming key sites of cultural regeneration. Stakeholders emphasise that belonging grows through familiarity and flexible programming, not large-scale entertainment. As explored in Chapter 4, libraries serve as social infrastructure, anchoring everyday literary engagement. Survey data supports this, with over 60% of English and 70% of Spanish respondents preferring venues like libraries and civic centres that prioritise connection over entertainment.

Second, literary participation is increasingly viewed as a socio-cultural practice tied to identity, collaboration, and territorial fairness. Calls for multilingual events, emerging voices, and school partnerships reflect public demand for programming that mirrors Barcelona's social fabric. Atlas.ti data from Fran Cobo and Abbie Hibler reinforce that engagement deepens through bottom-up formats rather than institutional representation alone³⁷⁹.

Third, decentralisation functions as both a logistical strategy and a collective claim for cultural access. Institutional actors like Galve and Muñoz support territorial programming, but barriers persist. Survey participants note gaps in visibility, over-reliance on digital outreach, and underrepresentation of diverse voices, showing that decentralisation remains inconsistently implemented.

Fourth, literary value is shifting from prestige and visibility toward emotional resonance and local relevance. Respondents prefer intimate, reflective spaces and authentic, place-based engagement over mass cultural consumption, aligning closely with sustainable tourism goals.

Together, these trends point to a socio-cultural shift where literary events are rooted in trust, shared responsibility, and localised infrastructure. Table 5.11 synthesises these developments, showing how Barcelona's literary ecosystem navigates between symbolic inclusion and material transformation.

³⁷⁹ Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Abbie Hibler'; Bruni Sousa, 'Qualitative Analysis of Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero'.

Table 5.11 Thematic Synthesis of Empirical Findings - Convergences, Contradictions, and Gaps

Convergences	Contradictions	Gaps
Broad support for decentralisation	Symbolic inclusion vs. practical accessibility	Migrant and diasporic voices
Libraries as trusted civic infrastructure	Multilingualism valued but inconsistently delivered	Grassroots publishers and informal actors
Preference for small/local literary events	Rhetoric of co-creation vs. limited implementation	Youth authors and emerging creators
Events as tools for cultural belonging	Digital promotion vs. analogue accessibility	Representation in programming and authorship
Desire for reflective, slow literary tourism	Decentralisation without communication still excludes	Mechanisms for community input or co-design

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from Atlas.ti, extracted from interviews and survey data.

In sum, Barcelona's literary scene is evolving toward more community-rooted and inclusive practices. Fully realising this shift requires addressing gaps in visibility, language access, and collaborative governance. As the city moves from symbolic decentralisation toward lived participation, sustained support and co-created programming will be essential. The final section builds on this momentum to outline broader conclusions and policy implications.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter synthesises data from interviews and surveys to assess how literary events in Barcelona drive socio-cultural transformation in urban spaces and contribute to sustainable literary tourism. By comparing institutional strategies, grassroots practices, and public perceptions, it reveals a complex yet evolving literary ecosystem.

Across sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement, decentralisation emerges as both a strategic tool and a popular demand. It redistributes cultural activity, eases pressure on central areas, and fosters local identity and access. Survey responses confirm residents' strong preference for neighbourhood-based events that promote proximity, inclusion, and engagement.

Nonetheless, gaps persist between institutional policy and grassroots reality. Institutions prioritise global visibility and strategic programming, while community initiatives face challenges of funding,

recognition, and multilingual inclusion. Survey data highlights issues of communication and inclusion, where stated goals of diversity do not always translate into practice.

Significant absences persist, especially among international residents, migrant communities, and informal cultural actors, who lack meaningful representation. Without broadening inclusion beyond geographic decentralisation to linguistic diversity and participatory governance, literary tourism risks reinforcing narrow cultural narratives that exclude key voices in Barcelona's diverse social fabric.

Still, new patterns of literary life are emerging. Libraries, bookshops, and district festivals function as key infrastructures of belonging, shifting the focus from prestige to local collaboration. These spaces support sustainable cultural growth grounded in everyday participation.

Overall, literary events act as participatory platforms where culture is co-produced, strengthening social bonds and transforming public spaces into inclusive literary commons. Unlocking this potential requires bridging the gap between policy discourse and realities through stable support, resources, and collaboration.

In direct response to the central research question: literary events contribute to socio-cultural transformation by decentralising access, including literature into daily urban life, and promoting inclusive participation in line with sustainable tourism goals. However, this transformation depends on addressing persistent structural and representational inequalities through consistent top-down and bottom-up collaboration.

This empirical foundation leads into the final chapter, which revisits theoretical frameworks and offers concrete policy recommendations to advance a more inclusive and sustainable socio-cultural transformation through literary events, realising literature's potential as a catalyst for urban renewal and community resilience in Barcelona.

Chapter VI - Conclusions

6.1 Summary of the Study

This thesis examined how literary events in Barcelona contribute to the socio-cultural transformation of public spaces and the promotion of sustainable literary tourism. It responds to increasing academic and policy interest in culture-led urban development, particularly in cities where tourism, cultural production, and local identity intersect. As a UNESCO CoL since 2015, Barcelona offers a compelling case for exploring literary events as mechanisms for regeneration, engagement, and decentralised governance.

The study investigated how literature functions as a spatial and cultural tool in a city facing over-tourism and commodification. By analysing literary events as forms of placemaking, the thesis contributes to debates on sustainable tourism and urban transformation. Its audience includes scholars, policymakers, cultural institutions, organisers, and residents seeking inclusive, participatory urban culture.

The central research question was: *In what ways do literary events in Barcelona socio-culturally transform public spaces and contribute to the promotion of literary tourism?* Three sub-questions guided the analysis:

1. *How do literary events support sustainable tourism practices in Barcelona?*
2. *How do literary events contribute to the regeneration and reimagining of Barcelona's public spaces?*
3. *How do literary events foster community engagement in Barcelona?*

A multi-dimensional theoretical framework, combining sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement (see Diagram 1.1), supported the analysis of how literary events operate in cities.

Methodologically, the study used qualitative and quantitative data. Four expert interviews with stakeholders from public institutions (Jaume Muñoz), libraries (Carme Galve, Fran Cobo), and grassroots culture (Abbie Hibler), alongside two multilingual surveys (Spanish n=68; English n=18), provided diverse insights. Atlas.ti coding revealed key themes such as decentralisation, identity, and accessibility.

This empirical strategy, a key innovation, bridges public sentiment and expert perspectives. It fills a gap in literary tourism research by grounding analysis in both flagship events and everyday practices aligned with sustainability and participation.

Together, the theoretical and empirical tools provided a, multi-actor perspective on the complex and often contradictory ways literary events shape, and are shaped by, Barcelona's urban environment.

6.2 Brief Overview of the Main Chapters

This thesis progresses from conceptual foundations to empirical analysis, showing how literature functions as a tool for sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement in Barcelona. Chapters 2 to 4 establish the theoretical framework; Chapter 5 synthesises empirical findings.

Chapter 2 addressed the sub-question: *How do literary events support sustainable tourism practices in Barcelona?* It positioned literary tourism as a complementary alternative to mass tourism aligned with cultural sustainability goals. While global agendas support this shift, implementation in Barcelona remains limited. The chapter concluded that literary events promote sustainable tourism when decentralised and community-rooted.

Chapter 3 explored: *How do literary events contribute to the regeneration and reimaging of Barcelona's public spaces?* It analysed events like Festival 42 and BCNegra as tools to strengthen neighbourhood identity and redistribute cultural participation. However, it identified gaps between decentralisation ideals and the longterm resources needed for implementation. The chapter argued that literary events can support regeneration when integrated into inclusive, stable policy frameworks.

Chapter 4 focused on: *How do literary events foster community engagement in Barcelona?* It analysed libraries, bookshops, and festivals as community spaces enabling dialogue and belonging, especially in peripheral districts. The chapter examined how policies could better address multilingualism and inclusion, concluding that engagement increases when programming reflects community diversity.

Chapters 2 to 4 outlined the theoretical and policy context; Chapter 5 provided the empirical core. Drawing on four expert interviews and two multilingual surveys, it synthesised how literary events impact public space, tourism, and community life.

6.3 Key Findings

Chapter 5 synthesised data from four interviews and 86 survey responses to examine how literary events in Barcelona intersect with sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement. The findings reveal alignment and tension across institutional strategies, grassroots efforts, and public perceptions.

