UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Contesting Urban Tourism: Creative protest in Barcelona and Venice

Elisa Bruttomesso

Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università
degli Studi
di Verona

Sede Amministrativa: Università degli Studi di Padova

Universitat de Barcelona

Sede Cotutela: Universitat de Barcelona

CORSO DI DOTTORATO IN STUDI STORICI, GEOGRAFICI, ANTROPOLOGICI
Curriculum: Geografico
CICLO XXXII

DOCTORADO EN SOCIEDAD Y CULTURA
Curriculum: Antropología Social y Cultural

Contesting Urban Tourism: Creative protest in Barcelona and Venice

Coordinatrice del Corso: Ch.ma Prof.ssa Maria Cristina La Rocca
Supervisore: Ch.ma Prof.ssa Tania Rossetto

Coordinatrice del Corso: Ch.ma Prof.ssa Camila del Mármol Cartañá
Supervisore: Ch.mo Prof. Roger Sansi Roca
Supervisore: Ch.mo Prof. Manuel Delgado Ruíz

Dottoranda: Elisa Bruttomesso

A tutte le persone senza le quali questo lavoro non sarebbe stato possibile.

Alla professoressa Tania Rossetto, per il suo costante incoraggiamento e la sua preziosa professionalità.

Al professor Roger Sansi, confronto necessario in questo percorso.

Al professor Manuel Delgado, per alimentare e far confluire idee.

Table of contents

Illustrations

Figures

Maps

Tables

Riassunto

Negli ultimi anni si è assistito ad una crescente politicizzazione del turismo urbano. La critica all'industria turistica, entrata ormai nell'agenda delle azioni di diversi gruppi cittadini, si è dimostrata tanto articolata quanto diversificata. Spesso, molte di queste proteste condividono la proliferazione di tattiche creative che rendono evidente il rapporto tra mediazione simbolica e risignificazione dello spazio pubblico.

Attraverso un lavoro etnografico che si snoda tra i centri urbani di Barcellona e Venezia, la ricerca si inserisce all'interno di questa crescente dinamicità dell'attuale critica alla turistificazione della città ed analizza diverse forme di protesta che emergono direttamente da progetti dal basso ed aspirano ad un cambiamento socio-politico. L'obiettivo è quello di contribuire e problematizzare in maniera complessa il dibattito sulle forme contemporanee di rivendicazione all'interno della città turistica. Nel complesso, la tesi si presenta come un'incursione delle scienze sociali nel dibattito sull'*overtourism* con il proposito di integrare focus spaziali, culturali e riflessivi sia dei collettivi urbani, sia dello stesso ricercatore che si avvicina a queste pratiche.

Introducción

Donde lo personal y lo académico se cruzan

En 2012 me mudé por primera vez a Barcelona. Desde el primer momento en que empecé a mover mi pasos por el centro catalán percibí el solaparse de diferentes aspectos en una ciudad en constate fermento. En los primeros meses trabajé en una asociación para inmigrantes en el Raval, barrio en el distrito de Ciutat Vella, lleno de ofertas culturales según las primeras personas que conocí, peligroso en el cual mejor no ir según otras. La dualidad de estas visiones me dejaba bastante perpleja.

La asociación en la que trabajaba está ubicada en calle San Rafael, a medio camino entra la Rambla del Raval y Calle D'En Robadors. De un lado, un ancho paseo de un quilómetro, cuyo perímetro está adornado por arboles y todo tipo de terraza, donde uno puede sacarse una foto con el gigantesco gato hecho por Botero y al lado del cual se eleva un hotel de lujo; del otro, una calle deteriorada caracterizada por la presencia de prostitutas a cualquier hora del día. En ese momento tenía dificultades en comprender como estas dos calles tan diferentes pudiesen estar a tan poca lejanía.

Mientras registraba estas primeras sugestiones, a unas pocas semanas de mi llegada en abril 2012, una amiga me invitó a una manifestación dentro del barrio organizada por el colectivo de las *putas indignadas*[1]. Durante el recorrido de la protesta, una cancioncilla cuyas letras entonaban "en esta bonita ciudad, turistas, hoteles y demás son los reyes del lugar" llamó mi atención (Fig. 0.1).

---

[1] En 2012 se inauguró la Filmoteca de Catalunya. El edificio se encuentra justo detrás del hotel que da a la Rambla del Raval y en frente de la calle D'en Robadors. El edificio, identificado como parte del proceso de higienización del barrio, causó la movilización del colectivo de las prostitutas indignadas las cuales querían expresar su derecho a trabajar en la calle. Para más informaciones sobre la regeneración de este barrio, véase Fernandez, M. (2012) *Matar al Chino, Entre la revolución urbanística y el asedio urbano en el barrio del Raval de Barcelona*, Barcelona: Virus Editorial.
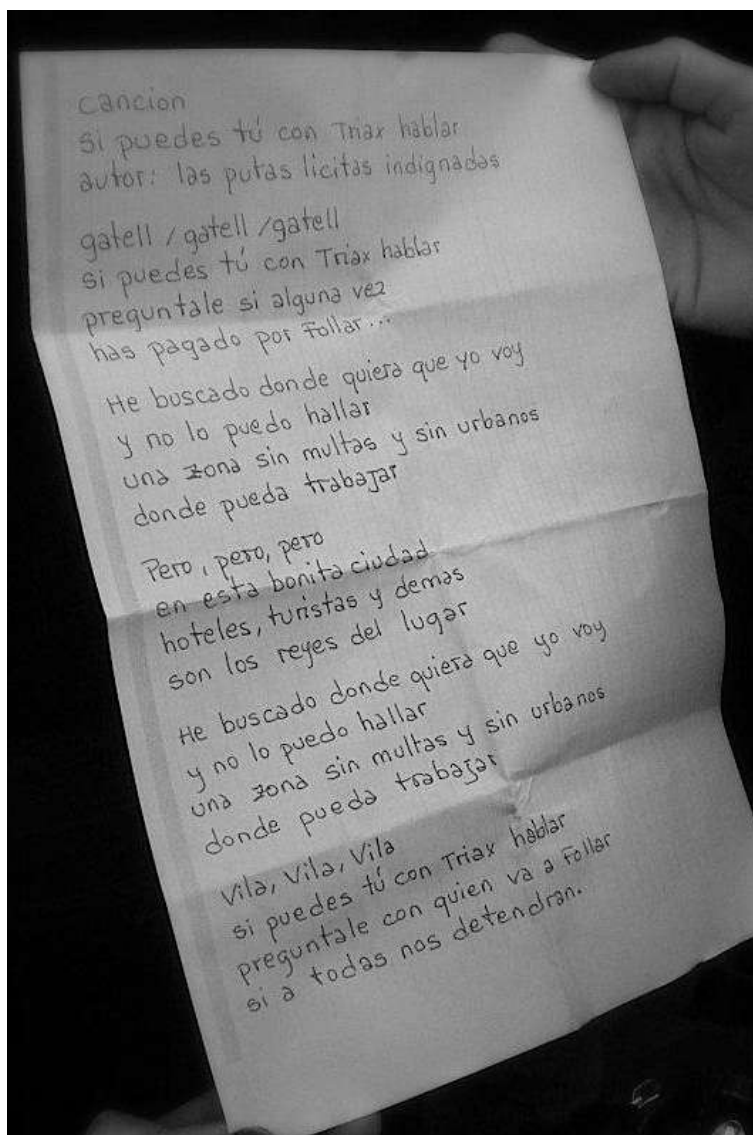
Figura 0.1 Letras de la canción entonada por el colectivo durante la manifestación del 26 de abril 2012. Foto hecha por el autor.

Según Hannerz (2001), la ciudad es el sitio de la serendipidad, donde el azar se multiplica como contrapunto a la necesidad y donde podemos encontrar lo que no estábamos buscando. De tal manera, si tuviera que mirar atrás y establecer el momento exacto en el cual empecé a tomar conciencia de las diferentes dinámicas de la ciudad, con muchas probabilidades sería este.

Desde entonces, simples investigaciones personales me llevaron a averiguar el porqué turistas y hoteles iban identificados como reyes de la ciudad. Dicho interés, en un segundo momento, motivó mis tesis de master, primero en desarrollo intercultural del

turismo y luego en antropología y etnología[2]. En el primer trabajo analicé según una perspectiva económico-geográfica las implicaciones sociales de los grandes eventos en Barcelona, mientras en el segundo profundicé la cuestión, aventurándome en las practicas de reivindicación del espacio publico por parte de un colectivo del casco antiguo de la ciudad.

Mientras tanto, durante esos años, iba difundiéndose en muchas ciudades de Europa cierto descontento hacia la excesiva presencia del turismo, como por ejemplo Berlín y Lisboa, donde síntomas de este malestar se manifestaban por las calles en múltiples formas advirtiendo '*Tourists go home*', '*Too much tourism kills the city*' and '*Terramotourism*[3]'. Además, fue justo en esos momentos, en el cual empezaba a participar en reuniones y charlas en diferentes asociaciones de barrio, que pude darme cuenta de cómo Venecia entrase – ya en esa época – en los discursos de algunos grupos barceloneses, los cuales mencionaban la ciudad lagunar como un *memento mori*, punto final sin vuelta atrás de unas estrategias de desarrollo turístico mal gestionadas. La misma alcaldesa Ada Colau, al comienzo de su mandato en 2015, apelando a un uso más sostenible de la ciudad proclamaba que la capital catalana no se convertiría en otra Venecia y que el turismo de masa puede llegar a matar una ciudad (Colau, 2015).

Afectada por estos estudios y observaciones, empecé a mirar con ojos diferentes los centros urbanos en los cuales estuve viviendo y, una vez instalada en Venecia a finales de 2015, ya noté como muchos patrones se iban reproduciendo. De manera más sencilla, estas críticas sobresalían evidentes en el *linguistic landscape* de las dos ciudades (Fig. 0.2), en las protestas organizadas en el centro histórico y en los discursos de colectivos urbanos que, en el caso veneciano, identificaban la capital catalana como ciudad activa en la lucha a la explotación turística, ejemplo del cual aprender para no morir de turismo.

---

[2] Los dos master son por la Universidad de Venecia Ca' Foscari.

[3] En Lisboa suelen verse folletos pegados a las paredes de los edificios en los cuales se comparan los efectos del terremoto de 1755 a los impactos negativos que el turismo esta habiendo hoy en día en el tejido urbano de laciudad.

Figura 0.2 Críticas al turismo en pop-art pegadas por las calles de Venecia (cerca de Plaza San Marco) y en Calle dels Escudellers, Barcelona. Fotos tomadas por el autor en 2014 y 2015.

Esta continua toma de conciencia se concretó unos años más tarde en la presente investigación doctoral. De hecho, si consideramos las comparaciones que ya estaban ocurriendo a nivel local y si pensamos en el turismo como un campo de negociación entre relaciones sociopolíticas, financieras y culturales de una globalización entendida como un proceso (Milano, 2016), desde el principio me pareció obligatoriamente útil abrirme a posibilidades que incluyeran diferentes realidades (Neveling y Wergin, 2009) en las cuales el monocultivo turístico estaba llegando (o ya había llegado) a su clímax.

Por un lado Venecia con unos 25 millones[4] de turistas por año, del otro Barcelona con casi 30 millones[5]. Sin embrago, si bien en muchos discursos institucionales y en los medios de comunicaciones se nota una fácil comparación entre las dos ciudades, dicha yuxtaposición no debería tomarse de manera tan acrítica. Venecia, muy a menudo considerada como una ciudad histórica, más bien es el centro histórico de una ciudad metropolitana mucho más compleja. Por lo tanto, por sus superficies, numero de habitantes y tipo de practicas turística que las caracterizan, consideré más oportuno salir de esta equiparación genérica y delimitar el campo de acción a dos porciones especificas: Venecia centro histórico formado por seis barrios[6] y Barcelona casco

---

[4] De estos 25 millones, 7,8 son turistas que pernoctan, mientras 18 millones son *day trippers* (Comune di Venezia, 2017).

[5] De los 30 millones de visitantes anuales, la mitad pernoctan, mientras que la otra mitad son excursionistas de un día, pasajeros de crucero, etc. . (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017).

[6] Cannaregio, Castello, Dorsoduro, Santa Croce, San Marco y San Polo.

antiguo compuesto por cuatro barrios[7]. En concreto y más en el detalle, el Ayuntamiento de Venecia cuenta con 260.000 habitantes, de los cuales menos de 55.000 viven en el centro histórico en un área de 7 quilómetros cuadrados[8]. Por lo que concierne el centro catalán, el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona cuenta 1.600.000 habitantes, de los cuales 102.000 viven en *Ciutat Vella*, cuya superficie es de 4,5 quilómetros cuadrados[9] (Mapas 0.1 y 0.2).

Mapa 0.1 Venezia Centro Storico. Cartografia de base Bing Aerial. Autor: Alberto Diantini.

---

[7] Barceloneta, Raval, Gótico y Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera.
[8] www.comune.venezia.it
[9] www.bcn.cat

Mapa 0.2 Barcelona, Ciutat Vella. Cartografía de base Bing Aerial. Autor: Alberto Diantini.

A pesar de algunas diferencias demográficas que ven Venecia en una perdida continua de sus residentes[10], mientras que en *Ciutat Vella* la población se mantiene estable ya que este barrio es meta de muchos extranjeros y casi la mitad de sus habitantes no son de España[11], es en estas zonas donde se concentra la ciudad histórica turística (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000). Además, no obstante en los últimos años la geografía de las estructuras receptivas haya subido profundos cambios debido al difundirse de plataformas de economía compartida como Airbnb, es en *Ciutat Vella* y en Venecia centro histórico donde se sitúan más alojamientos turísticos para recibir a los turistas durante sus visitas[12]. En concreto, en el centro catalán se cuentan 395 estructuras hoteleras con aproximadamente unas 25.000 plazas[13] y en el centro lagunar 406

---

[10] El ápice de habitantes en la ciudad lagunar fue en 1951 con 175.000 residentes.

[11] https://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/castella/dades/guiadt01/pob01/t18.htm

[12] El otro distrito con más oferta de alojamiento es El Eixample.
En el centro histórico de Venecia se encuentra 406 estructuras que ofrecen alojamiento turístico, por un total de casi 30.000 plazas (Comune di Venezia, 2017). El distrito de *Ciutat Vella* cuenta con 395 estructuras por un total de 25.000 plazas (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017).

[13] https://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/castella/dades/anuari/cap13/C1301040.htm

servicios hoteleros con casi 30.000 plazas[14]. Junto a eso, es precisamente en los centros históricos donde se concentran los monumentos, museos y atracciones junto a todo un corolario de servicios que complementan las visitas turísticas, como bares y restaurantes que van conformando nodos en la trama urbana[15]. Por lo tanto, aunque la siempre mayor fluidez entre viaje, tiempo libre y ocio haya ido desvaneciendo las barreras entre practicas propiamente turística y no turísticas, la presencia e implementación de este tipo de servicios han causado una evidente tercerización del espacio publico, hasta convertirlo en un espacio enclave, promovido por las administraciones locales y contestado por una parte de su población (Fig. 0.3 y 0.4).

Por estas razones, sin perder una visión de conjunto y de las especificidades que caracterizan los dos centro urbanos, consideré más apropiada una investigación que se moviese dentro de estos perímetros, en los cuales, hace ya años, se asiste a la movilización de diferentes colectivos.

---

14 https://www.comune.venezia.it/sites/comune.venezia.it/files/immagini/Turismo/ANNUARIO%202017%20Ver%202.8.1%20cover.pdf
15 En el caso de Barcelona encontramos también diferentes atracciones que se sitúan en manera más difusa por la ciudad. Sin embargo, se trata de monumentos destacados, mientras que el centro histórico tanto en Barcelona cuanto en Venecia representa en si mismo una atracción por su paisaje arquitectónico y su entrelazarse de callejuelas, parte fundamental de la experiencia que merecen el simple pasear.

Figura 0.3 Manifestación del 28 de enero 2017 durante la cual diferentes asociaciones de Barcelona han ocupado La Rambla bajo el lema Barcelona no está en venta.
Source: The Guardinan https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/29/barcelona-residents-protest-high-rents-fuelled-by-tourism Photo Credit: Luis Gene

Figura 0.4 Manifestación del 2 de Julio 2017 en Venecia bajo el lema Mi no vado via (Yo no me largo).
Source: The Guardian https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/aug/10/anti-tourism-marches-spread-across-europe-venice-barcelona Photo credits: Manuel Silvestri

Paralelamente a estas manifestaciones más clásicas, en los dos centros se han ido organizando también otras varias practicas de resistencia que no han llegado a las noticias internacionales y no han gozado de categorizaciones que forman parte de la oleada de protesta global (Matera, 2015), quizá por razones de escalas o marginalidad. Todas estas luchas, menos mediáticas, comparten muy a menudo la proliferación de tácticas creativas que ponen de relieve una mediación simbólica y una resignificación en un proceso de encuentro/choque de las *performances* (Bruner 2005; Edensor: 2000) que se generan en el espacio publico. Frente a un entorno cada vez más restringido, las intervenciones colectivas se han hecho tan articuladas cuanto diferentes, algunas más visible y otras relacionadas con micro-prácticas. Y aunque muchas de estas presenten elementos innovadores, arte y creatividad cierto no son una novedad dentro del activismo y movimientos sociales. De hecho, muchas formas creativas de protesta han sido perfeccionadas por precedentes movimientos locales y globales y siguen relevantes hoy en día. Así mismo, anteriores oleadas de protestas, como por ejemplo los colectivos de finales de los años 90 y 2000 (Graeber, 2002; Ramírez Blanco 2014; Serafini 2018) han sido objeto de un rico caudal de literatura académica sobre la creatividad de estas formas de acción. Sin embrago, aunque las conexiones entre arte, creatividad y movimientos sociales hayan sido documentadas de manera proficua en las ultimas décadas, sigue habiendo una brecha en los estudios que ven estos argumentos entrelazarse con estudios más propiamente turísticos. Por lo tanto, la presente investigación, sin solución de continuidad desde mis primeras experiencias en 2012, representa una ulterior profundización en los procesos que afectan Barcelona y Venecia y quiere contribuir de manera significativa al debate sobre las formas contemporáneas de reivindicación en la ciudad turística. De hecho, a pesar de que ya haya habido diferentes aportaciones sobre la turistificación de los contextos urbanos (Colomb y Novy, 2016; Sequera and Nofre, 2018a; Sequera and Nofre, 2018b), aún no han sido investigados los repertorios de acción de diferentes grupos. Pocas veces, hasta ahora, se ha incluido un análisis reflexivo y las contradicciones que surgen dentro de los estudios del turismo urbano. Por ello, desde un punto de vista teórico, lo que sigue quiere ser una incursión desde las ciencias sociales (Leite y Graburn, 2010; Neveling y Wergin, 2009) para integrar enfoques espaciales, comportamentales y reflexivos (Nepal, 2009) tanto de los colectivos cuanto del investigador que se acerca a estas practicas.

Objetivos de la investigación, metodología y estructura de la tesis

Si consideramos la experiencia turística como no estática ni homogénea, sino como parte de un fenómeno performativo entre lugares y personas, el objetivo de la presente investigación es poder adentrarme en la densa complejidad que la caracteriza para comprender los procesos sociales implicados en la producción del espacio, extendiendo el análisis más allá de los conflictos más propiamente mediáticos, hacia expresiones culturales en las cuales se aplica la creatividad, culturalmente situada y producida (De Certeau, 1984; Crouch, 2009). La dimensión de protesta se convierte en escenario privilegiado en el cual la creatividad vernácula (Edensor, 2010), excluida por la visión hegemónica, se manifiesta bajo diferentes formas a través de las cuales las personas pueden cuestionar particulares circunstancias, en este caso la "invasión" del turismo. Por lo tanto, en el trabajo desarrollado, se ha vuelto central el vocabulario de protesta y su expresión artística entendidos como procesos de ruptura dentro del discurso dominante y la ideología turística.

Desde el momento en que presenté esta propuesta de doctorado tenía claro que la selección de las creatividades sociales que servirían de casos de estudio, en las cuales experimentación y colaboraciones se mezclan, tenían que salirse de los ejemplos críticos más vinculados con el molde del "artivismo". La idea era de optar por casos de interrupción creativas generadas conjuntamente desde abajo para poder, de tal manera, ampliar la noción de arte con diferentes matices de diversidad y disidencia. Por lo tanto, ya que activismo artístico puede representar un término elusivo, utilizado para referirse tanto al trabajo de artistas que se movilizan para cambiar la sociedad cuanto a tácticas artísticas utilizadas por activistas fuera del sector cultural, he considerado eludir dicha ambigüedad optando por el término creativo. Aunque esta categorización pueda ser igualmente sujeta a malentendidos dentro del paradigma de la ciudad creativa (Laundry, 2000), como ya anticipado, dicho concepto hace referencia a practicas que utilizan una praxis inventiva (Edensor et al., 2010) para manifestar (y lograr) un cambio social y político, las cuales están directamente conectadas con colectivos urbanos.

El objetivo es poder contribuir a repensar en la relación entre pragmático y poético y documentar en que manera lo performativo se funde con lo político. Así mismo, verificar si estas diferentes formas de manifestar, en vez de quedarse en formas de

simple protestas reactivas, consiguen crear un entorno más proactivo que alimente el empoderamiento de los ciudadanos. Además, la curiosidad que movió este mapeo de acciones rizomaticas conectadas al turismo aspira en averiguar si estas prácticas pueden actuar y apostar por un cambio real.

A través de la metodología etnográfica, la presente investigación quiso adentrarse en 'maneras de hacer' y nuevas dinámicas de las acciones que miran a una critica y a propuestas alternativas al turismo masificado. Dicho propósito ha sido conseguido a través de un recorrido etnográfico caracterizado por muchas idas y vueltas. En concreto, a lo largo de los tres años académicos del doctorado, he estado 13 meses en Barcelona (febrero-julio 2017, enero-marzo y octubre-diciembre 2018, marzo 2019) y el restante periodo en Venecia. Estancias más largas han sido acompañadas por breves visitas en las cuales he intentado quedarme al día y mantener relaciones, lo cual fue posible gracias también a los social networks y lista de correos que permitieron una etnografía digital sin estar físicamente presente. Además, la contextualización de las practicas y de los grupos ha sido enriquecida por una investigación en los archivos y la consulta de prensa local. Este tipo de herramienta, imprescindible para poder tener una visón macroscópica de los procesos de turistificación, sirvió también para examinar inicialmente el fenómeno del turismo urbano con un enfoque sistémico, que pudiese primero deconstruir discursos y narraciones tan difundidos en los últimos años. Este asunto representa el tema del primer capítulo. De hecho, frente a la omnipresencia y a la gran difusión de términos como, por ejemplo, *overtourism*, sentí la necesidad de describir y recolocar las transformaciones fundamentales que han experimentado las dos ciudades a lo largo, no de las últimas décadas, sino del último siglo. Esta parte nos ayuda a entender en manera crítica el rol del turismo en las políticas urbanas, entendido ya a principio del XX siglo como elemento estratégico, hasta convertirse en fenómeno extractivo en el momento actual.

A continuación, en el segundo capítulo, me centraré en la presentación de la actual situación urbana en la cual asistimos a formas de politización desde abajo del turismo. Se trata inicialmente de una panorámica para introducir un nuevo sujeto político, la red SET (Sur de Europa Frente a la Turistificación), que se ha formado oficialmente en 2018, conjuntamente con mi trabajo de campo y a cuyas reuniones he podido tomar parte. En concreto, en diciembre 2017 participé a una reunión en Valencia, en abril

2018 en Venecia y en Octubre del mismo año en Nápoles, además de estar involucrada en una lista de correo que ha contribuido a la contextualización de los hechos.

Después de esta primera presentación, en la segunda parte de este capítulo continúo con la definición del marco teórico. Como anticipado, ya que la presente investigación pretende analizar diferentes formas de protesta creativa y frente a la creación de nuevas realidades y colectivos urbanos, resulta necesario examinar los enfoques que se han centrado en la comprensión de los movimientos sociales y las diferentes corrientes desarrolladas hasta ahora. Así mismo, para un mejor discernimiento de la parte etnográfica, he tomado en cuenta la relación entre estética y política, junto con la noción de practicas incorporadas y perfomance en relación a los movimientos sociales.

Los tres capítulos que siguen (3,4 y 5) presentan el trabajo de campo en el cual me centré en tres diferentes tipos de criticas, que se deben de entender como una espiral a doble sentido. Empiezo con el análisis de practicas de protesta que ven acciones diarias como merendar, cenar y quedar en la plaza cargarse de un fuerte sentido político para oponerse a la siempre mayor privatización del espacio publico. Sigue la presentación de dos casos de estudio en los cuales las canciones representan el medio a través del cual mover una critica a la venta de la ciudad. En este caso, junto con la metodología etnográfica clásica, he participado activamente a los eventos, actuando la que se define etnografía performativa. Eso garantizó una involucración mayor en el proceso de creación y una forma más directa de experimentar las acciones organizada por los grupos.

Por último, en el quinto capítulo, desarrollo una *practice-led research*, por medio de la cual pretendo cuestionar, desde un punto de vista auto-etnográfico y en colaboración con un fotógrafo barcelonés, las practicas normalizadas dentro de la ciudad turística. En este modo los capítulos etnográficos se desarrollan en dos nivel: de un lado practicas actuadas, performadas y experimentadas van acompañadas por una evolución cada vez mayor de mi comprometimiento. Asimismo, este progreso será abordado en el capítulo 6, en el cual reflexiones (auto)etnográficas intentan dar pleno sentido a los casos específicos presentados en los capítulos precedentes y al rol del investigador dentro del actual movilización en la ciudad turística.

Objetivo final es dar más espacio a la comprensión de cómo los grupos se construyen y como el entorno sea contestado y mediado a nivel practico-narrativo y como realidades

socio-materiales y practicas incorporadas vayan creando "nuevos espacios de resistencia" (Routledge and Cumber, 2009) en un contexto donde no hay un orden social sino infinitos tentativos de cambiarlo y de renegociar la realidad.

Bibliografía

Ashworth, G., J. and Tunbridge, J., E. (2000) *The Tourist-Historic City*, New York: Routledge.

Ajuntament de Barcelona (2017)

https://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/castella/dades/anuari/cap13/C1301040.htm

Bruner, E. (2005) *Culture on Tour. Ethnographies of Travel*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Colau, A. (2015) Mass tourism can kill a city – just ask Barcelona's residents, *The Guardian*, 2 September. Online. Available at:

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/02/mass-tourism-kill-city-barcelona.

Comune di Venezia (2017)

https://www.comune.venezia.it/sites/comune.venezia.it/files/immagini/Turismo/ANNUARIO%202017%20Ver%202.8.1%20cover.pdf

Crouch D. (2009) The Diverse Dynamics of Cultural Studies and Tourism, in Jamal T., Robinson M. (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Tourism Studies*, London: Sage pp. 82-97

De Certeau M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dovey, K. (2010) *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power*, London; New York: Routledge.

Edensor, T. (2000) Staging tourism: tourists as performers, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2): 322-344.

Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S. and Rantisi, N. (2010) *Spaces of vernacular creativity: rethinking the cultural economy,* London: Routledge.

Franklin, A. (2003) The tourist syndrome An interview with Zygmunt Bauman, *Tourist Studies* 3(2) 205-217.

Graeber, D. (2002) The New Anarchists, *New Left Review* 13: 61-73.

Hannerz, U. (2001) *Esplorare la città. Antropologia della vita urbana*, Milano: Il Mulino.

Marcus, G. E. (2001) Etnografía en/del sistema mundo. El surgimiento de la etnografía multilocal, *Alteridades* 11(22): 111-127.

Matera., V. (2015) Leggere la protesta. Per un'antropologia dei movimenti socialiin,

Archivio Antropologico Mediterraneo 17(1): 5-12.

Milano, C. (2016) Una generación de turismofobicos
http://www.nuevatribuna.es/articulo/espana/generacion- /20161215122111134780.html

Nepal, S., K. (2009) Tourism Geographies: A Review of Trends, Challenges, and Opportinities, in Jamal T., Robinson M. (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Tourism Studies*, London: Sage, pp 130-145.

Dovey, K. (2010) *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power*, London; New York: Routledge

Neveling, P. and Wergin, C. (2009) Projects of scale-making: new perspectives for the anthropology of tourism, *Etnográfica* 13 (2): 315-342.

Ramírez-Blanco, J. (2014) *Utopías Artisticas de Revuelta*, Madrid: Cátedra.

Routledge, P. and Cumber, A. (2009) *Global Justice Network: Geographies of Transnational Solidarity*, Manchester: Mancherster University Press.

Serafini, P. (2018) *Performance Action, The politics of Art Activism*, New York: Routledge.

Sequera, J. and Nofre, J. (2018a) Debates Shaken, not stirred. New debates on touristification and the limits of gentrification, *City* available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2018.1548819

Sequera, J. and Nofre, J. (2018b) Urban activism and touristification in Southern Europe. Barcelona, Madrid and Lisbon, in Ibrahim, J. and Roberts, J., M. (eds) *Contemporary Left-Wing Activism Vol. 2. Democracy, Participation and Dissent in a Global Context*, London: Routledge.

Turner V. (1974), Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press

1. Coming to terms with overtourism. An historical journey through the strategic use of tourism in the cities of Barcelona and Venice

1.1 Framing the (seemingly) emergent debate on overtourism

This chapter aims to establish the historical context within which the ethnographic research is situated. What follows is a dialogue between the present debates on urban tourism as a powerful force of urban change and its diachronic development over the last century. In order to do so, I thought it was important to provide some critical reflections on the nature of tourism by analysing a widely spread term that has become mainstream nowadays, i.e. overtourism. In fact, in the last couple of years, the just mentioned term has come to the forefront as one of the most discussed topics in regards to tourism in mass media and, increasingly, scientific journals. Subsequently, its rapid deployment has shed light to some debates. By first deconstructing the popularity of this term, I will then go through some main processes that have characterised the construction of the tourist cities under consideration in this study. Such trajectory is functional to understand the progress of tourism within urban development. Moreover, it will help in situating properly the understanding of the present anti-tourism wave and the specific case studies presented in the next sections. Therefore, this chapter unfolds starting from some theoretical notes, going through empirical evidences of the historical development of Barcelona and Venice, and concluding with some broader theoretical remarks on the role tourism has played on economic and social change within the city.

Nowadays, the tourist development ideology is accused of unbalancing the different urban functions a city should have. Overtourism is presented as a new construct to look at potential threats to popular destinations that are going through some negative consequences if the tourist dynamics are not well-managed. Milano, Cheer and Novelli (2018), in the article *Overtourism: a growing global problem*, define it as the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have enforced permanent changes to their lifestyles, access to amenities and general well-being. The claim is that overtourism is harming the landscape, damaging beaches, putting infrastructure under

enormous strain, and pricing residents out of the property market. Although the term was largely non-existent before 2017, we can say that a similar concept was launched by Becker's book in 2013 *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism* in which the author uncovers how leisure has become an enormous enterprise with profound impact on countries, the environment, and cultural heritage. Since then, the use of the term spread like wildfire. In the last two years, four Special Issues of academic journals on the topic have come out: The Future of City Tourism in *Tourism Futures* in which the issues of overtourism and city pressures are developed (2017); Overtourism and Tourismphobia: A journey through four decades of tourism development, planning and local concerns in *Tourism Planning and Development* (call published in 2017, forthcoming publication in 2019); Urban Planning and Tourism in European Cities: Overtourism, Placemaking and Heritage in *Tourism Geographies* (Vol. 20, No. 3, July 2018); Overtourism, Challenges and Constraints for Tourism Destinations in *Sustainability* (deadline call for papers on February 2019).

Certainly, all this attention has been influenced by some protest actions, spread by the media, against the touristification of several European cities and it has led the Conference on Responsible Tourism to organise, in 2017, its 13th edition on *Tackling Overtourism – Local Responses* in Reykjavik, Iceland. The meeting was sponsored by the City Council of the Icelandic capital, the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, the Icelandic Tourist Board and the University of Iceland. Significantly, it saw the participation of the director of the Strategic Tourist Plan (*Plan Estratégico de Turismo*) of Barcelona 2016-2020. This issue also led the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to publish, in September 2018, a book entitled '*Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions, Executive Summary*, whose purpose is to understand and design sustainable tourist policies so to avoid the local discontent in urban destinations. In October 2018, the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) commissioned a study entitled *Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses* (Peeters et al., 2018). Hence, whether it is from a management perspective or a cultural one, several conferences have been organized. Eurac Research [16] organized "Overtourism – International Conference" in March 2018 to which speakers from Barcelona, Venice,

---

[16] A private research centre whose headquarter is in Bolzen, South Tyrol.

Dubrovnik took part. The last one, instead, is a call for paper on "Cultural Responses to Overtourism in Europe" that took place at the University of Exeter in June 2019, whose aim is to look at the literary, cinematic and artistic responses to this topic. Moreover, The Telegraph proposed overtourism as the word of 2018 (Dickinson, 2018). Its popularity has also been reflected in the film *Crowded Out: The Story of Overtourism* (2018), written and produced by the travel company Responsible Travel, whose attempt is to be the first of its kind to document, from the perspective of local people, popular holidays destinations, such as Venice and Barcelona, that are overrun by tourists.

