Semiotic landscapes and discourses of protest in Barcelona: *Tourism Kills*

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[…] and so, I went on straight to Barcelona, the treasure-house of courtesy, haven of strangers, asylum of the poor, home of the valiant, champion of the wronged, pleasant exchange of firm friendships, and city unrivalled in site and beauty. And though the adventures that befell me there are not by any means matters of enjoyment, but rather of regret, I do not regret them, simply because I have seen it.
The Ingenious Nobleman Don Quixote of La Mancha. Cervantes. Chapter LXXII. Part II.1615

Abstract
This paper considers how the homogeneity of the capitalist narrative of "tourism is good for the economy," that has been sponsored and perpetuated by the official governmental institutions since the 1960's Francoism's *desarrollismo* period to present day, did not transfer its economic blessings to all social actors. On the contrary, it has generated social conflict, a border of self-interest between the institutional agencies and the local, which has elided possibilities of home-grown prosperity for the locals. The narrative of a homogeneous economic bonanza has created a fantasy that has irrevocably affected the city's authenticity as an urban space. It has also codified its struggle under *pintadas callejeras* (written graffiti): "Tourism Kills" written all over the city. This declaration of confrontation presents the citizens of Barcelona with a simple metaphor that represents global mass-tourism as the equivalent of the beginning of the end for the local way of life.
Key words: tourism, linguistic landscape, urban space, protest, discourse

1 Introduction

Cities are synergetic spaces that organically interact with the people that live in them, locals and strangers alike. And, as such these spaces condense and project their social, political, economic and cultural realities throughout time and space. The cities we reside in or visit are both a legacy from their past and the chronicler of their present struggles and challenges. And Barcelona, like any other city, is a great example of legacy and contemporaneous urban changes and developments. A great example of urban change and social mobilizations happened in 2014. This specific year is considered "the *Year 0* of recent mobilization and popular organization against the *turistification* of Barcelona" (Mansilla & Milano 2019: 19).[1] Certainly, social protests against tourism became visible and a deep feeling and social discontent was apparent. What is wrong with the blooming industry of tourism? Why is *tourismphobia* a new term and a rampant feeling in the city? Is the city overcrowded and victim of its own success? And, why is the narrative of

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[1] This is my own translation and summary of the Spanish text: "El puente de agosto del 2014 podría considerarse como el *Año 0* de la reciente movilización popular contra el fenómeno de la turistificación en Barcelona."

"tourism is good for the economy" not sufficient anymore? These questions about the impact of tourism in the city, data about visitors and current hotel constructions, and, therefore, its consequences for the locals, have become the social, political and economic spotlights of this time.

Social activism and neighborhood associations were taking central agency by reclaiming public spaces in the city and opposing a perceived social change triggered by the tourism industry. In this context of protesting social and economic change, this paper examines a recent time in history of the city (2014 -2018) when urban change and social protests collided because the narrative of tourism's public benefit was not a homogeneous reality of transparent trickle-down economies, but an elision in the discussion of consequences for the lack of local growth. This confrontation was articulated in street protests that condemned the economic inequality that satisfied only the financial sector and governmental bodies. The bubble of this inequity was viewed as a space of tension and confrontation that allowed for protests and negotiation strategies for challenging the prevalent socioeconomic identities and realities. In particular, I intend to examine how urban space in juxtaposition with tourism and urbanization during the years of recent local activism (2014-17) has codified its language of protest. This language testifies to a discourse of both struggle and intolerance that surrounds mass-tourism driven by capitalist gains and has significant consequences for local residents in the city of Barcelona.

The first decades of the new millennium have shaped a great number of movements calling for social change all over the world. Movements like *The Arab Spring*, *Occupy Movement*, *Tea Party*, *Black Lives Matter*, *All Lives Matter*, *Me Too*, *LGBTQ Social Movement*, *Farm-to-table*, *Indignados*, *Yellow Vest Movement*, *Anti-Tourism*, to name a few, have brought to the table the social issues of inequality and discrimination, which needed to be talked about and, in the last instance, resolved. Social theories frame these movements from discrete perspectives of functionalist, critical and symbolic interaction and they study forms of collective behavior, differentiating between types of social movements and crowd behavior. Lefebvre's works, written between the mid-sixties and the mid-eighties are also key to the study of socio-spatial theories. The methodology used in this paper consists of a critical analysis of the written language of protesting in the public space where graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* practices are used as a means of communicating and reproducing activism to construct a collective local ethos. Furthermore, this paper answers Martín-Rojo's (2014) call, in his seminal work, *Occupy: The Spatial Dynamics of Discourse in Global Protest Movements*, to review the available strategies in the study of social movements and communicative practices and departs from his approach to "analyze communication practices and their relationship to space" (2014: 586).

In the case of Barcelona, during this time of anti-tourism, the specific language of protest challenged the long-held beliefs of tourism's public benefits – an idea that was well-ingrained in the collective strategies of city development. This belief, once interpreted as part of a transparent and equal redistribution of wealth from the

gains generated by the tourism industry, had failed to benefit the way of life for a very large segment of the population working in the industry of tourism, while also having a disruptive impact on the locals' everyday practices.

1. How the legacies from the past set the fallacies of the present

A product of urban evolution – since its foundation more than 2000 years ago as a Roman city to the global city that it is today – Barcelona reveals its challenges, achievements, and historical set-backs in its streets and interconnected neighborhoods. As Antònia Casellas (2009: 829) points out "Barcelona's urban characteristics and its tourist assets are the result of a long and complex evolution." This evolution mirrors the growth and potential of the city as perceived by its inhabitants throughout history. This is why Barcelona is also a great example of how, using Jane Jacobs' (1961: 4) terminology, "the principles of planning and practices in rebuilding have worked to promote social and economic vitality in the city." Following the idea of economic vitality, Deyan Sudjic ventures a definition of a city from a lucrative point of view that helps framing this essay:

> In material terms, a city can be defined by how close together its people gather to live and work, by its system of government, by its transport infrastructure and by the functioning of its sewers. And, not least, by its economic potential. One definition of a city is that it is a wealth-creating machine that can, at minimum, make the poor not quite as poor as they were. (Deyan Sudjic 2017: 1)

Dudjic foregrounds here a key point: a city and its infrastructures embody the metaphor of a "wealth-creating machine" and its vast possibilities for development. And yet, while the idea of wealth-creating sets in motion neoliberal mechanisms that allocate funds and infrastructures to implement, build and grow the industry of tourism, it also creates a palpable economic growth inequality: On one side, workers' lack of control over their compensation and on the other, locals' realization of spatial inequalities. Locals are forced to share their public and private spaces with tourism while living expenses are becoming costlier. At this point, the city and its infrastructures embody the metaphor of "Tourism Kills." The anti-tourism movement takes over the streets of the city and uses them as a semiotic landscape. Language becomes a visual discourse to communicate how this unsustainable practice of tourism is shaping the urban reality. Graffiti/pintadas callejeras *Tourism kills* becomes thus the sentence that summarizes the interaction between social, spatial, and communicative practices during four years of anti-tourism struggle in Barcelona. This anti-tourism movement graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* was strategically placed all over the city, as a way of visualizing the struggle of the city. It was positioned at eye's level and intentionally designed to be spotted: black letters font color typography over a yellow background. At the same time, it was camera-ready in the world of selfies. This semiotic landscape is used as a practice that connects the idea of resisting/fighting as a form of social action. As Martin-Rojo (2014: 590) points out "[l]inguistic landscapes draw our attention

to the language used in signage and in public displays, and interactive processes as indicators of broader linguistic, ideologic and political trends."