Sustainable Tourism

Grassroots actors and residents favoured literary tourism as a slower, decentralised alternative to mass tourism, one that supports local identity and small businesses. Survey respondents support it as a multilingual, culturally sensitive counterpoint to 'party tourism'. However, institutional actors often framed it as a secondary effect of citizen-focused programming rather than a strategic goal. Concerns

about commodification, accessibility, and the sustainability of flagship events like Sant Jordi highlighted tensions between tourism development and cultural authenticity.

Culture-Led Urban Regeneration

Decentralisation emerged as a shared goal across sources. Libraries like Gabriel García Márquez and Jaume Fuster, and bookstores like Backstory Bookshop, were introduced as successful in including literature into neighbourhood life. Respondents preferred localised events but reported weak communication and visibility for smaller initiatives. This gap suggests decentralisation risks remaining symbolic without stronger structural support and community engagement.

Community Engagement

Literary events were widely recognised as spaces of connection, dialogue, and belonging. Libraries and bookshops enabled participatory engagement on residents' terms. Still, linguistic barriers, scheduling issues, and limited promotion restricted access, particularly for newcomers. Multilingual programming was seen as critical for broader participation. The dual role of literary venues as community anchors and cultural attractions illustrates tensions between visibility and genuine inclusion.

Overall, literary events are powerful tools for reimagining public spaces, building community, and promoting sustainable tourism. However, their full potential depends on bridging gaps between policy ideals and realities, particularly in decentralisation, linguistic access, and unbiased cultural infrastructure.

6.4 Linking the Findings to the Research Question

This thesis explored the question: *In what ways do literary events in Barcelona socio-culturally transform public spaces and contribute to the promotion of literary tourism?* Findings from Chapter 5 show that literary events increasingly support community participation, decentralised engagement, and alternative tourism models, though their impact is uneven due to structural gaps and inconsistent implementation.

First, the data show a shift toward neighbourhood-based engagement. Libraries like Gabriel García Márquez and Jaume Fuster act as inclusive cultural anchors, offering accessible, climate-conscious spaces that rival traditional landmarks. These findings support the thesis's view of literature as a community tool for reimagining public spaces and fostering belonging. Survey results reinforce strong public support for localised programming to improve access and decentralisation.

Second, literary tourism remains contested. Grassroots actors like Abbie Hibler frame it as community-based and economically supportive of local businesses. Institutional views often treat it as a

symbolic outcome tied to international positioning, with limited emphasis on local redistribution. Survey respondents valued decentralised tourism, however, raised concerns about overcrowding at events like Sant Jordi. These tensions mirror broader challenges between sustainability and commodification.

Third, while literature's potential to foster regeneration and engagement is evident, barriers persist, especially in language access, grassroots visibility, and uneven policy delivery. Literary events offer transformative potential, however, their impact depends on consistent structural support.

Finally, literary tourism must be rooted in everyday neighbourhood life. Activating underused public spaces and integrating literature through libraries, bookshops, and local festivals fosters identity and participation. When literature becomes part of urban infrastructure, rather than centralised entertainment, community engagement deepens, positioning literary tourism as an inclusive, decentralised, and sustainable component of Barcelona's future tourism strategy.

6.5 Revising the Theoretical Framework

The findings reaffirm the value of the thesis's three core conceptual pillars, sustainable cultural tourism, culture-led urban regeneration, and community engagement through literature, as interconnected lenses to understand how literary events shape public spaces and community life in Barcelona. However, each framework also showed limitations.

Cultural sustainable tourism proved useful in positioning literary events as alternatives to mass tourism. Grassroots actors and survey respondents supported a decentralised, community-driven model. Still, this vision was often undermined by institutional ambiguity, poor communication, and centralisation. While theory frames cultural tourism as inclusive, the findings show that success depends more on implementation than on intention.

Culture-led urban regeneration was the most empirically supported. Decentralisation emerged as a common goal, with libraries and district festivals seen as means to ensure inclusive cultural access and support neighbourhood revitalisation. However, without adequate resources, visibility, or multilingual access, decentralisation risks becoming symbolic, reinforcing rather than addressing inequalities..

The community engagement framework, rooted in cultural identity and shared community spaces, was both resonant and complex. Literary events promoted dialogue, empathy, and belonging, however, barriers such as language, access, and infrastructure limited participation. The findings support the framework but stress the need to examine the real-world conditions that shape engagement.

Overall, the theoretical framework offered a solid foundation, yet its application must address gaps between policy ideals, public perception, and spatial reality. Achieving literature's full socio-cultural and spatial potential requires applying theory through inclusive, actionable strategies.

6.6 Recommended Improvements to the Use of the Framework

While the conceptual pillars of sustainable tourism, culture-led urban regeneration, and community engagement offered a solid foundation, the empirical findings suggest several refinements to strengthen their future application.

First, the idea of sustainable cultural tourism should be approached with more critical nuance. Though often framed as a socio-cultural and ethical alternative to mass tourism, interviews and surveys revealed how literary events can become commodified, especially when centralised, poorly promoted, or linguistically exclusive. Future research could draw on critical tourism studies to examine who defines sustainability, who benefits, and who is excluded.

Second, the urban regeneration framework would benefit from closer attention to uneven implementation. Although decentralisation was broadly embraced, its inconsistent implementation across districts points to gaps in cultural infrastructure, local capacity, and governance. Future studies might incorporate metrics on resource distribution, institutional trust, or longitudinal impacts, especially in peripheral areas.

Third, while community engagement remains a essential goal, it requires greater analytical precision. Cultural community engagement theories must be paired with attention to access, intersectionality, and linguistic inclusion. Future research should explore how engagement varies by age, language, income, and migration background, and how literary spaces can become more intergenerational, multilingual, and inclusive.

Together, these refinements would enhance the framework's diagnostic strength and ensure its continued relevance in changing urban cultural landscapes.

6.7 Recommendations for Policy and Future Research

The findings suggest several policy and academic directions to enhance the socio-cultural and spatial impact of literary events in Barcelona. These address gaps in accessibility, decentralisation, communication, and inclusion, while identifying areas for future research.

1. Strengthen Decentralised and Inclusive Cultural Programming

The city should deepen investment in neighbourhood-based literary events, particularly in underrepresented districts like Nou Barris and Horta-Guinardó. Stronger collaboration with libraries, schools, and community groups can promote literary culture at the local level. Multilingual programming, especially in Catalan, Spanish, and other community languages, should be expanded to foster inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and broader engagement.

2. Prioritise Community-Centred Tourism Strategies

Survey responses suggest residents are not opposed to tourism itself but to its impacts when unmanaged. Policies should support decentralised, respectful literary tourism that reflects local values, avoids overcrowding, and centres community benefit.

3. Improve Communication and Support Key Cultural Infrastructures

Many residents, especially newcomers and non-Catalan speakers, struggle to access information about events. Clearer communication via multilingual platforms, digital tools, and local networks is essential. At the same time, libraries and independent bookshops should receive stable funding and recognition as everyday cultural anchors that sustain participation beyond major festivals.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study offers an empirical look at literary events as tools for urban and tourism transformation, limitations include the short research window (Feb–Apr 2025), modest survey sample size, and Barcelona-specific focus. Future research should expand on the following:

1. Expand Temporal and Comparative Scope

Future studies should examine the longterm impact of literary events on community identity, economic development, and tourism patterns to assess their viability as a sustainable alternative to mass tourism. Comparative research across UNESCO Cities of Literature, such as Edinburgh or Utrecht, can also reveal diverse governance models, inclusion strategies, and spatial policies.

2. Diversify Participant Representation and Contexts

Broader, more inclusive survey samples, including participants from varied class, language, migration, and digital backgrounds, as well as (literary) tourists, are needed to better understand engagement patterns

and identify underserved or excluded groups. This would help clarify how different publics perceive and access literary tourism initiatives.

3. Explore Emerging Formats and Participatory Frameworks

Research should investigate how digital tools, hybrid programming, and post-pandemic innovations are reshaping participation, especially for youth and less mobile populations. Additionally, further inquiry into citizen-led programming and cultural rights frameworks could strengthen legitimacy and shared ownership in literary spaces.

6.8 Final Thoughts

This thesis has shown that literature is not merely a cultural product or economic asset, but a socio-cultural practice that shapes how people relate to their city and one another. In Barcelona, literary events activate public spaces, foster dialogue, and offer alternatives to mass tourism. Whether through a multilingual bookshop, a neighbourhood library, or a poetry festival, literature creates temporary yet powerful spaces where imagination, memory, and belonging intersect.