All of that would therefore suggest that overtourism has become commonplace, very profitable and trademarked inside and outside the academia. However, the term is similar in its representation of the issue compared to earlier conceptualizations and, on the whole, such use is neither a new nor recent phenomenon (Capocchi et al., 2019). Rather, it simply refers, by using a new linguistic form, to the old problem of managing the negative impact of tourism. Dredge (2017) defines overtourism as "old wine in new bottles". According to the author, the term itself is still not well conceptualized and she wonders whether coining the term simply means resetting the clock on already well-known debates. In fact, it refers to a variety of well-established factors, such as the loss of sense of belonging, diminishment of sense of place, increased congestion and privatisation of public spaces, the rapid growth in numbers of seasonal and day visitors, the associated decline in purchasing power parity of local residents vs. visitors, the dismantling of socio-cultural connectivity (Milano, 2017) and the mainstreaming of special and niche tourism practices in vulnerable places (national parks, small islands and critical cultural heritage places). Moreover, it is worth noting that, ever since the publication of the Report on the Limits to Growth by the Club of Rome in 1972, a debate on growth and unlimited resource consumption has begun. Although the term overtourism seems an urgent concern, it has to be said that it is simply referring to already recognised issues, such as the prioritisation of pro-growth economic objectives in the political agendas, profit maximisation strategies which were perceived, then as it is now, as exploitative and unsatisfactorily linked to local urban development. This is also evident from reviewing the publications between 1975 and 1979 in *Annals of Tourism Research* in which adverse impacts, costs and socio-cultural effects are exposed (McKercher and Prideaux, 2014). In those years, in the just mentioned

Scientific Journal, Harriman (1974) suggested the idea of tourism as a form of neo-colonialism; Wenkman (1975) gave evidence of the adverse impacts of tourism; while the UNESCO (1976) published a literature review on the negative social consequences of tourism (McKercher and Prideaux, 2014). Other authors (Farrell, 1979; Jafari, 1974; Rodenburg, 1980) documented adverse host-guest interactions, the criticisms of large-scale tourism and highlighted the costs of this sector.

A common feature of these early works was that an improper development of tourism was undermining the local environment. During the 1980s, debates concerning the carrying capacity of a destination brought the discussion forward. The purpose was to find the limit with regards to the number of tourists without causing serious negative repercussions, which could be higher or lower depending on the physical characteristics of the city and residents' attitude (Koens et al., 2018; Van der Borg et al., 1996).

In regards to Venice, in 1988, two economists, Van der Borg and Costa, established four indicators to calculate the threshold above which the city would have suffered. The first limit is a physical one, i.e. the maximum number of visitors the city can absorb in its public space. It is the maximum number that can fit on the site at any given time and still allow people to be able to move. The second limit is a social limit, with which the maximum quantity of visitors tolerated by residents is fixed. The third limit concerns the economic dimension and defines the level of acceptable change within the local economy of a tourist destination: it is the extent to which a tourist destination is able to accommodate tourist functions without the loss of local activities. The four and last one is a biophysical limit and deals with the extent to which the natural environment is able to tolerate interference from tourists.

In the case in question of the historic centre of Venice, the two economists stated 7,5 million tourist annual presence, with an average of 20.750 per day. Subsequently, a couple of years later, Costa with the collaboration of Canestrelli (1991) elaborated an easier model to establish the carrying capacity of the Lagoon city, reducing to two the reference indexes: the physical and the socio-economical one. This estimate deviated slightly to the one elaborated a few years earlier and gave as total amount 22.400 visitors per day.

As explained, this number was the result of different indicators and represented the optimal situation, which, in a sense, has always been a utopian one. In fact, already two

years before the study of Costa and Van der Borg, the tourist number in the city had reached larger sum than the ones proposed by the two economists and the fluxes have kept on growing over the years. Nonetheless, in 2018, the European project Alter Eco on the sustainability of tourism in city centres commissioned the updating of the carrying capacity of the Venetian centre and the threshold has been raised to 52.000 visitors per day and 19 millions per year. Despite the loss of residents and the impossibility of expanding its urban driving (physical indicator), the study took into account the improvement of the means of transport and the hotel accommodations, which have grown in number over the years. Subsequently, the study updated the number of tourists that the city can absorb without considering the social tensions that are taking place. Hence, as it can been seen, there is no fixed and clearly defined way of approaching the problem of managing capacity, since it is highly dynamic.

Despite this and although the limited effectiveness and the difficulties in applying the carrying capacity concept to local human population, the assessment and maintenance of the crowd at the destination seems to be still considered as a major indicator for sustainable tourism within the actual debate on overtourism (Lee and Hsieh, 2016). The concept has continued to be a popular one within tourist economy, but the usefulness of this perspective as a way of formulating problem definitions and management actions in relation to the social and biophysical aspects of tourism has been questioned (McCool and Lime, 2001). The main criticism is its focus on numbers and its lack of effective operation. So, if on the one hand the debates surrounding overtourism and carrying capacity have helped to draw attention to the uncontrolled and ever-increasing growth of tourism industry, on the other, as the case of Venice emphasises, the idea of limit is shown – again – to be an economical and political construction.

As some authors are questioning, in an effort to overcome the carrying capacity approach, the present academic and political strands should take advantage of this neologism so to place into the agenda some other complementary issues that need to be analysed in depth. In the article O*vertourism: un concepte en construcció* (Overtourism: a concept under construction, 2018), Cañada first asks why the present debate pays so much attention to what is happening in some European cities, while massification and standartization processes have been taking place also in other contexts, and for several years now (which also points out an Eurocentric vision). Secondly, he wonders, in order

to add more value to the term under consideration, if it would be better to identify the agents and those responsible for the events we are facing, as well as the perspectives of residents rather than relying on visitor numbers. Likewise, Koens, Potsma and Papp (2018), highlight that this term is being used as a vehicle for recycling existing issues, as well to overshadow agency and responsibility. Such weaknesses are still mostly lacking in the present discussion on overtourism and this may have led to what Koens et al. describe as 'overtourism myths'. These myths may well have worked as a focal point to increase awareness, set up alliances and spread the concept of overtourism, but moving forward, they can also popularize falsehoods and hinder further understanding (Koens et al., 2018). Hence, under the stimulation of the popularity of the term, the present time represents a good opportunity to advance analytical frameworks and process-oriented research, connected to earlier work and the construction of the tourist city. Indeed, it is not possible to uncritically embrace the definition of urban tourism. Far from being the result of a casual process, we should address the touristified city, in which a coalition of public policies and private interests have encouraged the conversion of the city into a space of capital production through the tourist sector, typical feature of the modernity (D'Eramo, 2017). Although it is commonly related to the post-industrial city, to which I will come back later, the promotion of tourism can be dated back to the mid-19th century: a phenomenon which enshrines the basis of the present city-marketing and shares similar strategies and discourses, as well as consequences in the urban space and over the social classes inhabiting it (Cócola Gant and Palou Rubio, 2015).

The prototype and the basis that triggered what is now defined as overtourism dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, in a time when the bourgeoisie acquired greater control over local politics and saw the emergence of a consumer society and the awareness of inter-urban competition. The understanding of the genealogy of the tourist city (Ward and Gold, 1994) is generally lacking in the actual debate. Hence, in order to understand the popularity of the term overtourism, it is worth analysing the transformation mechanisms (Miles, 2010) triggered by some strategies through a historical perspective. In the next section, the setting-up of an idealised image of the city often separated from its social reality; the transformation of the historic centre and

commercialisation of its urban heritage; and the coalition between local authorities and private activities will be presented.

1.2 A journey through the foundations of the overtouristied Barcelona and Venice

As I have been mentioning in the previous section, the actual debate on overtourism cannot be fully grasped without clarifying and making explicit the genealogy of the tourist development of the two cities. Hence, in order to keep the pace of comparison, what follows is an historical selection of the steps that characterised the two urban centres.

In the case of the Catalan capital, since the beginning of the 20th century, the emergence of the 'destination Barcelona' (Palou Rubio, 2012) has been connected to the urban space, which is the main facility used by local powers to foster the tourist development of the city. At the end of the 19th century, Barcelona was a semi-rural city, without any distinctive attraction. Meanwhile it was a city characterized by a degraded physical aspect, with social conflicts and a strong labour movement. Moreover, the urban centre was an enclave of poverty and marginality (López Sánchez, 1993). Overcoming these conditions to move forward tourism, thus, concerned both the transformation of the city centre and, in parallel, the setting-up of a promotional image with the purpose of refusing the reality of its urban spaces, as well as presenting an idealised representation of the city (Cócola Gant and Palou Rubio, 2015).

In this direction, in a time when tourism played out as a modern adaptation of the Grand Tour (Richards, 2001), it was crucial to be endowed with a monumental historic centre as a key factor to attract visitors. According to MacCannell (2005) the relevance of architecture lies exactly in its ability to engender referential frameworks, which is a relational means between the tourist and the destination. Indeed, the tourists' experience is often based on the contemplation of different portions that are united in the same setting, and which acquire meaning because of what they recall as a totality. This is what Urry (1990) defines as semiotic landscapes, i.e. the spaces that have the potential to attract tourists as to represent a reality or an idea of it. In such a way, the historical

and monumental heritage in which history turns into a stereotyped and easily consumed resource (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000), even if idealised or reconstructed, represents one of the first advertising images of the city (Cócola Gant and Palou Rubio, 2015:464).

Hence, this approach led to the willingness of changing the social composition of specific areas, while the reconfiguration of the social space represented a key aspect to the establishment of the tourist promotion of Barcelona of that period. In fact, in the second half of the 19th century Barcelona went through a series of urban changes, such as the so-called Cerdà Plan[17]; demographic growth and the industrial boom; the annexation of nearby towns and events like the World Fair in 1888 that established the city as a paradigmatic example in southern Europe. Around the turn of the century, all these factors strongly changed Barcelona's urban landscape, converting it into a more cosmopolitan centre. But then, after the Spanish colonial crash at the end of the 19th century and the loss of the overseas territories[18] that represented the main market for Catalonia's industry, the city had to develop another strategy to maintain its status (Mansilla and Milano, 2019). Instead of sinking into the crisis, local authorities set new targets and tools of intervention (Cócola Grant and Palou, 2015; Solà-Morales, 1994) and, in this situation, tourism represented a possible economical vector of development (Guàrdia et al., 1991), especially after the World Fair and its impacts both on the promotion and on the urban growth of the city.

The success of the young manufactures and professionals originated from Catalan nationalism triggered a political project based on the conviction that the modernisation and innovation of the society represented the appropriate response to the on-going circumstances.

The development of tourism was then related to the local bourgeoisies represented by the Regionalist League (*Lliga Regionalista*), which, in 1901, gained its first electoral success in the municipal elections. On the one hand, characters like Josep Puig i Cadafalch, Enric Prat de la Riba, Narcís Verdaguer i Callís and Francesc Cambó gave

---

[17] Ildefons Cerdà i Sunyer was an urban planner who designed the 19th-century extension of Barcelona called the Eixample.
Cerdà's plan focused on planning for hygiene and ease of mobility and it was planned on blocks of the extension to be 113.3 by 113.3-squared metres in order to optimize the living standards. To increase mobility and transportation, he also planned very large street of a width of 35 metres, and included big avenues from 50 to 80 metres wide. Moreover, the plan focused on increasing the green spaces and gardens in every built block.
[18] In 1898, in the Spanish-American War, Spain lost its last two overseas colonies: Cuba and the Philippines.

priority to capitalistic interests; on the other, they also established new model of cultural growth. Indeed, the League drove forward urban interventions aimed at adjusting the city to its industrial functions, but also shaping it to the new international function, reinforcing the commercial role and the patrimonialisation of certain monuments and spaces (Cócola Grant and Palou Rubio, 2015:466).

At the turn of the century, tourism and the creation of a prestigious brand became some of the key strategies of the new society. Thus, tourism was handled by the municipal council, initially by the Commission for the Attraction of Foreigners and Tourists (CAFT, *Comisión de Atracción de Forasteros y Turistas*) and then by the Society for the Attraction of Foreigners (SAF, *Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros*). The CAFT tried to come up with a new urban model and it was aware that an attractive image was not only the means to appeal to foreigners, but could also mould a new story of the city that would have had an impact on the configuration of the centre itself. Although, at that time, the city did not provide a tourist offering and lacked most of the necessary services, the strategy was exactly to stimulate the creation of a real tourist attraction by an attractive image. In so doing, the creation of the tourist image was the resource and preceded the effective product. Hence, the image that the CAFT advertised represented values of order, civility and beauty matched by romantic landscapes and idyllic prints (Cócola Gant and Palou Rubio, 2015) spread through the propaganda media of that time.

In 1908, Gonçal Arnús, a nobleman Catalan collaborator of the SAF, wrote an ideological treaty entitled *Barcelona Cosmopolita* (Fig. 1.1), in which he stated the importance of tourism industry as an element of competitiveness to foster the economical and cultural growth of the city (Cócola Gant and Palou Rubio, 2015:468).

The creation of a hegemonic category ensued, whose aim was to naturalise and legitimise the positive role of such a tool. After the CRAFT, the SAF – a private-public group in operation from 1908 to 1936 – went along with the process of promotion of Barcelona by guaranteeing local and international admiration renewal.

Subsequently, tourist discourses, matched by the creation of civic pride and social cohesion, became a cultural institution and above all a political means of social consensus. Thus, in order to support the monumentalisation of the historic centre as an essential requirement for tourism development, in 1911, the idea to reconstruct a "gothic quarter" arose (Cócola Gant 2014). In that occasion as well, the official images and discourses were of extreme importance in the process of creating a social cohesion in the processes of revitalisation. This can easily be interpreted as the basis of the current city marketing (Ward, 1998). As Navas Ferer argues (2014:2), "the urban iconographic representation was – and still is – a powerfull tool for the transmission and consolidation of ideas and trends with a constant penetration in the cultural imaginary". She goes on saying (2014:15) "the cultural elites of the city produced an image of Barcelona that presented a wish of order and monumentality. This image not only triumphed within the dominant classes, but it developed a gaze over the city that, in

some of their most important elements, remains unaffected nowadays". In this respect, Castell and Borja (1997) define civic patriotism as an apparatus tending toward the acceptance of the contemporary city project as a communal project.

Now, leaving the Catalan capital aside for a moment and although the time frame is slightly different, we will notice how the same dynamics can be observed in the Venetian context. Indeed, over the same period, the city was characterized by a spirit of enlargement towards a national and international horizon (Reberschak, 1997). In 1900 and 1905 the *Società Italiana per l'Utilizzazione delle forze idrauliche del Veneto* (Italian Society for the use of hydraulic force of Veneto) and the *Società Adriatica di Elettricità* (S.A.D.E. Adriatic Society of Electricity) were founded. Alongside, in 1906, the *Compagnia Alberghi Lido* (Lido Hotels Company) was set up, which would have expanded a few years later, becoming the *Compagnia Italiana Grandi Alberghi* (CIGA, Great Hotel Italian Company). Industry and tourism development progressed hand in hand, and whilst on the mainland the construction of the industrial hub was in progress, at the Lido la *cité loisir* was finalised with the construction of *Des Bains* and *Excelsior* luxury hotels (inaugurated in 1900 and 1908, Fig. 1.2). Between the 1930 and 1934, Venice produced − within the Biennal program − the Contemporary music Festival, the Theatre Festival and the Cinematographic Art Festival, which would then become the International Film Festival. The palace of this latter opened in 1932 and, a few years later, also the Casino was inaugurated. In was also on that decade, precisely in 1931, that we witnessed an implementation of the infrastructures and the road bridge was built alongside the rail bridge, connecting the mainland to the Lagoon city.

Figure 1.2 Excelsior Hotel, view from Lungomare Guglielmo Marconi Street, postcard, 1910s.
Source: hotelphotoarchive.com

After the period in which small and medium-sized enterprises had created a basic tourist accommodation, this buzzing period can be thus considered as the entrance into the tourist entrepreneurship of major capital. In fact, in a time in which it was quite unfamiliar to the contemporary Italian businessmen, who assigned a marginal function to tourist activities (Cavalcanti, 2008), the politicians and the businessmen that run the city in the three decades from 1915 to 1945 demonstrated their awareness regarding the role of tourism.

The specific nature of the Lagoon landscape allowed to the historic city centre to keep on maintaining its cultural and representation purpose (Vanzan Marchini, 1997), while its bathing appendix at the Lido – rare example at European level – was improved to attract the Italian and foreign bourgeoisie. Moreover, since the 1930s, tourism was included within the key aspects of the 'Venice project': a development plan carried out by Giuseppe Volpi[19] and Vittorio Cini, two local entrepreneurs, together with Gaggia,

---

[19] Among the charges he covered, Giuseppe Volpi was governor of Tripolitania (1921-1925), president of the Venice Biennale (1930-1943) and president of Confindustria, the General Confederation of Italian Industry (1943-1943).

president of the CIGA for almost 30 years. The project equated the tourist development to the prospects for development of the port and maritime sectors. Indeed, in 1935, Cini, during the Provincial Council of the Corporative Economics (*Consiglio provinciale dell'Eeconomia Corporative*), formulated an organic vision of Venice, putting together the different hallmarks of that period and setting out their complexities. According to him, the Venetian issue included not only the port and the building aspects; rather, it concerned also the commercial, industrial, craftwork and tourist facets. This implied the intertwining of cultural and social issues.

The bourgeois class of that time considered that Venice had to assert its right of unique city and its representational function. The urban centre did not have to be only the headquarter of Public offices, but also of Cultural institutions and academies, among others. Moreover, according to Cini[20], part of the population had to move to the working neighbourhood in Marghera, to morally and materially settle down.

So, once again, what emerges from this framework is a genealogy that anticipates several characteristics defined nowadays as specific of the post-industrial city. Although it can be said that many cities came to tourism during the 1970s, using it as a fast track to rapid socio-economic development, in the case of Barcelona and Venice it is worth noting how a basis was established at the turn of the 20th century. Subsequently and thanks to these first actions, the conversion into a brand for attraction of investment and visitors saw a strong revival to face the industrial crisis and boost the economy of the two cities in the late 1970s. Indeed, and going back to the Catalan case, after the grey years of dictatorship and with the return of democracy in 1978, Barcelona once again had democratic levers for its economic, cultural and tourist development. A strong link between regaining of the city centre (urban strategy) and development of the service offer (related economic and tourism strategies) is observed during these first years of urban projects in Barcelona after Franco's regime (1978-1992). In 1979, after Franco's death, the Socialist Party came to power in Barcelona, Narcis Serra got elected mayor of the city and Oriol Bohigas, a well-know architect, was designated as the head of the newly created *Department de Projectes Urbans* (Department of Urban Projects).

At that time, the Catalan capital was characterised by several critical areas due to the

---

[20] Venezia, *Archivio della Camera di commercio, industria, artigianato e agricoltura*, Verbali, Registro 77.1935, Consiglio provinciale dell'economia corporativa di Venezia. Consiglio generale, seduta 11 maggio 1935.

absence of infrastructures and the presence of several segregated areas, which arose as a result of the waves of migration linked to the industrialization period. The urban structure of *Ciutat Vella* differentiated from the 19th century Cerda's structure of the city. The seaside area hosted industries and a railroad divided the city from the beach. In the late 1970s, beginning of 1980s the city went through numerous architectural and urban interventions, whose aim was to take action on the existing city, or "building on the built" (De Solá-Morales, 1986), trying to rehabilitate disused sites and creating public areas for the citizenship. The slogan of Bohigas was to recover the city centre and to monumentalise the suburbs by eliminating social and territorial segregation (Ingrosso, 2011). The intention was to guarantee the reconstruction of the city in its entirety, described as "a requalification of the peripheries and a revitalization of the historic centre" (Bohigas, 1992). Alongside the limited projects that would have ensured to create a re-equilibrium among different parts of Barcelona, taking into account the urban heritage of the city centre became a priority to increase its attractiveness. More than 80 projects of interventions were programmed on the whole urban fabric. In this post-dictatorship period, the renaissance of the city was charged with a symbolic value: reconstruction means claiming the identity of Barcelona as socialist capital of Catalunya. Nonetheless, in the midst of an economic recession, private investments were scarce; therefore, small projects were carried out with little funding and in a short time. Parks and public spaces, built during the early 1980s and recovering old industrial structures, are the tangible proof of this[21]. Alongside this, the local administration looked for solutions able to bring forward a greater process for the renewal of the city. This became a dynamic of "doing and keep on doing": a process that increased with the candidacy to the Olympic Games in 1981. This was the occasion for accessing public and private funding for a greater transformation of the city. Again, as at the beginning of the century, the Olympics would have given a kick-start to the tourist economy by drawing visitors from all over the world. Meanwhile, the mega event would have also attracted investments by operators in the sector. It represented therefore an important opportunity to market the city, overcome the crisis of the industrial past, and project the city to the international arena after the years of closure during the dictatorship.

---

[21] For example, in the neighbourhood of Sants, in an ex industrial complex, some chimneys turned into a sort of sculptures and an amphitheatre was constructed within a park. In the city centre, small squares were planned, such as Plaça de la Mercè.

With the definition of the management and financial programme, it was hereby established the COOB-92, the Olympic Organising Committee, responsible for the sporting events and result of an agreement between the Olympic Committee, the Spanish State, the *Generalitat* and the *Ajuntament* and a mixed-activity holding company[22], that was in charge of managing the funding for the Olympic structures and infrastructures. Three more corporations were set up, each one with the specific objective of urbanizing a different area designated for the Olympic games. All this represented the basis for more interventions around the city and in the city centre as well. The projects undertaken at the beginning of the 1980s could be expanded and better defined thanks to a greater budget provided by European funding to which Spain had access after its entrance in the European Economic Community in 1986. Additional funding was provided by the private sector. FOCIVESA, founded in 1988 with the name PROCIVESA (60% public capital and 40% private) is just an example, and is still in charge of regeneration interventions in the *Ciutat Vella* district nowadays.

If this can be identified as the consecration of the public-private partnership agencies created to support the redevelopment of Barcelona, similar dynamics can be found during the organization – and revitalization – of the Carnival of Venice right towards the end of the 1980s. After a spontaneous renaissance of the feats at the end of the 1970s, without any official form of organization and described by local newspaper as a moment of effervescence and a collective happening (Fieldnotes, 2018; Il Gazzettino di Venezia, 1978), in the following years, the resurgence of Carnival was embedded within broader revitalization processes of the cultural heritage of Venice, to which the Venice Biennial also contributed. Specifically, in 1979, on the heels of the recent revitalization by young university students, the City Council and the Tourist Promotion Company (APT, *Azienda di Promozione Turistica*) tried to experimentally pull the trigger and redefine the spontaneous events in order to officially boost the Venice Carnival as a citizen event, and an occasion to improve the winter tourist season of the city. Nonetheless, in 1980, the City Council was not able to organize a proper event independently and it leant on the planning of the Theatre Biennial Festival for the shows, and on the initiatives of APT for the outdoor events.

Theatre and Carnival seemed then to be complementary and interdependent: the

---

[22] The HOLSA (51% State, 49% Ajuntament)

natural scenic dimension of Venice as a historic theatrical city had in the Carnival its symbolic space. Despite the nearly lack of publicity, most of the hotels were sold out and the Carnival framework constituted a space for a debate on theatre and its importance. The Biennial planned a six-day programme with a show every hour. It was during these first years that it started to spread the need of an early coordination between the participating institutions; an economic contribution by those operators that benefit from the events; and an improvement of the planning to turn Venice into an international cultural centre (Leporatti, 2007). Within this context, some voices of disagreement questioned the excessive intellectualism of the event, which limited the spontaneity of the feast. Nonetheless and opposed to this, the president of APT, Federico Fontanelli, claimed the validity of the project that had to be celebrated on annual basis. In 1981, the organization of Carnival kept on being organized in parallel with the Biennial Theatre Festival under the title "The Ratio Carnival", clearly recalling the past and the tradition of the 18th century and the Enlightenment, which inspired the style of the masks.

Again, the perplexity of those who wanted a spontaneous carnival in the street increased. Nevertheless, this combination went along over the years and in 1987 the slogan of the feast was "Embassies at the Venetian Carnival", with the aim to make reference to the cosmopolitanism of the city over its history and also to its present tourist vocation. Alongside, and as a response to the accusation of organizing an old-style carnival, the councillor for tourism asked for the production of an outside event in Campo San Polo (one of the biggest and central squares in the historic centre), hosting some worldwide musicians, sponsored by Fininvest, an Italian holding company controlled by Silvio Berlusconi and Coca Cola. In that year, 6 North American televisions, BBC, national TVs of other 8 countries and 357 news media around the world followed the event (Leporatti, 2007).

Hence, in face of an increasing event that required ever-greater public expenditure, a public-private Inc. responsible for managing the event was created, the *Venezia Eventi Spa*. Extern sponsorships financed the feast, connecting to it their images. In this direction, the Carnival of 1992 represented a watershed. The managing of the event was borne by the Fininvest Group while the organization, the artists, and the funding came from Milan and depended on them. The corporate setting seemed to guarantee the

quality of the event and the representative of Fininvest affirmed the desire to ensure the "*venezianità*" (the Venitian features) of the event.

Other voices of dissent spread in contrast to what they considered the "Berlusconi's Carnival", synonymous of a complete cession of the Venetian feast to the private sector. Accordingly, the social centre *Laboratorio Morion*[23] organized that year a "Counter-Carnival" (Controcarnevale) against the commodification of the city, the Fininvest management and the tourist monoculture. Those who participated also denounced the selling-off of Venice under the slogan "Venice for sale. 1952:175.000 inhabitants, 1992: 76.000 inhabitants". The protest manifest, written in Italian and English, reported "that facing such data, it is no more possible to attribute all this situation only to the incapacity of the City Council. Rather, one should think that a precise pattern has been designed in order to empty out the city so as to full it accordingly to a precise objective: a city empty in citizens, empty of memory, scenography of a mass stupidity for the use and consumption of those who propose it and manage it[24]" (Leporatti, 2007). In 1993, the participation of Fininvest was confirmed again and the sponsors of the Carnival of that year were Swatch and Reebok (Fig. 1.3).

---

[23] The Laboratorio Morion was founded as a local group at the end of the 1980s and permanently squatting a venue since the early 1990s.
[24] "Di fronte a questi dati non è più possibile imputare tutto all'incapacità dell'amministra-zione, si deve pensare a un disegno preciso di svuotare la città per riempirla secondo i propri disegni: ottenere una città vuota di abitanti, vuota di memoria per farne una no-bile scenografia della massificante stupidità ad uso e consumo di chi la propone e la gestisce".

Figure 1.3 Carnival Poster 1993.
Source: http://www.produzioniteatraliveneziane.it

In both cases, the narration of the facts exposes (and emphasizes) a seamless situation and the repetition of patterns over time in order to guarantee a symbolic and economical growth of the city. The contemporary hegemonic discourses that naturalise and justify the tourist vocation are actually part of the ideology of tourism (Cócola Gant and Palou Rubio, 2015) promoted by the ruling powers since the beginning of the 20th century.

Additionally, these cities highlight how the tourist assets and the private sector involvement have to be intended as the result of a long and complex evolution and as a key component in the urban redevelopment characteristics that led, over the years, to the consolidation of the overtouristified city as we know it nowadays.

1.3 Tourism's evolving role in urban politics: from a strategic tool to the extractivism paradigm in the overtourism era

Now that a deconstruction of the mainstream term overtourism has been suggested, together with the highlights of the tourism history over the 20th century of the two cities under considerations here, we can broaden the spectrum and intertwine specific details with some general comments. This will then lead to the next chapters.

As we saw in the previous paragraphs, by referring to the two case studies, since the 1970s cities' economies experienced a marked shift away from manufacturing[25] towards service and knowledge-based industries. Against the backdrop of declining urban industrial bases, the urban centres increasingly entered into a stage of rapidly changing economic environment, in which they had to reaffirm their standing in an evolving interurban hierarchy (Fainstein et al. 2003: 2). Hence, on those years, the two cities, as many others, had to respond to a new era of production and to the new post-modern socio-economic logics (Harvey, 1993) within the capitalism process. The answer to the crisis of the 1970s was given by neoliberalism. Within this new process, as empirically exposed, the urban space ceased to be the space in which production took place and it acquired the double function of resource and product of this latter one. Moreover, urban plan started to geared towards big events[26], advertisement and slogans so to make unique the urban product and build new landscape through the post-modern architecture[27]. Accordingly, as the historical path we have been through in the previous

---

[25] The Poble Nou neighbourhood in Barcelona was known as the 'Catalan Manchester' for its industry that was located in there since the mid-19th century until the 1970s of the last century. As regarding Venice, its industrial hub in Marghera (for the majority chemical industry), at the pick of its history in 1971 had 200 companies which employed almost 36.000 people. Nowadays, the Marghera shipyard and Fincantieri (another shipbuilding company) employ less than 14.000 people.

[26] By referring to the previous section, in the case of Barcelona this is represented by the search of new events and cultural development in order to keep on attracting investments and tourism. In the case of Venice, the resurgence of Carnival and its partnership with the private sector represents a new way out of the industrial crisis of the 1970s.

[27] Regarding Venice, do to its urban structure and the impossibility to expand or construct ex-novo, the list of new structures is not so long. Among the new structures we should mention the Constitution Bridge, better known as the Calatrava Bridge. In 1997 the architect offered to the city of Venice the executive project for the 4th bridge on the Grand Canal (until 1850 the only one bridge that crossed the Canal was the Rialto one, then the Austrians built the Accademia one and the Scalzi bridge in front of the train station). In 1999, Calatrava received by the City the assignation for the preparation of the construction of the bridge.

paragraph sought to point out, the capital got fixed on the space, thereby providing both the physical conditions of the production and the constructed environment for consumption. In order to maximise the economic development within a rapidly rising consumer landscapes, more and more, over the years, leisure enclosures have been created in a variety of ways. Nonetheless, such spaces have tended to present distinctive features that mark them. Those can be mostly physical ones, in terms of green areas, architectural or cultural design. The distinctiveness also arose from the concentration of activities of the land use, such as restaurants, shops, museums and other cultural attractions, entertainment spots or the physical environmental such as a beach or a new port[28].

This tendency, in constant ascent during the last 40 years, could not have been possible without the creation of a specialisation of the destination around the turn of the last century. Subsequently, if at the beginning of the 20th century the development of tourism was complementary to the industrial sector, after the 1970s crisis it moved, together with consumption, culture and leisure, centre stage in the political economy to achieve competitive advantage. Tourism re-emerged as an attractive development option not only because of the increased recognition of its economic potential. Rather, it was seen as compatible with and conducive to other policies that came to characterize the 'post fordist new urban politics' from the late 1970s and early 1980s onwards (Hall and Hubbard, 1998). Examples of the latter include traditional amenity-based

---

The work began in 2003 and the time of realisation was estimated in one and a half year. The work lasted almost 6 years and the bridge was inaugurated on the 11th of September 2008.

[28] During the Olympic reconstruction, the City Council of Barcelona started the regeneration of the seafront. Specifically, one of the four designated areas of the event was precisely the so called Villa Olimpica which faces the sea. Until then, Barcelona "lived turning its back" to the sea. In fact, a railway line restricted access to the sea.

Moreover, on those years, the warehouses of the port located at the end of La Rambla were demolished, except one, the General Commerce Warehouses (*Almacenes Generales de Comercio*), which turned into a museum, the Sea Palace (*Palau del Mar*). The transformation of this areas meant that finally the city could also take advantages of the opportunities related to the sea side tourism.

Regarding Venice, this process already took place at the beginning of the 20th century with the creation of the Leisure City at Lido. Nevertheless, this project did not enjoy similar success after the 1980s as seaside tourism in this area was in decline due to the strengthening of old competitors (such as Spain or Greece) and new ones (such as Croatia or the Adriatic Cost), which, on the whole, turned into new destinations for seaside tourists.

development strategies to lure investment capital, residents and businesses and culture based strategies[29] (Miles 2010).

Thus, this must be seen as a unique evolutionary project over the whole century. Of course each phase is characterised by particular conditions. So, once the promotional and idealised image was well established, other particular tools characterised the post-industrial city, i.e. the ascendance of information technologies and the associated increased mobility (Sassen, 2005), due to a related implementation of infrastructures.[30]

On the whole, such transformations determined the emergence of urban policies that saw an ever-growing participation of the private sector, together with a rescaling, and weakening, of the national as a spatial unit due to deregulation. Moreover, such processes could not happen without the intensification of inequalities of various kind, such as theming. According to Degen (2008), who has been studying for years the transformation of the Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona, culture produces symbols to provide the city a peculiar identity that can lure its consume. Since the 1980s, a process was triggered, to which nowadays each city seems to vying for, towards the creation of the ideal city, closer to a theme park and quite homogeneous. Some authors, more than a decade ago, defined it as "disneyfication" (Harvey, 2007) or "artistification" (Delgado, 2008) and the intention is, again, to turn the urban space into a consume space. In regards to the two case studies, this aim is achieved in different ways. In fact, whereas in Barcelona processes of requalification have been set in motion, in Venice it

---

[29] In the aftermath of the Olympic Games, in order to continue with the establishment of new centrality areas and the regeneration of the city centre, within Ciutat Vella district two of the most important museum were inaugurated. Namely, in 1994 the Contemporary Culture Centre of Barcelona CCCB was founded and in 1995 the Contemporary Art Museum MACBA. These two new institutions arise in an ex convent area.

A year later, to further enhance this urban portion, we witness the establishment of the Communication Science Faculty of the Ramon Llull University and, in 2007, the opening of the Geography, History and Philosophy Faculty of the Barcelona University just in front of the entrance of the CCCB, in an area which was initially planned as a green space for the neighbourhood.