1.1 Legacies from the past
The financial interest of industries, public institutions, governmental bodies and the Catalan upper-level bourgeoisie of 19th century understood how to use the city as a wealth-creating space. An example of this was the celebration of the World Fair (*Exposición Universal de Barcelona*) in 1888 and its second World Fair in 1929. These were international events of great political, economic and social prestige as well as opportunities to exhibit technological advances of the region's industries. World Fairs allowed the country hosting the event(s) to be globally known for their economic progress and suitability to attract investments and contribute to industrial progress.

   In this respect, some years later, the need for economic growth positioned itself as central argument in the Francoist ideology. During the 1950's the stagnant economy was threating the survival of the regime and thus needed to be revitalized. Therefore, as an effort to cement its continuation, the regime "opened up" its borders to pursue foreign alliances – like the establishment of USA military bases in Spain and the opening to international markets (The Madrid Agreements of 1953).

   Under the Francoist regime, Barcelona hosted in 1952 another mega-event, the International Eucharistic Congress. This event once again positioned Barcelona as a wealth-creating space as it was both a critical urban intervention and a touristic promotion of Barcelona under the authoritarian regime in need of economic stimulation. It was also conceived as helping to project an international image of normalcy within the Francoist regimen. Mansilla & Milano (2019: 33) point out that Barcelona was the protagonist during those years of great urban transformations, but also of the first expressions of an urban and social conflict that had not manifested itself with equal magnitude since the Republican period (1931-36) and the Civil War (1936-39). The authors also state that many of the city's neighborhood associations were created during these years, like the Federació d'Associasions de Veïns i Veïnes de Barcelona (FAVB) / Barcelona Neighbors Association. This association was characterized as the genuine local counterpart that articulated needs and hopes of the neighborhood's networks. For instance, their mobilization and protests resulted in the cancellation in 1973 of the so-called Plà de la Ribera, an attempt to transform a large part of the coastal neighborhoods of Barceloneta and Poblenou into a Barcelona *Copacabana*, a conjunction of highly speculative urban and real estate project and tourism and leisure development (Mansilla & Milano 2019: 33).

   Josep Maria Porcioles was the Francoist mayor of Barcelona from 1957 until 1973. His tenure is considered an example of fast economic and industrial growth of the city during Spain's *desarrollismo* years, a success framed under unplanned urban developments. His office sought to build a city model in his image and likeness. He resigned his post due to neighborhood protests over his long tenure of

speculation and corruption as mayor of the city. During this time (1950-60), tourism in Barcelona was non-existent but an idea from the past connecting tourism with culture reemerged.[2] As Mansilla & Milano (2019: 33) discuss this decade of tourism, they point out that the Barcelona Information Office started to promote visits to the Picasso Museum, the Art Museum of Catalonia, the City Museum and to Gaudí's works, although they still did not stand out significantly as patrimonial and tourist references of the city. Porcioles legacy, however, is still tangible in Barcelona and his decisions conditioned the present and future of the city. In an article published in the newspaper *La Vanguardia* reflecting on the legacy of Porcioles twenty-five years after his death posits that

> [h]e dreamed of a new Universal Exhibition in 1982 that would revolutionize the city and its urbanism again, but more hotels were needed in his project. Therefore, he offered extra authorization to build to the contractors who would build luxury hotels, which attracted hotel brands such as Sheraton and Hilton, although the *ad hoc* incentive soon derailed in court and the three ongoing projects had to be redirected. His megalomaniac 'Plan Barcelona 2000' also came from this objective and, as he defended in his memoirs, he presented the candidacy twice to host the Olympic Games in Barcelona. (Pauné 2018)[3]

The next mega-event that the city hosted was the Olympic Games event in 1992, organized under the tenure of Socialist politician Pasqual Maragall as Mayor of the city (1982-97). Mansilla & Milano, citing Manuel Vázquez Montalbán and Eduard Moreno, describe that neoliberalism was seen by Catalan politicians in the late eighties as the only system to build the New Barcelona:

> Socialist politicians commanded by Narcís Serra, who would later be Defense Minister of the Socialist Party (PSOE) government, in collaboration with former businessman and Francoist politician, Antoni Samaranch, at the time President of the Olympic Committee, started to promote and design what would become the biggest event held in the city for decades, the mega-event of the mega-events, the 1992 Olympic Games.[4] (Mansilla & Milano 2019: 37)

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[2] Creation in 1908 of the Societat d'Atracció de Forasters (SAF) / Society for the Attraction of Foreigners visitors by the City Hall of Barcelona. The Exposición Internacional / International Exhibit happened later in 1929 and consequently, a series of urban-planning and social conflicts followed (Milano 2019).

[3] This in my own translation of the Spanish text: "Soñaba con una nueva Exposición Universal en 1982 que volviera a revolucionar la ciudad y su urbanismo, pero echaba en falta más hoteles. Por ello, ofreció edificabilidad extra a quien construyera grandes hoteles, lo que atrajo a cadenas como Sheraton y Hilton, aunque el incentivo ad hoc descarriló pronto en los tribunales y los tres proyectos en marcha tuvieron que reconducirse. Su megalómano 'Plan Barcelona 2000' bebía también de esta aspiración y, según defendió en sus memorias, presentó candidatura en dos ocasiones para acoger unos Juegos Olímpicos."

[4] This is my own English translation of the Spanish text: "Los políticos socialistas comandados por Narcís Serra, posterior Ministro de Defensa del Gobierno del Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), en colaboración con el antiguo empresario y político franquista, Josep Antoni Samaranch, a la razón Presidente del Comité Olímpico Internacional (COI), comenzaron a promover y diseñar el que sería el mayor acontecimiento celebrado en la ciudad desde hacía décadas, el mega-evento de los mega-eventos, los Juegos Olímpicos (JJOO) de 1992."

