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Menorca: From the third tourism boom to the economic crisis and the role of the Insular Territorial Plan

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Abstract

Territories and tourist destinations have experienced a large-scale process of evolution and transformation in recent decades. This period has witnessed extremely important morphological and structural changes, which have also affected the island of Menorca. Increasing numbers of tourists, approval of the Insular Territorial Plan, the subsequent economic crisis and end of the real estate bubble are the main factors conditioning the evolution of Menorca in the past few decades. This paper analyses these three factors in order to study the main transformations that have occurred on Menorca and how they have come to shape the territory today.

Key words: Menorca, tourism, Insular Territorial Plan, tourism boom, urbanisation, crisis.

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1. Introduction. Objectives and methodology

With the onset and expansion of tourism in recent decades, the island of Menorca has undergone profound social, economic and territorial transformations. The main objective of this article is to analyse them from the 1990s until today, a 25-year period in which tourism has gained momentum. Therefore, many of the changes that have happened cannot be explained without taking it into account, especially when it has been described, here too, as drawing from a model with rather Fordist characteristics.

It is also true that the role of tourism cannot be understood studied in isolation, without relating it to land-use planning. This leads to the second objective, namely examining how certain land-use policies signal a turning point with regard to the changes that occur in a specific place. This article analyses whether with the 2003 Insular Territorial Plan of Menorca (abbreviated ITPM), the island began to lay the groundwork for a territorial and economic model which would mark a break with the model in place until then. However, the Plan was not the only important initiative in this change; it is also important to bear in mind Menorca's declaration as a Biosphere Reserve in 1993. Finally, the third objective is to ascertain how this increase in tourism has started to slow down in the past decade because of not only the implementation of the ITPM but also the start of the economic crisis and the bursting of the real estate bubble, which have clearly played a crucial role since 2008.

The methodology used in this article was based first on the analysis of certain quantitative indicators, and secondly on a bibliographic search for studies written on the topic. Basically, we should mention the studies published by both the Socioenvironmental Observatory of Menorca (Observatori Socioambiental de Menorca, abbreviated OBSAM) and the Sustainability and Territory Research Group (Grup de Recerca en Sostenibilitat i Territori, GIST) at the Universitat de les Illes Balears.

This article starts with a brief introduction describing the territorial and tourism framework, and then it analyses the evolution of the territory, with a particular emphasis on three factors. The first is the territorial changes and transformations which can be gleaned from the cartography by analysing the land-cover maps from 1995 and 2005. To do so, the first step was to unify and simplify the categories on both documents in order to facilitate their comparison; ultimately, an entirely new set of categories was defined. Secondly, this article analyses the importance of tourism using three basic indicators (spatial tourism function rate, residential tourism function rate and tourism function rate) which provide a snapshot of the sector's presence. Finally, based on variables like the percentage of the employed population by sector and population evolution, the main social and economic transformations which preceded the approval of the Insular Territorial Plan are surveyed.

The article then continues to a second section focused on the revision of the Insular Territorial Plan of Menorca. The territorial consequences that the Plan may have had, as well as the current crisis in the economy and the real estate sector, are analysed to see whether we can detect a turning point in the growth dynamics from previous decades. The analysis of the economic crisis is based on statistical information sources from the Statistical Institute of the Balearic Islands (Institut d'Estadística de les Illes Balears, abbreviated IBESTAT) and the National Statistical Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE), given that even today there is a dearth of articles that undertake a

detailed analysis of its territorial consequences. The phenomenon's closeness in time means that the topic has not yet been thoroughly analysed.

Finally, the article ends with conclusions which reflect on the possible future of the island.

2. Justification of the period studied

Tourist spaces have been heavily studied in the recent history of this activity in its most modern guise as the spread of mass tourism. Of course, the Balearic Islands have been a prime target in this sense, given that they have become a leading destination worldwide. The initial idea of this article, which is still important, is that the onset of tourism in the 1960s led to excessively quick urban development, especially in the early decades and on the coastline. At that time and place, the most important thing was to grow and not (or not so much) how this growth took place. Subsequently, with the introduction of the process leading to the autonomous regions and a higher level of self-governance for local entities, the vast majority of town halls reviewed and in some cases wrote their own municipal plans; however, they carried on with the same growth patterns. This explains why the application of urban and land-use plans in the Balearic Islands as a whole in the 1980s sought continuity with and legitimisation of this earlier growth (Blázquez, 2006; Rullán, 2010a).

Nonetheless, the first law drafted by the regional parliament after it was established in 1983 was precisely Law 1/1984, dated 14 March 1983, on the Organisation and Protection of Natural Areas of Special Interest. The speed with which this law was enacted can be interpreted as a sign of the Balearic Islands' desire to resolve the tourism and urbanisation issues, which even back then were showing truly worrisome signs. This law gave the Parliament the capacity to intervene on matters involving the protection of spaces that are threatened by urbanisation processes, even though this problem did not begin to be grappled with fully until Law 1/1991, dated 30 January 1991, on Natural Spaces and the Urban Development System of Specially Protected Areas on the Balearic Lands. With this law, one-third of the land at risk of being urbanised on the islands was placed under protection. Despite these early efforts to stanch the expansion of urbanisation, the true turning point on Menorca did not come until the approval of the Insular Territorial Plan.

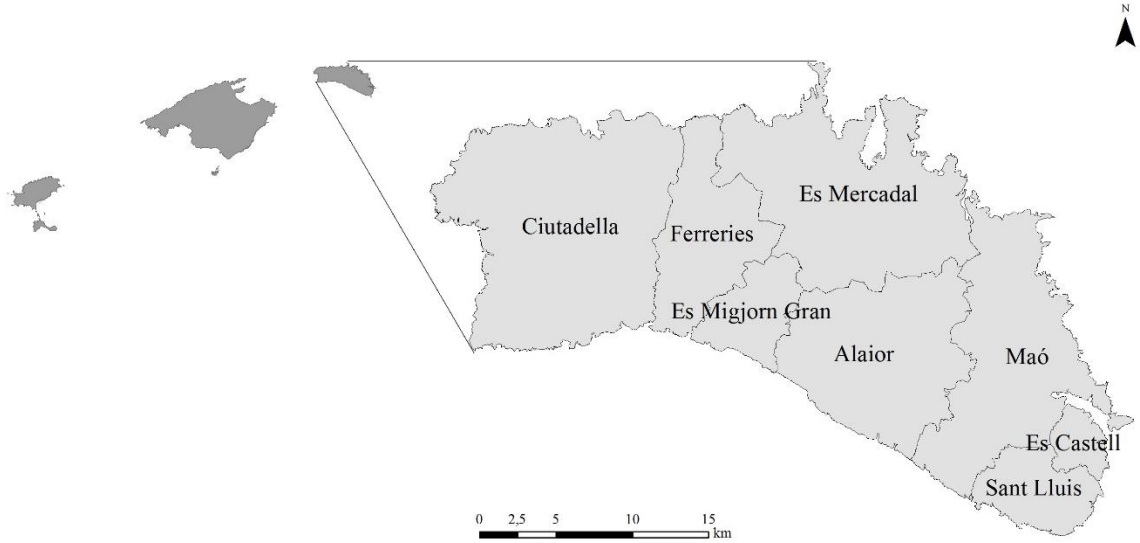
Therefore, the period studied begins in the 1990s, after the first tourism boom of the 1960s, characterised by growth in the number of hotels, and the second one in the 1980s, when the construction of urban residences scattered along the coastline predominated. The third tourism boom on the island was characterised by steep growth in urbanisation all over the territory as the residential model – single-family dwellings – spread far and wide, although primarily in the areas closest to the coast (Rullán, 2004). There was also a rise in tourism urbanisation with more hotel places and flats, especially directly on the coast (Blázquez & Murray, 2010). As Yrigoy (2013) claims, this urbanisation was a particular temporary solution to the accumulation of capital after the second half of the 20th century, and it materialised in the "production" of "fun in the sun" and beach spaces.

3. Tourism as a factor in the transformation of Menorca

3.1. Territorial and tourism context

The island of Menorca is made up of eight municipalities: Alaior, Ciutadella, Es Castell, Es Mercadal, Es Migjorn Gran, Ferreries, Mahon and Sant Lluís. Measuring a little over 700 km2, it is the second largest island in the Balearic Islands after Mallorca. It has a coastline around 200 km long, wrapping around an elongated yet totally homogeneous island (Fig. 1). The different geological formations in the southern and northern parts create two quite distinct halves of the island: the northern coast has a more rugged terrain with a notable presence of reefs, while the southern coast is gentler and flatter. The distances are relatively short, with a maximum distance lengthwise of 49 km (from Cap de Bajolí to La Mola spur) and a maximum width of 23 km (from Cap de Cavalleria to the beaches of Son Bou). Sixty percent of its land is protected by both the Law on Natural Spaces and the Insular Territorial Plan (Comas, 2004).