However, this potential is neither automatic nor equally distributed. It relies on accessibility and structural support. Findings call on policymakers, cultural organisers, and researchers to treat literature not only as content but as a public foundation. Amid challenges of over-tourism and inequality, literary events can offer a more inclusive and thoughtful way of shaping cities

The research suggests a stepwise approach to including literature in sustainable policy: begin by transforming decentralised and neglected public spaces. When literary events are rooted in everyday neighbourhood life, they foster stronger local identity and participation. As residents engage with culture closer to home, rather than in centralised venues, a more grounded cultural landscape emerges. With this foundation, Barcelona can meaningfully integrate literary tourism into its sustainable tourism strategy as a complementary approach, reimagining its cultural offer for both locals and visitors.

At their best, literary events blur the lines between the local and the global, the everyday and the extraordinary. They show how culture travels, but also how it takes root, turning streets into stories, and gatherings into a form of belonging. Just as this thesis began by asking whether literary events can help reimagine urban spaces not merely as places to visit, but as places to belong, the findings affirm that literature does exactly that: it secures connection, creativity, and cultural life in the shared spaces of the city. As this study has shown, the future of urban life may depend not only on how we plan cities, but on how we narrate them, and on who is invited to take part in that storytelling.

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Appendix

Extensive Summary of the Interview – Carme Galve Montore - 14.03.2025 - Format: Google Meet - Original Language: Spanish

Carme Galve Montore, Director of Biblioteca Jaume Fuster, offers a nuanced perspective on how public libraries contribute to literary tourism, urban regeneration, and community participation in Barcelona.

She confirms that literary tourism exists in the city and has grown since Barcelona's 2015 UNESCO CoL designation. However, she stresses that literary programming predates the title, citing initiatives like the International Year of Reading and genre-focused festivals such as Barcelona Negra.

Galve introduces the idea of 'biblioturismo,' noting that architecturally significant and culturally active libraries, including Jaume Fuster, have become cultural destinations. While critical of the fast-paced nature of mass tourism, she sees literary events as a way to distribute tourist flows and animate the city beyond peak seasons.

On urban regeneration, she notes the library's architectural awards and its role in uplifting the surrounding neighbourhood, serving as a hub for public culture and participation. Though she cites no specific data, her emphasis is on the library's symbolic and community value.

Galve highlights community engagement as central to the library's mission. Through partnerships with schools, senior centres, and community groups, the library fosters cross-generational, inclusive participation. Events are promoted through coordinated outreach with the City's Department of Culture and institutions like the Italian Cultural Institute and local publishers.

Regarding public policy, Galve sees long-standing commitments to decentralisation, inclusion, and institutional continuity as key to libraries' cultural resilience. These frameworks have helped ensure libraries remain relevant, community-anchored spaces.

Despite challenges like inequality and the digital divide, she strongly advocates for libraries as vital, evolving institutions that offer community connection, cultural access, and inclusive public spaces.

Questions asked:

1. En general, ¿percibe usted la presencia de turismo literario en Barcelona? - *In general, do you perceive the presence of literary tourism in Barcelona?*
2. ¿Y cómo participa la biblioteca en su promoción, o sea, del turismo cultural y del turismo literario? - *And how does the library participate in its promotion, that is, of cultural tourism and literary tourism?*

3. ¿Considera entonces que los eventos literarios pueden ser una herramienta para fomentar un turismo más sostenible? - *Do you think then that literary events can be a tool to promote more sustainable tourism?*
4. Usted ha mencionado varios eventos que hay durante el año. ¿Cuáles son en los que participa la biblioteca? - *You have mentioned several events that occur during the year. What are the ones in which the library participates?*
5. ¿Cree que desde que Barcelona es una Ciudad de la Literatura hay más eventos literarios, o ya era así antes? - *Do you think that since Barcelona is a City of Literature there are more literary events, or was it like that before?*
6. En términos de la promoción de los eventos literarios, ¿cómo anuncian las bibliotecas estos eventos para que la gente se entere y quiera participar? - *In terms of promoting literary events, how do libraries advertise these events so that people find out and want to participate?*
7. Ha mencionado que hay políticas culturales que fomentan los eventos literarios. ¿Cuáles son estas? ¿Cuáles son las que favorecen la creación y el mantenimiento de espacios literarios en Barcelona? - *You mentioned that there are cultural policies that promote literary events. What are these? What are the ones that favour the creation and maintenance of literary spaces in Barcelona?*
8. ¿Diría usted que estas políticas culturales fomentan la regeneración urbana, cultural y social de los distritos donde están ubicadas las bibliotecas? - *Would you say that these cultural policies promote the urban, cultural, and social regeneration of the districts where the libraries are located?*
9. En este sentido, ¿hay algún tipo de colaboración entre las bibliotecas y otras instituciones públicas y privadas para fomentar el desarrollo urbano a través de la literatura? - *In this sense, is there any kind of collaboration between libraries and other public and private institutions to promote urban development through literature?*
10. ¿Cree que gracias a estas colaboraciones la cultura literaria tiene un impacto económico? - *Do you think that thanks to these collaborations literary culture has an economic impact?*
11. ¿Cuáles son las oportunidades y los desafíos que usted ve en este contexto de la promoción cultural a través de la literatura? - *What are the opportunities and challenges you see in this context of cultural promotion through literature?*
12. ¿Cree que en este sentido [los ciudadanos que no asisten] es porque no saben que existen estos eventos, o por qué no participan? - *Do you think that in this sense [the citizens that do not attend] is because they do not know that these events exist, or why do they not participate?*

13. ¿Cuáles son los canales principales para anunciar los eventos que las bibliotecas utilizan? - *What are the main channels to announce the events that libraries use?*

14. ¿Cómo cree que la Biblioteca Jaume Fuster mejora el distrito de Gràcia a través de sus eventos culturales? - *How do you think the Jaume Fuster Library improves the Gràcia district through its cultural events?*

15. He visto que hay varios tipos de eventos como charlas, clubes de lectura, etc. ¿Podría contarme un poco más sobre ellos en detalle? ¿Cuáles son los principales objetivos, cómo se eligen los temas y qué tipo de público participa? - *I have seen that there are several types of events such as talks, reading clubs, etc. Could you tell me a little more about them in detail? What are the main objectives, how are the themes chosen, and what type of public participates?*

16. ¿Diría usted que la mayoría de los eventos son en catalán, o hay varios en español, inglés o italiano? - *Would you say that most of the events are in Catalan, or are there several in Spanish, English or Italian?*

17. En general, ¿cómo imagina usted el futuro de la biblioteca en relación con la promoción de la literatura y la participación de los ciudadanos de la ciudad? - *In general, how do you imagine the future of the library in relation to the promotion of literature and the participation of the citizens of the city?*

18. ¿Hay algún aspecto del trabajo que realiza la biblioteca que le gustaría que se reconociera más? - *Is there any aspect of the work done by the library that you would like to see more recognised?*

19. ¿Y eso es ya lo que está intentando promover la biblioteca también? - *And that's already what the library is trying to promote as well?*

20. ¿Hay algo que no haya preguntado que le gustaría compartir sobre la conexión entre bibliotecas, literatura y la ciudad? - *Is there anything you haven't asked that you would like to share about the connection between libraries, literature and the city?*

Extensive Summary - Jaume Muñoz Jofre - 24.03.2025 - Format: Ajuntament Barcelona Webex - Original Language: Spanish

Jaume Muñoz Jofre offers a detailed account of the Institut de Cultura de Barcelona's (ICUB) role in shaping literary culture and its intersections with tourism, urban planning, and community participation.

While literary tourism is not formally quantified, Muñoz affirms it plays a meaningful role in Barcelona's cultural identity. The 2015 UNESCO CoL designation boosted global visibility and enabled partnerships with cities like Manchester, fostering international literary exchange.

ICUB does not explicitly design events to attract tourists but focuses on enriching cultural life for residents in ways that also appeal to visitors. Literary offerings are communicated in Catalan, Spanish, and English to ensure broad access. Cultural tourists are valued for their interest in local heritage and creativity.

Muñoz notes that urban regeneration is led by planning authorities, however, literature contributes to territorial cohesion through decentralised programming across all ten districts. Festivals like Festival 42 (Sant Andreu) and KM Amèrica (Sant Martí) exemplify this approach, revitalising peripheral neighbourhoods.