As the authors note, in the context of creating the "Modelo Barcelona" / Model Barcelona, the celebration of the Olympic Games in 1992 was the urban development that definitely placed the city on the global radar. The celebration of the Olympic Games created an extraordinary opportunity to generate new economic revenues as well as reinvent the modern city. In the eyes of governmental institutions, Barcelona as a money-wealth machine was linking the promotion of tourism with democratic practices and the potential for a great economic growth. To that extent, hosting mega-events to attract businesses and tourism would imply a significant change in the urban planning and in the remodeling of the city. Barcelona took center-stage and experienced first-hand how the principles of planning and practices in rebuilding were a product of neoliberal investments aimed to position Barcelona as a modern and democratic global city. From that perspective, the city was able to engage in economic progress while improving its infrastructure, changing its urban landscape by impacting or demolishing neighborhoods, streets, and old infrastructures at the expense of its citizens. As López Ramón (2019: 86) states:

> After the entry of Spain into the European Economic Community in 1986, the general economic situation was good: the opening to foreign markets had led to the entry of important Arab and Japanese capital aimed at the real estate sector, and, on the other hand, the application of the European Community funds for the construction of infrastructures of all kinds, had meant the introduction of significant changes in the planning of the territory, particularly as a result of the great events of 1992 (the Universal Exhibition of Sevilla and the Olympic Games in Barcelona). In that context, the aftermath of urban speculation and political corruption were frequently manifested together.[5]

The global economic crisis of the early nineties was particularly difficult for Spain.[6] However, a series of neoliberal developmental land reforms[7] made available new land suitable for development in the real estate market while giving Spanish Autonomous Communities the opportunity to organize and build and manage what

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[5] This is my own translation of the Spanish text: "Tras el ingreso de España en la Comunidad Europea, la situación económica general era buena: la apertura a los mercados exteriores había conllevado la entrada de importantes capitales árabes y japoneses dirigidos al sector inmobiliario, y, por otra parte, la aplicación de los fondos comunitarios para la construcción de infraestructuras de todo tipo había supuesto la introducción de cambios significativos en la ordenación del territorio, particularmente a raíz de los grandes eventos de 1992 (la Exposición Universal de Sevilla y los Juegos Olímpicos de Barcelona). En ese contexto, terminaron por manifestarse frecuentemente unidas las lacras de la especulación turística y la corrupción política."

[6] In the context of having had a series of successful events (the celebration of the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the nomination of Madrid as the European City of Culture and the World Trade Fair of Sevilla in 1992), the economic crisis of 1993 was particularly severe, leading to a recession and 16-24% unemployment.

[7] The *Socialist Reform (La reforma socialista)* of 1990-92 on urbanization of territorial land; the *Supreme Court Ruling* 61/1997 (*Sentencia del Tribunal Supremo* 61/1997); and the 6/1998 *Law on the Appraisal and Categorization of Territorial Land*, (Ley 6/1998 sobre régimen del suelo y valoraciones), later promoted by the right-wing party *Partido Popular.*

they considered to be *developable land*. This meant that Communities had control and flexibility to use their land to build as they saw fit in their profitable urbanization plans.

The Land Acts and bylaws had significant consequences in transforming the city in the years that followed. According to the statistics listed on the *Barcelona Turisme* official website, the number of tourists staying in hotels was 8.8 million in 2019, compared to the 1.7 million that stayed in hotels in 1990 (Barcelona Turisme 2019). These numbers indicate that during the decade of the 1990s hotel accommodations multiplied by four, from just under 120 hotels in 1990 to 420 in 2014. Exponential growth in the tourism industry was possible thanks to Land Acts and Laws approved during this time, encouraging less oversight and more flexibility in the regulations to build hotels to accommodate an increasing tourism industry. Attracting visitors to the city was perceived by politicians and corporations alike as a way to invigorate local economies. Fletcher describes how this expansion of tourism without restrictions in the cities at a global scale has been dramatically maximized after the 2008 crisis:

> "… a crisis of overaccumulation at a great scale that needed a whole new set of 'fixations' from the tourist industry, among others, with the objective to maintain the global economy moving "as a *neoliberal zombie*" (Peck, 2010). The more than predictable result has generated the conjunction of tourism and urbanization (including the so-called 'residential tourism') that we are witnessing today. (Fletcher 2019: 11)[8]

Fletcher's comments resonate with implications we all are witnessing today; that is, the urban massification of popular cities as holiday destinations, such as Venice, Barcelona, Rome and Prague, has become an intrusive reality in recent years.

The tensions between neoliberal interests in participating in the *glocalizing* of the tourism industry and neighborhood assemblies and activist groups, protecting their local identity, have brought the notion that the city was catering to tastes and preferences of this 'residential tourism' into the public space. It became transparent for its residents that the urban environment was adapting to provide services to the tourist. For instance, there are more than 140 Mexican restaurants in the city, with 80 of them located around the city center (Las Ramblas, Gothic Quarter, and both Eixamples).[9] There is, however, no prominent Mexican diaspora that can account for this legacy and food heritage. Also, the iconic franchise of the Seattle-based coffee shop *Starbucks* has alone fifteen different coffee-shops in the city center. Considering that there is already a strong cultural identity built around *cafés*, the need of having *Starbucks* did not cater precisely to the locals' needs. Also, there are

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[8] This is my own translation of the text written originally in Spanish: "Una crisis de sobreacumulación a gran escala que ha necesitado un conjunto completamente nuevo de fijaciones de la industria turística, entre otros, con el objetivo de mantener la economía global en movimiento como un zombi neoliberal (Peck, 2010). El resultado más que predecible ha generado la conjunción del turismo y la urbanización (incluido el llamado 'turismo residencial') que estamos presenciando hoy."

[9] These are the names of popular central neighborhoods in Barcelona.

ten Offices of Tourism / *Oficina de Turisme*, owned by the City Hall of Barcelona, spread out throughout the core of the city center. All of them are promoting cultural visits and points of interest in the city and in the territory of Catalunya. Expressions of Catalan history (either monuments, museums or souvenirs) and culture expressed in cuisine (fashionable and organic restaurants, neighborhood open markets), clothing (merchandise promoting the soccer team of Barcelona), dancing (*sardanas*, as traditional Catalan dancing) are commodities sold as 'cultural escapes' because they promote tourism as cultural and visual entertainment. This offering of 'cultural escapes' by the Office of tourism to the global tourist perpetuates recreative cultural tourism. The marketing of cultural escapes is observable when visiting the Offices of Tourism: their walls are covered from top to bottom with well-known photographs of Barcelona and Catalan culture and history through time: from the Romanesque churches in the Pyrenees and Gaudí's embodiment of Modernism to the most recent architectural innovations.

When I take students to Barcelona for an intensive study-course during summers, they all seem to share the same experience of being taken aback for how familiar this 'other culture' appears. The city has undergone a process of transculturalism that has allowed the tourist to identify themselves in the other culture without experiencing boundaries. In other words, transculturalism applied to the tourism industry has helped transform the city to an experience of the global tourist. That is, the exotic localism has become a familiar landscape and a commonplace experience.

The anti-tourism movement, however, addressed the sense that the tourist's gaze and preferences were taking over, producing a homogenous cultural and urban environment. The demand for accommodations promoted platforms like Airbnb and HomeAway to attract natives to list their apartments for quick temporal and beneficial economic transactions. This has also contributed to an increase of residential tourism while raising rents. Growth in residential tourism is advantageous not only for the owner's apartment but for the Catalan Autonomous Government as well. The government collects taxes originating from license fees needed to legally register one's own apartment as *apartament turístic*. As a reference, in 2019 monthly payment for a touristic apartment was € 3.150, while the average monthly rent for a residential apartment was €1.005,8 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019).