[30] The first mentions of the airport of Barcelona date back to 1916. Anyway, it was in 1948 that the runway, which is still the main one, was built. Between 1948 and 1952 another runway was constructed, together with the passengers terminal and during the 60s the airport was subject to enlargement works. Since the late 80s had to face the challenge of absorbing all the visitors coming for the Olympic Games, in 1992 two more terminals jointed the existing one.

As regarding Venice, the early works for the airport began in 1958 and its opening was in 1961. In a short time it became the referential airport of Veneto, substituting the existing ones in Venice-Lido and Treviso. During the same years, in the 1960s, the artificial island of *Tronchetto* was built and, since then, it serves as a parking for the means of transportation coming form the mainland. Moreover, during the 1970s, the rail bridge was enlarged, from 2 to 4 train tracks.

is exactly the fact that it apparently remains intact[31] that guarantee its status of desirable tourist city worth to be visited.

Again, as we saw, this is not a new process. Rather it saw acceleration, a revival and an enlargement of some strategies set in motion by the dominant class several decades before. Moreover, following the 2008 economic crisis, tourism promotion policies and tourism development have been intensified, also as a quick response to face fiscal austerity and massive cuts in public spending. What is nowadays most debated in urban (tourism) research is its capacity to contribute to a rapid commodification and destruction of places. Moreover, urban tourism tends to set dynamics in motion that can lead to an erosion of precisely those attributes that constituted the original attraction for tourists to visit (Harvey 2001). In this way, the affirmation of urban tourism, a trend that was built through years of promotion and public funding, projected in several cities the same conflicts and dependence, as exposed at the beginning of this chapter. Such criticism has taken particular hold not just because of the quantitative growth of the phenomenon, but also due to the qualitative changes it has led to. Urban tourism has spread geographically across new areas, which lacked conventional tourist attractions – and were until recently not planned or marketed as tourist zones[32].

These steps, hence, led some authors to relate urban tourism development to the extractivist model of urban contemporary society (Salerno, 2018). If initially, the introduction of this concept took its origin from those economies that are based on a predatory levying of natural resources, it has now faced an expansion to applied fields such as finance and urban economy (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Extractivism has to be intended as part of a process of accumulation through dispossession actions, typical of the financial capital domain (Harvey, 2010). Accordingly, the tourist economy provides an essential element of the urban declination of extractivism. The adoption of such a category can be useful for the comprehension of social and urban transformations of contemporary urban centres. Moreover, it brings out a biopolitic concept of the city

---

[31] Due to the impossibility of acting on the urban structure, Venice seems to remain true to its past but it is actually going through deep processes of change of use towards what seems the only possible way, i.e. tourism function of its public properties.

[32] This is the case for example of Hospitalet de Llobregat, a municipality of 260.000 inhabitants to the immediate southwest of Barcelona and of Mestre with its 180.000 inhabitants, part of the municipality of Venice located in the mainland just before the bridge that connects to the Lagoon city.

in which, again, the space of productions tends to blur together with the urban space (Crampton and Elden, 2007).

The extractivism category does not only concern the operation of appropriation of natural resources. Rather, it can also be applied to the urban dimension itself, to its complexity of resources and goods and the space for the common production (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). In other words, the production of goods is nothing but the life itself of the city.

Subsequently, this kind of transformation of the commercial fabric causes an indirect displacement. From this perspective, the effective occurrence of the displacement is the result of a continuous pressure process that undermines the quality of relations of the residents with the life habitat, producing a loss of place (Davidson and Lees, 2010). The tourist industry, by modifying the social context of the city centre, commoditizing it and, in the meanwhile, triggering processes of museification, represents one of the most powerful vectors of alienation of an extractivist economy that can be defined as colonial, i.e. a type of economy that consume lots of recourses accumulated during time, a system that centralises the profits while socializing losses. If this concept, as we have already seen, was introduced already during the 1970s by Harriman (1974), it can now be intended as a form of internal colonialism in which the city itself and its policies make reference to the inner temporal-historic dimension: an extractive activity that produces value from its own past enclave (Salerno, 2018). Hence, as I have sought to demonstrate, rather than a new concept, overtourism is an ever-evolving process.

During the 1980s Butler provided his tourism life cycle of evolution, presenting six different phases in which, after a period of exploration of the area and its strengthening, it could follow stagnation that can determine the "death" of the destination or trigger new forms of attractiveness. As explained, tourism industry, intended as an extractivist force, keeps on finding new ways for plus value generation.

The present chapter, which started with the deconstruction of the recent emergence of the term overtourism and passed through the historical development of the tourist city, had the purpose to bring up and make some common patterns of the two touristified cities clear. By highlighting the parallelism that characterised the two cities, we can observe how urban development changed during the last century. The actual urban tourism situation cannot be understood without linking it to urban evolution carried out

over the years. This leads to define our time, as D'Eramo (2017) argues, as the "Age of tourism", referring not only to the last years but at least to the last century, or more, and to highlight how the social meaning and materiality of space and place are created and incorporated into the accumulation process (Britton, 1991). The tourist phenomenon is a self-evolving machinery and its development is always of economic nature. Since the beginning of the 20th century, and with a constant and clear acceleration since the 1970s, the so called factory without chimney has guaranteed capital gains and it has prompted what Harvey (2001) defined as the spatial fix, i.e. the capitalism's insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring expressed through processes of heritization of the historic city.

The structure of the events, both in Barcelona and in Venice, can provide information on the tensions and the conflicts related to the local dimension and the cosmopolitan international level that have led to a "new economy of competitiveness" (Castells, 2000). Now that a genealogy of the tourist city has been offered, in the next chapter, first I will go through the emergence of the actual wave of discontent in the urban centres under consideration here. Then, a theoretical frame will serve as a further basis for the ethnographical chapters.

References

Ashworth, G., J. and Tunbridge, J., E. (2000) *The Tourist-Historic City*, London: Routledge.

Becker, E. (2013) *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Benach, N. (1993) Producción de la imagen en Barcelona del 92, *Estudios Geográficos*, 212: 483-505 .

Bohigas, O. (1992), *Ricostruire Barcelona*, Milan: Etas libri.

Britton, S. (1991) Tourism, Capital, and Place: Towards a Critical Geography of Tourism, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9 (4): 451-478.

Cabrerizo, C., Jorge Sequera, J. and Bachiller, P., G. (2016) Entre la turistifiación y los espacios de resistencia en el centro de Madrid: Algunas claves para (re)pensar la ciudad turística, *Ecología Política*, 78-82.

Cañada, E. (2018) *Overtourism: un concepte en construcció*, 22/02/2019, http://www.albasud.org/blog/ca/1070/overtourism-un-concepto-en-construcci-n

Capel, H. (2005) *El Modelo Barcelona: un examen crítico*, Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal.

Capocchi, A., Vallone, C., Pierotti, M. and Amaduzzi, A. (2019) Overtourism: A Literature Review to Assess Implications and Future Perspectives, Sustainability 11, doi:10.3390/su11123303

Casellas, A., P. (2003) *The Barcelona Model: Agents, Policies and Planning Dynamics in Tourism Development*, PhD Thesis New Brunswick University.

Castells, M. and Borja, J. (1997) *Local and global: the management of cities in the information age*, London: Earthscan.

Cavalcanti, M.,L. (2008) L'Italia "Paese noioso": i problemi dell'offerta alberghiera fra XIX e XX secolo, in Berrino, A. (Ed) *Storia del turismo. Annale 2006-2008*, Milano: Franco Angeli.

Cócola Gant, A. (2009) El MACBA y su función en la marca Barcelona, Ciudad y Territorio, *Estudios Territoriales*, 159: 87-101.

Cócola Gant, A. (2014) The Invention of the Barcelona Gothic Quarter, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 9 (1):18-32.

Cócola Gant, A. and Palou Rubio, S. (2015) Tourism promotion and urban space in Barcelona. Historic perspective and critical review, 1900-1936, *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 61(3): 461-482.

Cohen, E. (2012) A political ecology of water equity and tourism: A case study from Bali. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 39 (2): 1221-1241.

Colomb, C. and Novy, J. (2016) (Eds.) *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*, London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

Costa, P. and Canestrelli, E. (1991) Tourist carrying capacity: A fuzzy approach, *Annals of Tourism Research* 18(2):295-311.

Costa, P. and Van der Borg, J. (1988) La detenninazion e della capacità di carico turistica di Venezia. COSES *Informazioni*, vol. 32/33.

Crampton, J., W. and Elden, S. (2007) *Space, Knowledge and Power. Foucault and Geography*, New York: Routledge.

D'Eramo, M. (2017) *Il Selfie del mondo. Indagine sull'età del turismo*, Milano: Feltrinelli Editore.

De Solá-Morales, I. (1986) *Minimal Architecture in Barcelona*, Milano: Electa Editions.

Davidson, M. and Lees, L. (2005) New-build "gentrification" and London's riverside renaissance. *Environment and planning A* 37(7): 1165-90.

Delgado, M. (2007) *La ciudad mentirosa. Fraude y miseria del "modelo Barcelona",* Madrid: Los libros de la Catarata.

Dickinson, G. (2018) Dear dictionaries, this is why 'overtourism' should be your 2018 word of the year, 20/04/2018 The Telegraph https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/comment/overtourism-word-of-the-year/ Consulted on the 22/02/2019.

Donaire, J., A. (2008) *Turismo cultural. Entre la experiencia y el ritual*. Bellcaire D'Empordà: Vitel·la.

Dredge, D. (2017) "Overtourism" Old wine in new bottles? 12 de septiembre, 2017. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/overtourism-old-wine-new-bottles-dianne-dredge Consulted on the 22/02/2019

Farrell, B. (1979) Tourism's human conflicts: Cases from the Pacific, *Annals of Tourism Research* 6:122-36.

Guàrdia, M., García Espuche, A., Monclús, F., J. and Oyón, J. (1991) Modernization and urban beautification: The 1888 Barcelona world's fair, *Planning Perspectives*, 6 (2), 139-159.

Harvey, D. (1973) *Social Justice and the City*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.

Harvey, D. (2010) *La crisi della modernità*, Milano: Il Saggiatore.

Harriman, N. (1974) The legacy of Caribbean tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 2(1): 13–25.

Jafari, J. (1974) The components and nature of tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 1(3): 73-89.

Ingrosso, C. (2011) *Barcellona, architettura, città e società*, Milan: Skira.Lee, T. H., and Hsieh, H., P. (2016). Indicators of sustainable tourism: A case study from a taiwan's wetland. *Ecological Indicators*, 67: 779-787.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Leporatti, C. (2007) *"El mor! El mor! El mor!" Venezianità e rappresentazione*, Università Ca' Foscari: Tesi Triennale.

Koens, K., Potsma, A. and Papp, B. (2018) Is Overtourism Overused? Understanding the Impact of Tourism in a City Context, *Sustainability* 10, 4384; doi:10.3390/su10124384

MacCannell, D. (1999) *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 3rd edt. London: University of California Press.

MacCannell, D. (2005). "El destí del simbòlic en l'arquitectura per alturisme", *Nexus. Noves polítiques per alturisme cultural: reptes, ruptures, respostes*, 35, 30-43.

Mansilla, J., A. and Milano, C. (2019) *Ciudad de Vacanciones. Conflictos urbanos en espacios turísticos*, Barcelona: Pol·len Edicions.

Mezzadra, S. and Neilson, S. (2013) Extraction, Logistics, Finance. Global Crisis and the Politics of Operations. *Radical Philosophy* 178: 8-18.

McCool, S. and Lime, D. (2001) Tourism Carrying Capacity: Tempting Fantasy or Useful Reality? *Journal of Sustain Tourism*, 9: 372-388.

McNeil, D. (1999) Globalisation and the European city, *Cities*, 16(3): 143–147.

McKercher, B. and Prideaux, B. (2014) Academic myths of tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 46:16-28.

Milano, C., Cheer J. M. and Novelli, M. (2018) The Growing Global Problem of Overtourism, 22nd July 2018 The Wire https://thewire.in/travel/the-growing-global-problem-of-overtourism

Milano, C. (2018) Overtourism, malestar social y turismofobia. Un debate controvertido, *Pasos, Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 16(3): 551-564.

Miles, S. (2010) *Spaces for consumption*, London: SAGE.

Murray, I. M. (2015) *Capitalismo y turismo en España: del "milagro económico" a la "gran crisis"*, Alba Sud Editorial.

Navas Ferrer, T. (2014). "La construcción simbólica de una capital. Planeamiento, imagen turística y desarrollo urbano en Barcelona a principios de siglo XX". *Scripta Nova. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, 18(493): 1-21.

Palou i Rubio, S. (2012) *Barcelona destinació turistica. Un segle d'imatges y de promoció publica*, Barcelona: Vitel.la.

Peeters, P., Gössling, S., Klijs, J., Milano, C., Novelli, M., Dijkmans, C., Eijgelaar, E., Hartman, S., Heslinga, J., Isaac, R., Mitas, O., Moretti, S., Nawijn, J., Papp, B. and Postma, A., (2018) *Research for TRAN Committee - Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses*, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies: Brussels.

Reberschak, M. (2002) Gli uomini capitali: il gruppo veneziano (Volpi, Cini e gli altri), In: M. Isnenghi, S. J. Woolf (Eds), *Storia di Venezia. L' Ottocento e il Novecento*, Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani: 1255-1310.

Rodenburg, E. (1980) The effects of scale in economic development: Tourism in Bali, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 7(2): 177-196.

Routledge, P. and Cumbers, A. (2009) *Global Justice Networks: Geographies of Transnational Solidarity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Salerno, G., M. (2018) Estrattivismo contro il comune. Venezia e l'economia turistica, *ACME An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 17(2): 480-505.

Sansi, R. (2017) Anthropology beyond itself, *Visual Ethnography* 6(2): 49-65.

Sassen, S. (2001) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Smith, N. (1992) Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale, *Social Text* 33: 54-81.

Urry, J. (1990*) The tourist gaze: leisure and travel in contemporary societies*, London: Sage Publications.

Van der Borg et al., 1996 Costa, P. and Gotti, G. (1996) Tourism in European heritage cities, *Annals of Tourism Research* 23(2): 306-321.

Vanzan Marchini, N. E. (1997) *Venezia. I piaceri dell'acqua*, Venezia: Arsenale.

Ward, S. (1998) *Selling places. The marketing and promotion of towns and cities, 1850-2000*. London: SPON.

Ward, S. and Gold, J. (1994) Place promotion: the use of publicity and marketing to sell towns and regions, New York and Chichester: Wiley.

Wenkman, R. (1975). The Pacific tourist blight, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 3(2): 77.

World Tourism Organization (2018) '*Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions, Executive Summary*,
https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284420070

2. The emergence of a wave of discontent towards urban tourism development: some theoretical aspects to approach the field

2.1 Tourism's questioning and the spread of politicization from below

This chapter first aims to present the social context within which the ethnographic section is situated. After having presented empirical evidences of the rise of forms of politicization from below to oppose the negative impacts of the urban fabric, I will proceed with the drawing up of the theoretical framework for the understanding of the this study.

As we saw in the previous chapter, tourism has to be intended as a 'metaphor of contemporary living' (Bauman, 1998, D'Eramo 2017) and the set of activities identified under this industry belongs to the capitalist production system, which not only uses the landscape but also perpetuate dependency relationships.

This leads to ask in practical and narrative terms which new spaces of resistance have been taking shape (Routledge and Cumbers, 2009). However, this has not to be intended as an unprecedented process. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first discontent related to the selling-off of Venice started to arise already during the 1980s and in relation to the Carnival's resurgence. As regards the Catalan case, the watershed that triggered a return of protesting neighbourhood associations and the questioning of the economic model can be identified in the post-Olympic Games, a period in which strong changes of the scale affected the initial projects and where tourism was used as an urban strategy of capital accumulation (Murray, 2015). Indeed, during the 1980s, some community-based groups voiced their criticism towards the organization of the Games stressing that the investment for the Olympics would divert investment from neighbourhood revitalization and social programs. However, by 1992 Barcelona citizens were in general supportive of the event (Casellas, 2003; McNeill, 1999). On the contrary, ranging from 1992 up to the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures, the city promoted urban renewal through public-private partnerships and actions through the creation, in 1994, of the powerful institution for promoting the city *Turisme Barcelona* (The Barcelona Tourist Board), a partnership between the City Council and The

Chamber of Commerce. In addition, if we take another step back, we will see how urban questioning has a long path in the two cities, albeit with their own specific characteristics and continuity over time. In fact, neighbourhood associationism in Barcelona has a long tradition. Just to offer a short outline, in the early 1970s several neighbourhood associations got together and formed the *Federació d'Associacions de Veïns i Veïnes de Barcelona* (FAVB, Federation of Associations of Barcelona Neighbours). These associations were known for their defence of neighbourhood rights in a period in which the phenomenon of *barraquismo*[33] was fairly widespread. The work of the FAVB was characterised by a profound attention towards social and territorial rights. Its mobilisation capacity in that early period led, among others actions, to the cancellation of the *Pla de la Ribera* in 1973, an urban plan whose aim was to convert the coastline neighbourhoods of *La Barceloneta* and *Poblenou* into a Catalan Copacabana, a set of highly speculative building and tourist projects. Alongside, FAVB mobilizations also led to the implementation of several Popular Athenaeums (Andreu, 2015), which are still very important in the social and critical associationist life of the city. On the other hand, as regarding Venice, in 1968 (after 1966 Great Flood in which the high water level reached up to 194 cm leaving thousands of residents without homes), the *Fronte per la Difesa di Venezia e la sua Laguna* (Front for the Defence of Venice and its Lagoon) formed. During eight years, this group fuelled discussions on the safeguard of the Venetian ecosystem and denounced those projects that undermined the equilibrium of the lagoon (Mencini, 2005). This can be identified as the prelude of the 'Venice problem' related to the broader issues on the future of the Lagoon city and its connection with climate change and anthropogenic pressures.

Hence, if initially urban organisations have been interested in the protests of the working class, in the precarious conditions of life, in public health and environmental system, nowadays urban mobilizations have started to focus predominantly on the questioning of the tourist system. Since a couple of years, the excessive tourist pressure has legitimised the entrance of such an issue into the stances of urban collectives that, we can provocatively say, have being going through a process of touristification themselves (Milano, 2018). This means that, among the historical issues, tourist industry have been identified as a generator and accelerator of social inequalities

---

[33] Shantytowns.

(housing price increase, property speculation among others). At the same time, *ad hoc* collectives have arisen as a response to specific tourist speculation processes. Hence, the peculiar feature of this evolutionary chain of overtourism is the whole rage of counter expressions that are rising in response to the unequal opportunities of the contemporary societies. The rising issues are: the lack of next-door facilities; economic and affordability neoliberal problems; lifestyles; and the privatisation of public space (Cócola Gant, 2015). Accordingly, before proceeding, it is important to connect the deconstruction of the dialectical and media issues on overtourism with another term that has turn mainstream, i.e tourismphobia. Indeed, in the last years such word has been used in an arbitrary way to refer to both social mobilisations and to actions that have attacked tourists directly. Ruling classes have come to devalue and even criminalise, under the same term[34], forms of direct refusal[35] to tourists (perceived as a driver of contamination and danger, which can also present some xenophobe or racist features) and more moderate claims (Blanco-Romero et al., 2018; Mansilla, 2017). However, if the forms of denial should be better defined as touristphobia (Delgado, 2008), the protests and urban mobilisations are not necessarily expressive of fears (phobias), but rather the remonstrations intent to make explicit the impossibility to keep on relying on tourism industry as the only and possible resource for the urban economy. Indeed, speaking of 'phobia' implies a reaction of fear that is not proportionated to the real existing danger for the person who feels it (Zanardi, 2019). Hence, this linguistic approximation appears more a conceptual simplification and risks promoting a schematic approach of a host and guest polarity (Bruner, 2005). On the contrary, different social groups give value to the everyday through and in the space, which is polyfunctional, susceptible of manipulations, be them concrete or symbolic ones (Signorelli, 1999). Hence, going back to the case studies, and although there have been

---

[34] More broadly, beneath this umbrella we can also find any kind of text adopting an oppositional language toward tourism or tourists (journal articles, signs, stickers, murals); individual reactions to contingent situations (acts of violence, insults or aggressions); political measures promoted by local institutions to regulate or mitigate tourism development (bans on souvenir shops, restrictions on access, imposition of fines to tourist behaviors).

[35] This can be the case of the attacks with smoke cans to tourist buses in Barcelona organized by the ARRAN group (a youth organization of the Catalan Pro-Independence Left).
More info: https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/barcelona/20180709/45785832572/arran-irrumpe-en-un-bus-turistico-de-barcelona-y-cuelga-una-pancarta-contra-el-turismo-masivo.html
Other example are given by some graffiti in Barcelona close to the Park Guell entrance in which is asked 'Why call it tourist season if we can't kill them?'.

urban protests against the selling-off and museification of Venice and Barcelona since the last 30 years, we are witnessing nowadays a new cycle of social mobilisation that shares new forms of organisation. Their distinctive feature is the increasing demands for tourism degrowth, a concept that forcefully appeared in the last years (Fieldnotes, 2018; Milano et al., 2019) concurrently with the mainstream terms of overtourism and tourismphobia, but which has not enjoyed similar popularity. Such idea also served as a basis for the articulation process of a new social entity, which reunites different cities in South Europe. Specifically, since 2015 in Barcelona and then in Spain and in South Europe, different urban collectives facing the touristification of their neighbourhoods and cities, have been trying to adopt a less inward looking approach in order to interconnect with wider domain at international level. This is the case, first, of ABTS (*Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible*, Neighbourhood Assembly for Sustainable Tourism) that, since its constitution in 2015, have been reuniting almost 30 collectives of different districts in the Catalan capital and have been trying to invert the triumphalist tourist narrative as well as to invest on a degrowth discourse. In order to achieve this, the 1st Resident's Forum on Tourism was held on July 1st and 2nd, 2016 with the aim of debating controversial issues such as cruise tourism, public space and the use of residential properties. Subsequently, a domino effect in other cities took place.

According to Harvey (2001), the appropriation and commodification of a local's cultural capital upon which consumption-driven urban economies and tourism are based led to the emergence of contradictions and thus conflict. This allows divergent and to some degree uncontrollable local cultural developments that can be antagonistic to the smooth functioning of the touristified city (Colomb and Novy, 2016). In fact, on the basis of specific critiques, different collectives have been arising and started creating synergies that converged in numerous meetings and informal encounters that took place in Palma (September 2016 and June 2017 entitled "Social movements against tourism – a battle shared between different regions and cities"), Valencia (December 2017 "Touristification, Right to the Housing and Resistance"), Venice (April, 2018 "The other Use[36]"). These meetings served to shape the idea of creating a network that could contain different experiences, contexts and levels, as well as perceptions, of

---

[36] L'altro Uso.

touristification (Fieldnotes, 2017). The aim was not only to analyse the processes that the different cities were going through or the alternatives they look for; rather, the participants wanted to show how the problem was not local but that certain common patterns of action were repeated over space.

This shared discourse focused on the incompatibility of mass tourism dynamics and daily community life led, in April 2018, within the 2nd Neighbourhood Forum on Tourism held in Barcelona, to the official presentation of the South European Network called SET[37] (South Europe facing Touristification[38]). On that occasion, seventeen cities[39] signed the manifesto and started to disseminate its content. Accordingly, what is happening recently is the increasing politicization from below of tourism. In fact, one of the first points of departure that this network of collective subjects has defined is the reaffirmation on the specificity of Southern Europe. This means that, even though there are many cities and territories in Europe and all over the world experiencing social conflicts triggered by tourism, certain political, economic and historical differences exist. Such specificities, during the years, have been identified as PIGS nations[40]. This geographical framework, which involves a political significance of post-crisis, could lead to some questions such as why not include Amsterdam, Berlin or Rejkiavik, just to mention some other European cities in which resistance processes to tourisitification are taking place. These are issues that the young network has still to debate and, at the moment, the reference to PIGS countries, with the aim to expand the invitation to the eastern Mediterranean cost, is prevalent (Fieldnotes, 2018). Accordingly, southern Europe can be seen as a proper geopolitical space, marked by the economic crisis and

---

[37] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Gvgnhx9YsI&t=2s

[38] The selection of the name was chosen with the objective of highlighting the intention not to be an entity against but rather facing touristification processes. This is very important in the present time, in which the network could be easily accused of tourism-phobia.

[39] Namely, at the time of signing the manifesto, which is always open to further subscriptions, SET included: Venice (represented by OPA!), Valencia (EntreBarris), Sevilla (CACTUS - *Colectivo Asamblea Contra la Turistificación*), Pamplona/Iruña (*Convivir en Lo Viejo*), Palma (represented by *Ciutat per qui l'habita*), Napoli (represented by 081), Malta (*Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħja*), Málaga (*Ecologistas en Acción* Málaga), Madrid (represented by *¿Lavapiés dónde vas*?), Lisboa (*Morar em Lisboa*), Ibiza/Pitiüses (*PROU!!! Pitiüses en Acció*), Girona (*Més Barri* Girona), Firenze (*perUnaltracittà*), Donostia/San Sebastián (*BiziLagunEkin*), Canarias (*Federación Ecologista Canaria Ben Magec-Ecologistas en Acción*), Camp de Tarragona (*Aturem Bcn World*) and Barcelona (represented by ABTS).

[40] This is a derisory acronym used in UK finance and economics. The acronym refered to the economies of the Southern European countries of Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain.

austerity policies applied by national, supranational and global institutions. This leads to what Lefebvre wrote in 1974 in clear reference to the Mediterranean. According to him neocapitalism and neo-imperialism share hegemony over a subordinated space split into two kinds of regions: regions exploited for the purpose of and by means of production (of consumer goods), and regions exploited for the purpose of and by means of the consumption of space. Tourism and leisure become major areas of investment and profitability, adding their weight to the construction sector, property speculation, and generalized urbanization. If this was initially related to beach tourism, it can now perfectly fit into the new urban tourism ideology. Indeed, forty years later, the over-speculated Southern Europe lit in a diverse range of forms of indignation against the dictate of markets and the role states played as their supreme guarantors. Hence, the ambition that sets in motion the alliance between the aforementioned urban groups is the will to demystify tourism, to scrutinize the logics of state power and the increasingly liberalized modes of capital accumulation within the city. Moreover, the intention is to enrich the dialogue on class struggle and how it is intersected by a plurality of subjectivities, hence to build a new spirit of critical enquiry and a critical project that integrate the analysis of discourse with agency (Fielnotes, 2018).

Therefore, such network, to which Barcelona and Venice have been present since the first informal meetings, represented a good overall view to complement the case studies that will be presented in the next chapters.

It is then useful to intend the complex and dynamic articulation of the urban tourism conflict as socio-cultural rhizome (Franklin, 2007). Accordingly, although the actual debate has been centring more and more on housing issues[41], during the development of this research it seemed to me challenging to rethink in depth the way the criticism to the tourist industry has entered the present actions of protesting groups in the urban space.

Although the SET network, as I have been saying, is officially formed by a couple of representative groups in each city; in practice, in each urban centre there are more groups that join the action informally and jointly. Here I have presented the overall structure, while the following analysis of the creative practices of groups that act as corollary in Venice and Barcelona enriches and problematizes in a complex manner the dynamicity of the present phenomenon in which new spaces for political thought are

---

[41] I will be back to this topic in chapter 6.

devised and pursued.

What follows is a theoretical framework to approach the understanding of the ethnographic chapters.

2.2 Social movement theories and emotions

In defining a proper framework for the case studies that follow, some views on theories and approaches from social movement studies and emotions have to be included.

The studies that have been offered so far tend to have been generally divided into two strands: Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) and New Social Movement (NSM) Theory (McDonald, 2004). The first one has been centred on the struggle of workers against precarious working conditions and differs from the latter in relation to key dimensions of organizational style. This includes degree of bureaucracy, (de)centralization of power and organizational operating strategy, whether participatory or professionalized (Serafini, 2018:9). Juris (2005), for example, claims that the new forms of organization in the alterglobalization period have to be intended as a reflection of the technological patterns required by information technologies. According to this view, the working class established hierarchical, standardized trade unions like a reflex of the organizational principles of the assembly line, while alterglobalization activists built networks as they internalised the cultural logic of informational capitalism (Juris, 2005). Hence, scholars propose that contemporary movements involve the emergence of new paradigms. Such analysis highlights the shift from building organizations to creating events, and the importance of the cultural dimensions (McDonald, 2002; 2006).

In addition, RMT, rising as a reaction to previous theories that saw protest as irrational action, does not contemplate the role of emotion in social movements (Jasper, 2014), which is particularly important in the presentation of the case studies under consideration here. On the contrary, NSM recognizes a turn in favour of cultural politics that emerged in a post-industrial society, focusing on identities and symbols (Melucci, 1988; Serafini, 2018) and emotion as part of rational actions (Goodwin et Al., 2001) rather than on macrosocial and superstructural dimensions.

According to Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2001), who have been studying emotions and social movements, the so called 'motivational framing' – a process overflowing with emotions – is important to connect people with already shared assumptions and beliefs and the affective ties preserve the networks in the first place, as well as give activists much of their impact (Goodwin et Al., 2001: 8).

This is what Collins (2001) calls 'high ritual density'. According to the author, in order to achieve this, some ingredients are required, such as a physical assembly of people, so there is bodily awareness of copresence; a shared focus of attention which will later turn into a mutual focus of attention, a crucial process that create cognitive and moral unity. Depending on the extent to which these features are present, other consequences follow, such as perception of group solidarity; emotional energy in single participants, as they are charged with confidence and enthusiasm; symbols of the group, enshrining the memory of collective participation. A successful social ritual operating in the collective gathering of a social movement is a process of transforming one emotion into another (Collins, 2001). Hence, mobilizations are central network means, allowing activists to communicate political messages to an audience, while eliciting emotions and new subjectivities. Direct action produces powerful affective bonds. According to Clough (2012) affect is the power to act amplified through collectivity. Emotional geographies in social movements articulate people together, thereby increasing their capacity to act through interconnection. As the 'glue of solidarity' (Collins, 2001), emotions are highly significant within fluid, network-based movement that count on non-traditional ways of identification and commitment. In fact, given that formal movements provide stability during period of declining visibility, informal networks necessitate higher levels of commitment to sustain mobilization, in which mental and emotional energy are equally important because only motivated people are able to contribute creatively and enthusiastically to a project (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). However, some distinctions need to be made. Namely, Jasper (1998) distinguishes between 'transitory emotions' to external events (such as anger or indignation) and 'underlying affects' that play a significant role in shaping the goals of the actions. Rather than inspiring activism, Jasper (1998) also argues that emotions are important in shaping individuals' choices on the type of organisations and movement tactics. Such affirmations point out the importance of focusing on the processes of meaning and

ideological construction of social movements. Hence, according to Serafini (2018), such processes represent a central aspect in the study of artistic (and creative, my addition) social movements, because it provides insight into the reasons why people join movements, stay, and leave; the way movements are perceived, and the way movements and activism are experienced. Moreover, such an approach highlights how collective identity is not simply related on a cognitive boundary. On the contrary it has to be intended as an emotion towards other group members on the grounds of common actions and memberships (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). Slightly because of this affection, involvement in social movements can be pleasurable it itself, regardless of the final goal and the outcomes. Protest turns into a tool by which communicating something about oneself and one's morals, a way of finding joy and pride in them (Jasper, 2008).

All this reasoning, on the one hand, highlights the differences between various social movements and the specific temporal contexts within which they are conceived (Melucci, 1996). On the other hand, this enables us to explore the contours of 'experience movements' that increasingly characterize the globalized world (McDonald, 2004). Indeed, McDonald (2004) explains that, far from being a simple force of commodification, globalization (and in this case also touristification, which is part of it) informs us to different ways of being in the social world that question the relationship between individual and collective experience, concept that was once taken for granted and assumed as universal in the study of social movements. This involves a break with the analysis of movements in terms of 'we-ness' and emphasises social movements' exploration in terms of an experience of difference. According to Graeber (2002), who participated in the protests of Occupy Wall Street, the present urban insurrections have to be interpreted as an hopeful prefiguration of a democracy, which outlines the contours of an alternative city within which the benefits of the political system are redistributed by creating new forms of organization, enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures. The result is a growing panoply of organizational instruments to rise from below and attain maximum effective solidarity, without stifling dissenting voices, creating leadership positions or compelling anyone to do anything which they have not freely agreed to do. This leads to one of the most significant dimension of the broader framework of alterglobalization actions, which are the affinity

groups. Such notion refers to feature of organising in small number of people who share a strong personal relationship and functioning as action groups, working on several tasks, including communication, media, first-aid, cooking (McDonald, 2004; Routledge, 1996). The way of functioning relies on skill sharing, based on the contribution that each participant provides to the group. McDonald goes on by saying that "the affinity group is made up of relationships of trust, where each member is not defined in terms of the function they perform, but by a reciprocal relationship where they know the other as a person and are known as such by the other. This is not a demand for sameness – where solidarity requires equally implementing the decisions of the group – but recognition that the commitment of each will be different" (2004: 585). Therefore, theories coming up and influenced by new social movement theory, rather than only regarding the content of political actions, allow to frame a better understanding of artistic and creative protests as they acknowledge culture in terms of its potential to shape a set of tools and skills from which to create strategies of action.