He highlights the importance of public-private partnerships, with ICUB supporting entities like the Chamber of Books and bookshops through subsidies and logistics, particularly for events like Sant Jordi.

Community engagement is central to ICUB's programming. Events like Món Llibre collaborate with schools, ensuring intergenerational and inclusive access. Partnerships with libraries and hospitals help reach underrepresented groups, including the elderly and those with limited mobility.

Although most literary events target local audiences, Muñoz observes growing diversity in newer festivals. ICUB's evolving cultural policy prioritises participation, decentralisation, and support for grassroots actors, reinforcing Barcelona's identity as a literary city.

Questions asked:

1. ¿Cómo definiría el turismo literario en el contexto de Barcelona? ¿Diría que es un fenómeno en crecimiento? - *How would you define literary tourism in the context of Barcelona? Would you say it's a growing phenomenon?*
2. ¿Cree que si existiera un plan para promover o apoyar el turismo cultural o el turismo literario sería una buena estrategia de turismo sostenible para diversificar el turismo general de Barcelona? - *Do you think that if there was a plan to promote or support cultural tourism or literary tourism, it would be a good sustainable tourism strategy to diversify Barcelona's general tourism?*
3. ¿Cree que en el contexto de Barcelona como ciudad de la literatura, este título ha impactado la promoción del turismo literario, de eventos literarios en general? - *Do you think that in the context of Barcelona as a city of literature, this title has impacted the promotion of literary tourism, of literary events in general?*
4. ¿Diría usted que desde esta designación en 2015 ha habido un incremento en eventos y en participación nacional e internacional en los eventos literarios? - *Would you say that since this*

designation in 2015 there has been an increase in events and in national and international participation in literary events?

5. ¿Cómo se mide el éxito de un festival literario, por ejemplo? ¿Hay una cuenta de indicadores como asistencia, impacto económico, etcétera? - *How do you measure the success of a literary festival, for example? Is there an account of indicators such as attendance, economic impact, etc.?*
6. ¿Qué iniciativas ha impulsado el Instituto de Cultura de Barcelona o el Ayuntamiento para fomentar eventos literarios en la ciudad? - *What initiatives has the Barcelona Institute of Culture or the City Council promoted to promote literary events in the city?*
7. ¿Entre eventos literarios como Barcelona Negra o Kosmopolis, cree usted que hay más gente local participando o hay cada vez más gente internacional? - *Between literary events such as Barcelona Negra or Kosmopolis, do you think there are more local people participating or are there more and more international people?*
8. ¿Cómo cree usted que la literatura y los eventos literarios han contribuido a la transformación y regeneración urbana de diferentes zonas de Barcelona? - *How do you think literature and literary events have contributed to the transformation and urban regeneration of different areas of Barcelona?*
9. ¿Hay iniciativas para descentralizar la oferta de eventos literarios en distritos fuera del centro histórico? - *Are there initiatives to decentralise the offer of literary events in districts outside the historic centre?*
10. En términos de políticas públicas, ¿qué estrategias considera la clave para fortalecer la relación entre la cultura y el urbanismo en Barcelona? - *In terms of public policies, what strategies do you consider the key to strengthening the relationship between culture and urbanism in Barcelona?*
11. ¿Cómo han evolucionado las políticas culturales en los últimos años? - *How have cultural policies evolved in recent years?*
12. ¿Cómo funcionan las colaboraciones públicas y privadas para promover esos eventos? - *How do public and private collaborations work to promote these events?*
13. ¿Hay algún evento literario que el Instituto de Cultura de Barcelona organiza de primera mano o siempre en colaboración con algún otro instituto? - *Is there any literary event that the Barcelona Institute of Culture organises firsthand or always in collaboration with some other institute?*
14. ¿Cómo pueden los eventos literarios fomentar una mayor participación de la comunidad en la vida cultural de la ciudad? - *How can literary events promote greater community participation in the cultural life of the city?*

15. He visto que hay un nuevo evento literario que se llama Crush Fest. ¿De dónde salen estas iniciativas? - *I have seen that there is a new literary event called Crush Fest. Where do these initiatives come from?*

16. ¿Qué estrategias se han implementado para garantizar que los eventos sean inclusivos y lleguen a públicos diversos, incluyendo comunidades jóvenes, personas con discapacidad, etc.? - *What strategies have been implemented to ensure that events are inclusive and reach diverse audiences, including youth communities, people with disabilities, etc.?*

17. ¿Qué cambios ha notado en la participación del público en los eventos en los últimos años? ¿Hay una nueva tendencia de la gente que participa? - *What changes have you noticed in public participation in events in recent years? Is there a new trend of people who participate?*

18. ¿Y la gente mayor que quizás a veces no tiene acceso a redes sociales o a internet? ¿Hay alguna estrategia para alcanzarlos también, para que participen? - *And older people who maybe sometimes don't have access to social networks or the internet? Is there any strategy to reach them too, so that they participate?*

19. ¿Los eventos que ocurren en librerías son siempre organizados por la librería o hay algún apoyo institucional también? - *Are the events that occur in bookstores always organised by the bookstore or is there some institutional support as well?*

20. ¿Los tours literarios como el de *La Sombra del Viento* o el de George Orwell son organizados por el Ayuntamiento? - *Are literary tours such as *Shadow of the Wind* or George Orwell's organised by the City Council?*

21. Los centros culturales como el CCCB, que organiza varios proyectos durante todo el año, ¿también trabajan en contacto con el Ayuntamiento? - *Do cultural centres such as the CCCB, which organises several projects throughout the year, also work in contact with the City Council?*

22. ¿Y en el caso de las bibliotecas también? - *And in the case of libraries too?*

23. ¿Cómo imagina usted el futuro de Barcelona como ciudad de la literatura en los próximos años? - *How do you imagine the future of Barcelona as a city of literature in the coming years?*

24. ¿Cómo ve usted una estrategia para que la comunidad participe más en estos programas o que se interese más por la literatura local? - *How do you see a strategy for the community to participate more in these programs or to be more interested in local literature?*

25. ¿Barcelona participa del Festival de Guadalajara en México como ciudad invitada? - *Does Barcelona participate in the Guadalajara Festival in Mexico as a guest city?*

26. ¿Hay una idea futura para promover la app Literapolis a un público más amplio, fuera de las escuelas? - *Is there a future idea to promote the Literapolis app to a wider audience, outside of schools?*

27. ¿Hay muchos adolescentes que participan o no muchos? - *Are there many teenagers who participate or not many?*

28. ¿Hay algún evento o proyecto literario en particular que haya sido especialmente significativo para usted y por qué? - *Is there any particular literary event or project that has been especially significant for you and why?*

29. ¿Hay algún aspecto sobre la relación entre la literatura, las políticas culturales y la comida que considera importante y que no hayamos hablado? - *Is there any aspect about the relationship between literature, cultural policies and food that you consider important and that we have not talked about?*

Extensive Interview Summary – Fran Cobo Caballero - 26.03.2025 - Format: In Person - Original Language: Spanish

Fran Cobo Caballero, technical manager at Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez, offers a rich account of how public libraries support cultural policy, sustainable tourism, and urban regeneration in Barcelona.

He affirms that literary tourism is a growing reality, with the library now a ‘must-go’ spot for locals and visitors. Barcelona’s literary identity predates its UNESCO CoL designation in 2015, however, the title has helped formalise literature’s place in cultural and tourism strategies.

The library supports sustainable tourism by offering a welcoming, climate-controlled space with public amenities, internet access, and a quiet atmosphere, encouraging slower, more reflective forms of tourism and distributing cultural activity beyond saturated areas.

Cobo presents the library as a case of culture-led regeneration. Replacing a small facility, the new 4,000m² building in Sant Martí has transformed the district physically and symbolically, encouraging pedestrian-friendly streets, increased greenery, and neighbourhood pride. It exemplifies the city’s ‘20-minute city’ approach, delivering high-quality cultural services locally and reinforcing residents’ sense of inclusion and entitlement to cultural excellence.

The library's programming is rooted in community-building, with initiatives like the *KM Amèrica Festival* and multilingual reading clubs that engage residents, students, and remote workers alike. Community ownership is strong, residents view the space as theirs and actively shape its use, including raising concerns about tourist disruptions. This underscores the need to balance local priorities with external interest.

Institutional support plays a key role. Co-managed by the City Council and Diputació de Barcelona, the library collaborates with institutions like CCCB, Museu Picasso, and Turismo de Barcelona, including it into the city's cultural ecosystem.