Tourism was seen as a profitable enterprise; however, the notion that the city was *accommodating* tourism was also affecting its cultural identity. It became apparent that the city was adapting to the gaze of the global tourist. New fancy and expensive coffee shops, marketable 'exotic' restaurants and 'cultural escapes' were overcrowding the urban space, dispossessing the locals of their everyday urban environment. Food markets, such as "La Boqueria," in the middle of the Gothic Quarter became impenetrable, making it impossible for the locals to use them any longer. The movement of resistance, led by Arran – an independentist youth organization of the Països Catalans /Catalan Countries established in 2012 (Arran 2013) – was thus compelled to react, creating a performative protest:

Graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* "El turisme mata" (in Catalan), which became "Tourism kills."

1.2 The present

Barcelona hosts annually thirty million tourists. The city has seen their logistical management capacity surpass the growing number of visitors in the city according to an article published in the newspaper *La Vanguardia* in 2017. This article offers the perspective of the locals. The article implies that the problem with tourism is its bad management, but not so much the overtourism. It is important to point out the negative data this article reveals: 18% of the locals believe that there are excessive touristic accommodations; 13% would like to have less tourists visiting the city; and, 76,7% of the locals think that tourism results in price increases in the city (Doncell 2017). These numbers indicate the social problems that are at the core of the neighborhood mobilizations and protests (Doncell 2017). The intensification of urban tourism has immediately visible social consequences on the landscape of the city. For instance, in August 2014, local and international news outlets published pictures or showed the YouTube video of three Italian tourists walking naked for three hours in the streets of the Barceloneta neighborhood without anybody stopping or saying anything to them. The newspaper *El País* captured the locals' sentiment about this kind of tourism with a reference to *turismo de borrachera*, or "drunken tourism," using comments from one of the Barceloneta neighbors:

> Imagine yourself being in one-fourth of a house, with three children, unemployed, without money for vacations and having to endure the screams and the parties of the tourists in the apartment next door. It is unbearable." (Baquero 2014)[10]

This homegrown emotion of being overridden by tourists, in one's own urban space, produced a discourse of anti-tourism and resentment, which was locally framed in the convergence of overtourism, lack of governmental response, pervading economic crisis and elision of promised trickle-down benefits from the industry in the local social fabric.

Discomfort and resentment towards the social and environmental impact that the individual tourist as well as the industry generated in the environment of the city began to be tangible in the Catalan society through protestors' opening up urban spaces for debate, political action and change. This situation was acknowledged by Ada Coloau's administration when she became a mayor of the city in 2015. It was part of her civic platform agenda, referred to as "Barcelona en Comú." She advocated a sustainable tourism through regulation. An interview published by *el Público* (2017) mentions Colau's anti-gentrification strategy:

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[10] This is my own English translation of the Spanish text: Imagínese usted estar en un *quart* de casa, con tres críos, en el paro, sin dinero para las vacaciones y teniendo que soportar los gritos y la fiesta de los turistas en la finca de al lado. Es insoportable.

> Colau believes that Barcelona is 'a city of success,' but in her opinion, that cannot imply that the people of Barcelona have a harder time living in their city. People and neighborhoods are the soul of a city. That is why we have quadrupled the investment in housing policies and we are recovering more apartments from banking institutions than the *Generalitat* in all of Catalonia, but these measures do not give results from one day to another" (Público).[11]

Colau's words summarized the sentiment of discomfort in society. Obviously, tourism is an important service industry in the city's economy, but an equilibrium between localism and the influence of global tourism need be achieved, so that the well-being of the city in general can be preserved. The accomplishment of this goal was central to Colau's plan. Barcelona was the first city in the world to be awarded with the Biosphere certification from the Institute of Responsible Tourism (ITR) as a sustainable tourist destination in 2011. As explained on their website, "Barcelona City Council offers tour operators the opportunity to adhere to the Biosphere Barcelona Commitment. This is based on a handbook of best practices that includes the United Nations' seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" (Biosphere Commitment to Sustainable Tourism, 2019). In other words, if tourism is to have a positive impact on the city, adhering to the Biosphere Commitment is fundamental since it ensures a sustainable development going forward.

Foreign press critically took note of the situation as well. *The Guardian* published an article in August 2017 about the anti-tourism marches that were spreading that summer (2017) across southern Europe, citing Arran's comments to the BBC on the issue: "Today's model of tourism expels people from their neighborhoods and harms the environment" (Coldwell 2017).

In this socio-political context, Arran was central in stating this sentiment of local unrest that revolved around the idea "that the problems that tourists and tourism create in the city are due to the bad management of the autonomous government [of Catalunya] and the city council [of Barcelona]" (Arran, 2017).

This negative view towards the tourist/tourism was encapsulated by Arran in a narrative – *tourism kills* – that culminated not only in actions like the painting of street graffiti, geolinguistically occupying the city, but also this narrative-graffiti literally jumped from the building walls, neighborhood balconies or banners, to become action-performances in what are considered criminal acts by the law. For instance, some of these actions consisted of puncturing the wheels of city bicycles or vandalizing the iconic double-deck red "tourist bus/ el bus turistic." These actions metaphorically aimed to *kill* the icons most commonly used by and identified with the idea of tourism in the urban landscape.

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[11] This is my own English translation of the Spanish text: "En la entrevista, Colau también anuncia que el Ayuntamiento está preparando "una estrategia antigentrificación". Colau cree que Barcelona es "una ciudad de éxito", pero en su opinión, eso "no puede implicar que los barceloneses lo tengan más difícil para vivir en su ciudad". "La gente y los barrios son el alma de una ciudad. Por eso hemos cuadriplicado la inversión en políticas de vivienda y estamos recuperando más pisos de entidades bancarias que la Generalitat en toda Catalunya, pero esas medidas no dan resultados de un día a otro", concluye en la entrevista.

Figure 1. Personal photo taken by my student Marci Cole in Barcelona 2014. Used with permission.

2 The language of protest: Tourism Kills

"El turisme mata" and its English version "Tourism Kills" was an utterance written on the walls of buildings, seen on yellow stickers pasted throughout the city and written on banners during demonstrations. It went viral on the streets of Barcelona in the summers 2014-2017. As I discussed before, it also had national and international resonance. From this perspective and in the context of urban environment, a discourse of discomfort began to spread throughout the city streets.

   To begin with, it is important to contextualize this movement in terms of the law because graffiti is illegal in Spain. Moreover, it is considered an aggression against the state. Vilaseca (2012: 9) notes that: "In Spain, public space is treated as the property of the State as opposed to a communal space shared by everyone. City councils dictate, to an excessive degree, what activities can and cannot occur in public space." Graffiti is not an activity that can occur in the streets without a hefty penalty. The City-Hall of Barcelona controls its public space. Therefore, when Arran's street campaign *Tourism Kills* exposed the local predicament, not only was Arran creating awareness of the fact that the alleged social and economic benefits of the tourism industry were falling short of creating a universal social welfare for everyone working in that sector, but they were also performing an act of resistance against the state.