Figure 1. Menorca: Location and municipalities



Source: Authors

In terms of the structure and distribution of the settlements, what stands out is a clear urban bipolarity between the cities of Ciutadella and Mahon, which are the home to most of the island's population. These two towns are functionally supported by a road network which joins the two urban poles on either end of the island. The island's current population is 95,183 inhabitants (IBESTAT, 2013a), who are scattered homogeneously around the land. The cities of Ciutadella and Mahon account for almost two-thirds of the entire population of the island (both with almost 30,000 inhabitants), while the remaining towns have under 10,000 people. Table 1 shows the evolution of the population of Menorca since the onset of tourism, revealing how it has more than doubled in slightly over 30 years.

The population density is 135.6 inhabitant/km2, but it should be borne in mind that this figure – as well as previous population figures – is not entirely real since it does not take into account the floating population, or the temporary population. We can deduce that it is much higher in the summer, dovetailing with the high tourism season. For example, the Socioenvironmental Observatory of Menorca (Marí et al., 2013) regularly calculates a Daily Human Pressure (DHP)[1] indicator, and it recently concluded that in August 2012 (specifically on the 11th of the month), the figure of 201,660 people was reached (a new historical high), 4,800 higher than the previous year's record. In other words, the resident population more than doubled. In fact, ever since time series have been developed (1997), the DHP has never stopped growing from one August to another, starting with "just" 160,000 people that year.

Table 1. Evolution of the population of Menorca, 1960-2013[2]

	1960	1970	1981	1991	2001	2011	2013
Menorca	42,305	48,817	57,243	64,431	71,524	94,397	95,193
Alaior	4,939	5,106	5,606	6,444	7,108	9,450	9,769
es Castell	2,060	2,575	3,637	5,389	6,424	7,895	7,956
Ciutadella	12,240	15,113	17,637	20,874	23,103	29,510	29,629
Ferreries	2,019	2,506	3,076	3,681	4,048	4,667	4,610
Maó	16,086	18,466	21,860	21,541	23,315	28,789	28,765
es Mercadal + es Migjorn Gran	2,887	2,779	2,937	-	-	-	-
es Mercadal	-	-	-	2,365	3,089	5,292	5,425
es Migjorn Gran	-	-	-	1,049	1,167	1,520	1,520
Sant Lluís	2,074	2,272	2,490	3,088	3,270	7,275	7,509

Source: Authors based on data from IBESTAT (2013a)

With regard to the other neighbouring islands, Menorca got a somewhat late start in the development of its tourism activity. Nonetheless, just like the others, the sector has managed to become important and currently employs a large percentage of the active population. In fact, this case study may also be a good example of the recurring concept of "Balearisation", which lends its name to a very intense urban development growth model right on the sea and is often associated with a negative image because of the mass occupation of beach zones, hotels with large occupancies, accentuated seasonality and underused infrastructures and facilities the rest of the year (Antón et al., 2011).

[1] This indicator measures the volume of people on the island every day and is calculated based on the number of passengers entering and leaving Menorca daily by the airport and the ports of Mahon and Ciutadella, which are collected by AENA, the Port Authority and the Directorate General of Air and Maritime Transport of the Government of the Balearic Islands.

[2] The towns of Es Mercadal and Es Migjorn Gran appeared as one aggregate town for the years 1960, 1970 and 1981, such that the figures are shown together. These figures are not broken down into two municipalities until the 1991 census.

Naturally, today the Balearic Islands are suffering from the problem of the obsolescence of many of their towns, while from the ecological standpoint there are countless situations of biophysical unsustainability and an oversized ecological footprint[3] (Gorostiza, 2005; Murray et al., 2005; Murray, 2012). Nonetheless, since the instatement of the regional government, there have been no end of ecological and environmental claims in favour of protecting natural spaces, issuing urban development moratoriums or increasing urban permeability (Blázquez et al., 2005). For Menorca, it has been pointed out that this Balearisation has paradoxically taken place since the island was declared a Biosphere Reserve (Mata, 2006).

Thus, the urban growth in the second half of the 20th century, especially tourism-residential growth, is unquestionably one of the facts that best explains the current land use. Nonetheless, we should also recall that in 1993 UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme awarded Menorca (as a whole) the distinction of being a Biosphere Reserve because of the high degree of compatibility between economic development, landscape and heritage conservation, and the consumption of the resources found in the territory. This became the point of departure for subsequent land-use policies; within the sphere of land-use planning, the most important contribution to the objectives set by the Biosphere Reserve declaration was the 2003 approval of the Insular Territorial Plan, which incorporates urban growth guidelines that are meant to contribute to the cohesion of the island's natural spaces. If we start with the idea that the objective of any planning is to reach the proposed model that the public administration deems the most suitable (Fernández, 2004), then it is undeniable that this plan has been crucially important from the standpoint of tourism (Dubón, 2006).

To contextualise the evolution of tourism on Menorca since the 1990s, it is important to know what happened in the previous decades. In this sense, Onofre Rullán (2004) establishes a timeline of the tourism stages or booms on the Balearic Islands, which was used as a point of departure for this article. This author divides the development of tourism on the islands into three periods, the first starting in the late 1950s (slightly later on Menorca), which entailed what Blàzquez and Murray (2010) called the "economic modernisation of the Franco regime". This boom was characterised by the construction of a large number of hotels and an increase in air traffic thanks to charter flights. Afterwards, it started to wane with the world energy crisis in 1973. The second stage primarily stands out for a change in the kind of accommodations, with a predominance of apartment buildings; its turning point can be pinpointed at the time of the First Gulf War (1991), with a stagnation that some believe did not lift until 1993.

However, given the problems stemming from the increase in urbanisation, the first attempts to act on it arose in this same period. Using the approaches that were still common at the start of democracy, Menorca was able to double its population, yet at that time it saw the need to implement several measures or regulations at the supramunicipal scale (Rullán, 1999). The 1983 approval of the Statute of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands signalled the shift of new authorities over urban and regional land-planning policies to

[3] The ecological footprint measures the demands that a society places on nature. It is an indicator of environmental impact which answers the question of how much productive land is needed to sustain a given human population, thus indicating the possibilities for a socioeconomic model to be sustainable. However, applied to the case studied in this article, the concept could be defined by the abusive urbanisation of the coastline, which is intensive and often chaotic.

the Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands. Thus, some of the laws that were approved thereafter include Law 2/1984, dated 12 April 1984, on Non-hotel Accommodations, and Law 7/1988, dated 1 April 1988, on Transitory Land-use Planning Measures for Hotel Establishments and Tourist Accommodations, which stipulated specific features and thresholds for newly-built accommodations. In the 1980s, two tendencies which had begun to appear earlier gained ground, albeit tentatively: the growth in unregulated tourist services and extraordinary development of the sector in general, which would continue throughout the entire period analysed here (Rullán, 2010b).

The early 1990s ushered in the third tourism boom on the Balearic Islands (1991-2001), which was accompanied by the proliferation of tourist apartments and hotels on the coastline, as well as an increase in the influx of passengers by sea and air. It was also when the island of Menorca experienced an extremely intense urbanisation process thanks to vacation homes and an increase in the existing towns' capacity to host tourists: there was a diffuse, low-intensity process of urbanisation on the coastline (Pérez, 2012), as well as an increase in urbanisation outside the traditional towns, largely because of the advent of new forms of housing such as rural hotels and agro-tourism (Bauzà, 2006). That is, there was more urbanisation both on the coast and inland. Therefore, the construction industry played a crucial role in the proliferation of single-family dwellings used as second residences (Blázquez et al., 2002). In fact, this third boom added no new tourism products but instead primarily entailed an acceleration in the construction industry (Rullán, 2010b).