2.3 Political engagement, aesthetics and real utopias

In his inquiries on politics, Rancière equates the political act to the aesthetic one, acknowledging both as tools for disrupting consensus (Rancière, 2010). Hence, each situation contains the possibility of transforming the point of view and, by doing so, to produce ruptures in the setting we are facing. From his perspective, such confrontation is primarily a visual one and it allows to build new relationships within the visual and its significance. According to the conceptual framework of the philosopher, who avoids identifying political subjectivity with a particular social group or a population, the duty of the artist is to connect what was not present and to dissent what comes as univocal, hence to reframe the established vision. Moreover, for Rancière (2004:13): "the political act, equated to the aesthetic one, revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time". Moreover, Rancière defines consensus democracy as a form in which people are reduced to subjects, and politics is perceived as an issue handled by politicians. Nonetheless, actual politics is the activity that can

upset this 'given' distribution. By acting the dissensus, people overturn the unequal distribution of political and artistic participation (Serafini, 2018:5).

Therefore, the 'distribution of the sensible' is linked to the notion of democracy, by the means of a potential 'redistribution of the sensible', both as a perceptual alteration of the visible/invisible and as a political reorganization of the inclusive/exclusive, to form a new narrative environment. This is particularly complex in the context of social orders (and tourism ideology), which apparently promote equality but still repress it indirectly. More broadly, the distribution of the sensible is important in the study of what follows because it "reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed" (Rancière 2004:12).

Aesthetics for Rancière "determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience" (Rancière 2004:13) while the political act is seen as a particular instance, a speech situation. The forces that intervene in the speech and carry out acts of disagreement are defined by the term politics, which stands in opposition to what he defines as the police. Here we have an overturning in which, according to the author, politics that is generally seen as the set of procedures that consents the organization of powers, is what he calls police. Politics, on the contrary, is used to refer to those actions that change frameworks, and transform the enunciation forms. Such actions can include contemporary social movements and activist groups (Sansi, 2015). In this way, disagreement allows to see clearly the distribution of the sensible (the status of a thing or of a situation) in which there is no reality below the appearances, nor a specific order that imposes an evidence (Rancière, 2010). This means that each and every situation can be susceptible of being fragmentised in its interior or that each and every setting can be reconfigured by another order of perception and significance. Such notions can be helpful to make sense of the many practices of 'politics' today, not just from the perspective of art practice, but also in the wider sphere of political activism (Sansi, 2015).

As it looks to break the consensus in the public sphere, the concept of dissensus can be compared to the idea of transgression. In the ethnographic chapters, I will look at different experiences of transgression, by agreeing to a postmodern perspective on social movements that "privileges difference over unity and historical breaks over

continuity and emphasizes transgressive behaviours and ideas" (Serafini, 2018; Tucker 2010:52). In doing so, it is furthermore important to keep in mind that transgression should be better considered as one possible way of enacting politics and not the only one, as this would limit the repertoire of action, leaving out other forms of politics that are not treated as transgressive but can present key aspects of questioning. This is what Routledge (1996) defines as 'resistance' to refer to any action imbued with the intent of attempting to change or question particular circumstances related to societal relations and processes. These circumstances may involve material, symbolic or psychological domination, exploitation and subjection. Resistances are combined by materials and practices of everyday life and imply some form of contestation, some juxtaposition of forces involving all or any of the following: symbolic meanings, communicative processes, political discourses, cultural practices, social networks, physical settings and bodily practices. Additionally, Pottinger (2016) helps in broadening the repertoire of resistance by using the term 'quiet activism' by including in the category modest, quotidian acts, connection and creativity (Askins, 2014, Horton and Kraftl 2009). In this sense, I am adhering to what Ingold and Hallaman (2008) describe as creativity, i.e. the generative, relational and productive way in which people work it out. From this perspective, social life is imbued with creativity, by which actions turns into a continually conjunction towards 'in the making' (Blanes et al., 2016). Art and creativity represent a means to actually do things other than artworks, including many other kinds of social event and practices (Sansi, 2015). Hence, be it more evident or less openly confrontational, aesthetics can be transformative in the way it defamiliarizes the word and invents a sense of new social possibilities (Tucker, 2010) in favour of a qualitative different social world. Within this strand, Tucker, in his study of the aesthetics of social movements, continues by arguing that "aesthetic politics appeals to and relies upon identification with emotions, visual styles, and images when constructing political activities and ideas" (Tucker, 2010:5). Tucker adds that the last century has been characterised by a specific aesthetic politics that aims to oppose the capitalist commodification of experience, and is concerned with emotion and symbolism. As a result, this allows including other types of strategies, including performance-based ones (Ramírez Blanco, 2014; Tucker 2010) as means to produce new ways of protesting and proposing. The objective of these actions is not necessarily to generate an immediate

"Change" with a capital C, but to create unexpected situations, building unforeseen relations, unconventional and unprecedented associations and communities in a particular location, thus creating a gradual and systematic change. Considering all this leads to a last consideration, according to which place turns into an event, a happening not only in space but in time and history as well. Therefore, to the role of place as locator we need to add the role of place as 'eventmental' (Casey, 2009): as a scene of personal and historical happening that allows giving a much richer account of being in place. Such an approach enables us to go beyond grand narratives of dispossession triggered by neoliberalism and to explain the phenomena in a more situated, heterogeneous, complex and embodied way (Colomb and Novy, 2016). By doing so, it will be easier to identify singularities about, and gather the knowledge emerging from each specific process.

2.4 Embodiment and performance

To acknowledge the roles of emotions and events in social movements, leads us to also consider theories on bodies and embodiment, which are necessary to grasp the significance of performance-based and creative practices as specific tools of expression and direct action. As Thrift noted, "body practices rely on the emotions as a crucial element of the body's apprehension of the world. Thus we can understand emotions as a kind of corporeal thinking" (2004:67). Additionally, connection between body and emotion is also offered by Juris (2008) in his analysis on a Prague march protesting World Bank and IMF meetings. While reflecting on his experience, the author described how, "as we marched, powerful emotions welled up inside, preparing our bodies for action and enhancing our sense of collective solidarity" (2008:62).

The embodied, emotional aspects of protest actions matter not just because they are personally felt, but also because they connect individuals. Indeed, one could say that the affective power of emotions is effective. Therefore, within such framework, it is useful to consider the notion of 'embodied movement' as a means of exploring experiential facets of movements (McDonald, 2004). Embodiment, described as the physical and mental experience of existence, is a central aspect of our development as individuals

and social beings (Serafini, 2018). Such definition is not new itself and presents a long philosophical debate on mind and body. Human beings are seen as mindful and embodied social agents in which the body is not the mere objects of experience, but rather the very means of experiencing (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Nonetheless, our experiences, understandings and imagining of the human body have changed over time. The destabilizing impact of social processes of late capitalism societies have had an impact on daily embodied living, producing abstraction and leading bodies and body practices to processes of commodification (Csordas, 1994). To contest processes of privatization of public space – and touristification – is also a form of opposition to homogenization of bio-politics and politics of the body. Performances and direct action represent a form of disagreement towards the disembodiment of contemporary society and the surveillance and control over the heterogeneity of practices of the body in public space. Hence, through performance it is possible to act a critical reflection on certain crystalized social aspects, as well as to generate change on some levels of the society itself. Performance can be both an answer to socio-cultural transformations and it can also be the generator of this transformation. On the hand it allows an interpretation of one own's existence and, on the other, it fosters a critical reflection on reality through an exploration of cultural symbols (Turner, 1987).

A significant example of subversion against the oppressive powers is given by the carnival practices in which bodily excesses (such as drinking, feasting, eating) make a different use of space. This does not mean that carnival actions are by their very nature political, but suggests the potential of their aesthetics as a tool for transgression, in which the body is at the centre of questioning social norms. Indeed, similar uses of embodied and popular subversion are now increasingly constructed and shaped in several urban contestations (Graeber, 2007; Serafini, 2018). This is particularly relevant in the case of political actions such as occupations or sit-in in which the body is politicised by its materiality and presence in a space. In these activities there is a collective embodiment of a political message, which is made of individual bodies that together amount to something greater. By restructuring the dynamics of a space through the embodied experiences that take place there, activists can change not only the use, but also the meaning of a space. By doing so, the embodiment of political action not only allows the individual to connect with others through embodied forms of

communication, or to challenge the increasing abstraction in social relations. It also allows claiming a certain control over the body, in the sense of making use of the body as a political tool. Embodied experience is enhanced by the collective. However, besides collective identity, with its different nuances, personal experience has also achieved a predominant role within the political action (McDonald, 2004) carried out by the political body. Hence, we encounter in powerful form experiences of embodiment and embodied presence, and experiences is best understood in terms of 'embodied intersubjectivity'. Such definition, offered again by McDonald (2004), proposes a shift from focusing on forms of organisation to new experiences in social movements. According to the author, for example, turning a street into a dance floor challenges the functional logic that limits the urban as a communicative experience, while the use of creative tools allows a spatial practice that is organized in terms of a grammar of desire and emotions. In this sense, space, rather than being determined by fixity, turns into a stage for simultaneity and multiplicity. Singing, chanting, walking or cooking are all forms of communication through the embodied practice. Activists perform their ways of being through diverse bodily movements, techniques, and styles, giving rise to distinct identities and emotional tones (Juris 2008). This is what Routledge (1996) defined as 'imagineered resistance': struggles that are both mediated and embodied. In fact, artistic protest and social groups who use such tools are characterised by particular configuration that can change from one action to the next one. People might participate in an action, then dissolve and reform as other affinity groups (Routledge, 1996). Thus, the complex embodied performances engender dual effect. On the one hand, from an external point of view, they are powerful image events, in which participants communicate their objectives. On the other, internally, they implement the space in which identities are expressed through bodily techniques and emotions are brought about through prefigured utopias (Juris, 2008). All this underlines the plurality of senses through which we experience the world, the other, and the self. These forms of action and culture allow us to abandon the debates built on terms of individual versus the community, opening out forms of individual autonomy that do not correspond to the rational, disembodied individual. Therefore, by engaging with these forms of action and culture, I attempt to understand more embodied grammars of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and action. Rather than think of contemporary movements in terms of

the paradigms of organization that were so influential over the twentieth century, I hope to open out the way we think about movements to themes coming from studies of rhythm and resonance (McDonald, 2004), i.e in terms of process.

References

Askins, K. (2015) Being together: everyday geographies and the quiet politics of belonging, *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 14: 470-478.

Blanco-Romero, A., Blázquez-Salom, M. and Morell, M. (2018) Turismofobia como arba arrojadiza, *ABACO Revista de Cultura y Ciencias Sociales* 4(98): 55-65.

Bauman, Z. (1998) *Globalisation:The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity.

Blanes, R., Flynn, A., Maskens, M. and Tinius, J. (2016) Micro-Utopias: Antropological Perspective on Art, Reletionality and Creativity, *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia* 5(1): 5-20.

Brenner, N., Marcuse, P. and Mayer, M. (2012) Cities for people, not for profit: an intro- duction, in N. Brenner, P. Marcuse and M. Mayer (eds), *Cities for People, Not for Profit*. London: Routledge.

Brown, G. and Pickerill, J. (2009) Space for emotion in the spaces of activism, *Emotion, Space and Society* 2: 24-35.

Bruner, E.(2005) *Culture on Tour. Ethnographies of Travel*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Butler, J. (2011) Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street, *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics*. www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en Accessed 23 July 2019.

Casey, E., S. (2009) *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place- World* (second edition). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Casey, E: (2009) *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (second edition), Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Colomb, C. and Novy, J. (2016) (Eds.) *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*, London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

Csordas, T. (1996) *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, Cambridge: Cambrdige University Press.

Clough, N. L. (2012) Emotion at the center of radical politics: On the affective structures of rebellion and control, Antipode 44(5):1667-1686

Collins, R. (2001) Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention, in J. Goodwin, J.M. Jasper and F. Polletta (eds) *Passionate Politics*, pp. 27-44. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Delgado, M. (2002) Cultura popular i espai públic. Les apropiacions col.lectives del carrer a Barcelona, *Revista d'etnologia de Catalunya* 21: 158-159.

Delgado, M. (2008) Turistofobia, *El País* https://elpais.com/diario/2008/07/12/catalunya/1215824840_850215.html Accessed 25 July 2019.

Franklin, A. (2007) The problem with tourism theory, in I. Ateljevic, A. Pritchard, N. Morgan, *The critical turn in tourism studies*, New York: Routledge.

Garnier, J. (2006), *Contra los territorios del poder. Por un espacio publico de debates y...de combate*s. Madrid: Virus editorial.

Goodwin, J. and Jasper, J. (2004) *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning and Emotion*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Goodwin, J. and Polletta, F. (2001) *Passionate Politics. Emotion and Social Movements*, Chicago and London: The University of Chigaco Press.

Graeber, David (2002) The new anarchists*, New Left Review* (13): 61-73.

Graeber, D. (2007) *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire*, Oakland, and Edinburgh: AK Press.

Harvey, D. (1973) *Social Justice and the City*, London: Edward Arnold.

Harvey, D. (2001) The art of rent: globalization and the commodification of culture, in D. Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*. London and New York: Routledge.

Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. (2009) Small acts, kind words and 'not too much fuss': implicit activisms, *Emotion, Space and Society* 2: 14-23.

Ingold, T. and Hallam, E. (2008) Creativity and Cultural Improvisation: An Introduction, in Hallam, E. and Ingold, T. (eds.), *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*. Oxford/New York: Berg, 1-24.

Jasper, J., (1998). The emotions of protest: affective and reactive emotions in and around social movements, *Sociological Forum* 13 (3): 397–424.

Jasper, J. (2014) Feeling-Thinking: Emotions as Central to Culture. In: Baumgarten B., Daphi P., Ullrich P. (eds) *Conceptualizing Culture in Social Movement Research*. Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Juris, J. (2008) Performing politics: Image, embodiment, and affective solidarity during anti-corporate globalization protests, *Ethnography* 9: 61-97.

Juris, J. (2005) The New Digital Media and Activist Networks within Anti-Corporate

Globalization Movements, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 597: 189-208.

Lefebvre [1968] 2014 H. Lefebvre, *Il diritto alla città*, Verona [1968] 2014.

Lefebvre [1989] 2017 H. Lefebvre, *Quand la ville se perd dans la métamorphose planétaire* [1989], in *Una città-pianeta? Introduzione alla traduzione*, a cura di N. Cuppini, in "Scienza & Politica", 56 (2017), 223-239.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Low, S. (1999) *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

Low S. (2003), *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*. Malden, MA, Blackwell.

Mansilla, J. (2018) Turismofobia como significante flotante, El Diario https://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/opinions/Turismofobia-significante-flotante_6_650994900.html

Matera. V. (2015) Leggere la protesta. Per un'antropologia dei movimenti socialiin, *Archivio Antropologico Mediterraneo* 17(1): 5-12.

Mayer, M. (2003) 'The onward sweep of social capital: causes and consequences for understanding cities, communities and urban movements', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(1): 110-32.

Mayer, M. (2012c) 'The "right to the city" in urban social movements', in N. Brenner, P. Marcuse and M. Mayer (eds), *Cities for People, Not for Profit*, London: Routledge.

McDonald, Kevin (2002) From Solidarity to Fluidarity: Social Movements Beyond Collective Identity, *Social Movement Studies* 1(2): 109-128.

McDonald, Kevin (2004) Oneself as Another: From Social Movement to Experience Movement, *Current Sociology* 52(4): 575-593.

McDonald, Kevin (2006) *Global Movements: Action and Culture*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

McDonald, K. (2007) Between Autonomy and Vulnerability : the Space of Movement, *Recherches sociologiques et anthropologiques* 38(1): 49-63.

Melucci, A. (1988) Social Movements and the Democratization of Everyday Life, in (ed) Keane, J., *The Rediscovery of Civil Society*, London: Verso.

Mencini, G. (2005) *Il Fronte per la difesa di Venezia e della laguna e le denunce di*

Indro Montanelli, Venezia: Supernova edizioni.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith, London: Routledge.

Melucci, Alberto (1996) *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Milano, C. (2018) Overtourism, malestar social y turismofobia. Un debate controvertido, *Pasos. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural* 16 (3):551-564.

Milano, C., Novelli, M. and Cheer, J., M. (2019): Overtourism and degrowth: a social movements perspective, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, doi: 10.1080/09669582.2019.1650054

Mitchell, D. (1995). The end of public space? Peoples park, definitions of the public, and democracy. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *85*(1), 108–133.

Murray, I. (2015) *Capitalismo y turismo en España. Del "milagro español" a la "gran crisis"* Barcelona: Alba Sud.

Nogués, A., M. (2001), *Turismo, patrimonio y desarrollo*, en S. Rodriguez Becerra (coord.) Enciclopedia de Antropologia de Andalucia. Sevilla: Publicaciones Comunitarias.

Pottinger, L. (2016) Planting the seeds of a quiet activism, *Area*, 49 (29): 215-222.

Rancière, J. (2004) *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Routledge, P. (1996) The Imagineering of Resistance, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22: 359–76.

Routledge, P. and Cumber, A. (2009) *Global Justice Network: Geographies of Transnational Solidarity*, Manchester: Mancherster University Press.

Signorelli, A. (1999) *Antropologia Urbana. Introduzione alla ricerca in Italia*, Milano: Guerini studio.

Thrift, N. (2004) Intensities of feeling: Towards a spatial politics of affect, *Geografiska Annaler* 86(1):57–78.

Tucker, K., H. (2010) *Workers of the World, Enjoy!: Aesthetic Politics from Revolutionary Syndicalism to the Global Justice Movement*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Turner, V. (1987) *The Anthropology of Performance*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

University Press.

Wright, E., O. (2009) *Envisioning Real Utopias*. London: Verso.

Zanardi, C. (2017) La città è di chi la visita? Breve percorso nel turismo urbano in Italia. In *Città, spazi abbandonati, autogestione*, e-book a cura della redazione di infoaut.org

3. Making sense of the square: Questioning the privatisation of public space through convivial gatherings

It is very difficult to stay in a square without having to sit in a bar and consume something.

We were there, in the square, thinking about how to occupy it with a thousand ideas and a lady from the window up above said she just wanted to come downstairs with a chair and have a beer. (Field notes, Barcelona, July 2014)

Why don't we organize a lunch in campo[42]?

"In campo for La Vida!" Everyone brings what he/she would like to find. (Field notes, Venice, June 2018)

The commodification of urban life and the touristification of the city are intimately connected to manifold processes of exclusion, as those who cannot access and do not conform to the "tourist city" have felt more and more like outsiders in their own city. However, recent years have seen a proliferation of alternative modes of producing urban space and of living the city.

The short quotes at the beginning are taken from my field diary and refer to two different direct actions I have been participating during these last years, first in Barcelona and then in Venice. Facing an ever-increasing restricted urban environment, more or less directly politically oriented collective interventions, have been ubiquitous, broadening the concept of urban resistence. In this chapter I will examine the practical constitution and social implications of direct actions planned by two distinct groups. The intention is to analyse the connections between site-specific activism, local identity construction and sense of place in relation to tourism development. Two direct actions, one called *Fem Plaça* (FP Let's make the square) and the other *La Vida*, highlight the proactive rather than merely reactive role of inhabitants. A broader analysis on the

---

[42] The word campo (plural campi) in Venice is the equivalent of the square. Almost systematically, a campo has a church. Literally it means field and, prior to being laid with cobblestones or paved, the campi of Venice were on plowed earth and often cultivated.

people who organise these actions and take part in the performances will be presented in a comprehensive way in the subsequent chapters.

3.1.1 Defining the ethnographic space in Barcelona

I now turn to the presentation of the field data collected while participating to neighbourhood assemblies, meetings organised by groups of residents and during my participation to several initiatives of *Fem Plaça* and *La Vida*, which are the protagonists of this chapter.

In both cases, in order to understand the two case studies I am going to present here after, it is important to frame the area in which such actions arose. As regarding Barcelona, the activities started to take shape in the neighbourhood of *Sant Pere, Santa Caterina I La Ribera*, the east area of *Ciutat Vella* district divided by the Laietana street to the Gothic neighbourhood and adjacent to *La Barceloneta* on the south (Map 3.1).
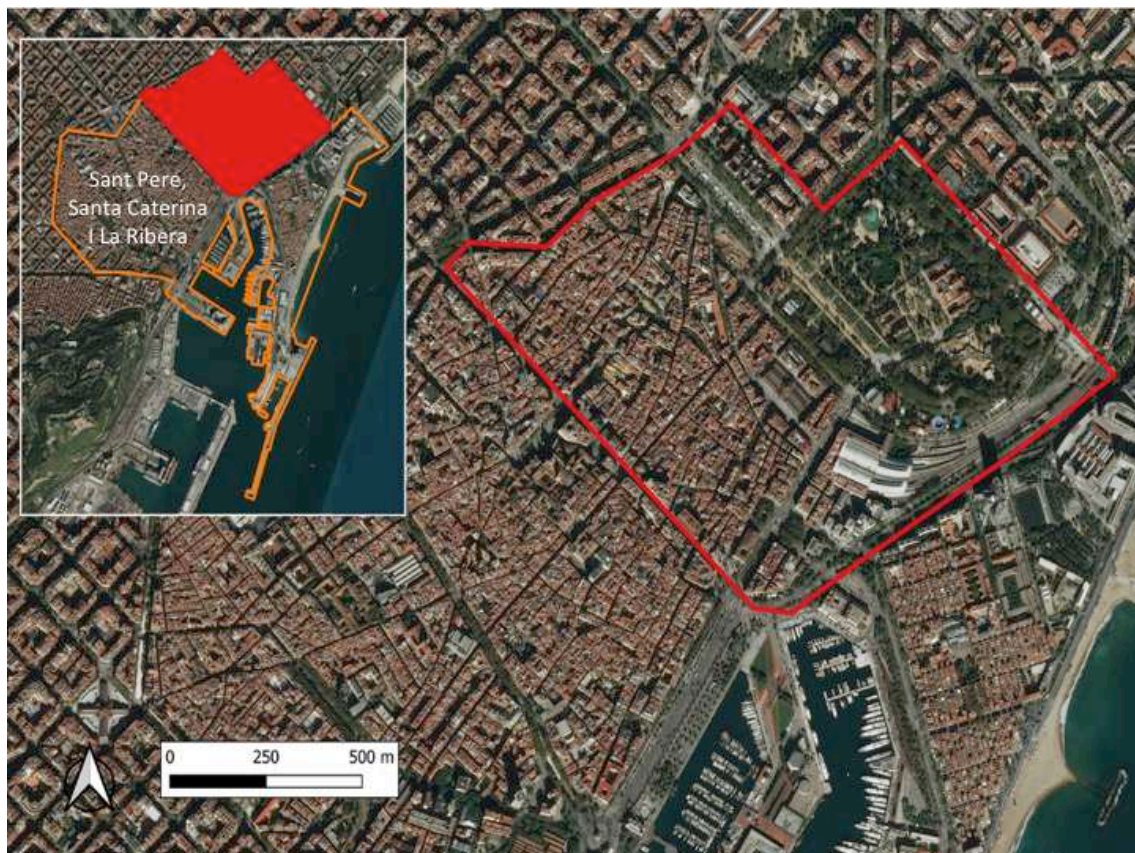
Map 3.1 Sant Pere, Santa Caterina I La Ribera, Ciutat Vella, Barcelona. Base cartography Bing Aerial. Author: Alberto Diantini.

This is one of the most touristy neighbourhoods. Here many expats live in a context full of bars, boutiques and cafes, especially in the southern area that opposes to the north part, less well looked and with a different type of immigration. According to data of 2017 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017) 40% of the inhabitants (almost 10.000 people) of this neighbourhood is foreign. At the top we have the Italian community (6,5%), followed by Moroccans (2,9%), French (2,9%), German (2,5%) and citizens of Great Britain, Pakistan and China (respective approximately 1,7% each)[43].

Recent history has witnessed highly contested processes of urban regeneration, such as in the case of the *Forat de la Vergonya* (The Hole of Shame). Officially named *Pou de la Figuera*, it is located between the streets of Sant Pere Més Baix, Jaume Giralt and Carders (Map. 3.2).

---

[43] In 1991, the 96% of the population of the district of CIutat Vella was composed by Spanish people, of which 60% were Catalans. Only the 4% was made of foreign. For more details: http://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/castella/dades/guiadt01/pob01/t16.htm

Map 3.2 Details of the location of the Pou de la Figuera. Base cartography Bing Aerial. Author: Alberto Diantini.

In the year 2000, the City Council of Barcelona started a series of action for the requalification of this area in collaboration with two mixed public-private companies, Procivesa and Foment[44]. A few years later, in 2004, 14,6 millions euros were made available for the improvement of the neighbourhood, initially allocated to reactivate the social economy through the creation of public spaces equipped with structures of collective use. The project included a green area that was later replaced by a project of a private parking, on a plot of 5.000 square meters, designed at the disposal of the cultural tourism that attends the area of the Picasso Museum, el Born and Santa Maria del Mar, a hundred meters away. On that moment, because of this change of plan, the residents of the neighbourhood started to take action. Comments such as "this is a hole, this is such a shame" could be heard and this led to the occupation of the space and the construction of a community garden and a park with some furniture to let children play.

---

[44] Companies created during the years of preparation for the Olympic Games.

In 2006, in the same period in which the mayor inaugurated the new units of the Universitat de Barcelona close to the Macba (Museum of Modern Art Barcelona) and CCCB (Centre of Contemporary Culture Barcelona), the anti-riot forces emptied out the garden and the installations that the residents built up in the *forat*. Again, another participative process and negotiation highlighted the urgency of social spaces and the community garden was rebuilt together with the Casal of Pou de la Figuera, a community centre that represented a reference point for the associations that are based nearby. Indeed, this place became initially one of the first points of connection during my first stay in Barcelona as several meetings of the *Associació de Veïns per a la Revitalització del Casc Antic*[45], whose headquarter is in Rec street, took place here. Specifically, in this single-storey building composed by a large room, a smaller one and an office surrounded by windows overlooking the *forat*, classes, meetings and exhibitions are organized. Here, back in 2014, I first attended an assembly organized by the *Associació del Casc Antic* on the construction of a hotel just at the end of the street in which the *Casal* is. The flyer said: "A new attack to our neighbourhood. NO hotel al Rec Comtal".

During this meeting, and others I attended in the same location, people discussed the heavy pressure of tourism. Taking for granted that the problem concerned the whole city, the organisers then dropped into the specific case of the hotel construction. The president of the association, an architect and a lawyer offered technical and legal explanations on the legitimacy of the new building, together with the possibilities to oppose it. Alongside, maps of the city (or portion of it) and urban use plans were projected to serve as a basis to the debate and comments of the participants, that, from time to time, I have come to know as the attendance to the meetings was quite moderate. On the whole, people were between 40 and 70 years old, and usually there were around 30-40 participants. Besides these meetings, people were also invited to participate in laboratories (*tallers*), in the same locations, to paint banners or flags that, at a later time, anyone can hang out of his/her own window so to denounce a neighbourhood on sale and call for rest. During these meetings, I familiarised myself

---

[45] Neighbourhood Association for the Revitalization of the Old Town. This association is federated by the Federation of the Neighbours Associations of Barcelona (FAVB, Federació d'Associacions de Veïns I Veïnes de Barcelona) whose origins date back to the Seventies.

with another action group formed by some members of the aforementioned association and local residents and collectives active in the district. It was a more youthful and dynamic association, called *Xarxa Ciutat Vella* (Ciutat Vella Network). While the neighbourhood association focuses more on technical assemblies, Xarxa represented, on that time, a new, heterogeneous, proactive group with alternative initiatives. Its purpose was to bring together the strengths of people from different social organisations to establish self-managed initiatives against the sense of touristification and other problematic conditions affecting the neighbourhood (such as immigration and environmental-sustainability issues, among others). One of these new initiatives was FP, born as an event and later established as a collective that identifies itself within a political positioning of people who not only request, but also propose, shaping the group as an active player in denouncing the gradual transformation into a theme park for leisure practices. As one of the participants explained:

How about doing something that serves as a protest, but also as entertainment? To trigger the social networks of the neighbourhood so that any of its inhabitants can take part in a project that occurs in the places where they live. Here, we are trying to fix the world and straight from the street (laughter). Ciutat Vella is becoming like Venice; there is no solution. We can't stop this situation. How can one stop it? If people want to go to a city because it is fashionable, they simply go! But the problem is when you create a monoculture. When you create a monoculture, everything around is being destroyed. We are not Guirilandia[46][47] (Fig. 3.1), (Field notes, October 2014).

---

[46] Land of foreign tourists.

[47] ¿Por qué no organizar algo que sirva de protesta pero que también nos haga sentir bien? Activemos las redes del barrio para que los vecinos puedan ser parte de lo que ocurre ahí donde viven. Aquí estamos intentando arreglar el mundo directamente desde la calle (risas). Ciutat Vella se está convirtiendo en Venecia; no hay remedio. No podemos parar esta situación. ¿Como se puede evitar eso? ¡Si alguien quiere ir a una ciudad porque está de moda, se va y ya está! Pero el problema es cuando creas una monocultivo y todo alrededor se destruye. Aquí no somos Guirilandia.
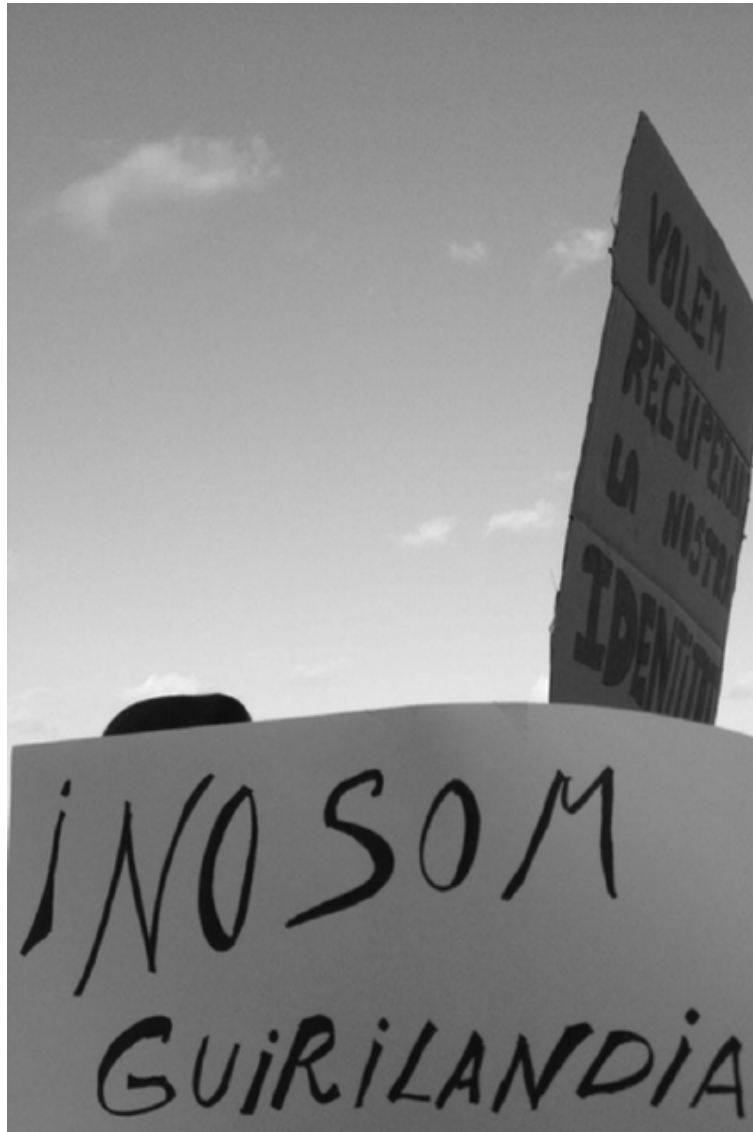
Figure 3.1 Two banners used during a manifestation in La Barceloneta in August 2014. 'We are not Guirilandia'; 'We want to recover our identity'. Guirilandia, or 'land of guiris', is an emic term that literally means 'Land of foreign tourists'. It is a metaphor used by local people to refer to the idea of Barcelona inappropriately viewed as a theme park (Author's photos).

The intention of this group is to appropriate a place – not by asking permission but without creating violent confrontations – and establish a series of activities imbued by a broader sense of sociability. They express a conscious effort to remain in the square. For this reason, to put more strength into their actions and reclaim public spaces as places of coexistence, when choosing a square, they address those which they feel are part of a collective memory of the neighbourhood, with a strong emotional attachment to the people – a square they feel no longer belongs to them, a square that suffered gentrification and now contains a high concentration of bars. They see how such a space

has changed its shape and use, and then subsequently occupy it for an afternoon.

The first intervention was organised in March 2014. As already explained, when I arrived in Barcelona in April 2014 for my first ethnographic fieldwork, I was interested in the touristification processes and the way inhabitants faced this situation. I first attended formal meetings and neighbourhood assemblies, to get a general sense of the situation. Then, as I learned about this monthly event, I decided to take part in it. It is important to note that it was during summer 2014 when the episode involving three naked Italian tourists running during the morning through *La Barceloneta* (Kassam, 2014), the working-class neighbourhood close to the seaside, sparked several protests in the old district against 'drunken and uncivil tourism'. I was completely immersed in this turmoil, in which various residents' associations got together for almost daily demonstrations, and I decided to join FP to have a more proactive role than that of a mere protestor.