   A movement of resistance took form of street graffiti/ *pintadas callejeras* against the adverse impact of what was considered *bad management* of tourism and tourism overgrowth. These street graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* appeared in newspapers and social media, advocating and negotiating for a shared local ethos to reclaim their

own territory and its significance as local identities. It is important to discuss here that this anti-tourist sentiment in Barcelona differs from the rise of populism, fascism and the growing European nationalisms trying to reterritorialize a locus to reclaim its lost *mythos.* For example, contrary to populist movements against immigration and immigrants, this anti-tourism movement is not against refugees and immigration settling in Barcelona. Moreover, some of the graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* observed had made this point clear with banners on balconies declaring: *Refugees welcome* in opposition to *Tourist go home.*

Figure 2. Photo taken by my student Boshudha Khan in 2017. Used with permission.

The point of the protest is that tourism is an industry of transitory people: a constant flux of different nationalities staying in the city for a short period of time directly impacting the living standards of the locals, thus altering the social equilibrium between the tourists and the locals. This is why one of the slogans reproduced throughout the city was "Tourist go home."

Figure 3. Photo taken by my student Nicole Albornoz (2019). Used with permission.

Tourism Kills is an aggressive multimodal, visual and written, spatial discourse, effectively integrated into the horizontal dimension of the city. These street graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* successfully delivered a narrative that aligned local residents into reclaiming their rights in public spaces.

It activated direct participation of the protestors as citizens and formed local associations and platforms to give voice to their concerns and demand for changes. It was a political and ideological battle for retaking urban space. Using Lefebvre's ideas on capitalist space as "domination/ appropriation" (Lefebvre's 1991: 227), it can be argued that this discourse of graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* is understood as an emergent construction developing from a social practice that transforms a capitalist space (in this case, global tourism and overgrowth) into a local counter-space/border that claims its public and local character. Interestingly enough, these local graffiti-narratives achieved the status of global protests in activism movements as they created social awareness and were picked up by international media outlets. This is how a local movement ironically became global, altering the global and the local borders again as an unfolding activist movement in other cities experiencing similar symptoms of mass tourism.

In sum, capitalist gains of the mass-tourism were crossing borders into the local milieu by disturbing the societal equilibrium. When the tourism industry entered into the sphere of the local, tourism was acknowledged as an industry blurring the borders of an urban space that had to be shared between the global and the local in the name of economic growth. However, this did not happen. As a logical consequence, local residents felt pushed around by a type of tourism that was shrinking their urban shared spaces.

3 Building a community: Street graffiti and shared social ethos
In her well-known work, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, Jacobs writes that "streets provide the principal visual scene in cities" (Jacobs 1961: 493). And so, the streets in Barcelona provided the local residents with a border space to stage and voice disapproval and grievances while at the same time offering a global panorama of their protest.

The graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* seen on the walls, stickers, posters, t-shirts or banners were written in the local language, Catalan, as well as in Spanish and English, global languages. Many times, the message was bilingual, which helped to make the activist movement visible and intelligible to all, regardless of their backgrounds. They described the direct impact of tourism at the core of the problem: impact in the neighborhoods, destructive remodeling of residential apartments for touristic use, and overcrowded tourism.

Figure 4. Fora turistes dels nostres barris / No tourists in our   neighborhoods.[12] Photo taken by Caitlin Shannon. Used with permission.

Figure 5 and 6. The same space: Before and after. Photos taken by my student Nicole Albornoz (in the left picture) (2019). Used with permission.

[12] My own translation of the Catalan text.

Figure 7. Photo taken by Nicole Albornoz (2019); used with permission.


The messages seen in the graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* are surely shocking for the visitor because it is an unexpected and uninviting reality of their visit: "No tourists in our neighborhoods," "Tourist: Your Luxury Trip is my Daily Misery," "Tourism expels us from our neighborhoods," "Tourist, go home," "Fuck Tourism," "Barceloneta neighborhood is not for sale," "One more tourist apartment = One less family in the neighborhood." These messages describe the situation the local resident is facing: overcrowded public spaces, loss of purchasing power, rising housing prices and natives being expelled from their house of residence because they cannot afford to pay higher rents. While most of these messages target what is perceived at the center of the problem, the ones with the word "tourist" in singular make it a personal and confrontational issue. It speaks directly to the person reading the graffiti: *you, the tourist reading this, go home.* Ideologically framed in the separation between locals and tourists, it creates a divide that blames the tourist for being the problematic *Other*. This is relevant to mention because the tourist is the end product in the tourist industry, while the tour operators, global and local agencies are positioned at the core of the issue. It is also worth considering how traveling packages to Barcelona are sold to the consumer as a combination of culture and a partygoers' dream of sun and sex.

3.1 Social media: Instagram images (2017). This content was researched by my student Caitlin Shannon (Drew University).
Social movements and the media are a perfect combination for communicating ideas and engaging the community to ensure local support and get them involved, as the content below shows. These images were collected by my student Caitlin

Shannon (2017) at the moment when the issue of mass tourism reflected in graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* was explored and shared on social networks. The role of social media is relevant in the social movements because locals have an opportunity to become aware of the issue, react to what the graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* are saying and align (or not) themselves with the message conveyed. And, at the same time, those reactions help to make the sentiment viral by retweeting the message and alerting others. When users of Twitter and Instagram discuss these graffiti/*pintadas callejeras*, they are contextualizing the issue for the locals themselves in a way that is not visible in the city landscape, while also creating their own social ethos and solidarity by mobilizing others.