Finally, Cobo highlights the library's broader social role. Beyond books, it provides free access to digital tools, education, and cultural participation, acting as a public safety net and advancing digital inclusion and social equality.

Questions asked:

1. ¿Percibe usted la presencia del turismo literario en Barcelona? ¿Diría que es un fenómeno en crecimiento? - *Do you perceive the presence of literary tourism in Barcelona? Would you say it's a growing phenomenon?*
2. ¿Cómo cree que las bibliotecas pueden contribuir al turismo literario en Barcelona? - *How do you think libraries can contribute to literary tourism in Barcelona?*
3. ¿Desde su experiencia, cree que el turismo literario puede ser una estrategia sostenible para diversificar el turismo en Barcelona? - *From your experience, do you believe that literary tourism can be a sustainable strategy to diversify tourism in Barcelona?*
4. ¿Cree que Barcelona ha logrado integrar el turismo literario en su estrategia cultural y turística desde la designación como Ciudad de la Literatura por la UNESCO en 2015? - *Do you think Barcelona has managed to integrate literary tourism into its cultural and tourist strategy since its designation as a City of Literature by UNESCO in 2015?*
5. ¿Colabora la biblioteca con otras instituciones culturales o turísticas, además del Ayuntamiento, para desarrollar iniciativas que combinan literatura y turismo? - *Does the library collaborate with other cultural or tourist institutions, in addition to the City Council, to develop initiatives that combine literature and tourism?*
6. ¿Cómo es la acogida de los eventos literarios organizados por la biblioteca entre visitantes y residentes? ¿Participan turistas nacionales e internacionales? - *How is the reception of the literary events organised by the library between visitors and residents? Do national and international tourists participate?*
7. ¿Qué impacto ha tenido la biblioteca en el barrio desde su apertura? - *What impact has the library had in the neighbourhood since its opening?*

8. ¿Ha notado algún cambio en el uso del espacio público en los alrededores de la biblioteca desde su inauguración? - *Have you noticed any change in the use of public space around the library since its inauguration?*
9. ¿Existe alguna política cultural específica que fomente la creación de barrios vivos a través de espacios literarios como esta biblioteca? - *Is there any specific cultural policy that encourages the creation of living neighbourhoods through literary spaces like this library?*
10. ¿Considera que la cultura literaria tiene un impacto económico en el barrio? - *Do you think that literary culture has an economic impact on the neighbourhood?*
11. ¿Cómo es la respuesta de la comunidad local a los eventos culturales desde que la biblioteca abrió (clubes de lectura, festivales, etc.)? - *How is the local community's response to cultural events since the library opened (reading clubs, festivals, etc.)?*
12. ¿Cómo han evolucionado los eventos literarios en la biblioteca en los últimos años, sobre todo desde la designación de la UNESCO? - *How have literary events in the library evolved in recent years, especially since the UNESCO designation?*
13. ¿Cómo se coordina la Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez con otras bibliotecas para la organización de eventos como Sant Jordi? - *How is the Gabriel García Márquez Library coordinated with other libraries for the organisation of events such as Sant Jordi?*
14. ¿Podría describir el proceso de planificación y gestión de un evento literario en la biblioteca, desde su inicio hasta su realización? - *Could you describe the process of planning and managing a literary event in the library, from its beginning to its realisation?*
15. ¿Cuál diría que es el principal desafío en la organización de eventos literarios? - *What would you say is the main challenge in the organisation of literary events?*
16. ¿Qué estrategias tiene la biblioteca para asegurar que sus eventos sean inclusivos y lleguen a públicos diversos (migrantes, jóvenes, personas con discapacidad)? - *What strategies does the library have to ensure that its events are inclusive and reach diverse audiences (migrants, youth, people with disabilities)?*
17. ¿Hay algún aspecto que le gustaría destacar sobre el papel de las bibliotecas en la vida cultural de Barcelona que no hayamos abordado? - *Is there any aspect that you would like to highlight about the role of libraries in the cultural life of Barcelona that we have not addressed?*
18. ¿Cómo imagina la evolución de la biblioteca en los próximos años? - *How do you imagine the evolution of the library in the coming years?*

19. ¿Qué cree que se podría hacer para fortalecer la relación entre las bibliotecas, la literatura y la ciudad de Barcelona? - *What do you think could be done to strengthen the relationship between libraries, literature and the city of Barcelona?*

Extensive Interview Summary – Abbie Hibler - 28.04.2025 - Format: Email - Original Language: English

Abbie Hibler, co-founder of Backstory Bookshop, offers a grassroots perspective on literary tourism, community engagement, decentralisation, and cultural sustainability in Barcelona. Her responses emphasise the role of small bookstores as cultural anchors and inclusive community spaces.

Founded on a shared passion for storytelling, Backstory aims to connect local and international voices, elevate underrepresented narratives, and reflect the city's diversity. Described as a 'cultural meeting point,' the bookshop promotes accessible literary programming across languages, backgrounds, and income levels.

Hibler sees literary tourism as a means to promote slower, more reflective travel, however, notes structural barriers, limited visibility, financial sustainability, and language accessibility, as persistent challenges for independent spaces in a saturated cultural landscape.

Though not formally partnered with institutions, Backstory serves as a flexible platform for local groups to host events. Hibler contrasts its responsive, intimate approach with larger institutions, highlighting the value of risk-taking, relationship-building, and community presence.

In the Eixample district, Backstory functions as both literary hub and neighbourhood gathering space, offering readings, workshops, and collaborations. Its audience includes writers, translators, artists, and newcomers. Hibler positions the bookshop as a space for empathy, dialogue, and discovery, literature as a tool for local connection.

Questions asked:

1. What inspired you (and the team) to found Backstory, and how would you describe its role within the local literary and cultural scene?
2. Do you feel literary tourism could help promote a more reflective, slow-paced form of travel in the city?
3. What are the challenges of running a literary space in a city like Barcelona, especially in terms of visibility, accessibility, and sustainability?
4. Do you collaborate with other bookstores, libraries, festivals, or public institutions in Barcelona? If so, how have these partnerships shaped your events and the Eixample district?

5. What do you believe literary spaces like Backstory can offer (to the city and the community) that larger institutions might not?
6. How do you see Backstory contributing to community engagement through literature, especially in the Eixample district?
7. Finally, Backstory hosts a wide range of literary events (readings, book clubs, workshops, etc.). What kinds of audiences do you attract? How do you ensure your programming is accessible, not just linguistically, but culturally and socially, to the full spectrum of Barcelona's residents?

English Language Survey

Survey Summary (English Version – Summary in English)

The English-language survey ($n = 18$) offers insight into how international participants and English-speaking residents experience literary events in Barcelona. Responses reflect strong interest in sustainable tourism, community engagement, and spatial inclusion.

Many supported literary tourism as a slower, more meaningful alternative to mass tourism, with potential to draw respectful visitors, support local businesses, and ease pressure on central areas like Las Ramblas. Events like Sant Jordi were praised for their atmosphere but criticised for overcrowding.

Participants valued author talks, book exchanges, and social interaction, while calling for more frequent, year-round programming and better promotion of smaller or decentralised events.

A recurring theme was the need for multilingual, decentralised programming. Respondents requested more events in English and Spanish, inclusive of diverse age groups and neighbourhoods. Libraries, schools, and local streets were seen as ideal venues for fostering community connection.

Language barriers and limited visibility were cited as key challenges. Several respondents urged clearer communication and more welcoming formats for newcomers and non-Catalan speakers.

In sum, participants called for literary events that are more accessible, inclusive, and locally rooted, aligning with this thesis's argument that literary tourism should prioritise cultural participation over entertainment.

List of Survey Questions (English Version)

Note that the same questions were asked both in the Spanish and English language surveys.

Section 1: General demographics and background

1. What is your age?

2. What is your district in Barcelona?
3. How long have you lived in Barcelona?

Section 2: Awareness and participation

1. Are you aware of any literary events held in Barcelona (e.g., Sant Jordi's day, BCNegra Festival, Don Quixote Tour)?
2. Have you ever attended a literary event in Barcelona?
3. If yes, how frequently do you participate in literary events?
4. If yes, which literary events have you attended?
5. What motivates you to attend literary events?
6. If no, why haven't you attended any literary events?