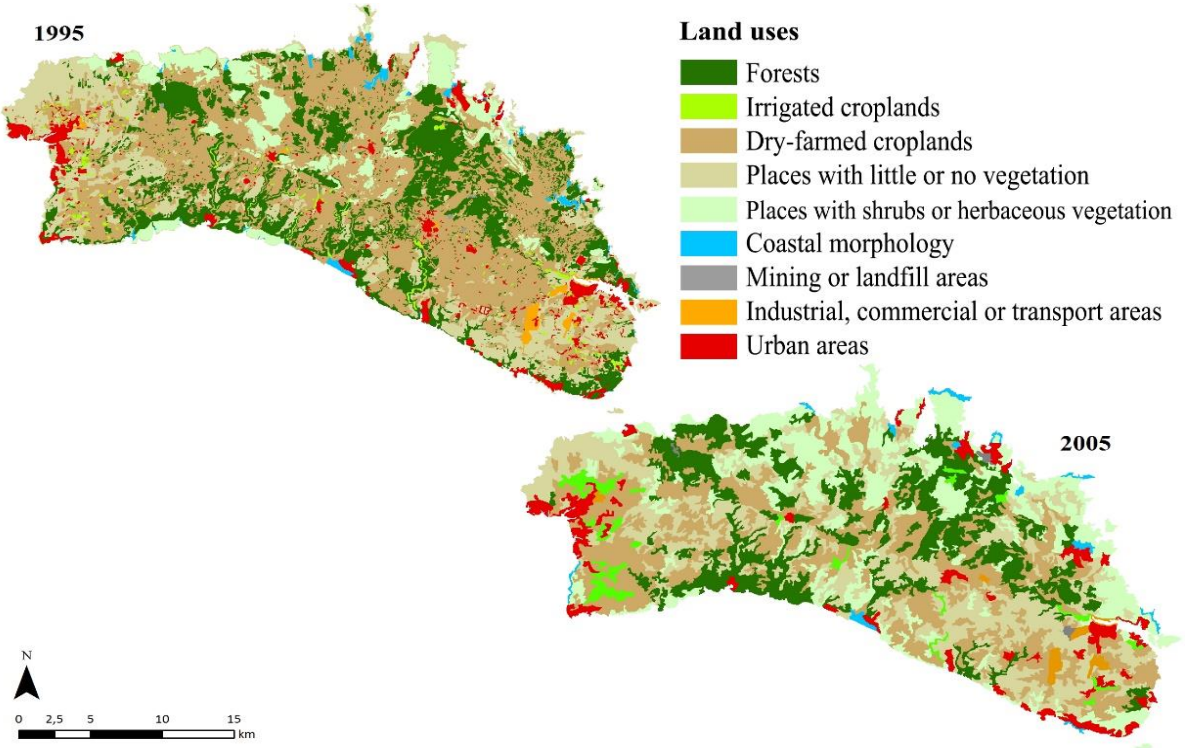
Nonetheless, the 1990s started with a crisis in the tourism sector, as had happened in the 1970s, largely because of the economic recession in the main source market at that time, Great Britain. However, in an increasingly global context, tourism on the Balearic Islands in general and on Menorca in particular benefitted from the outbreak of the First Gulf War (1991) and international tensions, which detracted from the appeal of competing tourist destinations on the southeast shore of the Mediterranean. Therefore, we could say that global economic cycles and tourism are closely linked on the Balearic Islands and shape clear patterns of evolution. The three tourism booms reflect this: the first one was the effect of the upswing at the end of Fordism, the second can be associated with the arrival of European capital after Spain joined the European Union, and the third is closely associated with economic growth and the availability of larger volumes of capital as a result of the transnationalisation of credit.

As a whole, tourism functionalisation and growth has had a profound effect on the territory of Menorca and has sparked two kinds of changes: structural and morphological. Regarding the former, both the demographic structure and the economic activity have changed, with a clear restructuring in favour of the tourism sector. In terms of morphology, we should mention the transformations in the landscape, with a rural environment where different leisure activities are represented today, as well as a specialisation in tourist residences and hotel complexes. The sections below briefly survey these changes.

3.2. Territorial transformations. Analysis of land uses and covers, 1995-2005

The territorial transformations on Menorca with the onset of tourism explain the main changes in land occupation. These changes can be more clearly seen from the land-cover analyses in 1995 and 2005. Figure 2 shows the land uses in those two years.

Figure 2. Land uses, 1995 and 2005



Source: Authors with map bases extracted from OBSAM

The most important differences are the loss of dry-farmed croplands and the increase in areas with shrubs or herbaceous surface coverage, followed by the increase in spaces with little or no vegetation. These changes are related to the abandonment of activity in the countryside, which led to a proliferation of areas with little vegetation or shrubs and herbaceous vegetation (Blázquez et al., 2010). Generally speaking, in the period analysed, around 10,500 hectares of croplands were lost and more than 12,500 of the other two typologies was gained (5% and 11%) (Table 2 and Figure 3). On this point, it is important to briefly explain the predominant plant cover on Menorca, especially woodlands and shrublands, bearing in mind that two elements condition it: the Mediterranean climate and its status as an island. Clearly Mediterranean vegetation predominates, with a higher presence of wetlands with holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) and an understory that fosters constant high moisture levels, which help plants and thickets grow. However, in areas where the holm oak groves have deteriorated, pine groves (*Pinus halepensis*) have taken over. On the other hand, in the drier areas where there is no forest, we can find different kinds of garrigues, including wild olive trees (*Olea eurpoeaea*) with white hedge-nettles (*Prasium majus*) and dwarf fan palms (*Chamaerops humilis*), which

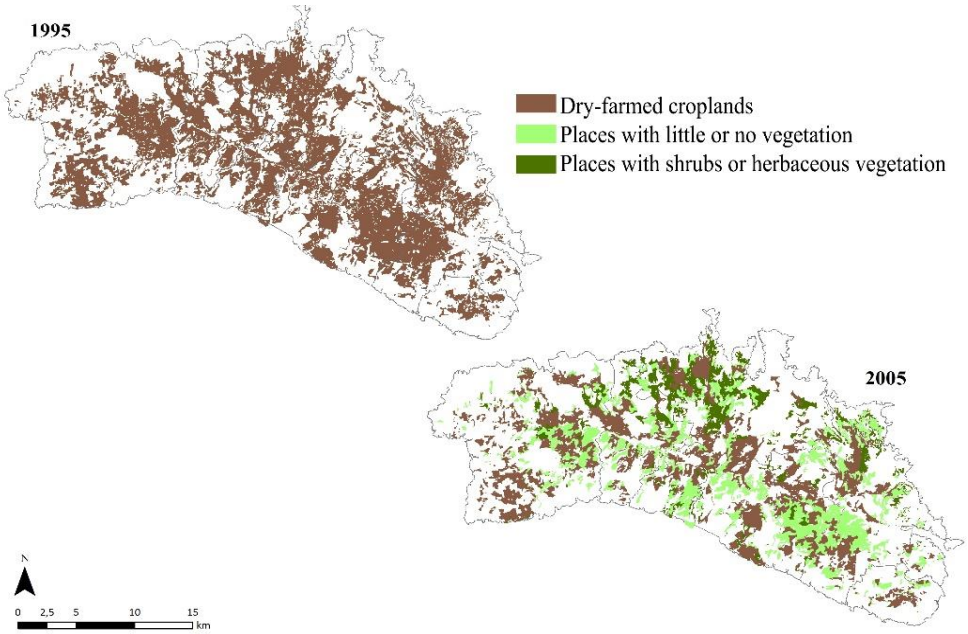
have spread also as a result of the deterioration of the holm oak groves. Near the coast, where salinity prevents larger species from growing, Balearic milk vetch (*Astragalus balearicus*) and other endemic species adapted to the local conditions predominate. Because of Menorca's status as an island, there is a large number of endemic species, and the majority of the Mediterranean species are represented except for the typical mountainous or fluvial and riparian species.

Table 2. Quantification of the changes in land cover, 1995-2005

Land cover	1995		2005		1995-2005	Variations
	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%
Forests	15,736.67	22.66	13,403.59	19.14	-2,333.08	-3.52
Irrigated croplands	860.07	1.24	1,652.39	2.36	792.32	1.12
Dry-farmed croplands	29,488.31	42.46	18,959.35	27.08	-10,528.96	-15.38
Places with little or no vegetation	13,216.81	19.03	17,441.26	24.91	4,224.45	5.88
Places with shrubs or herbaceous vegetation	5,627.74	8.10	13,990.24	19.98	8,362.50	11.88
Coastal morphology	774.51	1.12	292.37	0.42	-482.14	-0.70
Mining or landfill areas	74.96	0.11	153.03	0.22	78.07	0.11
Industrial, commercial or transport areas	474.99	0.68	594.01	0.85	119.02	0.16
Urban areas	3,189,03	4.59	3,526.05	5.04	337.02	0.44

Source: Authors

Figure 3. Changes in land covers and uses, 1995 and 2005



Source: Authors with map bases extracted from OBSAM

Given the importance of agriculture on Menorca in terms of the environment, the landscape and the economy, it is important to describe its main features. In recent years, the island's agricultural system has been in the throes of a restructuring process which is defined by a decrease in the number of farms and a stagnation in the population working in this sector stemming from the specialisation in tourism. In contrast, the size of farms has increased and farming has intensified and industrialised, with a mean of 120 hectares per farm. There are around 300 farms, most of them livestock and 175 of them exclusively working in the dairy sector to produce milk and cheese. Thus, we can detect a shift in the crop-livestock farming sector, with the gradual replacement of cropfields with livestock farms. Despite these changes, it is also important to stress that the decrease in cultivated land does not necessarily mean a parallel loss of the activity, since it has reconverted into more specialised, intensive and mechanised farms.