Since then, I have come back to Barcelona and I have kept on meeting FP at frequent intervals. From April to December 2014 on regular basis. Then, in 2017, I spent 7 months in the Catalan capital and, again, in 2018 I was there for the last three months of the year, attending the events even if organised at reduced frequency compared with the beginning a couple of years before. Moreover, the events and assemblies were supported with an email exchange, using the FP mailing list and the Facebook page. During these periods of time, I could observe how tourism has been reaching a permanent and pervasive dimension, especially in some areas of the city. From museums to cruise tourism, through simple leisure tourism, the tourism fields of action have continued to expand their pervasiveness with ever-increasing participation of different actors. Facing this restricted urban environment, several interdependent and heterogeneous organisations started to appear pointing out their disagreement with mass tourism (including housing activists, groups against privatisation of public spaces and environmental groups concerned about pollution from cruise ships). FP, which invites people to go out and enjoy the square and street life, is part of this opposition, in which a wide range of locals from different backgrounds have been dedicating their knowledge to spotlighting local needs that they believe are not being met or managed efficiently by institutional powers (Novy and Colomb, 2013).

3.1.2 Defining the ethnographic space in Venice

Regarding Venice, in December 2016 I was attending my first PhD semester while living in Venice and I was familiarising with the urban context I was in. One Sunday afternoon I volunteered to help during an event called *Gatarigole* in *Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio*. The happening, born on an annual basis in 2014 and whose name in the local language means tickle, has the purpose of cheering up, for a couple of hours, the attention on the social life of this part of town. Indeed, the event involved the collaboration of several associations that are based in the *sestiere*[48] of Santa Croce, in which *Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio* is located. The aim is to create a network and a unique purpose that groups together alternative realities that cohabit the city of Venice.

Basically, the event consisted of a gazebo in which people can have some snack, a cup of hot tea or wine and, later in the evening, dinner. Moreover, the space was disseminated with other activities, such as bartering booths, a small area with a selection of books for sale, a carpet on which activities for children were programmed. Music was set up and, as it got dark, the wall of the church in the middle of the *campo* was used as a screen for the projection of animated figures, result of a workshop of one of the association involved. Moreover, that day was the occasion to exhibit the results of a call for artists that invited people to paint the panels that coated *Pemma* Palace right in *Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio*. Specifically, we are dealing with an ex university building owned by IUAV (University Institute of Architecture of Venice) that sold its property in 2010 to a private company which, in 2020, will open a luxury hotel (Fig. 3.2).

---

[48] A sestiere (plural: sestieri) is one of six official districts in which Venice is divided. The word derives from the number sixth. The six divisions of the city are Castello, Cannaregio, Castello, and San Marco that lie north of the Grand Canal, and San Polo, Dorsoduro, and Santa Croce that lie south

Figure 3.2 Photo of the paints on the panels that coated the building under renovation in Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio. Source: author's photo, taken on the 4th of December 2016.

Although I already knew some of the associations that organized the event, on that day I had the opportunity to experience directly the liveliness of the place, which would have become the centre of my ethnography a year later. In fact, it is worth noting that the *sestiere* Santa Croce is one of the most effervescent in Venice (Fig. 3.3).

Map 3.3 Santa Croce, Venice. Base cartography Bing Aerial. Author: Alberto Diantini.

In detail, as it can be seen on the map, part of the *sestiere* is used as a terminal for cruises and it also hosted a parking for those coming to Venice by car. As regards the other part, before the inauguration of the Constitution bridge – also know as the Calatrava bridge – in 2008, all those day trippers and visitors that arrived to Venice by bus or car passed through the inner part of Santa Croce to reach Rialto bridge and San Marco area. Nonetheless, since the opening, the tourist fluxes have undergone a spontaneous deviation through Cannaregio, as the route is less tortuous and easier. Hence, although Santa Croce is a central district, just a few minutes walking from the arrival points from the mainland, this has implied a slight reduction of tourist transit through it. This, together with the presence of different schools in the surrounding area, has made it possible for this portion of the *sestiere* to keep quite and still full of a certain urban life. For these reasons as well, the associations just mentioned above, decided to settle down right here. In concrete terms, I am referring to four urban realities that are located less than 500 metres one from the others. Namely, they are

About[49], Casa Punto Croce[50], Awai[51] and DoppioFondo[52]. Moreover, it was precisely because of the associative effervescence of this area that another action was organised to oppose to the alienation of another building in the same *campo* which saw the mobilisation of some of these groups. The building in question is the Ancient Theatre of Anatomy, inaugurated in 1671 by the College of Physicians thanks to a donation of a private person, Lorenzo Loredan. The edifice contained three elliptical bleachers from which people could assist to the dead bodies dissection. Since 1760, it also hosted the Obstetrics School. Two seventeenth century portals of the original building, destroyed by a fire in 1800, still remain and above the main door, one can read the inscription *D.O.M. MEDICORUM PHYSICORUM COLLEGIUM* (collegium of physical doctors).

  At the beginning of the 20th century, the ground floor hosted a popular *trattoria*, known as La Vida because of a small vineyard in the adjacent pergola, meeting point of many artists that gravitated around the art gallery of Ca' Pesaro, which is quite close to the *Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio*. After its closure in 1971, the *trattoria* was bought by the San Giacomo Parish and then passed to the Regional ownership in the 1980s, which initially used it as an archive. In the first years of the 1990s, the Neighbourhood Council asked to use the ex-Vida as a space for citizens and in 1993, after being occupied, it became the headquarters of Arcigay[53]. After this experience, associations and committees presented some requests and projects to keep the space public. In 1996 the City Council voted for the variation of the *PRG* (*Piano Regolatore Generale*, General Urban Development Plan), which classifies the building exclusively designed to "expositive, museum, religious, cultural public activities". In the meanwhile, the ground floor became the headquarters of OCRAD (*Organismo Culturale Ricreativo Assistenza Dipendenti Regione Veneto*, Recreational Cultural Organisation Assitance

---

[49] Located in Lista Bari, 1166, it is an independent group of research, actions and arts formed in 2014 by a small group of ex students of IUAV, the University of Architecture of Venice.

[50] The location of this cultural association, founded in 2012, is hidden. In their website, under the heading "where we are", it can be read "close to Campo San Giacomo, if you want to know exactly where we are, just ask!". Its agenda offers concerts, small film festival, and theme dinners.

[51] Located in Santa Croce 201/A, this cultural association was founded in 2016 with the need to share a working space, a sort of coworking for artisans, artists and designers. Here, it is also possible to participate in workshops, as well to assist to concerts or cultural events.

[52] Its headquarter is in Santa Croce 1256, close to About association. This is an artistic association created in 2014, serigraph and printing laboratory, as well as an independent publishing house.

[53] Arcigay is an association of social promotion constituted in 1980 in Palermo (Italy). Its social aim is to safeguard the rights of LGBT community in Italy. The association is structured in local groups over the whole Italian territory.

Employees Venetian Region). In 2015, despite the fact that three local associations[54] presented to the Regional authorities a shared project of an ethnographic museum, the Region inserted the building in the plan for public property disposal[55]. After three auctions were declared unsuccessful, on the 21st of June 2017 the Venetian Region sold its 180 squared metres of the ground floor, through a private treaty, to a local entrepreneur, whose willingness was to convert the empty space into a restaurant.

These were the events that, during the summer 2017, gathered several people around the case of *La Vida*. Hence, first a social dinner just outside the building was organised and then, a few weeks later, a laboratory to paint on old sheets[56] sentences to claim that the building had to remain of public domain (Fig. 3.3).

---

[54] The three local associations are: 1) About; 2) Omnia, a cultural association and 3) Il Caicio, another cultural association created in 2005, whose aim is to promote marine traditions of the lagoon.

[55] The rent extraction capitalises the common patrimony of the city. Indeed, in Venice we are witnessing the alienation of public buildings and the progressive dispossession of the practicability of services with an inevitable impoverishment of the civic life. The law 112/2208 "Disposizioni urgenti per lo sviluppo economico, la semplificazione, la competitività, la stabilizzazione della finanza pubblica" (Urgent dispositions for the economic development, simplification, competitiveness, stabilisation of the public finance) allows local authorities to redact a list of the public properties for sale – Piano Alienazioni, Alienation Plan -, that has to be attached to the budget of forecast of the institution itself. Because of the public debt, such alienations seem inevitable and are the cause of the privatization of public areas, even if the Town Development Plan established a specific use.

[56] In Venetian, the word used for this event was *nizioleti*, which is also the name of street signs. The metaphor is to hang this handmade *nizioleti* from the windows, as street signs, so that everyone can read and get to know the situation.

Figure 3.3 Nizioleti per La Vida. Photo of the event. In the background, La Vida.
Source: https://www.facebook.com/Antico-Teatro-di-Anatomia-di-Venezia-1808190519410218/

Despite these first mobilizations, the sale process moved forward and, after the signature of the title deed, on the 28th of September 2017, a group of residents enter the building and occupied it. The initial objective was to draw attention to the just occurred sale: the residents, through such an action, called into play the City Administration and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and asked them to exercise the pre-emptive right.

It was just a few days before this facts that I moved back to Venice with the plan to stay there for approximately a year. Thanks to the friendship with two women with whom the previous year I created a collective[57] on tourism issues in Venice and who were already involved in the situation, I had no particular difficulties in starting to attend the space. Since the beginning, it was quite evident that it was not one of those classical occupation often connected to a *centro sociale* or to a specific group politically sided. On the contrary, the group of *La Vida* was characterised by the homogeneity of its participants. The core group was composed by 5-6 young people between 27 and 35 years (those ones of the first associations that presented the project before the sale), 5-6 mums between 35 and 45 years and some retired people. Most of them felt the need to

---

[57] OPA Officina di Pensiero e Azione.

participate as they live in the area around the property, but, in some cases, some participants also joined the group even if they live in another neighbourhood, sometimes in another city but spending the day in Venice to work.

Because of the specificity of the protest (and the 60 days of pre-emptive right), since the first day of reopening, the group programmed a busy schedule of events, beside the 24 hours continuous surveillance. One of the three rooms was converted into a playroom for the children that usually played in the *campo* right in front of the edifice[58]. The second room, which does not face out directly over the *campo*, was used as a storage/meeting room. The third and largest one hosted each day a whole variety of activities, such as book presentations, photo expositions, cinema, and small concerts. Moreover, each weekends, on Saturdays or Sundays, there was a shared lunch planned, in which everyone was invited to bring what they would have liked to find.

Nothing happened during the 60 days after the signature. No authority made use of the pre-emptive right and La Vida kept on its activities. Although at the beginning of November 2017 the Regional Authorities cut the power, the occupation of the ground floor lasted until the 6th of March 2018 – one day after national elections – when around 200 police forces surrounded the building and vacated it. After that episode, a huge protest was organised in which many associations and groups active in Venice took part in support of the just evicted building (Fig. 3.4).

---

[58] Venice lacks of green areas for children, which are replaced by the *campi*. Most of them are not so big, and just a few ones allow children to play, run or draw with chalks.

Figure 3.4 Saturday 10th of March, protest in support of La Vida. The photo on the left show a flag that says "Don't take La Vida away from me". This is a wordplay which makes reference to the building La Vida, but also to the Venetian word that means life. On the right, the shot exhibits part of the demonstration walking near Guglie Bridge. Source: https://it-it.facebook.com/Antico-Teatro-di-Anatomia-di-Venezia-1808190519410218/

The day of the eviction was a rainy one. For this reason, all the accumulated stuff in the previous months was stored under a couple of makeshift gazebos right in front of the building. As the days passed, there was the urgency to restore the visual order and to arrange the material. Hence, in one of the first assemblies of March, it was decided to invest around 500 euros in a white fairground fireproof plastic gazebo and to occupy the adjacent section just in front of the entrance of the ground floor. In this way, the attention and the opposition to the selling off could continue without occupying the building.

For the specific objective of this chapter, I will focus on the practices that took place in the outdoor space. In the next paragraphs, I will thus analyse how these events on the public space in both cities are structured, how they are performed and the meanings they assume.

3.2 Preparation and development dynamics of the gatherings

Fem Plaça (FP) is the name of an urban collective and event that takes place in the squares of Ciutat Vella, the old district of the Catalan capital. Seen from the outside, this 'urban happening' does not present a strong feature of protest, but, actually, the initiative comes from the idea that people should be able to exist comfortably in public

spaces that are controlled more and more by the private sector. The intervention includes a monthly urban strategy identified by the organisers themselves as 'the act to go out in the street', carrying several implications and meanings.

The idea comes from a deep sense of failure with respect to classical protests. As Dani (one of the organisers) explained to me, in the summer of 2013, a demonstration was organised against the *Pla d'Usos*, a plan for further deregulation of licences for tourism in the district of Ciutat Vella. The plan included suspending official protection for several historic buildings and allowing more restaurants and cafés to fill public spaces with private seating. Thanks to this ordinance, between 2011 and 2013, bars with outside dining areas increased 11%, from 3882 to 4341 (La Vanguardia, 2013). Of these bars, 50%, according to surveys from 2014, did not follow all regulations, such as occupying only half the sidewalk and limiting tables. In addition to the aforementioned *Pla d'usos*, FP opposes the *Ordenança de Civisme* (Civility Ordinance), adopted in 2005 by the Barcelona City Council to regulate activities in public space (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2005; Galdon-Clavell, 2015). According to this ordinance, it is forbidden, without official permission, to paint or hang posters, play music, consume alcohol, distribute food or engage in artistic activities in public spaces. As nothing changed after the 2013 protest and being immersed daily in such a hyper-regulated context, FP organisers thought an alternative demonstration was needed.

Not knowing exactly what to expect and without great expectations, the first time I arrived at a FP protest, the event already had begun. I found myself in front of a square inside the square. Faced with the static behaviour of people sitting outside the bars, there was a different dynamic in the inner square, almost the opposite of the outside, created by the interactions between people and material objects, which ensured actions inside a delimited setting. This enclosure was possible thanks to a previous FP action, particularly because of a group of architects who studied the planimetry of the chosen square in advance. Once people begin to gather in the predefined location, the first action carried out was defining the portion of the square that FP wants to use as its space and within which its actions will take place. This is quite a simple action, but it creates a strong visual impact: photos and maps dense with meaning hanging on ropes lined with hooks connected to trees or street lamps. The photos depict past events, the planimetry of the specific square in which they are, and maps present portions of the

district that have undergone profound changes. Some photos are of neighbours accompanied by critical phrases (Fig. 3.5 and 3.6). Thanks to this, participants and the occasional passers-by can learn about the history of the place and discuss community issues. Everyone is welcome to stop, sit down, have a chat and engage with the neighbours.

Figure 3.5 Details of the delimitation of the space action. This photo was taken at the end of the event, and it shows hanging pictures and some sketches on the floor made with chalk. San Felipe Neri Square, Ciutat Vella District, 19 August 2014. Author's photo.
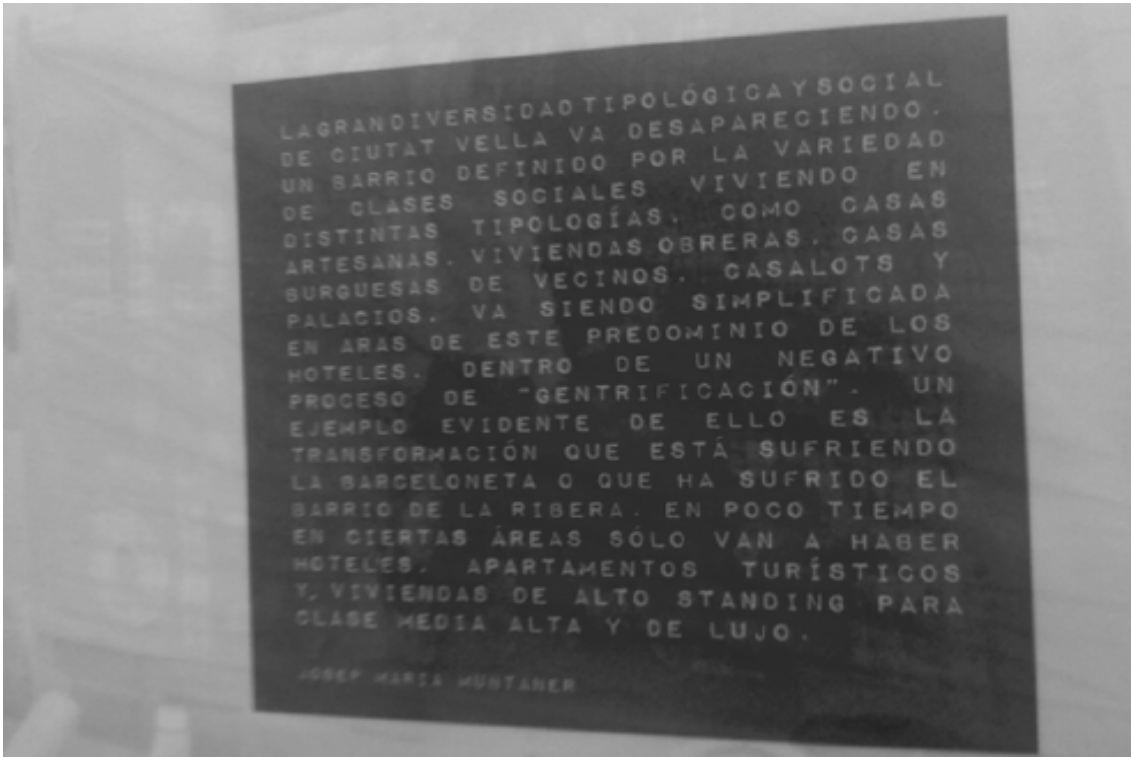
Figure 3.6 Details of a banner. 'The great typological and social variety of Ciutat Vella is disappearing. A neighbourhood defined by the variety of social classes and lifestyles in different housing types, such as artisan houses, public houses, bourgeois houses and palaces, is being simplified by this predominance of hotels through a negative process of gentrification. An obvious example is what La Barceloneta is suffering or what La Ribeira has suffered. In a short period, in certain areas, there will only be hotels, tourist apartments and high-class housing for half-class and luxury people'. Details from one of the photos are used for every event to delimit the space. Author's photo.

In this context, the main players are the neighbours who become visible and involve themselves through everyday actions. In fact, along with the delimitation, another important action to guarantee the spontaneity of the meeting is to set up, inside the perimeter, an area dedicated to commonality. The organisers bring tables and a few stools or chairs to allow participants to sit, and they set up an improvised buffet with dishes and snacks that people brought from home to share.

Moreover, in the preparatory phase, the dissemination of an open invitation to inform other neighbours about the event is very important. Alongside classical leafleting, additional communication media such as Facebook are used to nurture engagement with different and younger age groups. Then, to emphasise the recreational nature of the protest, the meeting time is always around 5 p.m., when kids are out of school. This is another strategy: by involving children, the objective is to occupy the space in a spontaneous way, using the area fully and in a heterogeneous way. The objective also is made clear by a banner that says, '*Recuper l'espai public com a lloc de convivència*'

('Let's regain public space as a space of coexistence'), and by other writing on the floor which call for an inclusive public space (Fig. 3.7) Clearly, such a decision emphasises the desire to create and legitimise a worthwhile experience for participants.

Figure 3.7 Details of a writing on the floor. Santa Maria square, in front of Santa Maria del Mar Cathedral, 9th of July 2017. Author's photo.

It is evident in these activities how FP represents a response to the desire to do something different from standard protests, to emphasise a desire to confront these urban interventions with a cheerful spirit. Usually, in addition to snacks, chalk is used to demarcate the field of action further, together with ropes and pictures, which are then left on the ground so that anyone can write or draw on the pavement. Accordingly, recreational activities also serve as further space demarcations, turning them into peculiar places characterised by specific actions. This manner of defining spaces contributes to enhancing the chosen slogan, 'Let's make the Square', which is both inclusive and exclusive, and contributes to creating a square in the square with dynamics that differ and almost oppose the traditional rites of sitting comfortably – and statically – at bar tables.

Within this context, while participating, I felt like I was part of an open process that

sought to recover autonomy and social inclusion: people of different ages came together in recreational areas dedicated to conviviality in which they move around, play and sit here and there talking about the daily affairs of the city. Normally, during the events I have been attending, there were about 30 people enjoying this way of living in the square and after a couple of hours, people started to leave. During the first meetings, an informal briefing closed the event: the organisers and a few more stayed, coming together in a sort of agora, or 'ritualised space' (Fig. 3.8). Nonetheless, in the last meetings I attended, such practice were less ritualized, people restored the previous visual context, the organisers clean up the area while chatting and setting another appointment in the following days. Then, everyone left.

Figure 3.8 Details of the event. Participants sit in a circle during the closing discussion of an FP event. Author's photo.

The closing discussion (be it more or less structured) becomes the symbolic centre of the meeting, in which people express their impressions of the just-finished FP event. Moreover, decisions regarding the following month's event are debated, with suggestions for new places or alternatives for differentiation – always in an ongoing process that differs from the previous one – in a horizontal organisational structure in

which everyone can contribute. It was at this moment, during the years, that I could assist in the decision to customise the invitation and the event. During my fieldwork, for example, '*Fem Plaça, Fem Platja*' ('Let's make square, Let's make beach') was proposed, as the meeting place was planned to be in a square near the seaside at La Barceloneta in the summer months. Also '*Fem Plaça, Fem castanyada*' ('Let's make square, let's make a chestnut-roasting party') was organised during the Feast of All Saints. The effort was not to make the events attractive; rather, the aim was to emphasise local traditions embedded and performed as political acts. The choice of saying *Fem Castanyada* was actually used in contraposition to the mainstream Halloween parties and *Fem Platja* was accompanied by the invitation to bring sardines and grilled them together to remark a traditional custom typical of summer months.

Furthermore, in June 2017, FP was organized just in front of Santa Maria del Mar Church, in one of the most touristified area of the city centre with the slogan "*Fem Plaça no fa vacances*[59]". In a more recent gathering in the Gothic Neighbourhood in November 2018, stories were shared by an historian woman about a local worker and activist Josepa Vilaret, called *La Negreta*, who was executed in 1789 in an uprising against the increases in the price of bread. During the activity, a vacant plot close to the Ramblas was occupied to fill it with community life and build some street furniture. As the plot is unnamed, it was named *Plaça Josepa Vilaret* for the event – also a tribute to the many influential female personalities that are not represented in the city's street names.

During the years, FP has kept on being organised. Despite the change of political orientation of the City Council since Ada Colau was elected at the head of Barcelona City Council on 2015, the issues related to the outside dining area of bars and restaurants are still an open question. In fact, since the beginnings of her mandate, the mayor had to face the outside dining area legislation promulgated by her predecessor Xavier Trias. When the legislation started to take shape in 2013, in the streets of Barcelona there were around 4.400 outside dining areas. Since then, the total number of terraces has increased of the 14%, although the basic difference lies on the number of tables permitted. The team of the then mayor calculated that nearly half did no fulfil the requirements of distance between tables/chairs and urban elements. According to this,

---

[59] FP does not go on holiday.

the onset of the process of relocation or elimination was fixed in 2015, year in which the city went through the new mayor's elections. This new legislation saw the uprising of the *Gremi de Restauració* (Restaurant & Bar Union) that organised several protest campaigns in order to ask the modification of the ordinance. This was achieved in 2018 when the City Council and the Restaurant Union signed a new agreement, more flexible than the previous one. For these reasons, despite the urgency of other issues, such as the right to housing and tourist renting, FP organisers have kept on pointing the attention also to this specific aspect that characterises the daily life in the city centre.

Similar matters concern the historical centre of the Lagoon city. As I have already mentioned, in the Venetian case, the privatization of public space refers to a specifically referred issue. Nonetheless, it has to be seen and understood within a general tendency of the Lagoon city in which the regeneration of public space and properties is often for tourism purposes. After the eviction, and with the installation of the gazebo from the spring months in 2018, the adjacent space to the entrance of the building turned into a stage in which something occurred almost everyday. In an almost playful tone, this was then named the "gazebo era" and lasted until autumn 2018 (Fig. 3.9).

Figure 3.9 Occupation of the urban space. On the left, makeshift gazebo on the day of eviction. On the right, the white gazebo.

Specifically, Tuesday was the predefined day for the assembly or open reunion in which anyone could participate. A few minutes before the start time, those who arrived in advance picked up the chairs from inside the gazebo and set them up in a circle just outside in front of the structure. Normally, the meetings were announced through a whastapp group and a mailing list, which is open to all, the acceptance to which was scrutinized by active members. The assemblies thus relied upon fluid bonds among

individuals: all participants had equal rights to propose ideas, and cooperate with other committees or groups by elaborating shared actions and concepts. Hence, within these couple of hours, the order of the day set the topics to be covered, usually the planning of new events, activities and positions were discussed, and planned, also in relation to the legal affairs. In fact, it has to be pointed that, just after the reopening in September 2017, 6 people were denounced, first in civil procedure and later also in criminal trial. If on the one hand, some caution was required, on the other, the opinion shared by the community was to keep on organizing events and to use the open space in front of the building. In general, the decisions during the assemblies were taken non-hierarchically; there were no established leaders, although there were a few spokespersons that deal with the press or release public announcements that were previously approved by the assembly. At the end of the assemblies, one person normally took responsibility for sending a resume to the mailing group.

From March onwards, also because of the coming of warmer days, a rich calendar with weekly events and presentations followed. Usually, people gathered 30 minutes before the beginning and set up several chairs. In addition, a couple of armchairs or beanbags were arranged, some carpets and tables on which to put drinks and food to share with attendants. Easels, panels and posters – in which the history of the building and specific references to the urban development plan was explained – further adorned the space (Figures 3.10 and 3.11). During these events social dinners in which anyone could bring something to eat were organised, cards tournaments, cake competitions, laboratories and small concerts.

Figure 3.10 Photos of the gathering in which posters and small postcards defined the space.

Beyond the public events, in the "gazebo era", it was also important for the assembly

to guarantee visibility and openness of the space, in this case of the gazebo, almost daily. For these reasons, during the afternoons, on turn-based, people went to spend a couple of hours sitting outside the gazebo with a table and few chairs – that were then normally stored inside the structure – and information material – on the impossibility of the building to turn into a restaurant – prepared by a group of urban planners that are part of the group. On these occasions, also the well in front of the building, in the middle of the *campo*, turned into a shelf above which lots of books were arranged at the disposal of passers-by or of children playing in the *campo*. In this way, even when there was no official event planned, it was possible to spend some time just as in an informal outdoor living room.

Figure 3.11 La Vida, outside event. 28th of September 2018. Author's photo.

3.3 Making sense of the square in neoliberal times. Redefining the protest in the tourist city

One of the differences between Fem Plaça, the events organised at La Vida and other meetings organised by other associations in which I participated, is definitely the act to

come out in the square and become visible through daily practices.

"*A joyful meeting to regain the public space and provide it, at least, with a more simple and natural content which it is getting harder to find recently: small talks, have a snack, plays…A couple of hours to say that we can all share the square and that many different options fit in as well[60]*". (Fem Plaça Manifest).

As regarding FP, this was my first experience of fieldwork back in 2014 and, also when coming back to Barcelona, I have always joined the group direct action as a participant. In Venice I further deepened my participation by getting involved directly in the daily organisation, the preparation and the management of the outside space. Precisely, it was this continuous involvement over the years with this material, practical "outside" that brought up several interesting questions that have continued to arise in both fieldworks and each time I came back to one of the two urban contexts.

While participating, I relied also on specific techniques towards which I feel a greater inclination, that is, photography, which was not chosen independently from other methods, such as field notes or observant participation, but rather as a complementary medium (Pink, 2007). While my first tentative visual outcomes in the research relied on pictures to communicate more vividly the construction of a 'vernacular square', I later began to analyse my own photographic practice, through which I came to understand more fully the place and sensations transmitted during the meetings (Kroon, 2016; Rose, 2008, 2014). Transcending the limitations of verbal discourse in the field, this tool allowed me to open spaces of understanding and explore embodied performances (Scarles, 2010). It provided me with an opportunity to relive my experience visually and access the practices of which I was a part. Hence, I was able to comprehend more deeply the ways in which FP and La Vida came into being, and at a later stage, photos triggered further reflections in relation with the data collected. I became aware that, while taking pictures, I was more focused on specific inner details and materialities of the event. What I was intrigued while participating and what I ask myself has to do with the constitution and social implications of these squares inside the square. How did performing bodies carry and communicate a political message?

Within the contested city, the process of production of the public space is the result of

---

[60] Una tarda de trobada lúdica en què recuperar l'espai públic i donar-hi un contingut d'allò más senzill, natural i darrerament difícil de trobar: tertúlia, berenar, jocs…Unes horas per a dir que a la plaça hi cabem totes, i que hi caben moltes opcions diferents.

the combination of two mechanisms run by 1) the dispositives that functionality settle the city and 2) the individual/collective use practices of the space. These two dynamics express different ideas of public space, of its management and organisation. The first one reflects the conception of the decisions that act on the structure and the physics morphology of the territory with the objective of governing the use and codifying its functions. The second one, on the contrary, reflects the daily dimensions of the subjects that inhabit and move within the city. The single individuals, through interaction processes, redefine the space and constitute its collective socio-political character. Through the elaboration of new signifiers, often alternative ones, the physical space turn into practiced place. In the daily dimension, the factual powers hide the habitual tactics, in most cases visual ones, that – through the tourist image – cover, neutralize and perpetuate the socio-spatial divisions and controls of capitalism. Public space (including in this concept what concerns the everyday life such as squares, urban furniture, streets, etc.) is neither neutral nor permanent: urban space is not a passive container. Rather, it is constituted by a network of relationships that are dynamically politicized and, in their turn, are the reflection of the divided economical structure. In the contemporary city, the dominant agents (real estate, private investors, local administrations) use urban space as a platform through which visibly project an optimistic facade and, invisibly, an individualistic, consumerist, homogeneous and controlled logic. In his essay "Methaphors to Live By: Landscapes as Systems of Social Reproduction" (2008) Mitchell rearticulates the ideas of Lefebvre, emphasizing the aesthetic illusion of landscape, which nowadays can perfectly fit into the tourist city. He writes "the very purpose of landscape is often precisely to mask the relationships of control that govern the production of landscape. The illusion of landscape is a seamless zone of pleasure". Hence, as exposed in the previous section, in order to understand the resistance and political aspects of FP and La Vida, it is necessary to explore the specific neoliberal politics to which they oppose and in which the disparity is culturally hidden by the powers that produce it. The direct action of the two groups contains the possibility of transforming the urban setting and, by doing so, to produce ruptures in the landscape. From this perspective, such confrontation is primarily a visual one and it allows to build new relationships within the visual and its significance, as well as to dissent what comes as univocal. This means that each and every situation can be susceptible of being

fragmentised in its interior or that each and every setting can be reconfigured by another order of perception and significance. Moreover, such actions, "revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time" (Rancière, 2004:13). This implies a potential 'redistribution of the sensible', both as a perceptual alteration of the visible/invisible and as a political rearrangement of the inclusive/exclusive, to form a new narrative environment.

The experience of FP and La Vida direct action shows the emotional and political aspects of a particular on-going reconfiguration that is historically and geographically contingent. Their aim is to renegotiate reality and set the groundwork for social disagreement. Although the just presented case studies refer to distinct situations, the critical issues that lay at the heart share several common points. Backed up by a series of legislative provisions, FP refers to a widespread phenomenon of outside area for bars and restaurants that is considered as a limitation to the wide range of activities that could happen in public space. These activities are physically limited by the occupation and privatization of space, and it is reinforced by the Civic Ordinance. As regarding Venice, the on-going selling off of the public property is backed up by the National Law of 2008 and it is compounded by the 2006 Bersani decree on the trade liberalisation[61] that, on the whole, is felt by part of the residents as a continuous clampdown to the different urban functions a city should have. In this sense, these two groups unite themselves around what has become a symbol and a common characteristic of the tourist city. Within an ever-increasing limited and mono-functional urban context for local inhabitants, FP and La Vida achieve an open and visible space, a place in which people can reunite not only to enjoy public space but also to reclaim it. Their interventions work as an alternative channel that can denounce neoliberal forces and open new possibilities, interstices that define a more inclusive urban life.