Figure 8 and 9. Stop Turisme Massiu! / Stop overtourism!
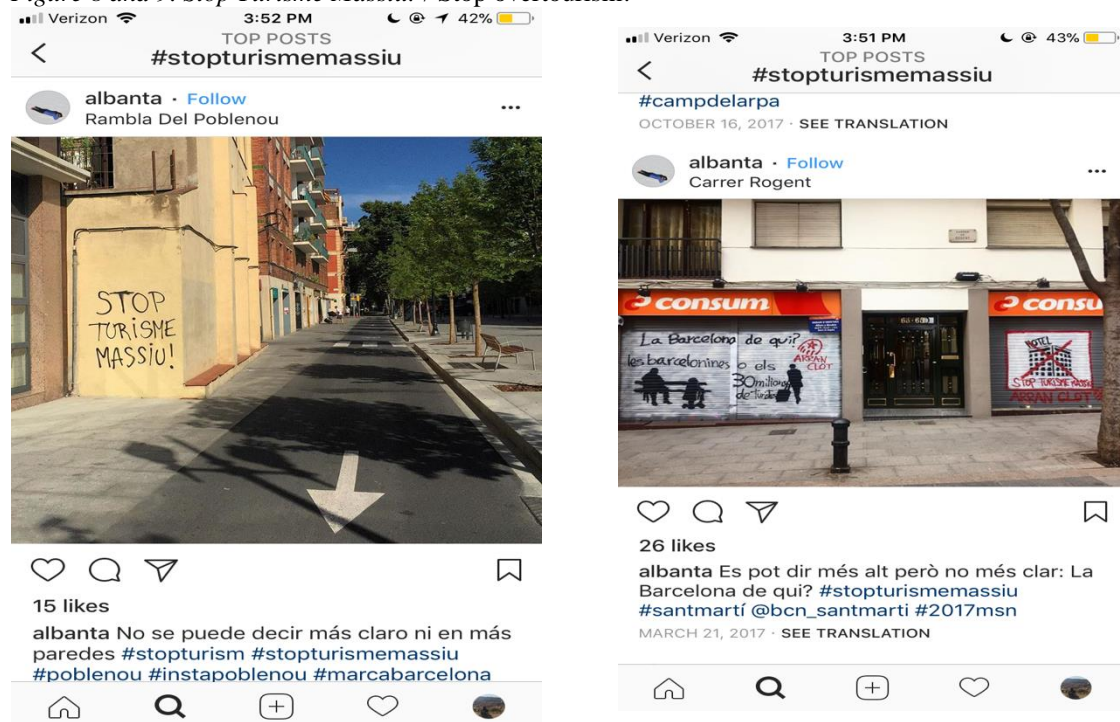
Figure 10, 11 and 12. More social media images of anti-tourism *pintadas* throughout the city.
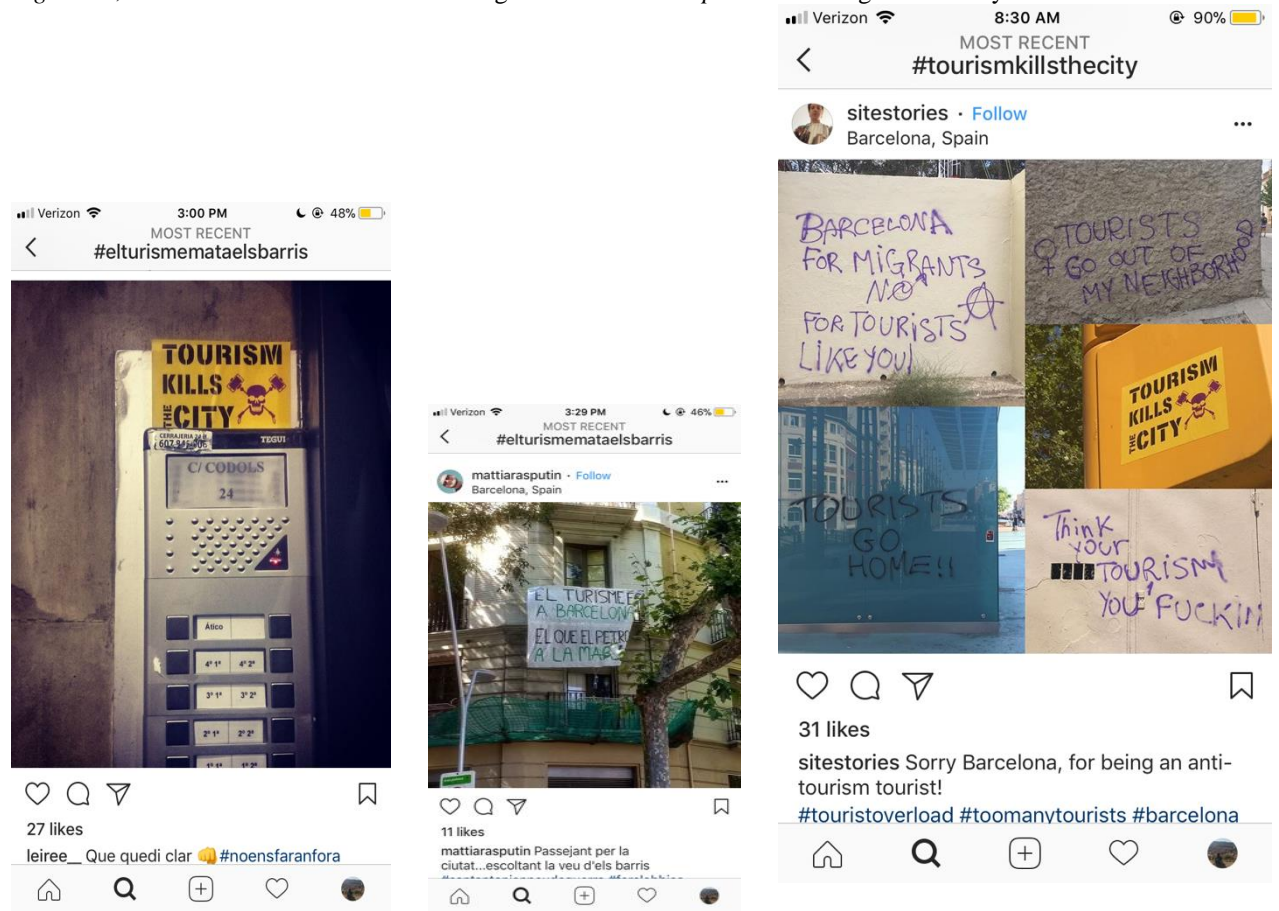
3.2 Contesting tourism in public and virtual spaces

The following four figures are personal photos taken by my student Caitlin Shannon for a research paper on graffiti in Barcelona in 2017. They are used with permission.

Figure 13. Cap pis turistic / No tourist apartments

Figure 14. Fora pisos turístics / No tourist apartments

Figures 15 and 16. El turisme mata els barris / Tourism kills neigborhoods.

The sign in yellow as well as the written graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* were disseminated all over the city, but heavily concentrated in areas frequently visited by tourists[13], amplifying a message of political and social discord in the local public sphere and was captured in the city's landscape as its main narrator. It became viral. It created an audience receptive to and persuaded by its message. This discourse of protest was vital in this awareness-rising movement within the community's neighborhoods. It basically encapsulated the discord in a metaphorical slogan: "tourism is deadly for the locals." The ideological slogan pointed to the inevitable shredding of the local fabric in the community, while also implying the need to reverse the unavoidable consequences for the locals.

At the same time, this discourse revealed an increasing commitment of the politically motivated youth sector (Arran) and its struggle to define the notions of social justice while subverting the official political discourse. This was happening in the context of an urban space overtaken by radical democratic practices, fundamental to the formation of both identity and community. Graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* successfully transformed urban touristic spaces into spaces of protest and activism.

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[13] A mapping of the graffiti collected in 2017 showed that it was heavily concentrated in the Gothic Quarter and Vila de Gràcia. These are among the most visited neighborhoods of the city.

The use of the public space to post a narrative of protest on a semi-permanent basis was useful to raise awareness by identifying issues and writing about them on the walls of the buildings, and could be considered as a democratic practice since everyone could post, see and read the graffiti. I argue that the group(s) or individuals involved in the creation of the graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* understood the city as a canvas for a "shared social ethos," or that, at least, this was an unintended consequence, because it provided cohesiveness to the activist movement. These tourism-built narratives in the form of graffiti and/or images persuaded the locals of having collective experiences worth sharing. The collective identity was the necessary context that allowed the activism to develop. A shared social-ethos building was key to engaging in a collaborative, popular media project about what it meant to talk about tourism and the tourist's perception with specific and critical discursive properties.