The abandonment of the countryside took place after the onset and expansion of tourism. Furthermore, in the primary sector, a large number of plots have become specialised in livestock for milk production. Whether because of the loss of agricultural spaces or the decline in the primary sector, overall there has been a shift in the active population and the weight of different activities within the island's economic structure, with a decrease in farmwork in favour of the tertiary sector and services. This change can be seen even more clearly by the evolution in the active population by sector: the number of people working in the primary and secondary sectors has dropped, while the number working in services has grown, albeit with major fluctuations throughout the year because of the seasonality of the tourism model in place. The primary sector's share of production (as well as jewellery and footwear) dropped considerably in the mid-1990s because of the constant crises, which led to mergers and the disappearance of some companies (López & Rosselló, 2002).

In this analysis, the degree of land cover transformation can also be evaluated in greater detail. Table 3 shows the differences between 1995 and 2005 by calculating the number of hectares lost by each kind of land cover, the number gained (on another part of the island) and the number that remained unchanged. The last column indicates the total area by land cover, which corresponds to the sum of the hectares gained and those that remained unchanged.

The changes that are more the focus of this article are those that occurred in artificialised areas, because they are crucial to understanding the evolution of the urbanised space and therefore the space used for tourism. Figure 4 shows the increase in urbanisation by zone between 1995 and 2005, distinguishing between urban nuclei[4], dispersed urbanisation[5] and other artificialized spaces[6].

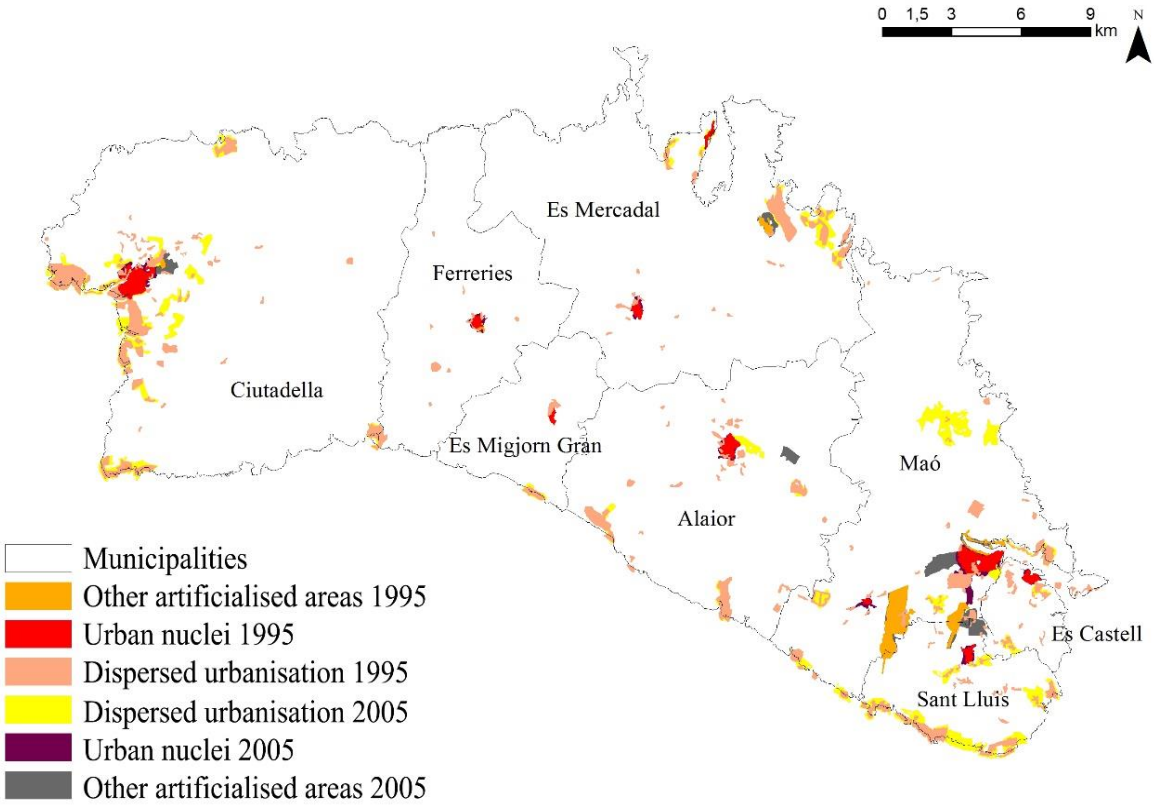
[4] Urban nuclei include the entire continuous urban extension.
[5] Dispersed urbanisation includes the discontinuous urban extension, urban estates and rural nuclei.
[6] The following elements are included in this category: industrial estates, port zones, airports and sports areas.

Table 3. Transformations in land cover until 2005

Land cover	hectares lost	hectares maintained	hectares gained	total (hectares gained + hectares maintained)
Forests	8,185	5,727.84	7,544.1	13,271.94
Irrigated croplands	17,020.78	6,326.4	2,009.21	8,355.61
Dry-farmed croplands	574.71	1,353.04	285.37	1,638.41
Places with little or no vegetation	6,871.48	12,574.36	4,674.29	17,284.65
Places with shrubs or herbaceous vegetation	3,454.82	11,615.1	2,170.68	13,785.78
Coastal morphology	2,037.69	82.32	204.61	286.93
Mining or landfill areas	72.25	148.77	2.71	151.48
Industrial, commercial or transport areas	104.1	208.83	370.5	579.33
Urban areas	1,236.96	1,521.13	1,937.56	3,458.69

Source: Authors

Figure 4. Evolution in artificialised land cover, 1995-2005



Source: Authors with map bases extracted from OBSAM

The category that increased the most is dispersed urbanisation, while traditional nuclei hardly increased in area. What stands out is the growth on the coast in the municipality of Sant Lluís, which actually created a long urban strip along its coastline. Also worth noting is the growth in the municipality of Mahon, while the municipality of Ciutadella grew because of the construction of a series of urban estates located not on the coast but on the outskirts of the traditional nucleus. Urbanisation also increased in Fornells; this is a nucleus which belongs to the township of Es Mercadal where many of the homes are used as second residences.

By analysing each of the categories, we can see how they all increased in this ten-year period, with dispersed urbanisation increasing the most in absolute numbers (more than 500 hectares). The urbanisation of traditional nuclei grew around 200 hectares, while other urbanised zones grew more than 250 hectares (especially in the industrial areas in both Ciutadella and Mahon). What varies in this sense is the relative weight of each of the land covers: while in 1995 lax urbanisation exceeded 72% of all artificialised land cover, by 2005 it had dropped to 68%: both the urbanisation of traditional nuclei and other artificialised zones gained relative weight (Table 4). As a whole, there was a 1,000-hectare increase in these three new uses by 2005 (an average of around 100 hectares per year).

Table 4. Evolution in artificialised land covers 1995-2005

Land cover	1995		2005		variations 95-05	
	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%
Traditional urban nuclei	454.61	14.53	644.72	15.65	190.11	1.12
Dispersed urbanisation	2,294.19	73.34	2,825.93	68.59	531.74	4.75
Other artificialised areas	379.30	12.13	649.40	15.76	270.10	3.64
Total	**3,128.10**	**-**	**4,120.05**	**-**	**991.95**	**-**

Source: Authors

3.3. The rising importance of tourism

Tourism is an activity which has gained popularity on Menorca over the years, while also bringing certain problems, the most important of which is seasonality. It is primarily concentrated in the three summer months, which means that the beaches, facilities and infrastructures are saturated, whereas the rest of the year they are underused. This seasonality also has effects on demographics, with major population fluctuations over the course of a year.