Be it the beach or the square – the same one or in different ones –, in any urban area in which an event takes place, the two groups use an aesthetic and a language that express a social positioning within which its participants want to be included. The space

---

[61] The decree of the 4th of July 2006 n.223, converted into law on 4th of August 2006, n. 248, provides for the abolition of the Communal and Provincial Commissions for the issue license necessary for the opening of public exercises.

they create is linked to the emergence of new social relationships that act to meet the needs that members view as common through the exchange of information. The practices described in the previous section highlight the spatiality of urban assembly as a constant relational co-production in which the possibilities for dwelling in the public space are altered and regenerated. These examples of direct action show the contradictions in the contemporary neoliberal touristic landscape and offer a critical viewpoint on the instrumental use of it. Furthermore, these two ways of staying in the public space outline a particular conception of local, place-based resistance expressed within the neighbourhood, which guarantees a network of support. Although the seemingly festive atmosphere might suggest simplicity in the event, it actually politicises the space through strategies and tactics (De Certeau, 1984). These examples of urban intervention, articulated in a specific situation, are just one of many (Nicholls et al., 2013) in which the district acquires increasing importance. Squares intended as spaces of contestation become places where people can self-organise in social ceremonies used to reclaim the public importance of urban spaces. Playful actions are performed in small-scale spaces, in which political actions are transformed into rituals to strengthen relations between neighbours and stimulate the emancipatory potential of everyday spaces. In fact, as I have been able to verify during the assemblies or informal talks with people of La Vida, these constant events positively charged affections and allowed different generations to encounter people who would otherwise shared the same *campo,* as a transit space, but never come together. These events galvanise the participants, but actually are the tip of the iceberg. In fact, beyond the specificity of the protest gatherings, the continuity of the groups is given by the commitment of a good part of the participants and by a constant involvement in the planning. FP and La Vida are self-organised forms of a do-it-yourself (DIY) project, an ad hoc problem-solving effort carried out through activities capable of returning social life to these sites. They blend old protest terms, such as 'occupation', with newer terms and concepts, for example, 'Post-It city' (Peran, 2008), which emphasise a non-standard, temporal use of public spaces (Ferreri, 2015). While performing their playful protests, the individual artefacts, such as photos, food and the apparently simple actions of drawing or playing, acquire added value and a potentiality that exceed their common functions, constituting a new socio-political feature. The creation of the square inside the square plays an

active part in conditioning the development of the events' possibilities. The urban space is altered via textual and material means, expressed in temporal and ephemeral occupations that appear and disappear without leaving visible or tangible marks, but certainly ideological ones in the minds of participants feeding from time to time on the *raison d'etre* of their movement. Be it in Barcelona or Venice, these examples confirm the urgency of community spaces for citizens, not just to promote the destination. It appropriates spaces by drawing, metaphorically and literally, a new setting that points to the spontaneity of normally denied daily practices allocated in separate spaces standing in for a specific social ordering (Degen, 2008). These specific urban happenings act on the space in which they subjectify their ideas and also renew the sense of belonging and collective identity of the collectives themselves. They shape the space and the agents themselves in a relation of reciprocity. The symbolic creation of a square inside the square engages with the physical occupation that acquires both a strong symbolic significance of inclusive setting and affects the participants themselves, reinforcing and legitimising further agentic behaviours of simple spontaneous acts. In this sense, actions shape the location and overlap with different spatial relations, each of which is characterised by its own sense of meaning (Agnew, 2002) and peculiar rhythm. FP and La Vida effort to reclaim inclusiveness in public spaces shows that apparent optimistic, orderly and fixed neoliberal spaces mask relationships of control and standardisation (Mitchell, 2000). Hence, this kind of action reverses the actual logic of urban landscape, showing that alternatives are possible. Time and space can no longer be thought of as some matrix within which activities occur (Crang, 2001); rather, they are multiple and co-produced (Latham and McCormack, 2004; May and Thrift, 2001). Through socio-materiality, FP and La Vida beat to an inner rhythm that contributes to feeding contingent, proactive and local place-making in opposition to the perception of placelessness. These actions are motivated by a collective sense of place that reclaims all those practices that neoliberal policies and the historical moment exploit for economic gain and returning them to the social sphere. A peculiar time-space (Crang, 2001) is created in a process of interrelations involving forms that are shifting and always are under construction.

Moreover, the activities described above lead us to the category of control that seems to be the most important, as it often passes unperceived. Being part of a control

dispositive, there are small details that limit the different uses of public space. The urban furniture is just an example of these physical barriers so well aesthetically designed and integrated in the urban environment that influence our activities, itineraries and possibilities of imaging the socio-urban context. In the actual Barcelona and Venice, the public and free spaces to sit down, have a rest or meet up with other people are fewer and fewer. So then, Fem Plaça and La Vida bring their stuff in the squares that have been progressively usurped by outside dining areas of any kind of bar and restaurant. Alongside, they turn urban furniture in their favour to legitimise and construct their own space of action. Such actions have to do with, and oppose to a broader trend in which the urban space is designed within a society of "moving along" (Rancière, 2001) in which people go from one point to another without interacting (Saltzman, 2015). Such remark made by Rancière is extremely valuable in respect to the cities we are analysing, characterised by different forms of control on the inhabitants that do not contribute to the image of the tourist city. FP and La Vida, in contrast, consist in transforming this space of 'moving-along' into a space for the appearance of a subject: i.e., the people who are part of these groups and those who want to join them. They consist in refiguring the space, what there is to do there, what is to be seen or named therein. As a confirmation of this, although it has been approved successively and not during my fieldwork, the Venice city has promulgated a decorum regulation on May 2019 which includes the banning of consuming alcohol between 8 pm and 8 am if not in a bar, of sitting in public spaces such as stairs of building, bridges or wells that have not to be considered support tops. In addition, from Monday to Thursday, between 8 pm and 8 am, it is forbidden to go around in groups of more than two people; children's kick scooter are allowed only up to the age of 11 and, between other, the request of occupation of public ground can be asked, to local police, only twice a month (Comune di Venezia, 2019). If this regulation in some respects looks very similar to the Civism Law in Barcelona, it is also interesting to point out how the two normative are being applied arbitrary. Although the two groups have no official or permanent permission of occupation of the public space, during my fieldworks, no police took action to stop such direct actions. Perhaps these actions, if properly controlled, contribute to the apparent looseness (Franck and Stevens, 2013), even where there are significant restrictions in place. This means that some sort of cultural "noise" can be

excluded and, at the same time included to feed a certain image of the city, which, apparently, does not have to be too restrictive. On the whole, and seen from the outside, this holds the potential risk of perpetuating a permissive image of the city.

3.4 Some final remarks

During my final days of fieldwork in December 2014, FP organisers were discussing whether the event had to remain something symbolic and held monthly or, better yet, a daily practice people carried out whenever they wanted. In the summer of 2016, the Barcelona City Council started to work on the ordinance for bars and restaurants. What seemed initially to be a reform that would have reduced the number of outdoor seats in the public space turned out to be a further concession, and since the beginning of 2018, bars and restaurants can occupy up to 60 percent of the sidewalk. As exposed, FP has kept on being organised, but not month to month. In the meantime, some organisers have joined other local groups for a campaign to collect signatures for the revision of the new ordinance and have been joining other collectives on tourism issues.

As regarding Venice, at the end of summer 2018, the assembly of La Vida discussed the possibility to remove the gazebo, also in relation to the criminal charge that bear down on six people of the group. A few months later, a little vineyard was the only visual and material evidence of the community in front of the building. Community dinners and lunches, to keep up to date and strengthen the relationships, have been still organised with dilated frequencies in other spaces and also in the *campo*. This chain of events, their emergence, internal homogeneity and dynamics depend on the extent, strength and persistence of the mechanisms activating the processes of assembly. Moreover, it keeps on reiterating a more receptive attitude of the great profusion of associations and emergent local actions. Hence, it highlights how 'small p' politics and the everyday have been trying to influence 'large P' politics in relation to the development of tourism. The on-going vitality of these emerging grassroots interventions in attracting widespread citizen participation proves that, at least at the grassroots level, small-scale self-governed activism is, in fact, capable, of creating both inclusive democratic communities that can create solutions for their own needs and

fruitful alliances, as we will also see in the next chapters.

Finally, although in both specific cases, as it has been exposed, no specific victory has been achieved (the outside dining areas have increased and the opening of the restaurant is still an open question), such performances have been serving as a fuel to feed and negotiate the existence of such groups, which are in constant evolution[62]. It is also during these moments that people can meet up and discuss, in an informal way, about urban issues and work on new actions. Hence, all this implies some related observations. First, as these development are ongoing with the objects of protest shifting rapidly, this study suggests interpreting the field with fresh perspectives in relation to the whole. It allows for comprehending local actions from the inside, investigating the inner dynamics of the embodied performances of local people who feel dissatisfied with the urban economic development strategies and the ever-increasing power of the private sector. In this way, a more proactive role for the city's residents emerged, concerned with continuing trajectories and overcoming efficiency rhetoric that values a protest only for its ultimate specific success. Second, as a consequence, the current period points to a more articulated conception of urban tourism and the local discontent it elicited. Despite urban disputes having recently differentied themselves in so many ways and directions, until now, broad attention has been paid mainly to the context, actors and results. The proliferation of different forms of tourism contestation requires broader tourism research that focuses on repertoires of action to document how local people make use of their culture to oppose procceses of commodification. This leads to one final suggestion. Local residents'performance and performativity (Bærenholdt et al., 2004; MacCannel, 1999) in relation to tourism development in specific contexts should be included in the existing debate on the nature of discourses and representations in tourism (Ateljevic et al., 2007).

In the next chapter, further interventions on the sense of liveliness of urban-dwelling will be presented. The intention is to give some thoughts to the ways in which the touristification of the city breaks and reassembles certain structures of capitalism, and boots the emergence of new transverse militancy, creating alternative and highly bodily means to relate to public space.

---

[62] Such topics will be better analysed in the next chapters.

References

Agnew, J. (2002) *Making Political Geography*. Oxford: Edward Arnold.

Ajuntament de Barcelona, Projecte D'Ordenança de Misures per Fomentar i Garantir la Convivència Ciutadana a la Ciutat de Barcelona. Available at: http://www.bcn.cat/consell-deciutat/pdf/plenari_22novembre_projecte_ordenanca.pdf (accessed 10 February 2017).

Anderson, B., Keanes, M., McFarlane, C., & Swanton, D. (2012). On assemblages and geography. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 2(2), 171-189.

Appadurai, A. (2004) 'The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition', pp. 59–84 in V. Rao and M. Walton (eds) *Culture and Public Action*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Arias Sans, A. and A. P. Russo (2016) 'The Right to Gaudí: What Can We Learn from the Commoning of Park Güell, Barcelona?', pp. 247-263 in C. Colomb and J. Novy (eds) *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*. London: Routledge.

Ateljevic, I., N. Morgan and A. Pritchard (eds) (2007) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Bærenholdt, J.O., M. Haldrup and J. Urry (2004) *Performing Tourist Places*. London: Routledge.

Barad, K. (2003) 'Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. Signs', *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28(3): 801-831.

Bianchi, R.V. (2009) 'The "Critical Turn" in Tourism Studies: A Radical Critique', *Tourism Geographies* 11(4): 484-504.

Birrell, R. (2008). Jacques Ranciere and the (re) distribution of the sensible: five lessons in artistic research. *Art & Research*, 2 (1). Available from http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/pdfs/v2n1editorial.pdf [Accessed 23 May 2019].

Briassoulis, H. (2017) 'Tourism Destinations as Multiplicities: The View from Assemblage Thinking', *International Journal of Tourism Research* 19(3): 304-17.

Calavita, N. and A. Ferrer (2000) 'Behind Barcelona's Success Story: Citizen Movements and Planners' Power', *Journal of Urban History* 26(6): 793-807.

Castells, M. (1977) *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*. London: Edward

Arnold.

Castells, M. (1983) *The City and the Grassroots*. London: Edward Arnold.

Colomb, C. and J. Novy (eds) (2016) *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*. New York: Routledge.

Cordero, D. (2014) 'Barcelona Marca Un Nuevo Récord Turístico Con 7,5 Millones De Visitants', *El País*, 6 March. Available at: http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2014/03/06/catalunya/1394097151_710520.html (accessed 11 February 2017)

Crang, M. (2001) 'Rhythms of the City: Temporalised Space and Motion', pp. 187-207, in J. May and N. Thrift (eds) *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality*. London: Routledge.

Crouch, D. (2002) Surrounded by place: Embodied Encounters, pp. 207-218 in S. Coleman and M. Crang (eds) *Tourism between Place and Performance*. New York: Berghahn Book.

De Angelis M (2007) *The Beginning of History: Value Struggles and Global Capital*. London: Pluto.

De Angelis M (2010) The production of commons and the "explosion" of the middle class. *Antipode* 42(4):954-977.

De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* (trans. S. Rendall). Berkeley, CA:University of California Press. De Souza, M.L. (2006) 'Social Movements as "Critical Urban Planning" Agents', *City* 10(3): 327-42.

Degen, M. (2008) 'Modelling a New Barcelona: the Design of Public Life', pp. 83–96 in M. Garcia and M. Degen (eds) *The Meta-City: Barcelona-Transformation of a Metropolis*. Barcelona: Editorial Anthropos.

Degen, M. and S. Garcia (2012) 'The Transformation of the "Barcelona Model": An Analysis of Culture, Urban Regeneration and Governance', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36(5): 1022-38.

DeLanda, M. (2006) *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Company.

Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1993) *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Delgado, M. (2007a) *Antropologia y turismo. Ciudades sin ciudad, la tematizacion*

cultural de los centros urbanos. Madrid: Plaza y Valdes.

Delgado, M. (2007b), *La ciudad mentirosa. Fraude y miseria del Modelo Barcelona*. Barcelona: Catarata.

Dovey, K. (2010) *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power*. New York: Routledge.

Edensor, T., D. Leslie, S. Millington and N. Rantisi (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London: Routledge.

Ferreri, M. (2015) 'The Seduction of Temporary Urbanism', *Ephemera* 15(1): 181-91.

Galdon-Clavell, G. (2015) 'Uncivil Cities: Insecurity, Policy Transfer, Tolerance and the Case of Barcelona's "Civility Ordinance,"' *Urban Studies* 53(9): 1923-41.

Harvey, D. (2012) *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London:Verso Books.

Holston, J. and A. Appadurai (1996) 'Cities and Citizenship', *Public Culture* 8(2): 187-204.

Hou, J. (2010) '(Not) Your Everyday Public Space', pp. 1–18 in J. Hou (ed.) *Insurgent Public*

Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of the Contemporary City. London: Routledge. Hughes, N. (2001) 'Young People Took to the Streets and All of a Sudden All of the Political

Parties Got Old': The 15M Movement in Spain', *Social Movement Studies* 10(4): 407–13. Jacobs, J. and P. Merriman (2011) 'Editorial: Practising Architectures', *Social & Cultural*

Geography 12(3): 211–22.

Kassam, A. (2014) 'Naked Italians Spark Protests against Antics of Drunken Tourists in Barcelona', *The Guardian*, 21 August. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/21/ naked-italians-protests-drunken-tourists-barcelona (accessed 20 May 2019).

Kroon, A. (2016) 'The Ruins of Managua Vieja: The Use of Expressive Photography in Urban Ethnography', *Visual Studies* 31(3): 191-205.

La Vanguardia (2013) 'S'aprova Inicialment La Nova Ordenança De Terrasses', *La Vanguardia*, 16 July. Available at: http://www.lavanguardia.com/mon-barcelona/20130716/54377572089/ ordenanca-de-terrasses.html (accessed 22 May

2019).

Latham, A. and D.P. McCormack (2004) 'Moving Cities: Rethinking the Materialities of Urban Geographies', *Progress in Human Geography* 28(6): 701-24.

Lefebvre, H. (1968) Le droit à la ville, Paris: Anthopos. Lois-González, R. and M.J. Piñeira-Mantiñán (2015) 'The Revival of Urban Social and Neighbourhood. Movements in Spain: A Geographical Characterization', *Die Erde* 146(2-3): 127-38.

Long, J. (2013) 'Sense of Place and Place-Based Activism in the Neoliberal City', *City* 17(1): 52-67.

MacCannell, D. (1999) *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

McFarlane, C. (2009) 'Translocal Assemblages: Space, Power and Social Movement', *Geoforum* 40(4): 561-67.

McFarlane, C. (2011) 'Assemblage and Critical Urbanism', *City* 15: 204-24.

McFarlane, C. (2011) 'The City as Assemblage: Dwelling and Urban Space', *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* 29: 649-71.

Marcus, G.E. and E. Saka (2006) 'Assemblage', *Theory, Culture & Society* 23(2-3): 101–6.

Massey, D. (1999) '"Space-Time," "Science" and the Relationship between Physical Geography and Human Geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24(3): 261–76.

May, J. and N. Thrift (eds) (2001) *TimeSpace*. London: Routledge

Mitchell, D. (2000) *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mould, O. (2014) 'Tactical Urbanism: The New Vernacular of the Creative City', *Geography Compass* 8: 529-39.

Muecke, S. and C. Wergin (2014) 'Materialities of Tourism in the Twenty-First Century: A Very Brief Introduction', *Tourist Studies* 14(3): 227-30.

Müller, M. (2015) 'Assemblages and Actor-Networks: Rethinking Socio-material Power, Politics and Space', *Geography Compass* 9(1): 27-41.

Müller, M. and C. Schurr (2015) 'Assemblage Thinking and Actor-Network Theory: Conjunctions, Disjunctions, Cross-Fertilisations', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41(3): 217-29.

Navarro Yáñez, C.J. (2013) 'Do "Creative Cities" Have a Dark Side? Cultural Scenes

and Socioeconomic Status in Barcelona and Madrid (1991-2001)', *Cities* 35: 213-20.

Nicholls, W., B. Miller and J. Beaumont (eds) (2013) *Spaces of Contention: Spatialities and Social Movements*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Peran, M. (2008) *Post-City: Ciutats Ocasionals, Ciudades Ocasionales, Occasional Urbanities*. Madrid: Turner Publishing Company.

Pink, S. (2007) *Doing Visual Ethnography*, London: SAGE Publications.

Pritchard, A. and N. Morgan (2007) 'De-Centring Tourism's Intellectual Universe, or Traversing the Dialogue between Change and Tradition' pp. 11-28, in I. Ateljevic, A. Pritchard and N. Morgan (eds) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Rose, G. (2008) 'Using Photographs as Illustrations in Human Geography', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 32(1): 151-60.

Rose, G. (2014) 'Visual Culture, Photography and the Urban: An Interpretive Framework', *Space and Culture, India* (Special methodology edition), 2(3): 5-13.

Saltzman, M. (2017) 'Post-15M Grassroots Interventions In and For Public Space – Resurgence in Everyday Forms of Control and Resistance', in O. Pereira Zazo and S. Torres (eds) *Spain after the 15M: The 99% Speaks Out*. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/27687870/Post15M_Grassroots_Interventions_in_and_for_Public_Space_Resurgence_in_Everyday_ Forms_of_Control_and_Resistance

Scarles, C. (2010) 'Where Words Fail, Visuals Ignite. Opportunities for Visual Autoethnography in Tourism Research', *Annals of Tourism Research* 37(4): 905-26.

Stronza, A. (2001) 'Antropology of Tourism: Forging New Ground for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30: 261-83.

Walliser, A. (2013) 'New Urban Activisms in Spain: Reclaiming Public Space in the Face of Crises', *Policy & Politics* 43(3): 329-50.

4. Singing the Touristification: Lyrics from the field

Through the previous chapters we have seen how, during recent years, various forms of local contestation, which include daily and creative practices, have become widespread. Such tendency also includes musical composition and invites the connection of critical tourist studies to musical geography and anthropology. In this chapter, two songs of two local urban collectives, and more broadly their repertoires, allow the possibility for new analytical inquiry by emphasising the embodied character of these practices. The analysis of the content, the performers and the spaces in which the groups perform shows how tourism has become enmeshed in the creative initiatives of local protests and bring forward the present research.

The following case studies will help in understanding the actual urban mobilization against the sense of placelessness caused by processes of touristification. The aim is to identify how discourses are articulated into narratives and evoke feelings of deep attachment to a place, contrasted with urban commodification. In addition, the descriptions of the specific contexts and forms of activism invoke a broader consideration of urban liveliness and seek to disprove the idea of performance as an ephemeral and ineffective act.

4.1 Approaching the Context

The two songs that follow are about specific, hyper-located events. Their content fall within a general tendency of selling public spaces as short- and mid-term strategy to secure new revenues through tourism development. Regarding Barcelona, the song refers to facts that date back to 1999, when the Corporation for the Quality of Social Housing (in Catalan: '*Empresa Qualitat Habitatge Social*'), part of the UGT[63] (General Union of Workers), was bought for 600.000 euro per lot (see Fig. 4.1) in the *Portal de Santa Madrona*, southern part of Raval, the popular neighbourhoods of Ciutat Vella. The project was for the construction of social housing, as intended by the then-active urban plan. However, in 2003, a plan amendment of the PERI ('*Pla d'Especial de*

---

63 Sindicato Unión General de Trabajadores.

Reforma Interior del Raval', or the Special Plan of Renovation of Inner Raval, first approved in 1985) reduced the total amount of social housing by three-quarters. Shortly after, the Corporation for the Quality of Social Housing sold the land for approximately 2.350.000 euros to *Inversiones Lengar SL* (Lengar Investment Company), which resold the land to Barcelona Investment for 7.950.000 euros only two years later. In 2015, another sale for 22.000.000 euros transferred the property to ATIR, The Hotel Investment Company, whose major shareholder is Trénor Löwenstein, who appears in the following lyrics. Soon after, ATIR's project became clear: the construction of two buildings of 100 rooms each, the Praktik Drassanes Hotel (Rodriguez, 2017). The project of a further tourist accommodation has joined the broad spectrum of already existing hotels in the district. Indeed, over the last 15 years the number of hotels has passed from 203 in 2001 to 373 in 2014[64] (+83,74%), of which about one third is in Ciutat Vella (Barcelona Tourism Annual Report, 2017; Nofre et al., 2017).

---

[64] For the specific presentation of this case study, the date refers to tourist statistics of the City Council previous to the Urban Special Plan For Tourist Accommodation PEUAT (*Plan Especial Urbanístico de Alojamientos Turísticos*) approved on the 27th of January 2017, which entered into force on the 6th of March of the same year. The PEUAT is an urban planning tool whose aim is to control the implementation of tourist accommodations in the city. Specifically, the plan distinguishes four areas, each one with a specific regulation. Each area is characterised by a distribution of the accommodations on the territory, takes into account the proportion between the number of beds that are offered and the resident population and the impact of the tourist activities on the public space. For more information: http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/pla-allotjaments-turistics/es/

Figure 4.1 Aerial photo of the lot in Barcelona. The area concerned is at the bottom of the picture, delimited by the grass. Source: www.ara.cat Photograph: Tordera Pere.

During the same period, similar sales happened in Venice. Specifically, I am talking about the building in *Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio*, which has been presented in the previous chapter (Fig. 4.2). The buyer, a well-known local private investor, secured the building for 911.000 euros, far less than the estimated value (La Nuova, 2017). His intention, as already exposed, is to convert the space into a restaurant if the city council allows the change of use from public to private, which is still an open question. It would be another restaurant in a *campo* in which there are already three restaurants with their outside dining areas and a former university building that has been sold for renovation into a four-star hotel.

Figure 4.2 The front of the Regional building. The ground floor is the sales object.
Source: http://nuovavenezia.gelocal.it/venezia

In both situations, facing the sales and the cities' empty office spaces, the citizens' platforms took shape. In Barcelona, we see *Salvem les Drassanes*[65] ('Let's Save Drassanes') at the forefront. Created in 2006, the collective seeks to avoid the requalification in favour of a tourist monoculture. Regarding Venice, the group of La Vida created some working groups, one of which has the task of studying the urban issues that can stop the tourist requalification of the ground floor.

In both cases, local residents and activists see these dominant processes in urban tourism development as a significant threat to their social lives. New kinds of social complaints have been voiced, and, in addition to the aforementioned platforms born as a specific answer to these specific sales, the present time is also witnessing a proliferation of different initiatives. The initial ones were dedicated to organising events and reviewing legal material, which allowed activists to denounce, on a concrete basis, the situation from which the neighbourhood is suffering. Alongside, other groups were formed to create artistic work that reflected what was happening in their towns. This was the case for the *Teatre Sobre La Marcha* (TSM, a mix of Spanish and Catalan that

---

[65] https://salvemlesdrassanes.wordpress.com/

means 'Theatre on the Fly') in Barcelona and for the *Coro delle Lamentele* (CdL, or 'The Complaints Choir') in Venice.

I first met TSM at a local radio station[66] in Barcelona in March 2017 while helping a friend with her broadcast on the touristification of the city. On that day, two spokespersons of the theatre went to the radio to talk about their group and their agenda in the following months. After that occasion, I began to attend the group's shows and I also follow the organisation of an event scheduled for the month of July. Meanwhile, I heard about the choir in Venice, where I used to live in 2016 and to which I came back in September 2017.

Consequently, first in the Catalan capital and then in Italy, I followed rehearsals and performances, and backed them up by interviews, anecdotes, and an analysis of the internal processes and interactions of the group. Now, drawing from this, I will bring out the complexities of how these example of urban protests can help in investigating the embodied experience of collective action and identity, the political aspects of the two groups and the plurality of subjectivities involved in them (Serafini, 2018).

4.2 'Mamma Mia, They Want to Build Another Hotel' alongside 'Vida is Beautiful': Content and the individual/collective identity of the performers

During the 2011 demonstrations of the 15M Movement in Barcelona, meetings were planned and working groups were organised, including the committee of *Indignados* Theatre, which was responsible for planning committed gigs during the occupation of Catalunya Square. After being evicted, people continued to meet for rehearsals, first at the seat of the *Forn de teatre Pa'tothom*[67] and then at *La Casa de La Solidaritat*[68], both located in the Raval neighbourhood. The name they choose after the eviction was 'Theatre on the Fly[69]' (TSM). As Cordu and Carme, two members of the groups,

---

[66] Radio Contrabanda. A self-managed, free radio station since 1991.
More informations: http://www.contrabanda.org/
[67] Carrer de la Lluna, 5, 08001, Barcelona. This entity is specialised in the theatre of the Oppressed and social projects.
[68] Carrer de Vistalegre, 15, 08001, Barcelona. This social space was born as a place in which, weekly, people could receive food. It then turned into a space for social interchange and voluntary in which people can rent the rooms for a couple of hours a day.
[69] Teatre Sobre La Marcha.

explained to me, the name is by no means a random choice and signifies their way of being: the ethos of improvisation and their commitment to accompanying the social movements in town, artistically representing their struggles and going wherever they are called in support of other social causes.

Since its beginning, TSM staged several pieces, such as *Las Tres Cerditas Desahuciadas* ('The Three Evicted Little Pig Sisters', for the anniversary of La PAH, *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* 'Platform for People Affected by Mortgages'), *Caperucita Roja y Los Lobbies Feroces* ('Little Red Riding Hood and the Ferocious Lobbies'), *La Rateta que Escombrava la Barceloneta* ('The Little Mouse that Swept La Barceloneta', in which Barcelona's story is narrated, from the marketing slogan *Barcelona Posa't Guapa*, 'Barcelona, make yourself pretty', which was used during the mass restructuring for the 1992 Olympic Games until the Barcelona model failed and local urban regeneration actions fell out of favour and were replaced with staged simulacra to ensure the city's international brand and tourism image). The group is composed by 20-25 people, most of which are amateur actors. Nonetheless, a few of them perform on a professional level and are the creative engine of the group, which is then divided in different working subgroups. Most of their recital-shows readjust some well-known fairy tale and include cover songs whose lyrics have been rewritten to narrate a particular social fact about the city. Sometimes, however, they simply perform songs that were written for a particular occasion, without a theatrical performance. This was the case for the sale of the hotel Praktik, which is under consideration here. The Platform *Salvem Drassanes*, with other groups such as ABTS (*Asemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible*[70], 'Assembly of Neighbourhood for Sustainable Tourism'), asked TSM to write a song and record a video in the vacant lot to lend visibility to the issue (Fig. 4.3).

---

[70] ABTS is a set of entities and associations from different districts of Barcelona that, beginning in 2016, joined to carry out critical work and mobilizations to oppose the dominant discourse about tourism based on the Barcelona brand.

Figure 4.3 Four still images taken from the video by TSM.
The top left picture says *Who benefits from this?* The top right picture says *No, No. The neighbourhood is not for sale*. Lower left: *Where should we put all these guiris?* On the right bottom *What a saturation*.
Source: https://youtu.be/aalVWrSVNLs By permission of the authors.

This song was also used for the Raval alternative neighbourhood festival in July 2017. Originally religious ceremonies that came to embody the Catalan identity, the *festes majors* are now street festivals that are held one after another in Barcelona during the summer months. During the same period, in this neighbourhood, residents organise activities and events, which range from formal to alternative ones. During those of the latter category, TSM organized a kind of musical reclaiming parade, stopping several times through the Raval, and participants disguised themselves as local-indigenous people and estate speculators. People of the theatre, together with those of the *Salvem Drassanes* collective and other groups active in the district, gathered at a predetermined place in d'En Robador Street. At the start, all the participants were provided with the lyrics and then left for the neighbourhood, stopping and singing in several critical places, such as where an eviction was happening in Lancaster Street or where an occupied community garden[71] was located. During the parade, the group also stopped at

---

[71] Huerto del Chino, in Reina Amàlia street, was a self-managed garden which was occupied in 2012 and has evicted several times until its shutdown in 2017.

the Portal Santa Madrona and performed the song that was conceived a few months earlier opposing the hotel's construction (Fig.4.4)

Figure 4.4 Detail of the parade just in front of Portal Santa Madrona. During the event, some participants were asked to dressed up like indigenous (which was supposed to represent local people), while some others were wearing fine cloth disguise to resemble real estate developers. The buzzard accompanied the business men. Photo taken on the 13th of June 2019 by the author.

The lyrics are reproduced below in Table 4.1. The original version is on the left and my translation is on the right.

Mamma Mía, Volen Fer un Altre Hotel (original)	Mamma Mia, They Want to Build Another Hotel (English translation)
Rambla avall del Raval,	Lower ends of the Rambla of Raval,
Ve un marquès cavalcant	here comes a marquis riding,
Josep María… De Trenor Lowestein	Josep María… De Trenor Lowestein.
Ha comprat un solar	He has bought land,
I sabem que farà…	and we know what he will do…
Josep María… De Trenor Lowestein	Josep María… De Trenor Lowestein.
Ni llar de nens	No kindergarten,
Ni equipaments.	No urban equipment.
Ni sera un parc	There will be no park,
Ni tampoc uns pisos socials	And no social housing.
L'UGT sel'ls va rebentar	The UGT destroyed everything.
Els voltorrs s'alien amb noblesa	The voltors are lining up gracefully/
I arrasen barris sense pietat.	And they are tearing down the neighbourhood
Ohhh	with no mercy/ Ohh
COR: Mamma mía! /	**REF: Mamma mia!** /
Volen fer una alter hotel	**They want to build another hotel.**
Per què? / Qui en treu beneficis?	**Why? / Who benefits?**
Mamma mía! / Quina saturació!	**Mamma mia / What a congestion!**
Oh, no! /	**Oh, no!** /
On fiquem tants guiris?	**Where should we put all these *guiris*?**
Dius que hem d'estar contentes.	They said we should be pleased.
Que això son llocs de feina	That it is an employment opportunity.
I què? Si no em podré pagar el lloguer!	So what? If we can't pay the rent!
COR: Mamma mia! /	**REF: Mamma mia!**
Al Raval no us volem.	**At Raval we don't want it. No, no.**
No, no. El barri no està en venda, no!	**The neighbourhood is not for sale!**
Ciutadans el PP, PSC I Convergents	Ciutadans el PP, PSC and Convergents,
Que son molt pijos I molt llestos, també.	Who are very poshy, and very tricky as well,
Fan costat al marquès I al seu furor hoteler	Support the marquis and his hotel excitement,
Que son molt pijos I molt llestos, també.	Who are very poshy, and very tricky as well.
Alguns veins, semblen encantats	Some of the neighbours seem flattered.
Els han pres el pel, seduint-los amb caritat	They were teased, seduced with charity
Disfrassada d'avenç social.	Disguised as social progress.
Ja està bé! / No vull les teves engrunes	That's enough! / We don't want the crumbs
D'un pastís que no t'hem pas demanat/ Ohhh...	Of a cake that we did not ask for/ Ohhh…
COR: Mamma mía!	**REF: Mamma mia!**

Volen fer una alter hotel	**They want to build another hotel.**
Per què? Qui en true beneficis?	**Why? Who benefits?**
Mamma mía!	**Mamma mia!**
Quina saturació! Oh, no!	**What a congestion! Oh, no!**
On fiquem tants guiris?	**Where should we put all these *guiris*?**
Estic externalitzada,	I am outsourced.
si em queixo m'acomiades,	If I complain I'll get fired.
Quin mal! Treballar amb un hernia discal!	What a shame to work with a slipped disc!
COR: Mamma mia!	**REF: Mamma mia!**
Al Raval no us volem.	**At Raval we don't want it.**
No, no. El barri no està en venda!	**No, no. The neighbourhood is not for sale!**
No!	**No!**

Table 4.1 Mamma mía, Volen Fer un Altre Hotel. Source: Teatre Sobre la Marcha; English translation by the author.

Similarly, in Venice, the CdL (The Complaints Choir) was invited to support La Vida. When this group was formed, it took inspiration from a Finnish project[72] that invited people to complain ironically by singing the most common grievances of their towns. The project asked for one song that could be shared on the Internet for each choir from every city that decided to participate. The CdL's first song was conceived in 2016 for a local festival, of which many of the choir participants are organisers: the *Festival delle Arti Giudecca* (Festival of Arts Giudecca, one of the islands that make up the insular Venice). This festival has been held every year since 2010, the organisers are different associations and groups based in *Giudecca* island and the purpose is to express the vitality of a marginal place through art.

The songs for this occasion collected many of the Venetians' typical complaints, such as the weather conditions, the too-expensive local transports, all presented in a satirical way. As Sandro, one of the members explained to me, the participants were so tickled by the initiative that they decided to continue rehearsing and went beyond the format proposed by the Finnish project. Since then, the choir has become very popular locally, performing its own repertoire and several pieces of music composed to support the city's associations and committees that invited them to sing. Normally, they try to come together once a week, or at least every two weeks. The choir teacher and two guitarists

---

[72] http://www.complaintschoir.org/

constituted the professional core of the group, which on the whole sing at an amateur level. Normally, the melodies to revise are chosen by a few, while the creative process of the lyrical content is shared during rehearsals, or even through a whatsapp group. To name just a few of their works: in May 2017, the choir attended a demonstration organised by ASC (*Assemblea Sociale per la Casa*, 'Social Assembly for the House') and performed a song written for that event. In September 2017, during the annually International Assembly of European Movements for the Defence of the Territory, Environmental Justice and Democracy organised by the No Big Ship Committee, the group performed a song dedicated to the issue of the big cruises in the Venetian lagoon. Likewise, in November 2017, during a day of debate at La Vida, the CdL was invited to close the day with a song (Table 4.2) they wrote in response to the sale of the Regional building (Fig. 4.5). Since then, whenever there has been an opportunity to support the building's reopening, the choir has taken part in the events inside and outside the building (Fig. 4.6).