In this case, Tourism Kills */ El turisme mata* is an effective metaphor where *tourisme* equals death, which socially constructs the space of the protest and linguistically locates its content. This utterance constructed a number of interesting positioning within the communities that led to social debates and political discourses, confronting governmental sectors and activist groups in the public sphere. In a sense, the graffiti influenced the prevailing local opinion on the subject of tourism in the same way the society was influenced by the coverage of global tourism carried out by the media. From the perspective of a popular discourse, the issue of street graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* was also a common theme of everyday conversations and public forums, such as assemblies, magazines, newspapers or neighborhood events. As Martín-Rojo explains (2014:594) in her work *Taking Over the Square*, "[a]ssemblies became the new forum for making decisions, organizing actions and formulating demands." In this context, the phrase "tourism kills neighborhoods" was the trigger that summarized and interpreted the ideological discourse production of the collective thought. The massification of tourism, and its perception of the tourist, has become integrated in the socio-political fabric of Barcelona over the last six years. It was first constituted in popular assemblies and, later, also articulated in legislative projects aiming to curb tourism in the city (Plush 2017).

The naming of a sentiment and, in the case of Barcelona, the awareness of encroaching inequity between the local and the global industry of tourism resulted in the reclaiming of the urban space by the messages of protests conveyed on the yellow stickers and written graffiti. These communicative practices of protesting synthesized and integrated a message of denunciation in a horizontal dimension, thus becoming able to flatly occupy the city.

This understanding of a horizontal activism makes an important case in structuring the protest movements that chose *tourism kills the city* as their banner. The promotion of the sign through the visual landscape, combined with linguistic practices intended for a local and by extension global audience, resulted in the creation of a space that synthesized and integrated a vertical communal message of denunciation into a horizontal dimension, spread throughout the whole city. This

conceptualization of space as a social construction, establishes a participatory ethos structured by the place or community from which this communicative practice is formed. The message embedded in social debates and horizontally integrated in the spatial landscape makes a visual announcement that can expand into different neighborhoods, enabling its representation to be amplified multiple times.

I should also note that the city itself is the social construction of this shared ethos and, therefore, becomes the urban space of resistance – which is different from the creativity or viral characteristics of social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Graffiti art /*pintadas callejeras* brings awareness and completes the message of protesting through its visualization in 'real' urban spaces (vs. the virtual space of social media) where the message is communicated. Its urban spatial repetition also has a linguistic intentionality: different spaces of the city function as amplifiers denouncing the tourist/tourism through dissemination of the message multiple times in all the neighborhoods of the city. The processes, involved in the creation and promotion of the graffiti/*pintadas callejeras*, reveal the strategies of communicative and pragmatic intentionality as well as the need for the idea to fully consolidate the feeling of the community, including space as part of the message. This translates into dynamic and persuasive action that produces meaning and reshapes the city streets.

Similarly, within the field of Linguistics Landscapes, Urban Studies, Social Movements and Geosemiotics, other studies have focused on the crossroads of communicative practices and urban spaces. For instance, the work by García Agustín and Aguirre Díaz "Spatial Practices and Narratives: The GenkiDama for Education by Chilean Students" (2014) examines "how the uses of two spaces, the narrative and the enunciative, create an alternative way of interpreting (and participating in) the struggles between the Chilean students and the government" (2014: 733). Their work is also contextualized in the global-local dynamics. Aboelezz's article "The Geosemiotics of Tahrir Square: A Study of the Relationship between Discourse and Space" analyzes and situates "the discursive practices observed in the protest messages within wider Egyptian culture and society" (2014: 601). To that end, the author also uses concepts of urban space introduced by Lefebvre (1991). Likewise, Skórzyńska's work "Visual Subversion and the Resistance of Matter: The Political Ontology of a 'Disciplining City'" (2019) examines "the question of discipline, capturing the specificity of a local situation against a global history of urban modernization and emphasizing the uniqueness of modern local experience." Her work looks at the "process of the transformation of control instruments in a manner similar to Foucault's conceptualization, but instead focuses on the effects of this process" (Skórzyńska, 2019: 97). Research produced within these areas offers an understanding of the urban space as a living entity and the mechanisms used to communicate in such reality and landscape.

The analysis of these signs, graffiti/*pintadas callejeras*, banners and stickers, in the interrelated contexts of linguistic practice, space and society, offers a new way of understanding how the appropriation of the city or "re-territorialization" takes place. In the words of Martín-Rojo (2014: 588) there is an "appropriation or

reterritorialisation of core spaces in the city in order to reclaim an *agora*, a meeting point, a place for discussion and decision-making, for increasing participation and intervention in the governance of the community." Moreover, it can be argued that the objective of the "reterritorialization" of the urban space is to increase community participation in the social debate, facilitated also by the physicality of the city, which provides a horizontal landscape for the integration of an idea or demand in the collective consciousness.

The protest becomes a city-wide vindication because, in part, this signage takes the form of 'landmarks' embodied in bright and 'in-your-face' visual interrupters which cannot be unseen. These interrupters are eye-catchers that need be acknowledged and are impossible to ignore by the public gaze. The messages are interconnected and occupy the city through a linguistic and visual practice, reproducing the same graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* as landmarks of a protest, calling attention to the local reality they seek to convey. The communicative practice of graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* is successfully articulated against a constant flow of information: objects, images, people, media, assuming a different way of understanding the influx of ideas and covering the strength of the protest.

The urban public space was overtaken by democratic practices that promoted local discussions on tourism that was perceived to be socially inequitable. Following Martín-Rojo (2014), it can be argued that space is understood as a social construction and it is for this reason that the city is identified as the main context of a representational space that encodes the intentionality of the message. It is the physical and representational place invested with social power and communicative practice integrated horizontally: the whole city is involved and participates in this linguistic practice of open space that constitutes citizen mobilizations.

4 Participants and communities

The graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* managed to articulate a shared ethos: a common message of ideological principles that guided and united the protest within the communities. From this communicative-social perspective, citizens had gained agency by creating a series of assemblies, platforms, groups of neighbors that positioned its views in the debate. These assemblies allowed for citizen power to be reevaluated. For instance, Taula Veïnal d'Urbanisme de Barcelona has been an active forum since 2014. In this forum, when a neighborhood is facing new developments, their perspective on the changes and challenges that may affect them are taken into consideration. In their own words: "Given the situation of municipal political change and the re-thinking of the city model, from an urbanistic perspective, it is advisable to analyze where the development is located in the socio-political environment. This is a key point in understanding the city, its urban management and how it is distributed." (Federació D'Associacions de Veíns i Veínes de Barcelona, 2016).[14] It also promotes its view using a website *Marea Urbana*, twitter and Facebook.

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[14] "Davant la situació de canvi polític municipal i de re-pensament del model de ciutat, també des de la perspectiva urbanística, resulta convenient analitzar en quin punt de desenvolupament es troba

Another group, Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible (ABTS), active since 2015, encompasses and still gives voice to ten smaller neighborhood communities, associations or "col-lectius," each with their own website/blog where they promote their activism (ABTS, 2015). ABTS organizes workshops, puts forward proposals to restrain tourism and has also in the last years planned actions against the *BusTuristic*, an easily identifiable commodity of the tourism industry that resonates with local and global audiences. Additionally, they have organized gatherings and protests in the streets and engaged in an active discursive practice that visualizes the collective thought in a space of resistance (ABTS, 2015).