Tourism's importance in a land can be evaluated with a series of indicators that show not only its weight but also the pressure it can exert on a territory. Here we shall present three of them. The first is the *tourism function rate*,[7] which reveals Menorca to

[7] This measures the percentage relationship between the number of beds or places available for tourists in a town and its permanent population. In short, the goal is to ascertain a place's tourism potential. This rate establishes several thresholds according to the degree of tourism specialisation: from 0 to 10 minimum tourism function; from 10 to 100 semi-specialisation in tourism; from 100 to 1,000 tourism specialisation (which is considered strong at 400 and higher); more than 1,000 functional hypertrophy (Defert, 1967).

be a semi-specialised space, although this varies if the rate is analysed on a municipal scale. Specifically, Es Migjorn and Es Mercadal show the highest functional specialisation (212 and 129), since they are the home to large urban estates like Sant Tomàs in the former and Fornells in the latter. In fact, both municipalities have more tourist places than residents. The other municipalities on the island have the same degree of semi-specialisation yet much lower rates, with the exception of Mahon, which has a minimum tourist function level. Ciutadella, with a rate of 78, is far and away the municipality with the highest number of tourist places on the island, with almost 23,000 in 2011 (IBESTAT, 2013b).

The second indicator is the *residential tourism function rate*[8], and worth noting here is the high degree of tourism specialisation in the municipality of Es Mercadal (235), because it includes the town of Fornells, which is traditionally the home to second residences. In contrast, the other seven municipalities have very low rates, and with the exception of Sant Lluís (a rate of 53), they show figures closer to the level of semi-specialisation. Likewise, the importance of second residences is quite high, at around 20% of all homes on Menorca (IBESTAT, 2011), while 70% are primary residences and the remaining 10% are vacant. Of course, many of the second residences are not owned by locals, meaning that a large share of these homes are empty most of the year.

Finally, the third indicator used to measure the importance of tourism on the island is the *spatial tourism function rate*[9]. According to this measure, Menorca is a semi-specialised space, with an overall rating of 71. Just like the other two islands, it is a heterogeneous territory, since the greatest specialisation can be found in Sant Lluís, Ciutadella, Es Castell and Es Migjorn Gran and (rates of 100), while the other four municipalities have visibly lower rates or extremely low ones (such as Ferreries and Mahon). Table 5 shows these rates for each municipality and for the island as a whole.

Table 5. Tourism Function, Residential Tourism Function and Spatial Tourism Function Rates

	TFT	TFTR	TFTE
Alaior	71.3	41.2	61.1
es Castell	15.9	34.0	108.4
Ciutadella	78.1	42.4	122.8
Ferreries	20.2	18.8	14.2
Maó	6.4	28.7	16.0
es Mercadal	129.2	235.8	50.9
es Migjorn	212.3	35.0	100.8
Sant Lluís	81.7	53.4	156.4
Total	**52.3**	**45.4**	**71.3**

Source: Authors based on data from IBESTAT (2013b)

[8] This measures the importance, percentage-wise, of second residences in relation to primary residences in a given space, and the thresholds established to interpret the rate are the same as for the tourism function rate, but in this case specialisation occurs after a rating of 50-75 (Barbier, 1966; Renucci, 1984).

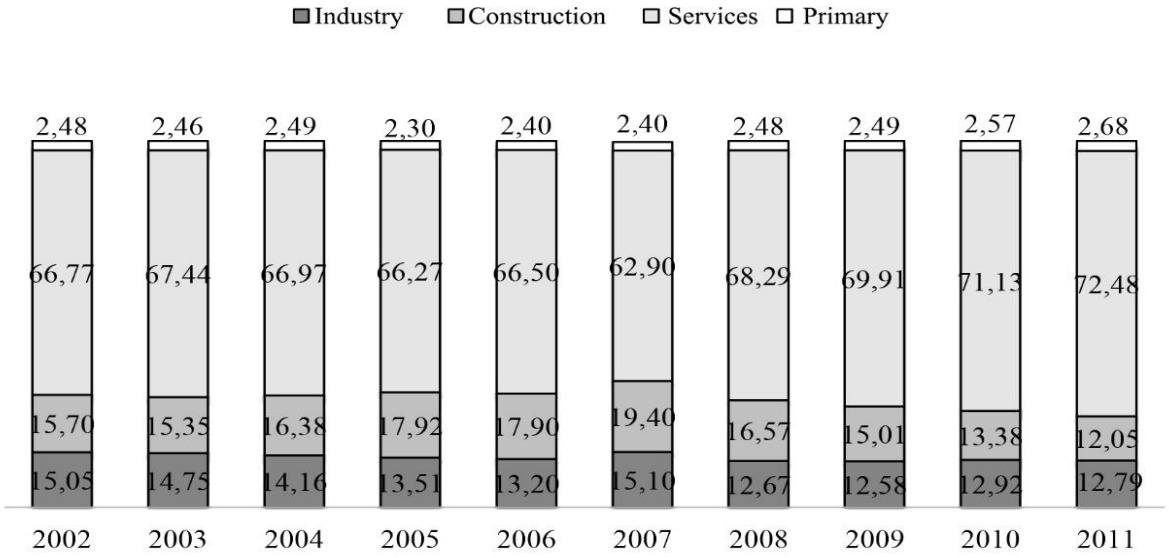
[9] This measures the weight of the tourist function or occupational density of tourist accommodations in a given place, relating the number of tourist places and the supporting land for these places. The results are interpreted the same as the tourist function rate (Defert, 1967).

3.4. Socioeconomic transformations

The increase in tourism has led to major changes in the island's socioeconomic base, giving rise to a productive model based increasingly on the services sector. Menorca has shifted from being a society that relied on the primary sector to gradually having a more tertiary economy (Pérez, 2003; Ordinas & Binimelis, 2013). Currently, more than 70% of the population of Menorca is employed in the tourism and services sectors, and if we break this down by activities, 35% of the total active population currently works in the hospitality industry and retail. However, it should be borne in mind that this figure is an annual mean; therefore, during the summer months it is even higher, reaching more than 40%. Figure 5 shows the relative weight of each economic sector for all Social Security affiliates on Menorca between 2002 and 2011.

Despite the losses in the primary and secondary sectors, which began to appear after the onset of tourism in the 1960s, within the last decade this trend has been particularly magnified; agriculture accounts for a minuscule 2.5%, while at the other extreme we find that the active population in the tertiary sector is growing steadily. Despite the gradual decrease in fieldwork, farming has played – and continues to play today – a very important role in shaping the landscape and maintaining the island's biodiversity (López & Rosselló, 2002). On the other hand, also worth noting is the loss of industry, which is related to the recent economic crisis and the disappearance of many factories. Furthermore, it is important to consider the construction sector, which is still in the midst of a serious recession because of the bursting of the real estate bubble, which shall be discussed below. In fact, since 2007, the percentage of the population working in construction has dropped from 19.4% to a little over 12% (2011).

Figure 5. Active population by sector, 2002-2011



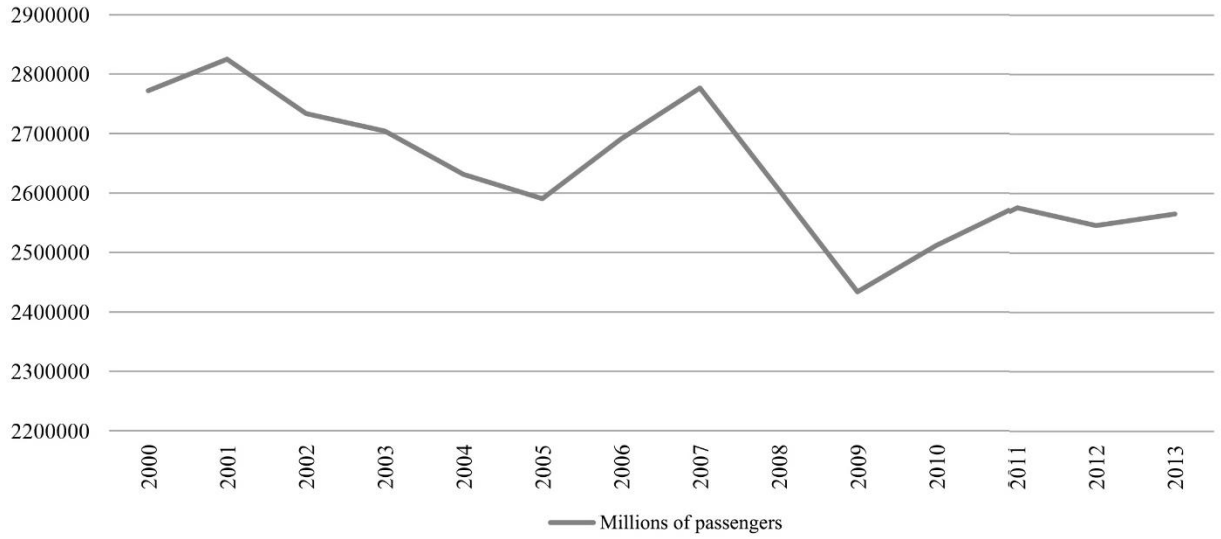
Source: Authors based on data from OBSAM

In the past two decades, the population of Menorca has increased, mainly because of the appeal of its tourism activity, which attracts immigrants from both abroad and the rest of Spain (Fullana, 2005 & 2008), although the population increase is also due to

vacation or work reasons. From 1998 to 2009, the number of foreign residents increased, whereas in the late 2000s the contingent of immigrants began to drop. While in 1998, the foreign population living on Menorca accounted for a little over 3% and reached its peak in 2009 with 16.7%, today this figure has decline slightly to 15.5%.