Figure 4.5 Complaint Choir at La Vida. Since La Vida has been occupied (or 'reopened', according to the residents involved), there have been many activities. One of these is Agire La Città ('Acting the city'), where a series of issues were discussed, including the touristification of Venice and the collective management of the urban commons. The figure presents a few images of the choir singing at the end of one of these meetings in November 2017. Source: Author's photograph.

Figure 4.6 Complaint Choir singing outside La Vida. The picture above shows the choir on a performance carried out on the 23rd of December 2017. Before Christmas Eve, La Vida organised a shared lunch and invited the choir to sing. For the occasion, the group revised the Coca Cola's Christmas commercial song, which was very popular in the 90s. The picture below shows the choir while singing a revised version of the Italian partisan song Bella Ciao on the day of the eviction on the 6th of March 2018.

La Vida xe Bea (original)	**La Vida is Beautiful (English translation)**
C'è, c'è chi non gli importa una sega	There are, there are those who don't give a fuck,
Dei veneziani chi se ne frega	Who cares nothing about the Venetians
C'è chi svende insieme alle case	There are those ones who, together with the houses,
Anche il cuore di questo Paese	Sell off the heart of this country,
E ci vuole far sopra una cresta	And they want to skim a little cream,

Ma ora gli gridiamo 'Basta, no!'	But now we are screaming out loud 'That's enough!'
A chi vuole affitare Venessia	To those ones who want to rent Venice
E andare l'estate in Croassia	And then spend the summer in Croatia.
C'è chi vuole spennare i turisti	Some people want to rip-off tourists,
E i vicini diventano tristi	And the neighbours get upset,
Ma alla Vida c'è quello che parla	But at La Vida there is someone who is speaking
E ci convience a occuparla	And convinces us to occupy it.
E la Vida, la Vida,	**And La Vida, La Vida,**
E la Vida xe bela	**and La Vida is beautiful.**
Basta avere in scarsela	**All it takes is money**
Giusto un par de milioni	**In your hands**
Par sti 4 goldoni	**For these assholes.**
E la Vida, la Vida,	**And La Vida, La Vida,**
E la Vida xe strana	**and La Vida is strange.**
No ne serve la grana	**We don't need money,**
Perchè la Vida xe nostra	**As La Vida is already ours,**
Ecco qua la proposta!	**Here you have our proposal!**
C'è, c'è chi porta i bambini a giocare	Some people, bring the kids up here to play,
E approfitta per fare all'amore	And take this opportunity to make love,
Poi ci sono le associazioni	Then we have the associations
Che si affogano nelle riunoni	That don't come out of their meetings.
E c'è sempre quello che parla	And there is always that one person who speaks a lot,
Ma cosa dice se parla, mah?!	But, what is he saying if he speaks, mah!
Ci vediamo a bere una birra	See you there for a beer,
A vedere un film che si ispirra	To see a movie that inspires us.
Non ha senso volerla alienare	It makes no sense to alienate it
È la nostra città che scompare	It's our city that disappears,
Se c'è sempre qualcuno che svende	If there is always someone who sells off.
La Vida chi la difende?	Who stand up for la Vida?
E la vida, la vida	**And La Vida, La Vida,**
E la vida xe bea	**And La Vida is beautiful.**
Basta avere in scarsea	**All it takes is money**
Giusto un par de milioni	**in your hands**
Par sti 4 goldoni	**For these assholes.**
E la vida, La Vida	**And La Vida, La Vida,**
E la vida xe verta	**And La Vida is open.**
Ma che bella scoperta	**But what fine news**
Sembra quasi una giostra	**It's almost like a carousel**

Sì la vida xe nostra!!   **Yes, La Vida is ours!!**

Table 4.2 Lyrics of Coro delle Lamentele's song for La Vida. Source: Coro delle Lamentele. English translation by author.

In urban contexts characterised by a diminishment of a sense of place, increased congestion, the privatization of public space and real estate speculation, the songs illustrate the inequalities between the policies designed for local residents and those ones for visitors. If we return to the songs' lyrical content and their narratives, we see how they share certain crucial similarities and the emergence of multi-layered spaces. Both songs take up the issue of the sales. In TSM's 'Mamma Mia', the introductory lines make the Marquis's project explicit, highlighting how UGT and the various parties that supported the urban plan changes have been accused of being accomplices in the urban transformation. Despite the residents' requests, no one will build a kindergarten, a park, or social housing. It seems that the only construction is one focused on tourism, backed up by social progress and a dominant rhetoric that claims that this kind of industry provides jobs. This type of discourse could be embraced and supported by some local residents. Some of the neighbours even seem flattered. But, it is demystified in the fourth, third lines from the end ('I am outsourced, if I complain I'll get fired / What a shame to work with a slipped disc!'). It is important to specify that these words are spoken by Las Kellys[73], a new urban collective formed in 2016 by the cleaning ladies of the hotel trade to denounce their insecure and underpaid jobs within a steadily increasing sector. Some members of Las Kellys were present in the making of the video and also during the parade, in which, after the performance, they made a short speech.

If we turn to the Venetian composition, we begin with the local authorities' disregard about the residents' desire to keep some places public and accessible. Instead, it is said, the local authorities prefer more lucrative tourism businesses to 'rip-off tourists', prioritising the commercial dimension at the expense of the social dimension. Although the song suggests that the only possible solution is to have buying power, the occupation of the building and the countless events held in it put forward an alternative way. Paraphrasing the text, at La Vida, you can find a children's playground, meetings of local associations, a film forum, book readings, concerts and exhibitions. Alienating

---

[73] https://laskellys.wordpress.com/

another urban space further undermines the urban vibrancy by depriving it of points of agreement and sociability.

In both cases, the songs present original lyrics in terms of the content. As regards the melody, these are remade versions of familiar tunes. Namely, the Catalan song use ABBA's melody of Mamma Mia, while the Venetian composition is a version of Cochi and Renato[74]'s *E la vita e la vita*. Indeed, the two groups use the art of music to enact identity politics in which the lyrical content is more relevant than the original melody. This is also relevant in terms of defining the success of the performance. By using well-known melody, the groups allow participants to follow the rhythm and sing along with them. Moreover, the adaptation of the text reflects a particular historical moment to construct alternative discursive terrains. In these cases, an inner specific point of view is adopted to construct a shared historical self-understanding about these urban conflicts. The words and the nature of the images conveyed in the two songs portray multi-layered social and physical spaces in which, through a set of oppositions, different categories of inquiry intersect. Specifically, in this situation, we have the local community who is telling the story and local authorities and private investors that are alienating a portion of the urban fabric without ensuring a social space for the residents. Within this opposition, there is a recurring category: the tourist one.

During a time that is witnessing ever-increasing contestation around tourism (Colomb and Novy, 2016) and ill-conceived urban place-making policies – widespread enough to have spawned the term 'tourism-phobia' – these songs cannot be said to attack tourists directly. However, this indistinct category is seen as an antagonistic element that unbalances the city's development strategies. Sentences such as 'Where should we put all these *guiris*?' (TSM) or 'Some people want to rip-off tourists' (CdL) introduce the tourists. In both cases, the emic word *guiris* and the use of the verb 'rip-off' highlight, on one side, an uneasiness about the continuing arrival of visitors and, on the other, the awareness of how tourist places are more lucrative businesses than those designed for the local residents.

It was precisely to debates on these issues I could assist during my fieldwork in Venice and I could further analyse during some informal talks with some members of

---

[74] An Italian musical and comedy duo active during the 1960s and 1970s. Here the original version of the song: https://youtu.be/YnenMM6cXvI

the choir. In fact, after rehearsals one evening, the group started to discuss a potential crowd funding so to finance an album. Some of them proposed, as an alternative, to busk in different points of the city and to raise the amount this way. Others opposed to the proposal as they argued that, by doing so, they were in a sense taking advantage of tourism, which is the very reason they join the choir, i.e. an alternative way to criticise how the city is administrated. For others, instead, tourists should be sensitised and along with singing, explanatory pamphlet could be distributed. These ideas were not taken under consideration seriously, and the final proposal was to organise a social dinner for the fundraising.

This episode, together with the explanations that I got during some conversations, offered me the possibility to understand the different positioning of members in the fluid collective identity, which is always under renegotiation in this group. By referring to his participation, after one performance at La Vida, Sandro told me:

This is not protest music. Rather, we are trying to keep things light and to place the emphasis on issues that are going on in Venice. Protest music would require more attention[75].

Alongside, the choir teacher said to me:

What we do is not protest music properly. We took inspiration from those songs of the Canzoniere Popolare[76], but we put into music the complaints and now the most common one is on tourism. Songs become the relief valve and the complaint, if sung, makes you laugh but it also gives you food for thoughts[77].

Since their formation, the group discussed its positioning and decided not to be identified as a protest choir. Nevertheless, even if this is the official rhetoric of the group, the motivation is then negotiated at individual level. As Anna, another participant told me:

For me, it is protest music or, at least, this is what drives me to joint the choir. For

---

[75] Non si tratta di musica di protesta, bensì di sdrammatizzare e mettere l'accento su questioni che stanno succedendo in città- La musica di protesta richiederebbe maggiore attenzione.

[76] A popular music group formed in Veneto during the 60s.

[77] Quello che facciamo non è proprio musica di protesta. Abbiamo preso ispirazione dalle canzoni del Canzoniere Popolare, ma mettiamo in musica le lamentele ed ora quelle più comuni sono sul turismo. Le canzoni diventano una valvola di sfogo e le lamentele, se cantate, ti fanno ridere ma anche riflettere.

me, this is a different way of protesting and this is my intention[78].

Perhaps, this identity narration towards the outside is due to the fact that most of the participants, with an age range of 50-60 years, have been living during the 1970s and, now, they do not feel comfortable to identify their practice as a protest one. As Elena, a further member that has joined the group since the beginning said to me:

You know, maybe the protest music of the 70s was tougher because the society itself was tougher. Maybe, does music nowadays, in a way a little more of entertainment, reflect the present-day society?[79]

Such interesting insights into the individual tensions within the group were not present within the TSM. As Carme and Cordu told me during a meeting we had:

We are a libertarian theatre, not an anarchist one, but with principles inspired by libertarian ideals. And since the beginnings in Plaça Catalunya, we thought this could be a more pleasant way to communicate[80].

Indeed, as they met during the occupations of the 15M, the participants identify themselves clearly as part of a social protest group of activists. Moreover, this commitment is not isolated. In fact, the majority of the participants militate in different associations and collectives within the neighbourhood. For example, some of the members are part of the *Ágora Juan Andrés*, a formerly empty lot in Raval, which was occupied by the neighbours in 2013 after a man was murdered just outside by some *Mossos*, the police force of Catalunya. Since then, the lot has been turned into a self-managed inclusive neighbourhood space for social and political activities, filled with graffiti and plants. This was also the arrival point of the parade during the neighbourhood festival.

---

[78] Per me questa è musica di protesta, o almeno ciò è che mi spinge a partecipare al coro. Per me si tratta di un modo diverso di protestare e questa è la mia intenzione.

[79] Sai, forse la musica di protesta degli anni 70 era più tosta perchè alle spalle c'era una società più tosta. Forse, la musica di ora, così un po' di svago, rispecchia la società di adesso?

[80] Somos un grupo con principios libertarios, no anarquista pero con principios liberatorios. Y desde el comienzo en Plaça Catalunya, pensamos que esta podía ser una forma más agradable de comunicar las cosas.

Despite the official self-narration, I could also observe such *fluidarity* (McDonald, 2010) within the choir in Venice. The first time I enjoyed the group, they planned rehearsal at La Vida – when the occupation inside the building was still taking place. My presentation was mediated by Silvia, a woman I met during the events and the shifts organised to monitor the space[81], who is also a member of the choir. Apart from her, also other 2-3 people are active participants at La Vida while the majority of the group are members of *Poveglia Per Tutti*[82] ('Poveglia for Everyone'), an association that was founded in 2014 to contest the sale by the Public Authorities of a small island located in the lagoon between Venice and Lido.

In addition, as well as explained by the TSM, the participants of the CdL decided to join the group as they felt it represents a more vivacious way of aggregation and it is a more agreeable way to communicate something (Field Notes, 2017). Hence, if the effects of the participation to these groups are often subtle and hard to measure, and confusing messages can be layered into the work, their initiator of action, as the notes here presented are trying to show, is to stimulate feelings, to move participants emotionally and, more generally to generate affect. Moved by affective stimuli, these groups and their related performances have their political results in physical presence, which I will analyse in the next section.

4.3 Political aspects and embodiment

Using songs as a form of protest highlight other issues around potential outcomes of this kind of practices (Serafini, 2018). Through the storytelling, these songs played a specific role within the community, creating a sense of shared identity between people and strengthening the already-active networks. In fact, there was no need to explain who The Kellys were, why they were singing about their back pain or why they were worried about being fired. The people who sang and those who were singing along knew exactly who they were talking about. And in Venice, it was the same. The choir

---

[81] During the occupation of the ground floor, the space was monitored 24 hours a day as there was the possibility of eviction. On a board at the entrance, people could sign down their availability to spend a couple of hours during the time in which no event was planned.
[82] http://www.povegliapertutti.org/wp/
In 2018 Poveglia and La Vida organised a two day conference together on urban commons.

members and the people at La Vida knew who convinced them to occupy it, who the person who spoke a lot is, and which associations have meetings in the building. Therefore, there is a sort of shared knowledge that shapes and creates reality, reinforcing the self-determination of the communities that oppose specific urban policies devoted to tourist development.

The lyrics, criticising the urban governance and private investments, positioned the groups in an antagonistic relationship, which is not expressed only through the lyrics, but also – and above all – in their specific place based performances. Hence, this characteristic suggested the need to engage with the music itself by observing with whom and where it interacts; in other words, how the lyrical content was encountered and experienced also by the audience.

In Barcelona, people stopped in front of the empty lot and, accompanied by an audio amplifier, started to sing '*Mamma mia, volen fer un altre hotel*'. The people were particularly happy because, a few days earlier, the City Council announced that it would not grant the license for the construction of the new hotel. In Venice, the choir concert closed a full day of debate, during which there was also a book presentation and discussion with Marco d'Eramo, the author of *Il selfie del mondo, indagine sull'età del turismo*[83] (2017). The final concert represented a moment of levity to end the day. Nonetheless, in both performative events, the songs became more than just a medium of entertainment. Rather, they carried the significant potential of experiencing emplacement. This happens precisely because of the participation at the creation of the situation, allowing the singers and the audience to interact face to face and foster a collective effervescence. Community is created through music and in music. Moreover, other elements disprove the consideration that such performances and songs are merely colourful though irrelevant moments of mere amusement. This concerns the co-presence and the multiplicity of relations and actions beneath the songs. The occasions and the spaces, in which these songs are played, are contested places that act as a resonance. These actions shape collective agency and consciousness and point out a social and spatial presence, which are particularly important to social groups who feel neglected by the authorities. These politically committed and social significances are produced for

---

[83] The selfie of the world, an investigation into the age of tourism.

these places and, in them, they are reproduced, built around power geometries (Massey, 2005).

Ultimately, on the whole, we have a picture of an extremely powerful micro-situational interactional ritual that involves the creation of shared alternative discourses and a micro-politics that enables subjects to inhabit it through the creation of shared symbols and solidarity. These kinds of situated performances engender a sense of place and a deep attachment to it, fuelled by intersubjectivity and emotional entertainment, which is a crucial part of social collective, since it allows individuals to feel part of a common unity (Dalla Porta and Diani, 2007). The creation of a 'we' and an 'us against them' helps to maintain levels of morale and unity.

Using song as a medium meant that this political act was communicated, on the one hand, through a discursive and symbolic channel constituted by the lyrics of the song, and, on the other hand, through the bodies of people, occupying the site of the contested spaces. It is precisely through the performing bodies that a political message is carried and communicated. Embracing the embodied aspect of political action not only allows the individual to connect with others through embodied forms of communication; it also allows them to claim a certain control over their body, in the sense of making use of the body as a political tool. The body is politicised by its materiality and presence in a space and it concerns with core themes such as agency, creativity, and relationality.

4.4 Some final remarks

In this chapter, I carried out an analysis of two artistic groups in the two cities I have been doing fieldwork in the last years. Although these are just two examples, they are not isolated. Hence, the complexity of the narrated facts suggests some final thoughts. First, it is important not to overlook the contribution of metaphors, images and, more generally, evoked suggestions. The songs, as the tip of the iceberg, allowed making connections between the seemingly small – a single story, a musical composition – and the broader social and cultural processes in which these stories are articulated. These songs offer new insights on the actual redefinition of urban spaces and the social relationship within. Furthermore, these amateur art practices highlight the actual social

situation in which people feel a sense of powerlessness in front of the multiple neoliberal forces and try to express themselves through alternative – and more pleasant – channels. Hence, they allow building a new spirit of critical enquiry that integrates the study of discourse with artistic agency and relationality. This disproves the dismissive notion that performance is ineffective, ephemeral, and mere entertainment (Sansi, 2017). Hence, participatory practices that open up new ways of communicating requires a close look at the importance of embodied communicative action. Moving away from a mere specific collective identity conceptualisation of the single groups, these examples help in rethinking communicative action in new ways in which personal experience and individuality have gained new roles in the sphere of political action. Moreover, a focus on embodiment can be relevant because many aspects of collective political activity are deeply embodied, as I have already tried to bring it out in the previous chapter.

The concept of embodied practices will also be addressed in the next chapter, in which a practice-led research mingles with an auto-ethnographic approach that centres the body and experience in tourist spaces.

References

Ajuntament de Barcelona (2014) *Pla de mobilitat turística de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona.

Ajuntament de Barcelona (2017) *Informe de l'activitat turística a Barcelona* https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/informe_activitat_turistica_barcelona_2016_1.pdf

Anderson, B., Morton, F. & Revill, G. (2005). Practices of music and sound, *Social & Cultural Geography*, *6*(5), 639-644.

Appadurai, A. (1996). Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy, *Theory, Culture & Society,* (7), 295-310.

Ateljevic, I., Morgan, N. & Pritchard A. (eds) (2007). *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Bala, S., & Zangl, V. (2015). Dramaturgies of Humour in the Performance of Protest. *European Journal of Humour Research*, *3*(2/3), 7-17.

Baker, G. (2006). "La Habana que no conoces": Cuban rap and the social construction of urban space, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, *15*(2), 215-246.

Baerenholdt, J. O., Haldrup, M. & Urry, J. (2004). *Performing Tourist Places*, London: Routledge.

Barcelona tourism annual report. (2015). Barcelona: Turisme de Barcelona.

Becker, E. (2015). The Revolt Against Tourism, New York Times, 17th July 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/opinion/sunday/the-revolt-against-tourism.html last access 10th February 2018.

Bianchi, R. V., (2009). The 'Critical Turn' in Tourism Studies: A Radical Critique. *Tourism Geographies*, *11*(4), 484-504.

Bithell, C. (2014). *A Different Voice, A Different Song: Reclaiming Community through the Natural Voice and World Song*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burdick, J. S. (2009). Collective Identity and Racial Thought in São Paulo's Black Gospel Music Scene, *Music and Art in Action 1*(2), 16-29.

Calavita, N. & Ferrer, A. (2000). Behind Barcelona's success story. Citizen Movements and Planners' Power, *Journal of Urban History*, *26*(6), 793:807.

Cameron, E. (2012). New geographies of story and Storytelling, *Progress in Human Geography*, *36*(5), 573–59.

133

Carney, G. (1998). Music Geography, *Journal of Cultural Geography*, *18*(1), 1-10.

Coldwell, W. (2017). First Venice and Barcelona: now anti-tourism marches spread across Europe, The Guardian, 10th Agust 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/aug/10/anti-tourism-marches-spread-across-europe-venice-barcelona Last access 15th February 2018.

Cohen, S. (2012). Bubbles, Tracks, Borders and Lines: Mapping Music and Urban Landscape, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *137*(1), 135-170.

Cohen, S. (2007). *Decline, Renewal and the City in Popular Music Culture: Beyond the Beatles*, Ashgate: Aldershot.

Coleman, S. & Von Hellermann, P. (2011). *Multi-sited Ethnography. Problems and Possibilities in the Translocation of Research Methods*, New York: Routledge.

Colomb, C. & Novy, J. (eds) (2016). *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*, London; New York: Routledge/Taylor&Francis.

Connell, J. & Gibson, C. (2004). Vicarious Journeys: Travels in Music, *Tourism Geographies*, *6*(1), 2-25.

Clayton, M., Herbert, T. & Middleton, R. (2012). *The Cultural Study of Music, A Critical Introduction*, (2nd Ed.), New York: Routledge.

D'Eramo, M. (2017). *Il selfie del mondo. Indagine sull'era del turismo*, Milano: Feltrinelli Editore.

Della Porta, D. and Diani, M. (2007) *Social Movements: An Introduction* (second edition), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Degen, M. & Garcia, S. (2012). The transformation of the 'Barcelona model': an analysis of culture, urban regeneration and governance, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *36*(5), 1022-1038.

Deleuze G. & Guattari F. (1993). *A Thousand Plateaus*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

DeSouza, M. L. (2006). Social Movements as 'Critical Urban Planning' Agents. *City* *10*(3), 327-342.

Durkheim, E. (1965). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, New York: Free Press.

Eyerman, R. & Jamison, A. (1998). *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Danaher, W. F. (2010). Music and Social Movements, *Sociology Compass 4*(9), 811–823.

DeNora, T. (2000). *Music in everyday life*, Cambridge: Cambridge Press University.

Dell'Agnese, E. & Tabusi, M. (2016). *La musica come geografia: suoni, luoghi, territori*, Roma: Società Geografica Italiana.

Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S. & Rantisi, N. (2010). *Spaces of vernacular creativity: rethinking the cultural economy*. London: Routledge.

Falzon, M. A. (2009). *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research*, New York: Routledge.

Friedman, J. C. (2013). *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, New York: Routledge.

Gibson, C. & Connell, J. (2005). *Music and Tourism: On The Road Again*, Toronto: Channel View Pubblications.

Gibson, C. & Connell, J. (2003). *Sound Tracks: Popular Music Identity and Place*, New York: Routledge.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for 'other worlds', *Progress in Human Geography, 32*(5), 613-632.

Jackson, M. (2002). *The Politics of Storytelling, Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*, University of Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.

Johansson, O. & Bell, T. L. (2009). *Sound, Society and The Geography of Popular Music*, Surrey: Ashgate.

Hage, G. (2005). A not so multi-sited ethnography of a not so imagined community, *Anthropological Theory, 5*(4), 463-75.

Harvey, D. (2001). *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. New York: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities. From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. London: Verso.

Holt, F. & Wergin, C. (2013). *Musical Performance and The Changing City, Post-Industrial Contexts in Europe and United States*, New York: Routledge.

Hudson, R. (2006). Regions and place: music, identity and place, *Progress in Human Geography, 30*(5), 626-634.

Judd, D. R. & Fainstein, S. S. (eds) (1999). *The Tourist City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

King, S., A. (2002). *Reggae, Rastafari and the Rethoric of Social Control*, Jackson: University Presss Of Mississipi.

Kong, L. (1995). Popular Music in Geographical Analyses. *Progress in Human Geography*, *19*(2), 183-198.

Krims, A. (2007). *Music and Urban Geography*, New York: Routledge.

La Nuova (2017). Venezia, occupata la "Vida" in campo San Giacomo de l'Orio, La Nuova Venezia, 28th Septembr 2017 http://nuovavenezia.gelocal.it/venezia/cronaca/2017/09/28/news/venezia-occupata-la-vida-in-campo-san-giacomo-de-l-orio-1.15914484 Last access 1st February 2018.

Lashua, B., Spracklen, K. & Long, P. (2014). Introduction to the special issue: Music and Tourism, *Tourist Studies, 14*(1), 3-9.

Leyshon, A., D. Matless & G. Revill (eds) (1998). *The Place of Music*, New York: The Guilford Press.

Low, S. (2016). *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place*, New York: Routledge.

Maggio, R. (2014). The anthropology of storytelling and the storytelling of anthropology, *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, *5*(2), 89-106.

Manabe, N. (2015). *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of the Multi-Sited Ethnography, *Annual Review Of Anthropology*, *24*, 95-117.

Martinelli, D. (2017). *Give Peace a Chant: Popular Music, Politics and Social Protest*, Cham: Springer.

Martinelli, D. (2013). Popular Music, Social Protest and Their Semiotic Implications, *New Sound* 42 (2): 41- 52.

Massey D. (2005). *For space*, London: Sage.

McDonald, K. (2007) From Solidarity to Fluidarity: Social movements beyond 'collective identity'--the case of globalization conflicts, Social Movements Studies, 1(2): 109-128.

Meretoja, H. & Davis, C. (2018). *Storytelling and Ethics: Literature, Visual Arts and the Power of Narrative*, New York: Routledge.

Moore, A. F. (2012). *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*, Surrey: Ashgate.

Nofre, J., Giordano, E., Eldridge, A., Martins, J. C. & Sequera, J. (2017). Tourism, nightlife and planning: challenges and opportunities for community liveability in La Barceloneta, *Tourism Geographies.* doi: 10.1080/14616688.2017.1375972

Peterson, M. (2010). *Sound, Space, and the City: Civic Performance in Downtown Los Angeles*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Peddie, I. (2006). *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest*, New York: Routledge.

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T. & Tacchi, J. (2015). *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*, London: Sage Pubblications.

Polletta, F. (2007). *It Was Like a fever: Storytelling in Protests and Politics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ritzer, G. (2010). Enchanting a disenchanted world. Continuity and change in the cathedrals of consumption. New York: Pine Forge Press.

Rodríguez, J. (2017). Informes 'ocults' de l'hotel Drassanes de Barcelona. La Directa, 4th March 2017, https://directa.cat/informes-ocults-de-lhotel-drassanes-de-barcelona. Last access 26th February 2018.

Rogers A. (2012). Geographies of the Performing Arts: Landscapes, Places and Cities, *Geography Compass*, *2*(6), 60-75.

Sansi, R. (2017) Antrhopology beyond itself, *Visual Ethnography* 6(2): 49-66.

Serafini, P. (2018) *Performance Action: The Politics of Art Activism*, London: Routledge.

Stock, M. (2007). European cities: Towards a recreational turn? Hagar. Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities, 7(1), 115-134. Retrieved from https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00716789/

Turismo Venezia (2015). http://www.turismovenezia.it/Statistiche-2015-485193.html

Waitt, G., Ryan, E. & Farbotko, C. (2014). A Visceral Politics of Sound, *Antipode, 46*(1), 283-300.

Walliser, A. (2013). New urban activisms in Spain: reclaiming public space in the face of crises, *Policy & Politics, 43*(3), 329- 350.

Watson, A, Hoyler, M. and Mager, C. (2009). Spaces and Networks of Musical Creativity in the City, *Geography Compass, 3*(2), 856-878.

Whitheley, S., Bennett, A. and Hawkins, S. (2004). *Music, Space and Place*, Ashgate: Surrey.

Wood, N., Duffy, M., and Smith, S. J., (2007). The Art of Doing (Geographies of) Music, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *25*(5), 867-889.

5. Creative research-action to contest the commodified tourist city

5.1 Feeling the need to experiment creative methods

In the previous chapters I have gone through alternative and creative forms that move local consensus (and senses), in which a sensorial embodied involvement is generated and experienced through specific actions. Now, I move from the performative participation to an autoethnographic perspective. Here, the focus shifts from processes of privatization of urban space to the homologation of urban tourist space as well as to the tourist practices related to it. Drawing from photography as part of multisensory processes experienced through the interconnection of the senses and images as moving trajectories, this chapter experiments with Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) as a potential specific photographic technique to examine tourist photographs in relation to the consumption of urbanscape and, more broadly, to critique the commodification of practices and the pervasive privilege of sight. By intersecting creative methods and photography as a social practice, ICM aims to develop a critical-creative style to evoke (rather than illustrate) the experience of moving-through urban tourist spaces and doing fieldwork. In addition, this chapter will help in taking forward the analysis of creative protest and the subjects that enact it. I will be back to this topic in the next chapter.

Since my first ethnographic experience back in 2014 I started to join different urban collectives in Barcelona and Venice. As I have been mentioning briefly in chapter 3[84], since 2016, beyond my participation to local urban collectives, I have been also active in a group of which I am a founder. Together with two other women, we launched OPA! (Officine di Pensiero e Azione[85]). Our background is in social sciences and we wanted to blend direct action with investigation in the city where we were living, namely Venice. Our first initiative took place in July 2017 and, by promoting a street art participatory project, we aimed at addressing the wider issue of the side effects of touristification on the urban fabric of the Lagoon city by intervening on the shutters of those shops that have been closing down during the years. The concept was to
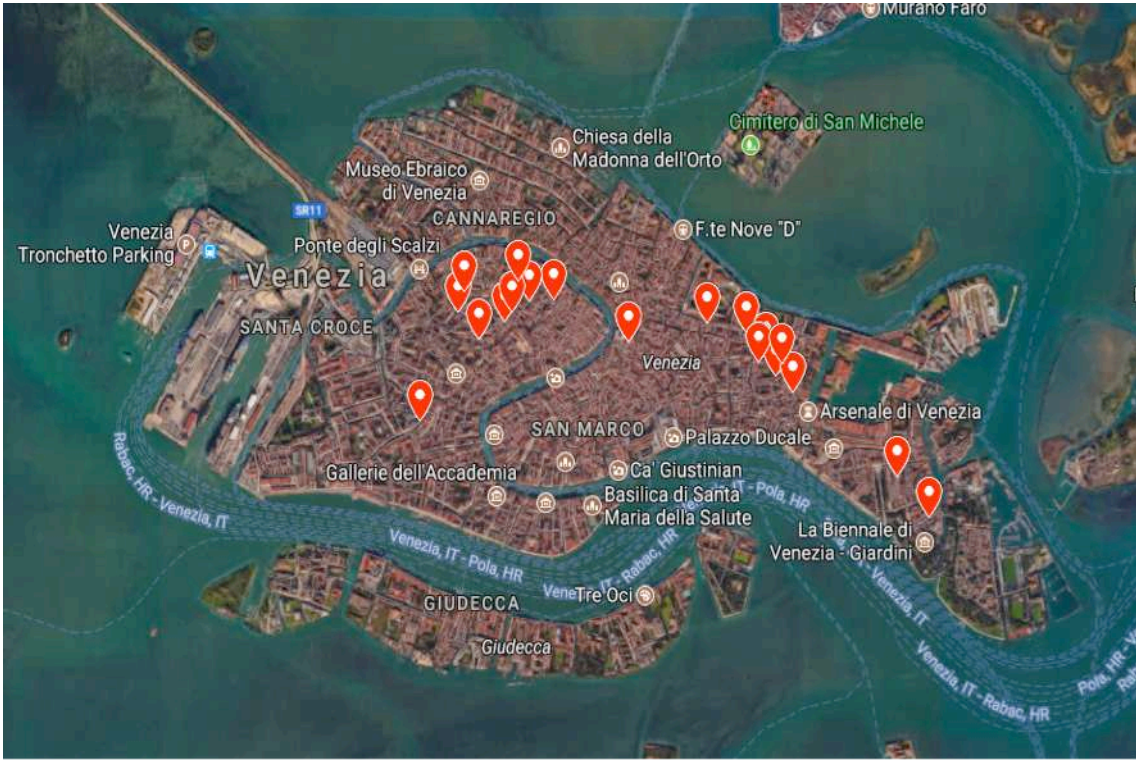
---

[84] Making sense of the square: Questioning the privatisation of public space through convivial gatherings

[85] Laboratory of Thought and Action.

temporarily brighten up such opaque spaces of the urban landscape. In fact, with 30 millions visitors per year, a figure increasing exponentially with each season, and a constant loss of residents, at a pace of 1000 per year, that has turned chronic since the late 60s, the signal of this draining are everywhere in the town. On the one hand, the reconversion of both public and private spaces for their exploitation by the tourist industry is evident in the most central areas and, on the other, there is abundance of unused spaces (empty flats, closed shops) in those urban zones less touched by the tourist flow (OPA, 2019). Hence, Venice is characterised by a strange combination of hyper-saturation and underusing of space. As a confirmation of this, a study conducted in 2016 by IUAV (Venice University Institute of Architecture) attempted to catalogue and quantify the abandoned spaces in the city. The research project showed that Venice presents 750.000 square meters of unused built surface. A second survey, made by the same university in 2017, mapped in detail the commercial activities in town[86]. Briefly, within the historical area there are 23 grocery stores, 29 small supermarkets, 292 bars, 335 restaurants, 524 clothing stores, 19 bookshops, 280 souvenir shops, 133 jewellers and 96 art shops. Moreover, the investigation highlights that only 437 shops offer services or goods addressed to residents, while 1.278 are exclusively addressed to tourists. Drawing from these data, our first intervention consisted in an open call. The main guidelines were clear: to avoid any nostalgia for the past, and to not blame the tourists as individuals (given that we are all tourists at a certain point of our lives). Twenty-three artists submitted their artworks, which were then reproduced in a poster format and applied on the shutters, during a one-night operation carried out by three teams of voluntary billstickers[87] (Fig 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

---

[86] More info on these projects: http://arcg.is/48G9C
[87] A photo essay can be found here: http://journal.urbantranscripts.org/article/sticking-around-poster-art-activism-venice-opa/

Map 5.1 Map of the selected shutters. Source: OPArt!