Section 3: Perceptions and impact on literary tourism

1. Do you think literary events in Barcelona impact the city's image?
2. How do you feel about tourists visiting Barcelona for literary purposes?
3. Would you like to see more literary events in your district/neighbourhood?
4. Would you prefer literary events to be concentrated in specific areas (e.g., touristic sites like Las Ramblas) or spread across different districts?
5. How do you feel literary events contribute to Barcelona's cultural identity?
6. What do you enjoy most about literary events in Barcelona?
7. What challenges have you seen caused by literary events (e.g., overcrowding, commercialisation)?

Section 4: Community and suggestions

1. Do you think literary events help create a sense of community in Barcelona?
2. What types of literary events would you like to see more of in Barcelona?
3. What suggestions do you have for improving literary events in Barcelona?
4. How do you believe literary tourism could benefit your district economically or culturally?
5. Would you personally participate in or support literary events in your neighbourhood if they were organised?

6. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences or ideas regarding literary events in Barcelona?

Spanish Language Survey

Survey Summary (Spanish Version – Summary in English)

The Spanish-language survey (n = 68) offers a detailed view of how residents and visitors perceive literary events in Barcelona, addressing themes such as sustainable tourism, community engagement, urban regeneration, and inclusion.

Respondents recognised literary tourism's potential to boost local economies, especially by supporting bookshops, emerging artists, and diversifying cultural offerings beyond tourist areas. However, events like Sant Jordi were criticised for overcrowding, which hindered local participation.

Open responses highlighted the social and emotional value of literary events, particularly those featuring author talks, cultural crossovers (e.g., music, food), and programming in Catalan or local languages.

There was strong support for decentralised, intergenerational programming in alternative venues like libraries, parks, and universities. Respondents linked literary events to identity, community-building, and neighbourhood revitalisation.

Public libraries and bookshops were frequently cited as key cultural anchors. Many called for broader multilingual access, more inclusive scheduling, and better communication, especially digital outreach, to reflect the city's diversity.

In sum, the survey reflects broad enthusiasm for literature as a tool for inclusive, decentralised cultural life, while calling for improvements in accessibility, communication, and neighbourhood-level engagement.

List of Survey Questions (Spanish Version)

Note that the same questions were asked both in the Spanish and English language surveys.

Sección 1: Datos Demográficos

1. ¿Cuántos años tienes?
2. ¿En qué distrito de Barcelona vives?
3. ¿Cuánto tiempo has vivido en Barcelona?

Sección 2: Reflexión y participación

1. ¿Conoces los eventos literarios que se organizan en Barcelona, como el Día de Sant Jordi, el Festival BCNegra o la Ruta del Quijote?
2. ¿Has asistido alguna vez a un evento literario en Barcelona?
3. Si tu respuesta es sí, ¿con qué frecuencia participas en eventos literarios?
4. Si tu respuesta es sí, ¿a qué eventos literarios has asistido?
5. ¿Qué te motiva a asistir a eventos literarios?
6. Si tu respuesta es no, ¿por qué no has asistido a ningún evento literario?

Sección 3: Percepciones e impacto del turismo literario

1. ¿Crees que los eventos literarios en Barcelona influyen en la imagen de la ciudad?
2. ¿Qué piensas sobre la llegada de turistas a Barcelona atraídos por la literatura?
3. ¿Te gustaría que se organizaran más eventos literarios en tu distrito/barrio?
4. ¿Preferirías que los eventos literarios estuvieran concentrados en zonas específicas (por ejemplo, lugares turísticos como Las Ramblas) o que se distribuyeran por distintos barrios?
5. ¿Crees que los eventos literarios contribuyen a la identidad cultural de Barcelona?
6. ¿Qué es lo que más disfrutas de los eventos literarios en Barcelona?
7. ¿Qué desafíos has observado en relación con los eventos literarios (por ejemplo, masificación, comercialización)?

Sección 4: Comunidad y sugerencias

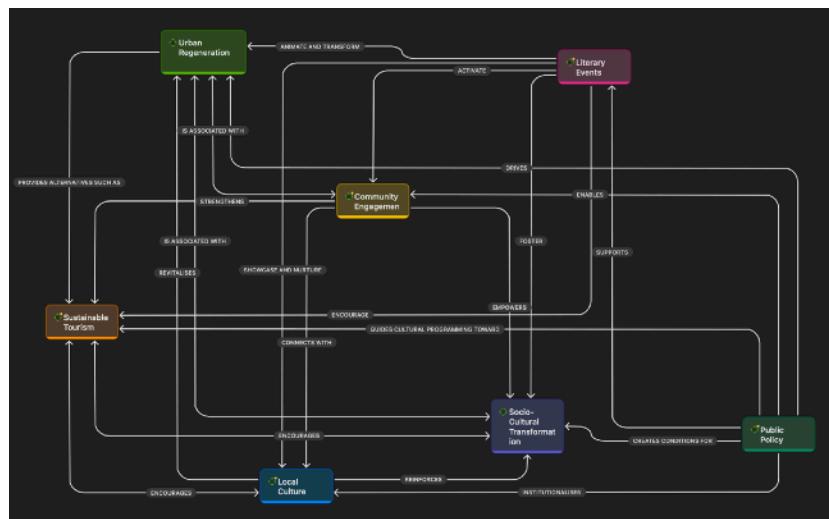
1. ¿Crees que los eventos literarios ayudan a crear un sentido de comunidad en Barcelona?
2. ¿Qué tipo de eventos literarios te gustaría ver más en Barcelona?
3. ¿Qué sugerencias tienes para mejorar los eventos literarios en Barcelona?
4. ¿Cómo crees que el turismo literario podría beneficiar a tu distrito económica o culturalmente?
5. Si se organizaran eventos literarios en tu barrio, ¿participarías o los apoyarías?
6. ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría compartir sobre tus experiencias o ideas en relación con los eventos literarios en Barcelona?

Table 1 *Atlas.ti Coding Process for Interviews and Surveys*

Step	Description	Tool/Method	Output/Result
1. Data Preparation	Transcribed four expert interviews and exported open-ended survey responses in English and Spanish. All texts were anonymised and formatted consistently	Pages	Clean, standardised source documents ready for <i>Atlas.ti</i> import
2. Initial Framework Design	Drafted a preliminary coding scheme aligned with the three core themes of the thesis: sustainable tourism, culture-led urban regeneration, and community engagement	ChatGPT prompt (code list generator)	A structured, theory-informed list of initial codes reflecting literature and research aims
3. AI-Powered Open Coding	Used <i>Atlas.ti</i> 's AI Coding function to generate suggested codes and visualise early co-occurrence patterns	<i>Atlas.ti</i> AI Coding	Broad initial code set with thematic clusters across documents
4. Manual Review and Merging	Reviewed AI-generated codes for redundancy, relevance, and clarity. Merged overlapping codes and renamed for consistency (e.g., combining "Community Space" with "Belonging")	<i>Atlas.ti</i> Manual Coding Tools	Refined code list; improved reliability and analytical coherence
5. Thematic Clustering	Grouped codes into higher-order themes (e.g., Decentralisation, Over-tourism, Libraries, Literary Identity) under the three thesis categories	<i>Atlas.ti</i> Code Groups and Networks	Organised thematic structure facilitating multi-document comparison
6. Co-Occurrence and Network Analysis	Generated code co-occurrence tables and network diagrams to examine relationships between key concepts across data sources	<i>Atlas.ti</i> Visual Tools (Co-occurrence Explorer, Networks)	Identified thematic links (e.g., "Libraries" + "Sustainable Tourism"); supported intersectional analysis
7. Theme Synthesis and Quote Extraction	Selected representative quotes from interviews and surveys under each theme to integrate into Chapters 5 and 6	<i>Atlas.ti</i> Quotations Panel	Empirical evidence supporting thesis arguments with traceable citations

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Diagram 1 *Atlas.ti Coding Connections for the Interview with the Carme Galve Montore*



Source: *Atlas.ti*, Carme Galve Montore's interview.