The importance that tourism has gained can also be demonstrated with the number of passenger entries (Figure 6). Since 2000, there has been a drop, mainly because of the growth of new tourism destinations like Turkey and Cyprus, which compete fiercely with the Balearic Islands. Also worth citing is 9/11, which temporarily slowed down the amount of travel around the world. Furthermore, Germany, the second largest source of tourists on Menorca after Great Britain, experienced an economic crisis. Nonetheless, the number of passengers entering increased in 2005, but then it slowed down again after 2007 because of the crisis that hit Spain, and it remained in a downturn until 2009, when the curve rose slightly and then became stable.

Figure 6. Tourist entries, 2000-2013



Source: Authors based on data from AENA

4. The Insular Territorial Plan: An initial turning point

In the 1990s, a series of transformation patterns began to appear on all the Balearic Islands. The tourism and construction sectors showed increases never before seen, while there were demographic changes which were crucial in a labour market that was surging and needed more than just the local population to fill the jobs. However, once the new millennium had started, the tourism development model began to show clear signs of exhaustion. Despite a few initial attempts during the regional decentralisation process in the 1980s, the decision to truly tackle the territorial problem, namely the increase in overall tourism urbanisation, was not taken until the 1990s. Afterwards, the first decade of the 21st century signalled a turning point because of two key factors: the approval of the Insular Territorial Plan and the economic crisis.

4.1. Legislative framework

In order to understand the scope of the Insular Territorial Plan, the first thing to bear in mind is Law 8/1987, dated 1 April 1987, on Land-use Planning (abbreviated LOT), which established a new context for land-use planning instruments above and beyond the level of urban planning. It is a framework law that stipulates the documents that must be drawn up and assigns the authority over them. The next regulatory framework is called "Land-use Planning Directives" (abbreviated DOT), which always prevail over the Territorial Plan because they constitute a steering instrument that is binding for the other plans.

After three decades of steep growth in tourism and urban development, the 1990s led to significant changes with laws and plans which sought to regulate or stanch the new wave of territorial expansion that was occurring (Rullán, 1999). A few tentative steps started to be taken in favour of land protection, albeit with only minor and barely perceptible repercussions (e.g., in 1991, the Law on Natural Spaces was approved, which protects more than 60% of the land from urbanisation). Late in the decade, however, society and the different political forces began to consider the need to limit the growth in tourism and urban development (Manchado, 2001), which became feasible through the General Tourism Law and the Land-use Planning Directives, both of which were approved in March 1999. However, with this new legislation, growth did not entirely halt; the difference is in the way it happened: from then on, it was redirected and had a clearer goal of bringing order to the chaos that had characterised the urbanisation of some parts of the island.

The General Tourism Law of the Balearic Islands placed a moratorium on increasing new hotel places unless they were replacing obsolete existing places. However, being unable to expand the stock of hotels and tourist flats meant that the second residence market rose steeply (Jordi & Vicente, 2007). Therefore, this law did not prevent the volume of tourist places from increasing, but quite the opposite: it led to an unbridled increase. In turn, the measures approved with the DOT banned the creation of new, isolated nuclei that could be urbanised, as well as the creation of new urbanisations within the 500 metres of the sea; it limited the classification of buildable land to a periurban area of 500 m from the existing nuclei; and finally, the key measure limited the growth of Menorca to 12% of the urban and buildable land with the definitive approval at the time the Directives entered into force.

On the other hand, also worth citing is Law 2/2001, dated 7 March 2001, on Land-use Planning, which conferred land-use planning authorities on the island councils. This, then, laid the legal framework for drafting and approving what would become the Insular Territorial Plan of Menorca, promoted by the island itself upon the initiative of the Island Council.

4.2. The Insular Territorial Plan of Menorca

After sketching the context prior to the approval of the Insular Territorial Plan of Menorca (ITPM), now we must analyse in further detail how it contributed to changing the patterns

of territorial transformation. The Balearic Islands were one of the first autonomous communities to enact policies to redirect their urban growth, and ultimately the ITPM represents the culmination of the previous attempts in the tendency towards integrated land-use planning. The ITPM was also created with the clear mission of organising and regulating the entire island following sustainable parameters and criteria, especially in the coastal areas whose urbanisation process had irreversibly increased. Thus, the main issues that it had to deal with were: the increase in land consumption in the past few decades, the gradual abandonment of primary activities (and the transformation of farmland) and the need to change the island's tourism model, which was considered obsolete and low-quality.

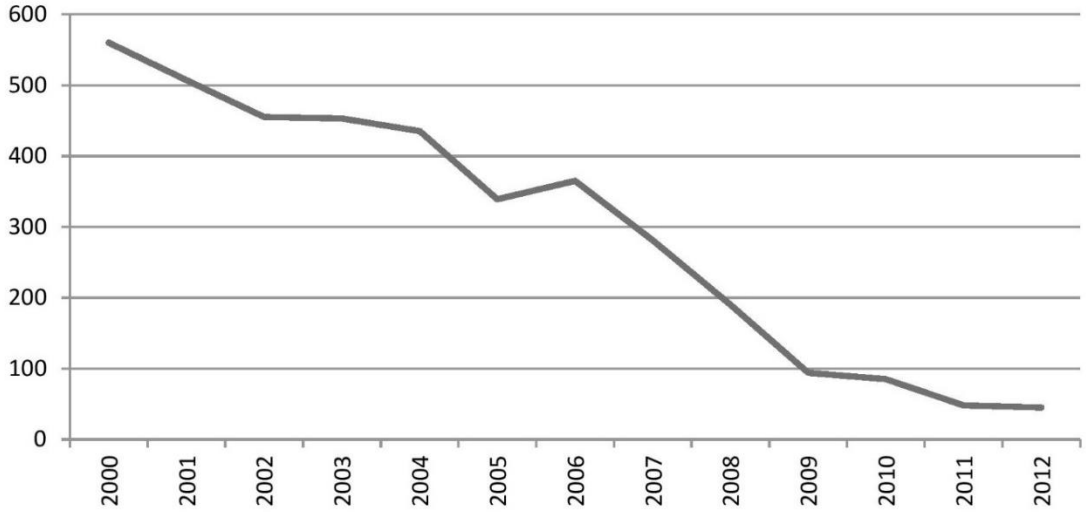
The approval of the ITPM signalled a fundamental step towards land-use planning and was warmly welcomed by the institutions involved and the population as a whole. Menorcan society was particularly receptive and interested in the future definition of the island as called for in the plan. This was fostered by keen citizen awareness, as the residents of Menorca viewed it as a fragile, unique island with high environmental and landscape values, which necessitated special approaches to appropriately safeguard it. Therefore, it was both a political and a citizen initiative.

Another key feature of the ITMP is its emphasis on problems in the agricultural sector and the fact that this activity was paradoxically viewed as basic to the maintenance and management of many of the natural and landscape resources. Thus, the Plan also proposed the separation between traditional population nuclei and tourist zones, setting different measures for each of them (CIME, 2003). Below we shall present the most salient aspects of each.