As space was being reconfigured to represent neighborhood identities, denouncing social-labor precariousness as evidence of changes that global capitalism was reproducing locally, indications of these inequities were being felt socially. The locals, in particular, experienced rent increases, forcing local displacement. At the same time, tensions between Arran and the City Hall were coming to a head on the issue of the impact of tourism on the local communities. In this context, Arran intensified their activism with an increased number of actions, referred to as "un gran ciclo de movilizaciones/ a great cycle of mobilizations" (González 2017).

The official government's discourse clashed with the actions/attacks directed by Arran, emphasizing the fact that the signage posting and the *Bus Turistic* incident (2017) were isolated events, while promoting the economic advantages that the tourism industry created or simply ignoring the fact that those actions reflected a general feeling of population's weariness and anxiety in relation to how tourism had impacted their lives. The previous newspaper article *Arran reivindica un ataque al bus turístic de Barcelona/ Arran claims an attack on the Bus Turístic of Barcelona* (July 30, 2017) by Germán González for *El Mundo* revealed the local actors (Arran Països Catalans) as responsible for protesting against "la situación turística/tourism situation" in Barcelona; that is, their activism had succeeded in reterritorializing the space for their protest. The City Hall and political parties were forced to take note of the issues facing the locals through the actions carried out by Arran.

Arran's official statement revindicated the need to visualize the conflict through their actions and to continue debating in the public sphere: "The visualization through controversy becomes necessary in order to raise these debates in the public sphere, and so they are unavoidable" (Arran 2017).[15] This activism practice differs from the traditional communicative practice of the graffiti in that it constitutes a mobility turn. The mobility turn can be considered as a turn that dislocates the communicative locus of the graffiti: between people and the fixed place (a street wall). And, in this case, the most important aspect is that it draws attention to the fact that the communicative practice of the message has been transformed, is not

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aquest àmbit socio-polític tan clau per entendre la ciutat, com es distribueix i la seva gestió urbana." The English translation of the text is my own.

[15] "les accions de visualització a través de la polèmica es fan necessàries per plantejar aquests debats dins l'esfera pública i de forma ineludible." This is my own translation of the Catalan text.

immutable and has assumed a different way of understanding the fluidity and spatiality of the ideas. Here, the communicative practice of the protest is now mapped onto a moving 'icon' that is symbolic of the invasive practice of tourism: the *Bus Turístic* that carries the visitors to their sightseeing destinations. This clearly indicates how an action of protest might develop into a 'mobile' idea of dissent.

The global press also wrote and commented on the uneasy situation between Barcelona, its visitors and the overwhelming problem tourism was creating for the city. In June 2017, *Bloomberg* printed an article about the city's relationship with tourism (Matlack 2015). Similarly, *Quartz's* article "Bye Bye Barcelona," in July 2015, was described the straining situation of the city in terms of how tourism had impacted locals' livelihood: "Overcrowding of treasured local spots, especially in scenic areas like the seaside neighborhood of La Barceloneta, have raised tensions between tourists and locals. Tourists flocking to the working-class neighborhood have been accused of corrupting local culture with excessive noise, vulgarity, and heavy drinking" (Sanchez Diez 2015). In the same way, the *WSJ*, in May of 2018, described the effects of overtourism globally, including Barcelona (Pannett 2018).

The urban space of the city revealed itself to be a social, participative and linguistically hybrid space for struggle. At the same time that the localized Catalan protest was assuming a global perspective and resonance in 2015, communicative practices changed to include both Spanish and English. To that end, eye-catching *pintadas*, such as, "Tourist go home," "BCN is not a theme park," "Tourist go home, refugees you are welcome" became visible.

The intentionality of these graffiti/*pintadas* messages was to amplify the protest by engaging global audiences. In particular, the receiver of those messages was the "consumer of tourism," understood as the capitalist mode of production in the public space. The sender – clearly the local people – was being affected by this mode of production and, aware of the problem, calling out for solutions. There was a great proliferation of graffiti, expressing the destructive consequences of using the city as a wealth-machine. The pictures below show the messages intended for the consumers of tourism:

Figure 17. "Be a good tourist. Give your seat on the bus. No photos. Respect the neighborhood. Respect the nature or go home. The massive tourism is destroying our community."

Figure 18. BCN no tourist. El Guinardó neighborhood -Barcelona July, 2018.

Figures 19 and 20. Living the Glocal: Left picture: Tourists waiting by the colorful Bus Touristic sign for the Bus in street l'Escorial #63. This is the stop to visit Gaudí's Modernist Park Güell. Right picture: Bus Turistic arriving at the stop in this same street. Photos are mine (2016) and were taken from the apartment's balcony located on the first floor of the apartment building. It is interesting to point out how the space between local living and tourism became, literally, up-close and personal. And, as a personal comment, these stops were noisy and crowded from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm daily. As of 2019, this particular bus stop, however, was no longer there.

Figure 21. +Barri, -Pisos Turístics / More Neighborhoods, less apartments for tourism. Banner found in the city Girona, June 2018.

Figure 22. El Guinardó neighborhood -Barcelona summer 2019.

5 Conclusion

Monolingual or bilingual banners welcoming tourists in different neighborhoods, using capital letters on a white canvas, or huge banners posted on the facades or written sentences on the walls, are all communicative practices in the urban space illustrating the discussion presented in this paper. Tourism was perceived as 'massive' and as such, it was a destabilizing force in the 'glocal' equilibrium of urban space. The banner above serves as an illustration of the community's resistance to globalizing forces I have discussed, of saving the local neighborhood against the threat of tourism as an industry that can devour the native way of living within the context of shared urban space. Community activism in Barcelona has brought together two positions into the main discourse. First, the use of graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* to deterritorialize the public space by committing an act of aggression against the state-controlled streets. However, graffiti had also reterritorialized the urban space by placing the writing in the streets; that is, the graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* have created a stronger sense of community by sharing a common social ethos. At the same time, they have also mobilized and engaged the entire city, using an aggressive and illegal method of communication.

Figure 23. Banner in Catalan "Turisme o Barri/ Tourism or Neighborhood" stating the local choices. Photo taken by my student Leticia Mercado (2019). Used with permission.

Second, the message of the local graffiti/*pintadas callejeras* has also succeeded in subverting the homogeneous narrative that 'tourism is good for the economy' in the context of urban change and social conflict, where sharing and social interaction had become problematic. The official narrative of tourism's blessings and far-reaching social benefits had, in fact, failed to incorporate multiple social segments; workers were left behind and positive public opinion was lacking, both of which are necessary cornerstones for a successful campaign. Activism thus carried out by neighborhood associations has reconciled what the industry of tourism had evaded: equal social development.

The unity in the message "Tourism Kills" allowed progressive neighborhood communities to share an ethos and develop plans to stop or slow down the pressing issue of overtourism, which had an immediate social impact. A number of the *Bus Turistic* stops in the vicinity of heavily crowded visiting places were removed from the route while City Mayor (2019) Ana Colau announced restrictions for licenses to build hotels in the city.

Arran's activism, in confronting the issue of mass tourism through the linguistic landscape of signages covering the streets and walls of Barcelona, was received as a call for social justice. It was the urgency that locals felt challenged a homogeneous and well-established narrative while offering a more sustainable relationship between tourism and the city.

Acknowledgements

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