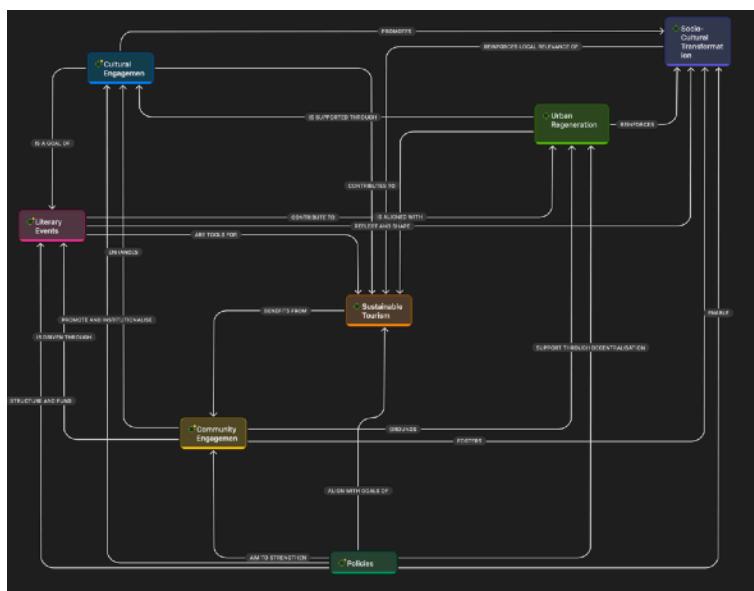
Carme Galve Montore - Atlas.ti Analysis Summary

Carme Galve Montore's interview highlights the Jaume Fuster Library as a hub for community engagement, inclusion, and neighbourhood regeneration. Atlas.ti data shows *Community Engagement* (GR = 70) as the dominant theme, closely linked to *Local Culture* (35), *Urban Regeneration* (23), *Sustainable Tourism* (22), and *Public Policy* (20). Galve describes libraries as 'public spaces under a roof' that welcome diverse users and promote social cohesion.

Urban Regeneration is driven by consistent community use and collaboration with local institutions. While not aimed at tourism, libraries contribute to *Sustainable Tourism* by offering what Galve calls 'biblioturismo.' Events like Sant Jordi help distribute cultural activity citywide. Though less frequent (*Literary Events*, GR = 17), Galve highlights collaborations with CCCB and the Instituto Italiano de Cultura as ways to foster inclusion and revitalise everyday spaces. *Local Culture* (GR = 37) shapes all programming, grounded in linguistic diversity and neighbourhood identity. *Public Policy* (GR = 23) is described as enabling rather than directive, ensuring equal access. *Socio-Cultural Transformation* (GR = 21) emerges through gradual, inclusive practices such as intercultural reading groups and adult education.

In sum, Galve's interview shows how libraries and literary events enable place-based cultural transformation. Community engagement is central, events are supportive tools, and literary tourism, when it occurs, reflects thoughtful, locally rooted planning, aligning directly with the thesis's core arguments.

Diagram 2 Atlas.ti Coding Connections for the Interview with Jaume Muñoz Jofre



Source: *Atlas.ti, Jaume Muñoz Jofre's interview.*

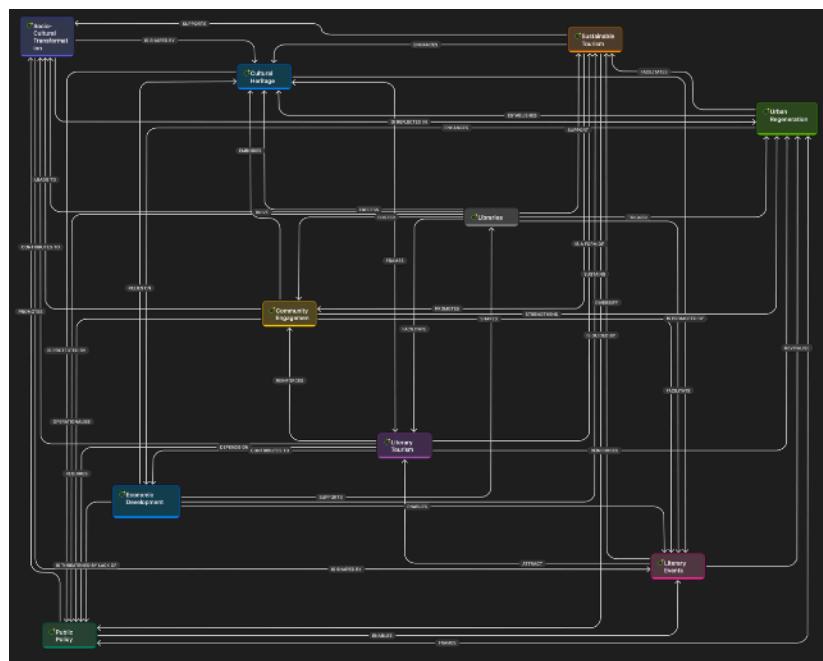
Jaume Muñoz Jofre - *Atlas.ti Analysis Summary*

The Atlas.ti analysis of Jaume Muñoz Jofre's interview shows how literary events are integrated into Barcelona's cultural governance. Rather than targeting tourism, they are positioned as tools for decentralisation, identity, and policy delivery. From his ICUB role, Muñoz sees culture as a public service, with tourism as a secondary effect.

Community Engagement is the leading theme, tied to *Cultural Engagement* (GR = 15), *Policies* (14), *Socio-Cultural Transformation* (10), and *Literary Events* (4). Events like Món Llibre and Literapolis promote inclusion through multilingual, intergenerational programming in non-central areas. *Urban Regeneration* emerges through cultural redistribution rather than physical change. Events such as Festival 42 and KM Amèrica bring visibility to peripheral districts, supported by links like *Urban Regeneration* ↔ *Community Engagement* (GR = 9). *Sustainable Tourism* is approached with care. Literary events are not promoted as tourist products, however, they attract visitors seeking meaningful experiences. Data links like *Policies*, *Literary Events* (GR = 5) and *Policies*, *Sustainable Tourism* (GR = 6) reflect a strategy focused on cultural prestige over volume. While not all co-occurrences appear in visual maps, key patterns, such as *Community Engagement* ↔ *Socio-Cultural Transformation*, are evident. Muñoz emphasises diversity, shared memory, and linguistic inclusion, framing literature as a community tool.

In sum, Muñoz offers a policy-driven view aligned with this thesis: literary events foster inclusion, decentralisation, and cultural rights, contributing to a more vibrant urban landscape.

Diagram 3 *Atlas.ti Coding Connections for the Interview with Fran Cobo Caballero*



Source: *Atlas.ti, Fran Cobo Caballero's interview.*

Fran Cobo Caballero - Atlas.ti Analysis Summary

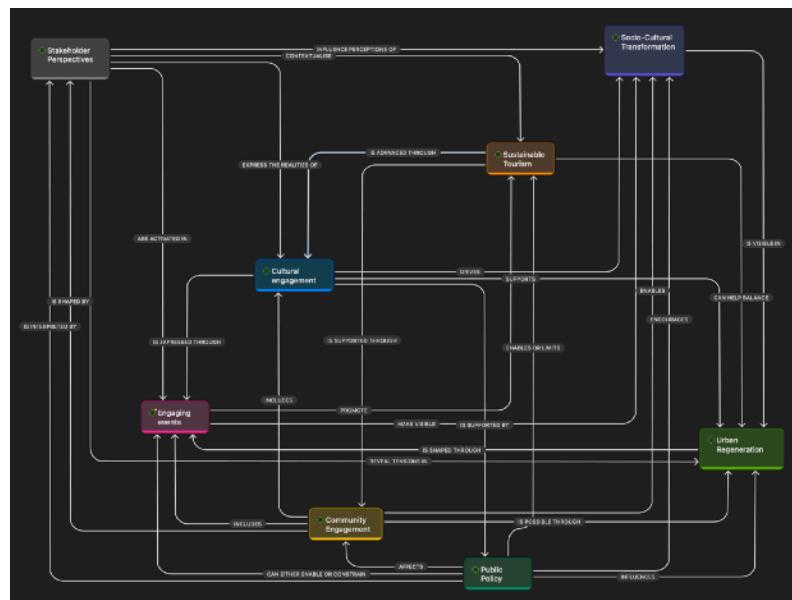
The interview with Fran Cobo Caballero shows how the Gabriel García Márquez Library links sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement. Atlas.ti data highlights *Community Engagement* and *Libraries* as central themes urban and cultural policy.

Community Engagement dominates, with strong links to *Participation* (GR = 22), *Sustainable Tourism*, and *Urban Regeneration*. The library offers free resources, inclusive programs like KM Amèrica, and a welcoming environment for diverse users. Connections to Local Identity and Inclusion reinforce its role as a space of representation and involvement. *Urban Regeneration* is reflected in Sant Martí's shift from car-oriented to pedestrian-friendly, supported by the library's expansion from 270m² to 4,000m². Public spaces have become social hubs, showing how libraries can anchor neighbourhood transformation. *Sustainable Tourism* is viewed as a reflective, community-oriented experience. The library has become a 'must-see' destination, for its atmosphere and value, supporting decentralised tourism.