4.2.1. The system of traditional settlements

Until 2003, urban growth was scarcely regulated, and therefore it was essential to place limits on growth, as stipulated by the 1999 Land-use Planning Directives. It is also worth noting that either because of a conservationist mentality or because Menorca was believed to have reached its growth limit, the decision was made not to reach the maximum ceiling stipulated in the Directives but instead to allow growth of just over 10% in the areas that were already and could be urbanised. Therefore, the ITPM is the instrument that had to guarantee a pace of growth in urbanisation and building following more sustainable criteria. In addition to the fact that the Plan entailed delimiting the zones which could be urbanised and the criteria of how they could be urbanised, it also proposed setting a cap in specific time periods by controlling the issuance of building licenses. Moreover, one of its most important elements is the limitation on building on rural land. Figure 7 shows the number of building licenses granted on Menorca for new residential and non-residential buildings, illustrating the gradual decrease since 2000.

Figure 7. Building licenses for new residential and non-residential buildings, 2000-2012



Source: Authors based on data from IBESTAT (2013b)

To tally the land that had to be made available for urbanisation in order to meet the housing needs of the permanent population, and doing so harmoniously within the traditional nuclei, the future population that would need housing was estimated. Additionally, following the criteria of integration into cities and social cohesion in towns, the Plan also set forth criteria in which certain land sectors had to be set aside for publicly-subsidised housing. Without government regulation, a major population contingent could be excluded, rendering them unable to access a home. To combat this, almost 40% of new buildings have to be set aside for housing subjected to some kind of public subsidies which would authorise the administration to assess their price.

4.2.2. The regulation on tourism urbanisation. The Tourist Accommodation Stock Land-use Plan (POOT)

The urbanised land on the island accounts for approximately 5% of the total land on the island, and only 0.82% lies inside traditional nuclei. Therefore, we could say that the remainder reflects the urbanisation process which occurred in the second half of the 20th century (Dubón, 2006), with the onset and expansion of tourism. Menorca specialised in the "fun in the sun" and beach market, with a supply of accommodations that was considered low quality, a highly seasonal use and a small complementary housing supply. These factors, along with the territorial effects stemming from the excessive weight of tourism, rendered it necessary to limit the sector, change the predominant kind of accommodations and create a major complementary housing supply. These are the three main strands underpinning the Tourist Accommodation Stock Land-use Plan (POOT) within the Insular Territorial Plan. This desire to regulate the tourist accommodation stock became one of the key elements regulating tourism on Menorcan soil.

Menorca and its territory are the main assets in its tourism product because it is a fragile space which has a large, diverse array of landscapes, environments and heritage

sites (Barceló, 2007). Thus, it was deemed essential for the administration to intervene in setting strategies in favour of a tourist-territorial model that bore in mind all of these factors, as well as the population. The Insular Territorial Plan thus grants a crucial role to planning tourism, as the leading economic and consumer sector shaping the land. However, Menorca's environmental and landscape quality contrast with the spread of a model of accommodations comprised primarily of low and mid-category hotels and flats. Given that in the zones where tourism is concentrated there are different types of occupation, saturation and categorisation of the accommodation stocks that do not reflect the desired model, the POOT's first measure was to define and integrate the land in tourist zones into the category of land for tourism use (compatible with residential uses), establishing general provisions for each of these spaces. In addition to these provisions, particular determinations were added for each tourism area which reflected specific environmental or landscape territorial conditions that had to be integrated into the new tourism land-use model it sought to promote.

Based on these premises, the POOT proposed a series of principles that would govern the future tourism model of Menorca, halting its growth and becoming a turning point in the way the island had been urbanised to date, especially the coastline. First, it set forth sustainability criteria for future growth, prompted by the idea that the land had already reached its maximum carrying capacity and was running the risk of being irreversibly degraded. Therefore, counter to excessive growth, it sought to foster a different kind of land-use planning and a change in the typology that would guarantee higher quality. On Menorca, consolidated zones with a high degree of saturation (little vacant land with dire accessibility and congestion problems in the summer and in areas of significant environmental value) coexist with others with little development of the urban or buildable land, where tourism accommodations more coherent with the principles of the ITPM could be promoted.

Secondly, branching off from the first point, it defines 20 of what it calls "territorial reconversion areas" on the island, with two action strategies: increasing their permeability and changing their land use. The areas whose permeability was to be increased are located in spaces considered to have a high level of congestion, with the goal of increasing their supply of green zones and higher-quality facilities, or moving the buildable land and exchanging it for vacant plots of land. In contrast, the areas where the land use was changed are located in tourism areas that are not consolidated which have vacant lands that meet a series of environmental and landscape quality criteria. The objective in these areas is to encourage high-quality accommodations to be built there, along with facilities that will help counter the seasonality of tourism.

However, one of the problems in these Reconversion Areas is that they were left to be managed by the municipal plans, so in many cases the only result was that the land was declassified, while the projects that were to effectively develop them into other lands classified as buildable in the municipal plans were never drafted. In fact, the crisis that got underway in 2008 led these projects to stall and never be brought to fruition, even though the local administrations' responsibility should also be taken into account, as they were the entities that were supposed to have applied the provisions of the Insular Territorial Plan first.

The number of potential tourist places in the year when the plan was approved was double the number already built, a totally unsustainable figure; out of a potential 153,669 places in 2000, only 74,199 had been built (Estradé et al., 2009). The Plan lowered the number of places to be built in the next 10 years by almost 60,000 (Mata, 2006). Nonetheless, acquired rights and negotiation still left a considerable potential for growth in some coastal areas (e.g., Sant Tomàs, Torre Solí and Cales Coves) (Camps, 2008). This was possible through the declassification of buildable land without a definitively-approved partial plan, lands that had been inherited from a recent and more "development-friendly" past which were reclassified as rural land. In contrast, in other areas, plans that would change the land use or make the lands more permeable were drawn up and applied. Table 6 identifies the growth allowed by the ITPM by municipality, distinguishing between what had been provided for prior to the approval of the ITPM and the increase ultimately proposed, with a total decrease of more than 61,000 places.

Table 6. ITPM's proposal on the number of tourist places

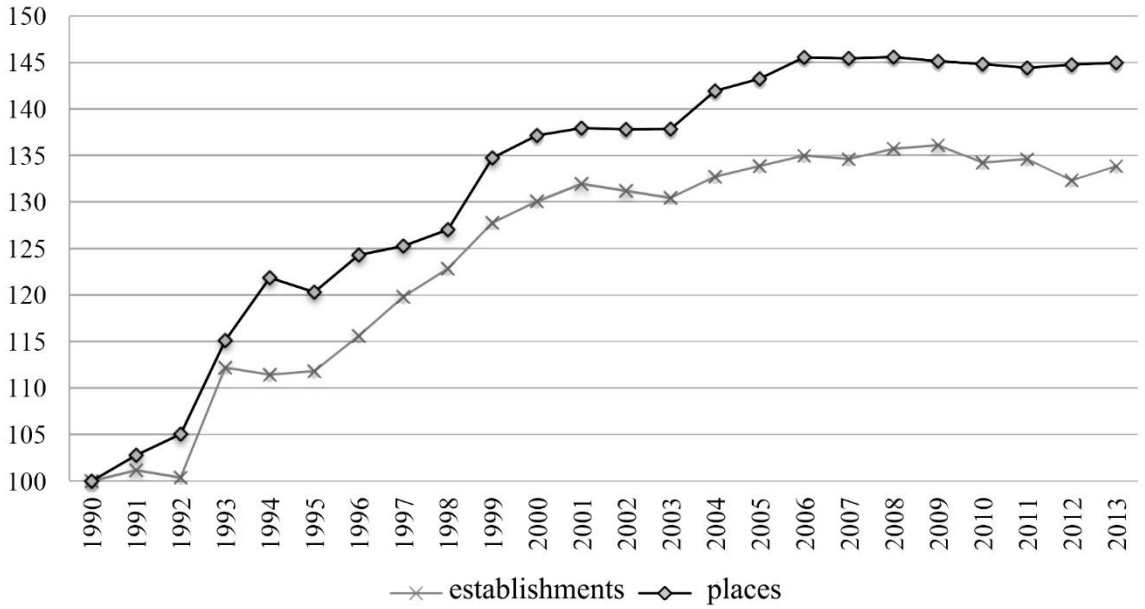
	Tourist zones			ITPM proposal		
	built	**vacant**	**total**	**vacant**	**total**	**difference**
Alaior	9,965	12,451	22,416	3,381	13,346	-9,070
es Castell	1,300	2,170	3,470	15	1,315	-2,155
Ciutadella	32,917	33,065	65,982	3,429	36,346	-29,636
Ferreries	1,479	124	1,603	124	1,603	0
Maó	1,652	1,686	3,338	493	2,145	-1,193
es Mercadal	11,381	23,382	34,763	6,814	18,195	-16,568
es Migjorn	3,502	1,164	4,666	345	3,847	-819
Sant Lluís	12,003	5,428	17,431	3,134	15,137	-2,294
Total	**74,199**	**79,470**	**153,669**	**17,735**	**91,934**	**-61,735**

Source: Ezquiaga Arquitectura, Sociedad y Territorio (2003)

Once the zones were determined, the types of growth had to been defined with the basic premises of avoiding overcrowding and attaining the maximum added value. Therefore, the decision was made to focus only just two types of buildings – hotels and single-family homes – each with specific characteristics. A maximum height of two storeys was defined for the hotels, with a cap of 450 places per hotel and a minimum category of four stars. Limits on growth were also placed at 600 places per year, divided among the eight municipalities. The new buildings had to house one family and have at most a ground floor and one upper storey, maximum development of 0.35 m2 and a cap of 1,052 new homes in the first two years that the Plan was in force (which was lowered to 858 after the third year). Additionally, there are other kinds of places which can be authorised and are not subjected to quotas: in rural areas – outside the traditional nuclei and urban estates for tourists – hotel enlargements in urban nuclei and tourist homes in addition to those that already exist (Rullán, 2007).

Figure 8 shows the evolution in the number of hotel places and rural establishments on Menorca; the effects of the ITPM can be seen by the fact that after 2003 the upswing plateaued and stands at approximately 49,000 places.

Figure 8. Evolution in tourism places and accommodations, 1990-2013 (index 100 = 1990)



Source: Authors based on data from IBESTAT (2013b)

4.2.3. Regulations of the natural and rural environment

Within the context of the determinations approved by the ITPM, a crucial step with regard to the natural and rural environment was taken, since until then it was rare for a land-use planning instrument to include the rural world as a prime consideration. As mentioned in Estradé et al. (2009), the ITPM diagnosed the limits of the Menorcan ecosystem with a study of its socioeconomic, environmental and cultural components, stressing three major themes: the cultural and natural heritage, the intense residential tourism development in the last boom, and the spread of urbanisation to rural land inland and on the coast.

The main purpose of this part of the document is to protect certain rural lands deemed to be of high ecological interest which are located near the Natural Areas of Special Interest (abbreviated ANEI) and the Parc de s'Albufera des Grau (the core[10] of the Biosphere Reserve). This was done by identifying and delimiting "Natural Areas of Regional Interest" which are defined by biophysical and territorial criteria. The outcome of this measure was a ban on new residential buildings on these lands. Thus, the delimitation of rural lands protected as ANEI and other spaces representing the island's ecological diversity was expanded and improved, shifting from isolated protected spaces to a connected network.

[10] The core of a biosphere reserve is the area made up of the ecosystems that are the best preserved and most representative. This area has a level of legal protection that only allows for activities that are compatible with the conservation of the landscape, the ecosystems and the species it harbours. Only activities related to research and traditional land uses that do not harm the environment are allowed.

5. The economic crisis and the real estate bubble

Without a doubt, the economic crisis that was triggered in 2008 has affected development patterns and the pace of change of Menorca's economy and society. One result is that the building sector has lost a great deal of sway as an economic engine and job-creator. At the same time, the housing market has also undergone major changes, and in addition to the impact of the ITPM, there was also a time of contraction stemming from the economic crisis, especially if we recall that it had been preceded by a period of steep growth in the housing stock.

Until 2006, real estate was a sector that showed steady growth, but one year later it began to be clear that the economic cycle had peaked. The sector entered a recessive curve which has not yet stopped, a trend which was manifested more intensely on Menorca than on the other islands. Within this context, the residential land category has been harmed the most, even though the non-residential real estate market has also suffered from the effects of the crisis, albeit not so strikingly. Thus, some determinations in the Insular Territorial Plan were halted, while it became more difficult for some of the population to access housing. Even though the Plan stipulated a percentage of newly-built homes which had to be set aside as publicly-subsidised housing, the crisis and the bursting of the real estate bubble meant that they were never built.

This shifting trend in the building and real estate sectors became clear with a couple of indicators, namely the evolution in housing starts and completions, and real-estate transactions. On Menorca, the number of housing starts has increased steadily since 2008, and precisely the previous year they reached a historical peak of 13,000; however, the total in 2011 was just over 2,000 homes (Ministry of Public Works, 2011). In terms of real-estate transactions, they also declined abruptly in recent years, as exemplified by two figures: first, there was a 70.7% drop in free housing transactions on Menorca in the period 2004-2011, and secondly, 2006 was the year with the most real-estate transactions (3,144) while only 921 were recorded in 2011 (Ministry of Public Works, 2011).

This crisis was not only evident in the building sector but also affected other areas. Worth noting is the demographic stagnation caused largely by the departure and non-arrival of immigrants, bearing in mind that the island offered good job prospects for labourers with a low educational level. Yet the crisis also led to a decrease in the number of incoming passengers, while also lowering the spending power of a large chunk of the population. From the standpoint of economic sectors, industry was also severely affected, while, as mentioned above, in agriculture – which often faces feasibility problems – an increasing number of crop and livestock farms were abandoned. Therefore, while the onset and development of tourism led to a change in Menorca's economic model and society, the current crisis once again triggered a shift in the development patterns in recent decades.

6. Conclusions: Where is the Menorca of the future heading?

The onset and growth of tourism brought radical changes to Menorca, as it did to many places. The first were profound territorial and landscape transformations; the island went from being an agricultural and partly industrial model to one based on (or perhaps

monopolised by?) services. Tourism also prompted social transformations in that the arrival of immigrant groups – for both work and tourism – altered the demographic structure and helped somewhat rejuvenate the population. Despite the indisputable positive impacts inherent to tourism, which it would be futile to deny, certain models implemented on an island lead to even direr problems than in other places precisely because islands can be considered closed ecosystems. One example is the impacts on the natural and rural environment due to a prolonged upsurge in construction. On Menorca, the approval of the LOT and the DOT should be seen as a turning point whose main objective was to contain and mitigate the negative impacts on the island. Of course, the 1993 Biosphere Reserve declaration had a great deal to do with essential issues like increased awareness of the need for a different land-occupation model. However, Menorca also experienced a wave of construction which spread across the island and called into question the importance of the values protected in that declaration, which are paradoxically part of the island's appeal.

The 2003 Insular Territorial Plan was characterised by its emphasis on sustainability and by being backed by broad consensus among the population and the public agents charged with safeguarding the land. At first, its approval meant establishing quotas or caps on urban growth, and Menorca thus began to have a legislative framework which determined how its land would be shaped in the short and middle term (it was approved for a 10-year period, after which it could be revised)[11]. On the other hand, the reality of the economic crisis and the virtual standstill in the entire construction sector contributed to curbing the dynamic that had begun the previous decade, especially in terms of the harmful effects of a specific urbanisation model on the landscape. Growth is still allowed, but now more rationally because it is redirected and limited. This means that on the Balearic Islands as a whole, the Insular Territorial Plan of Menorca is the plan that most clearly attempts to remedy the more negative trends in terms of the continuity of the expansionist urbanisation model if we compare it to the Insular Territorial Plans of Mallorca and Ibiza.

Currently, there is some debate around the ITPM and its repercussions on the island. While some prefer to reformulate it, bearing in mind that the patterns when it was written have changed, while others prefer to leave it the way it is, given the benefits it has brought since it was approved. At the same time, some sectors view the plan as a hurdle to greater economic development on the island, as opposed to those who argue that it has managed to maintain a space which is still appealing to many visitors yet where the local population can enjoy a high quality of life and wellbeing.

Times of crisis, like today, are ideal for considering different alternatives to situations that are clearly fraught, such as focusing on short-term policies that bring in revenues and create jobs even though they are detrimental to the recent strides made in terms of safeguarding the land, or alternatively, thinking directly about the middle- and long-term benefits and continuing with the guidelines of the ITPM as it was originally envisioned. Regardless, the Plan is still a sound reference document for rational territorial

[11] Despite the possibility of revising the ITPM 10 years after it was approved, it has not yet been done. However, the Menorcan public administrations have stated their desire to undertake it shortly, using the same technical and drafting team as the 2003 Plan. In this sense, a major debate has been launched on which points should be included or discarded: essentially whether urbanisation should be allowed to grow more or whether the regulations should be left the way they are now.

development and the maintenance of spaces and assets that contribute to making Menorca unique. It is important to recall that the growth levels stipulated in the plan have not been reached in the projections for either the tourist demand or residents. Yet the current crisis is the reason, not the Insular Territorial Plan.

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