Code maps confirm key patterns, such as *Libraries*, *Literary Events* and *Community Engagement*, *Socio-Cultural Transformation*. Though less frequent, *Public Policy* is essential in enabling this infrastructure and reflects a commitment to decentralisation and cultural rights.

Overall, Cobo's interview shows how libraries can foster inclusion, reshape tourism, and support urban renewal. His case exemplifies how publicly supported cultural infrastructure enables longterm socio-spatial transformation.

Diagram 4 *Atlas.ti Coding Connections for the Interview with Abbie Hibler*



Source: *Atlas.ti, Abbie Hibler's interview.*

Abbie Hibler - *Atlas.ti Analysis Summary*

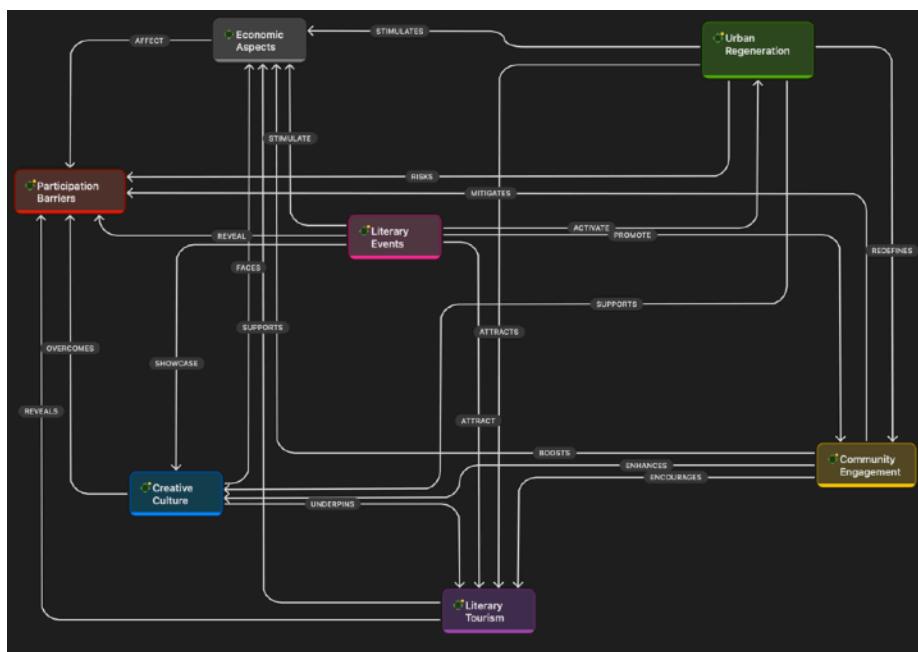
Atlas.ti analysis of Abbie Hibler's interview shows how small literary spaces like Backstory Bookshop contribute to community life, cultural diversity, and local transformation. Key themes include *Community Engagement*, *Sustainable Tourism*, and *Culture-Led Urban Regeneration*.

Community Engagement dominates, with links to *Community Connections* (GR = 7), *Diverse Voices* (3), and *Dialogue* (2). Hibler presents Backstory as a welcoming, trust-based space fostering belonging and shared stories, especially in contrast to larger institutions. *Sustainable Tourism* is framed as slow, meaningful engagement with local culture, not branding or high visitor numbers. The *Sustainability* code (GR = 5) overlaps with *Literary Tourism* and *Infrastructure*, though visual data also reveal challenges from limited policy support. *Urban Regeneration* appears through Backstory's role in rebalancing cultural life in Eixample. Codes like *Infrastructure* (2), *Innovative Space* (1), and *Community Revitalization* (1) reflect its grassroots impact. Support for emerging voices reinforces its role in diversifying cultural narratives.

Backstory functions as more than a bookshop, it is a cultural hub where identity, creativity, and participation converge. Code links confirm its role in inclusive, small-scale urban change.

In sum, Hibler's interview shows how independent literary spaces can activate community, support diversity, and enrich urban life from the ground up.

Diagram 5 *Atlas.ti Coding Connections for the Spanish Language Survey (Open-Ended Questions)*



Source: *Atlas.ti, Spanish Language Survey (Open-Ended Questions)*.

Spanish-Language Survey - Open Questions *Atlas.ti* Summary

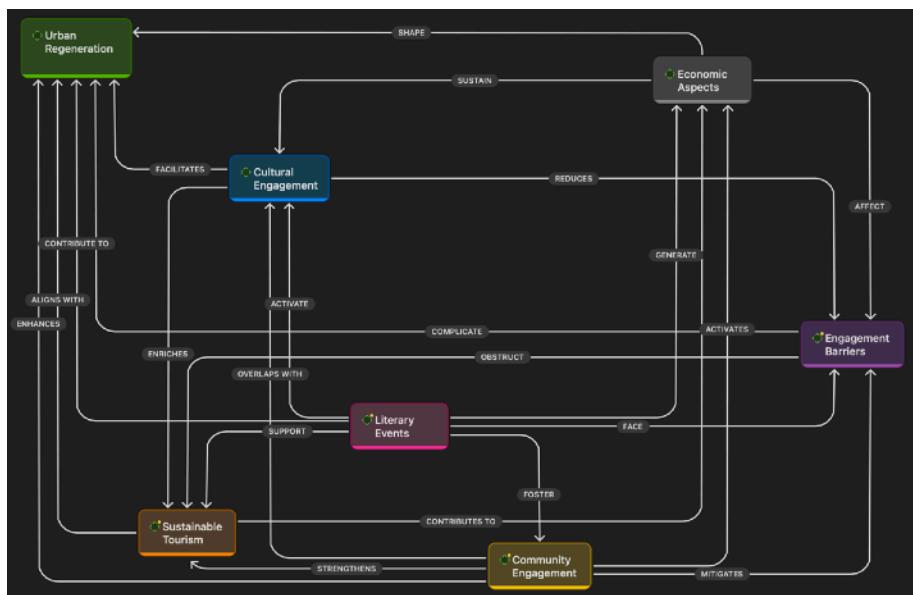
The Spanish-language survey (n=68) reveals strong public support for literature as a tool for community, identity, and inclusion, while expressing concern over limited access, visibility, and the centralisation of events. Responses align closely with the thesis themes of sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community engagement.

Community Engagement was the most frequent theme. Events like Sant Jordi and library programmes were valued for promoting connection and learning, but respondents called for more diverse, decentralised, and inclusive offerings, particularly for youth and marginalised communities. *Urban Regeneration* emerged through calls to spread events beyond overcrowded central areas. Libraries, bookshops, and public spaces were seen as vital to revitalising local life. *Sustainable Tourism* was viewed as a potential, rather than current, reality. Some saw literary events as ways to promote slower, culturally rooted tourism, while others criticised the commercialisation of flagship events like Sant Jordi.

Across responses, co-occurring concerns included massification, lack of diversity, and uneven distribution. Many linked literary culture to community values but warned against market-driven approaches.

In sum, respondents value literature's social role but seek more inclusive, decentralised, and accessible cultural policies, supporting this thesis's argument that sustainable literary development must grow from everyday participation.

Diagram 6 *Atlas.ti Coding Connections for the English Language Survey (Open-Ended Questions)*



Source: *Atlas.ti, English Language Survey (Open-Ended Questions)*.

English-Language Survey - Open Questions Atlas.ti Summary

Though smaller ($n = 18$), the English-language survey offers valuable perspectives from international and non-Spanish-speaking residents. Responses strongly support the thesis themes, especially community engagement and sustainable tourism, while highlighting barriers to access.

Community Engagement dominated responses. Participants valued multilingual, neighbourhood-based events that foster connection and reflect Barcelona's cultural diversity, preferring grassroots formats over centralised, top-down programming. *Urban Regeneration* was framed as reimagining public space. Literature was seen as a way to reclaim everyday places, spotlight local voices, and reshape how people experience the city. *Sustainable Tourism* was welcomed as a slower, more meaningful alternative. However, barriers like limited English-language information and outreach made participation difficult. *Participation Barriers*, language, cost, and visibility, were frequent concerns, often tied to exclusion from literary events.

In sum, respondents called for more inclusive, local, and accessible literary programming, reinforcing the thesis's argument that literary tourism should prioritise meaningful, community-based engagement over branding.