Figure 5.1 Detail of the action during the night. Source: OPArt!

Figure 5.2 Life in Venice. Photograph: Nataša Radović, May 2017.

After that first action, since November 2017 we joined La Vida and organized a photographic exhibition in there, so to contribute to the agenda of the events planned during the inside occupation in the winter months.

Beside these collaborative actions, during these years I also felt the need to experiment more creative methods to personally express the researched environment I was surrounded by (and enmeshed in).

Initially, during my first fieldwork and while participating in the direct actions of other groups, I relied on specific techniques towards which I felt a greater inclination, i.e. photography (Pink, 2007), I then started to use visual tools to explore embodied performances during my own actions (Scarles, 2010). By looking at the contexts in which I was doing fieldwork, i.e. where tourism is regulated and, concurrently, turns into a realm of contestation, I developed a personal curiosity towards the constraints and opportunities that shape the ways in which tourist space – considered as 'stages'– and performance are reproduced and can be challenged (Edensor, 2001).

Specifically, the results presented in this chapter are the outcome of some considerations shared with a photographer I have known in Barcelona since 2012. Being precisely both the location of the fieldwork and city in which I have lived for several

years, i.e. being myself a transitory inhabitant (or a temporary city user) which converts me into a tourist as well, allowed me to approach the present issue of photographic practices in tourist urbanscapes with a different sensitivity. Hence, during my PhD fieldwork I felt the need to complement the study of embodied practices related to the activist groups with a personal stance of me being both a researcher and a tourist. Thus, I thought to put into dialogue these two binomial aspects by creatively analysing the practices in the urban contexts in which I daily moved through. To me, the concept of embodiment aptly represented a focus of the urban protests but it also turned into a challenge to somewhat displace the 'tyranny of the visual' and demonstrate the importance of the body and performance within the complexity of the contemporary urban tourism research (Rakic and Chambers, 2009). For these reasons, I carried out performative practice-led research to further explore particular embodied and socio-material entanglements of fieldwork hardly accessible through more systematic approaches to photographic research (Jensen, 2016). Instead, I moved to what can be described as "sensuous knowing" (O'Neil et al., 2002). As Crang (2003) argues, in exploring the performative, embodied and haptic spaces of tourist practice, the body becomes implicit in research. The 'playfulness' of such practice-led approach allowed embracing rather then denying the inherent implicitness of researcher subjectivity. Hence, such first-hand experience turned into a personal creative political questioning of the tourist city. Geopolitics, increasingly experienced in the flesh and in the imaginary, turned into geopoetics (Holmes, 2007).

5.2 A personal photographic practice-led research within the fieldwork

Forty years ago, in her work *On Photography* (1977) Susan Sontag argued that photography dramatically transforms the perception of the world, turning it into a society of spectacles, in which reality becomes an item for visual consumption. Since then the relationship between tourism, tourists and photography has long been an interest of cultural researchers. As indicated by Sontag (1977), tourists use their cameras to possess the place that they visit, relieving their anxieties about being in a foreign environment. Hence, attempts have been made to create a general frame on

tourists' photography practices. The conviction of "consuming" a place through the camera became a shared inclination between critical tourism and visual scholarly. In addition, photography also has been a constituent element of other academic strands whose focus is demonstrating how the tourism industry works through signs and images (e.g., Mirzoeff, 1998). This is well summarised in the concept of the "circle of representation" suggested by Urry in his *The Tourist Gaze* (1990), which states that tourists' photographs both reflect and inform destination images. Tourists try to reproduce the iconic images of a destination in their own photos, which serve as evidence to display their version of what they saw before their visit. Tourists create an image before visiting the destination and, once there, they gaze upon an ideal representation of the pre-experience spot. According to the author, tourists travel searching for specific shots from travel brochures or postcards to capture nearly identical images as photos. If this might sound too strict, according to the co-authored third edition of *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (Urry and Larsen, 2011), the authors offer a much broader reconceptualisation. They argue that the tourist gaze is also about 'embodied and mobile practices', and they highlight that 'each gaze depends upon practices and material relations as upon discourses and signs'. Larsen (2006) also argues that tourist photography is a performed, rather than preformed, practice. He suggests that the intertwining of tourist and photography has a composite 'theatrical nature, which involves corporeal, staged and enacted imaginative geographies'. Tourist photographers are thus choreographed by images, but their picturing practices are not fully determined by this scripting. Tourism phenomena and practices are defined as embodied and situated as a large amount of academic work sought to highlight (Crang, 1997; Crouch, 2000; Edensor, 2000).

Alongside this, new debates on photography have emerged. Photographs have been defined as part of multisensory environments, experienced through the interconnection of the senses (Pink, 2011). In addition, thanks to new technologies, photography presents a hybrid character of technical and social aspects and its hybrid performances by corporeal humans affording 'non-humans' (Larsen, 2006) permits to take, to post-process and finally share the images all on the same device, almost at the same time. Such reasoning brought me to Pink's (2011) statements on images. According to her, photos are not 'of' place or stopping points. Rather, they are inevitably and obligatory

'in' places, produced by moving through environments. This means shifting away from the common-sense idea that a photograph stands for a static surface (Pink, 2011). In this sense, visual events are created through movement, stand for movement and are viewed in movement. They are part of new 'constellations of processes' (Massey, 2005) in a world that is always in forward motion. Thus, people engage with photographs corporeally and sensorially (Pinney, 2009). Pictures, produced and consumed, become intertwined with the trajectories of moving, and they both emerge from, and are implicated in, the production of the event of place (Pink, 2011).

Given all these developments and leaving academic debate aside for a moment, during my fieldwork I could bump into queues of tourists, waiting to take the 'classic' shot of a building or urban landscape (Picard and Robinson, 2009).

As the previous chapters sought to highlight, the global proliferation of tourist development expresses itself through highly commodified ways. Hence, particular tourist contexts generate a shared set of conventions about what should be seen or done and which actions are appropriate in those stages that are produced, regulated and maintained. As exposed in chapter 1[88] and in chapter 3[89], the tourist city and its creation are distinguished by restrictions, whether physical or symbolic, and are often organized to sustain common-sense understandings about what should take place. The coherence of most tourist performance depends on their being performed in specific stages (Edensor, 2001). Here, the term 'performance' refers to an approach that consider tourists' behaviours as social practices that are both carried out and evaluated publicly.

Performances are formative behaviours that conform to, confirm, (or challenge, in my case) social norms, as well as the institutions, power relations and identities that these norms support (Noy, 2008). As Edensor (2001:63) argues: "the processes of commodification, regulation and representation that reproduce performative conventions ensure that distinctive performance can be identified at most sites".

Although the city should represent an heterogeneous space, a paradox of the production of tourist urban centres space concerns the intensification of attempts to design and theme space, and the increasingly promiscuous nature of tourism, whereby

---

[88] Coming to terms with overtourism. An historical journey through the strategic use of tourism in the cities of Barcelona and Venice.
[89] Here, I am referring to the local ordinances on what kind of actions is allowed in the urban space, both in Barcelona and in Venice.

tourist stages proliferate. Hence the tourist performance is spatially and socially contextualized, and it is regulated to varying extents. In other words, the organization, materiality and aesthetic and sensual qualities of tourist space influence the kinds of performances that tourists undertake. Photography, as part of this process, is a further proof in which destinations are characterised by markers that identify the places that are worth seeing. In fact, as introduced in the first chapters, within the creation of the tourist city process, it was crucial to have a monumental historic centre and distinctive hot spots as a strategic factor to attract visitors, a point which is still current nowadays and in which I found myself immersed. MacCannell (2005) argues that the importance of architecture lies precisely in its capacity to engender referential frameworks, which is a relational means between the tourist and the destination. Indeed, the tourists' experience is often based on the contemplation of different fragments that are united in the same setting, and which gain meaning because of what they invoke as a totality. This is what Urry (1990) defines as semiotic landscapes, i.e. the spaces that have the potential to attract tourists as to represent a reality or an idea of it. The tourist value of semiotic landscapes lies in its aesthetic value or in its uniqueness (Donaire, 2008). In such a way, the historical and monumental heritage converts history into a stereotyped and easily consumed resource (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000) in which tourist flows move through. The fact that most urban tourists are often concentrated within a very limited area is evidence of that[90]. Common modern practices played out by tourists include taking pictures of a specific attraction or iconic objects while walking and without stopping, or waiting until people get out of the frame, sometimes suffering the frustration of not achieving the proper frame and not capturing the essence, thereby making the sight 'unphotographable' (Garlick, 2011; Jensen 2016) or taking a bad photo. This, again, remind me of Edensor (2000), who identifies three different dimensions to performance: spatial and temporal dimensions which bound the stage on which enactments occur, the social and spatial regulation of the stage (e.g. how the

[90] A comparative analysis of European metropolises using photo-sharing services and GIS in 2015 investigated the tourist hot spots based on social network. In their study García-Palomares, Gutiérrez and Mínguez show how, in Barcelona, tourists' photographs have a higher concentration compared to other cultural caital in Europe and how they form clusters around the historic center, the works of Gaudí (Sagrada Familia, Casa Batllo, Casa Mila , Park Güell), the beach, the Forum of Cultures site, Nou Camp stadium (Barcelona FC).

stage is managed, how movement is choreographed) and the accomplishment of the performance itself with regard to the expected outcomes.

Moreover, such behaviours are also remarkably parodied in some famous photographs by Martin Parr (2012), as well as in a few reflections on his blog[91]:

One thing that has really changed in recent years is how the tourist uses photography. [...] Now mobile phone cameras and digital photography mean that the entire visit is documented. [...] So I am under the impression that no one is really paying attention to the splendours and beauties of the site, as the urge to photograph is so overwhelming.

Parr wrote his blog after a visit to Barcelona and, as stated through his words, several cities still lend themselves easily to a feverish pursuit by tourists to photograph the most famous attractions or distinctive landmarks as holiday evidence. This method of acting indicates that the notion of the 'tourist gaze' remains relevant and highlights the privileging of the visual and ocular centrism of modernity (Fig. 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Tourists inside Sagrada Familia.
Source: https://www.martinparr.com/2012/too-much-photography/

---

[91] https://www.martinparr.com/2012/too-much-photography/

Supported by new technologies such as tablets and smartphones, the visual consumption of tourist destinations leads people to take pictures more and more rapidly, while performing their urban experience within clustered, urban tourist spaces. Even if performed rather than preformed (Larsen, 2006), the belief that photographs record a piece of reality is a central aspect in the tourist's effort to catalogue the world. The basis of this, of course, lies in the social nature of the photograph, which recognizes the sight as the only possible way of acknowledging (Costello, 2012; Heidegger, 1977; Garlick, 2011).

Given all this and intertwining our positionalities (being ourselves researchers, photographers and inevitably tourists as well in our lives), our purpose was to look for a way to perform photography that can clarify the concept of photos as part of a multisensory process inside tourist urbanscape (Massey, 2005; Pink, 2011). Hence, the point was if there was an alternative visual discourse that could make explicit how photographs are emplaced and experienced in movement.

Sometimes our daily walks to certain places were, and still are, in a way, "hindered" by a flow of people who did not pay attention to other passers-by, too busy taking picture of some architectural details, iconic objects or other attractions.

The overcrowding of the most-beaten tracks, especially at certain times of the year, fed our desire to visually document these photographic practices, specifically those in which tourists do not stop to accurately frame fellow travellers, but instead use their smartphones or tablets to take 'mobile' photos while moving from one hotspot to another. Namely, although the mere consumptive performance usually implies the payment of either a service or a product, also gazing and picturing have to be intended as a form of consuming within the place while visiting it.

At the very beginning, we asked ourselves whether this style of photography, which epitomises the aforementioned 'unphotographable' sights and sometimes expressed a 'bad' aesthetic, would be seen ever again. Driven by this question, we started taking pictures of travellers using the Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) technique. This method of shooting consists of rotating or moving in a horizontal, vertical or casual direction while photographing. In terms of the visual outcome, ICM images are characterised by a blurry artistic abstraction of the scenery, with marked signs and nuances that depend on a combination of shutter speed, aperture and ISO setting, along

with the camera movement and natural light. These characteristics initially seemed to be a useful means to make sense of what we were observing during our daily urban strolls. The intent was to represent metaphorically a sort of "no instants", i.e. the continuing need to shoot denoted by a lack of presence in which people are too distracted to pay attention to their surroundings, yet not entirely focused on the picture they are taking. Nevertheless, as the project moved along, more articulated developments arose. In order to take pictures of tourists, we were retracing their urban paths and, by stopping at the same spots, we were in a way re-enacting their behaviours, the one of the subjects of our visual project. Within this framework and inspired by the pictures we were taking, our curiosity moved to another point: 'Could these ICM images be part of the tourist experience and replace the classical shoots we were questioning? Could ICM provide visual evidence of what Pink and Massey stated?".

Hence, such questions brought us back to Rose's statements in *Using Photographs as Illustrations in Human Geography* (2008), according to whom, scholars should engage with photographs beyond mere documentation or criticism, i.e., photos are not just taken-for-granted illustrations, nor are they problematic representations. Instead, despite their implicit characteristic of being imbued with representation, they have the potential to turn into a creative resource for geographical work, besides conveying something that written text cannot reveal. Moreover, the camera can add new dimensions to the experience and, within an artistic process, it can serve to open up new 'worlds' (Gadamer, 1994; Garlick, 2011), thereby helping to make arguments through images.

This is also the case for what Marcus (2013) argues about experiment ethnography, according to whom the researcher should be motivated by reinvesting in new, vibrant, and synthetic way. This means that to engage with art practices embracing new ways of seeing and new ways of working with visual materials.

Influenced by this reasoning, we kept up our urban walk on the most beaten tracks, aware that we were not just thinking of tourists as performers, but that we had turned the performative photographic act inwards as a means of engaging with the world.

Hence, photography shifted from being a way of mere documentation to an output in "practice-led" research (Hawkins, 2011) to develop a critical-creative style to evoke (rather than illustrate) the experience of being-in and moving-through urban tourist spaces.

For these reasons, the photographs presented here refer to the second part of the experimental fieldwork. They were taken during the early months of 2017, first in Barcelona where I was working together with my colleague, photographer Jordi Vic, then, during the summer in Venice, where I conducted the research alone. At the beginning, Jordi was snapping photos using the ICM mode, while I was capturing the same images in a standard way. This was done to provide us with an archive for comparing photo shoots. Nevertheless, and on my own accord, we later started to take picture likewise, so that the two of us could be involved with the same dynamics and compare personal experiences. Therefore, the outcomes presented below only include the ICM output. This choice also aims to engage the readers with the visual results in a more spontaneous way (if possible), without any interference from the 'classical shot' on their understanding.

Regarding our fieldwork in Barcelona, for several afternoons, we simply met at some point at *La Rambla* (a tree-lined pedestrian mall that stretches for 1.2 kilometres known, among other things, for its street performers[92]), then wandered around, mingling with the fluctuating flow of people on the avenue. Our focus was on the route that links Catalunya Square to the end of La Rambla passing through the Gothic neighbourhood. In greater detail, the distance we covered goes from Catalunya Square to Columbus Monument passing through La Rambla and making a stop in La Boqueria Market. We then moved to Plaça Reial, Santa Maria del Mar Church and the Gothic Cathedral, then finally returned to Catalunya Square: approximately 3 kilometres.

In Venice, I retraced one of the city's most tourist-beaten tracks; somewhat comparable to the one we traversed in Barcelona. Specifically, it is the path that connects *Piazzale Roma*, the final destination for the means of transportation that arrive from the mainland, to Saint Mark Square. The easiest way to go from one point to another is to walk across Strada Nova and the Rialto area: 6 kilometres total. This is one of the city's most well-known pedestrian routes, full of shops and restaurants synonymous with a predominantly tourism monoculture as the investigation made by the IUAV sought to demonstrate. During certain times of the year, this area is so overcrowded that, for the first time in 2017, a project based on geolocation and

---

[92] Until 2006, street artists were allowed to perform throughout the entire length of La Rambla. Since then, a city council regulation limited this activity only to the final part of the avenue, establishing specific spaces for human statues and music shows.

developed by Corila, A4smart and Bologna University started to investigate the volume of tourists who walk this path. The aim is to provide the local government with numerical data that can be used to shape new tourist-management policies.

On the whole, the selection criteria in both situations was to go through tourist itineraries as defined by an evident urban structure that works as a *dispositif*, generates visual discourses and promotes gazing practices.

The hand-held digital camera was set with a shutter speed of around 1/30 (or shorter), with the aperture as small as possible. Sometimes we stopped when taking shots, but other times, we took pictures while walking or talking, pretending we were tourists on holiday. We photographed a variety of subjects, from broad views, such as architecturally significant buildings (e.g., Plaça Reial in Barcelona), to smaller iconic details (e.g., a gondola in Venice), trying to cover all the elements of interest that normally capture the attention of visitors walking through tourist areas. Hereafter, a selection of photographs is offered (Figures 5.4-5.9). Following Rose's suggestions to engage with photography as an autonomous creative resource, and adhering to Cosgrove's statement (2008) on the ability of the images to foresee, as well as see, a specific analysis of the case study's outcomes will come only after displaying the images.

Figure 5.4 Walking down La Rambla.
Photograph: Jordi Vic, March 2017.

Figure 5.5 Taking a break in Plaça Reial.
Photograph: Jordi Vic, March 2017.

Figure 5.6 Saint Mark's Basilica.
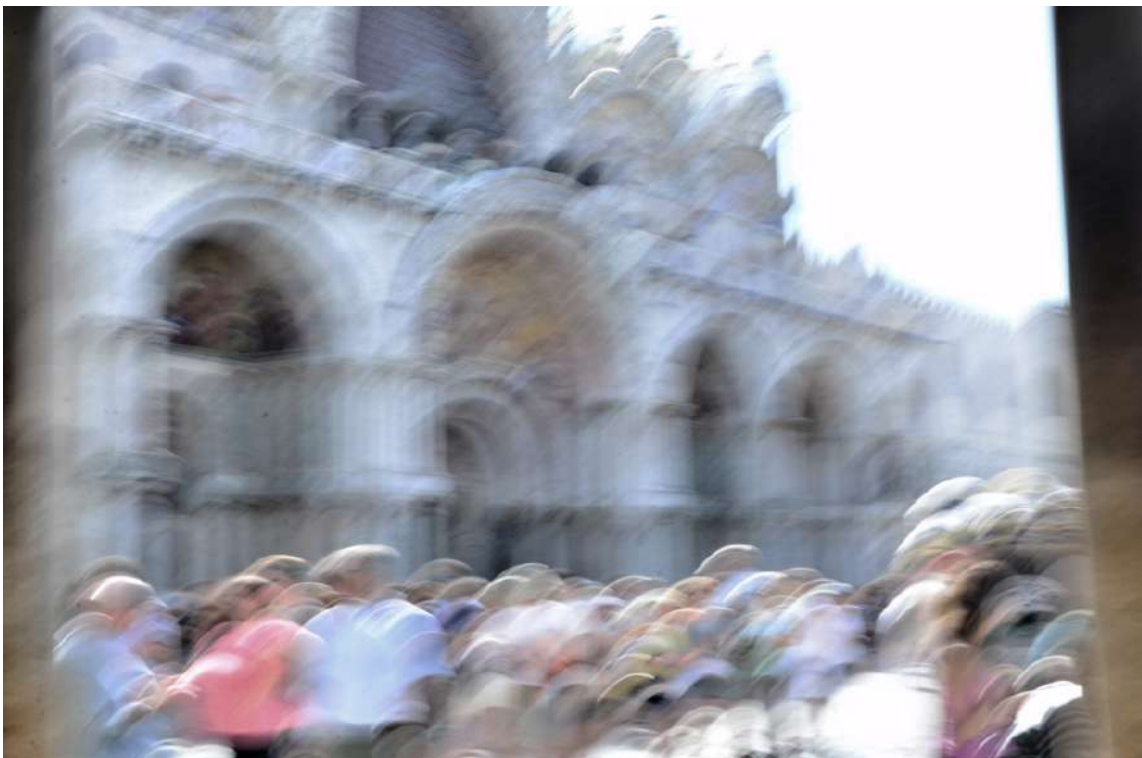Photograph: Elisa Bruttomesso, August 2017.

Figure 5.7 People queuing outside Saint Mark's Basilica.
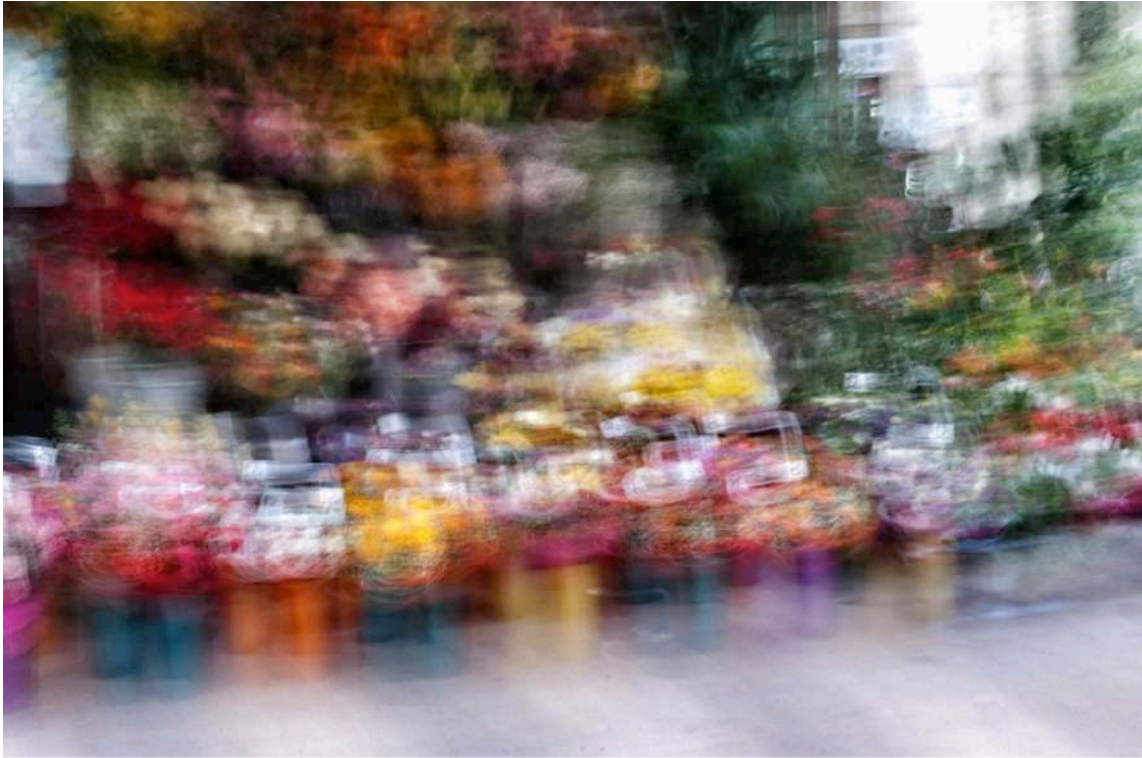Photograph: Elisa Bruttomesso, August 2017.

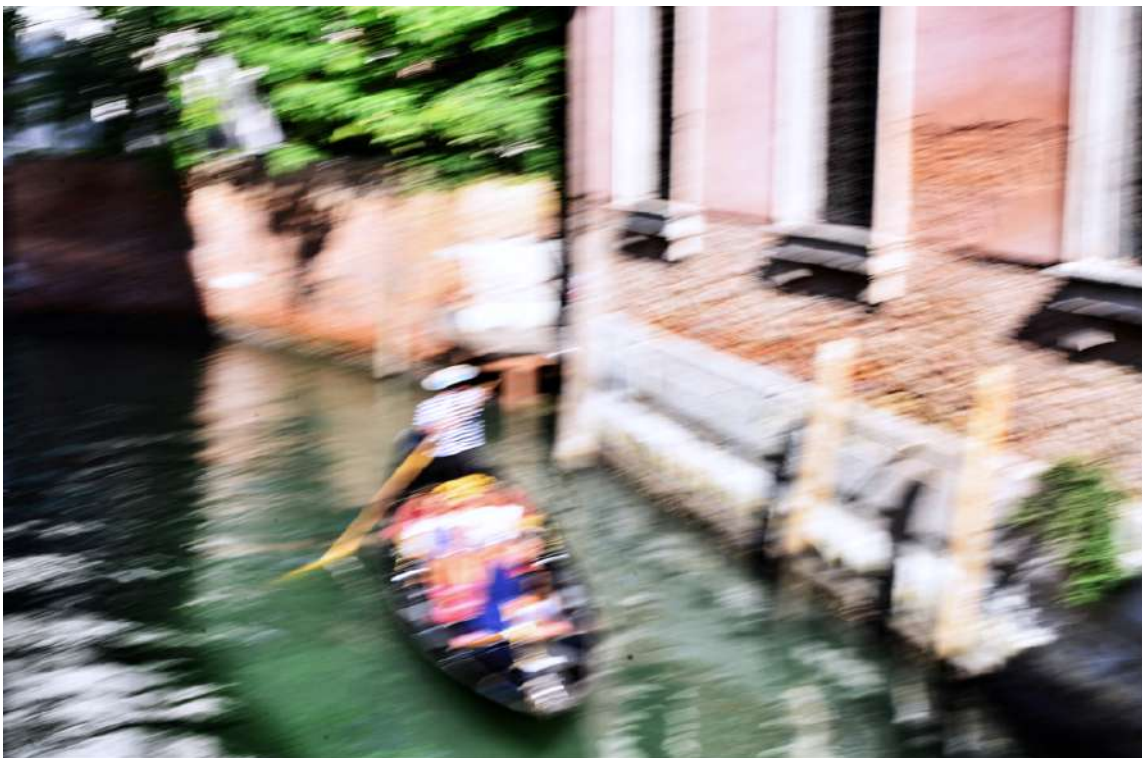**Figure 5.8** Flower vendor in La Rambla.
Photograph: Jordi Vic, March 2017.

Figure 5.9 Gondola with tourists in Venice.
Photograph: Elisa Bruttomesso, August 2017.

5.3 A multisensory mobile technique to enact and question the tourist city

During my fieldwork, tourist paths turned into key settings in which photography as a practice has been explored in its urban choreographies, giving us the opportunity to question how certain tourist practices are structured or, more simply, 'happen' within the commodified urban tourism experience. ICM and the autoethnographic attitude provided us with first-hand experience of what many authors have debated concerning the first edition of Urry's *Tourist Gaze* (Edensor and Holloway, 2008; Lund, 2005; Obrador-Pons, 2007; Scarles, 2009; Spinney, 2015; Urry and Larsen, 2011 among others). These authors, in fact, questioned the predominance of the visual and suggested that places and photography are experienced in multi-sensuous ways.

Focusing on the particular photographic practice of rapidly shooting specific tourist hotspots allowed us to re-examine 'the tourist gaze'. Moreover, such an approach made the corporeality and multimodal experience concrete. Indeed, while strolling during our urban visits in Barcelona and Venice, we experienced a multitude of sensations: the noise of cars and buses along La Rambla; music from the shops; people loudly inviting us to enter some restaurant; a wide range of smells, from smog to canals (depending on the city); the kinaesthetic aspects of the urban visit; the exhaustion of walking too much, etc. All these variables somehow 'disturb', blur, shift out of focus and otherwise make visual practice unstable. Our mobile practice-led method made it possible for us to approach the photographic practice by engaging the field directly with our whole bodies. While we were retracing tourists' most beaten tracks, we experienced that the images that normally stand for a waste product are part of a process of extreme dynamism in which 'shooting at a view' is only a fragment of a broader multi-sensuous process. And it is perhaps this kind of picture that tourists delete or do not look at anymore that better represents an experience made of mobility. ICM outcomes, which would seem to be a sort of exaggeration of this kind of picture and still are visual products, seemed to be the product of a specific technique to reveal the world in a way that is not enframing, a somatic sensibility that may be able to interplay with the other senses as it provides the sensation of more longitudinal rhythm. Hence, the present results aim to communicate visually how images continually emerge in relation to a series of flows and rhythms across space in which bodies move around, consuming

photography more and more in movements facilitated by digital media tools.

Subsequently, by understanding photography through a multisensorial theory, and together with the initial photo-elicitation of our artistic, blurry ICM pictures, we were able to reconsider the cultural role of the sign content of pictures, considering the issue of tourism. Here, again, I am referring to (and questioning) those images that require certain standardisation to be easily recognisable to confirm their status as 'tourist moments'. Many of those secondary, but no less experiential moments are deleted, discarded as part of a 'ritual' that often causes frustration from not achieving the proper frame. ICM aims to explicitly restore those moments lost in flux. Moreover, thanks to the specific outcomes of the technique that we used, the signifier seems to drift apart from what is signified, legitimising the choice of subjects different from the prototypical hallmark. Indeed, while performing our fieldwork, we often found ourselves picturing unconventional subjects (in relation to the tourist ones), attracted by vivid colours or peculiar details that then were exalted in the ICM photographs. Hence, ICM served as a tactical creative resource that invokes a "non-visual picture" whose aim is to invite the photo-taker to go off of the beaten track to experiment with new points of view or subjects of interest. This means the visual results can offer a different visual discourse that challenges (and tries to oppose to) the 'normative' visual, i.e., this technique aims for a more intuitive and sensual, less visual, mode of representing the urbanscape as it is encountered (by tourists, in this case) in non-cognitive ways.

5.4 Some final remarks

In this chapter I have tried to systematize the personal detour that led me to the need of experimenting with more creative methods during my research experience. Through photography, I felt the possibility to engage with the fieldwork more deeply, turning the visual products it generated into active players in making arguments and carrying out critical tourist knowledge. Indeed, appreciating tourism from an experiential standpoint means to think more plainly about the way tourism imaginaries and power relations are grounded into embodied practices, and to foreground practices in terms of a bodily performance (Roberts et Al., 2013). That is to say, instead of thinking of photos as mere

transparent windows or social constructs, ICM, within this broader study's context and the self-reflection in the knowledge creation process, approaches photographs as a prism that refracts and puts together cultural practices as well as corporeal experiences in space. Here, photography represents both a process and a product, a method out of many that has made it possible to both enact and document the embodiment in urban tourism practices. This leads to some final remarks that must be closely related to the analysis presented in the previous chapters. Although, it may seem that I wandered away from the initial focus on protest practices, the aim has been precisely to approach issues on embodied practices and tourism questioning from a different angle.

With this need for expressing myself in the research environment in which I was in, I asked myself about the possible social implications of these pictures and how they could carry and communicate a political message. Within the tourist city and its commodification, the selection of narrative implies the existence of power relations that privilege certain discourses over other. Thus, this practice-led research does not aim to provide a complete and rigorous method; rather, it sought to explore practices related to dominant relations and spatial constraints, such as the concept of cluster city or the beaten track, trying to look differently to such phenomena and offer alternative points of sensorial involvement and contestation. Just like the songs represented an alternative channel to communicate local discontent, so the artistic feature of this personal commitment suggests a new potential route to convey research on critical issues such as the commodification of tourism practices beyond conventional channels. From this perspective, the creative gesture is used to generate a different medium of knowledge dissemination about particular contextualised understanding of urban tourism culture. Moreover, this innovative way represented a progress and a challenge and it fuelled further considerations that are going to be discussed in the next chapter. Indeed, through this autoethnographical account, the aim is to point towards how fieldwork practices are not situated in spaces and prescribed to adhere to standardized scripts (Larsen, 2012), but uncover the boundaries of the researcher's role. Here, I am referring to the opportunity to access the nuanced 'hidden' spaces that raise questions about the emergence of subjects through aesthetics (Sansi, 2015) and the so- called 'reflective practitioner'. The attempt to understand my individual experience in tourism offered a reflexive tool for processing the multiple subject positions. Being myself a researcher,

an activist and a tourist led me to problematize the subjects that enact the questioning of the tourist city and the role of academy in it. Such topics are going to be discussed in the next chapter.

References

Barthes R. (2000) *Camera Lucida*, London: Vintage.

Belk R. and Yeh J. H. (2011) Tourist photographs: signs of self, *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5(4): 345-353.

Chalfen R. (2014) Your Panopticon or Mine? Incorporating Wearable Technology's Glass and GoPro into Visual Social Science, *Visual Studies*, 29: 299-310.

Chambers D. and Rakic, T. (2011) Rethinking The Consumption Of Places, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3): 1612-1633.

Chambers D., Tribe J. and Xin S. (2013) Conceptual research in tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41: 66-88.

Chambers D. and Rakic T. (2012) "The future of visual research methods in tourism studies", in Chambers D. and Rakic T. (Eds), *An introduction to visual research methods in tourism*, London, Routledge, 2012, pp. 203-212.

Cosgrove D. (2008) *Geography and vision. Seeing, Immaging and Representin the World*, London: Tauris.

Costello D. (2012) The Question Concerning Photography, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 70(1): 101-113.

Crang M. (1997) Picturing practices: research through the tourist gaze, *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3): 359-373.

Crouch D. (2000) Places around us: embodied lay geographies in leisure and tourism, *Leisure Studies*, 19: 63-76.

Degarrod L. N. (2016) Collaborative art and the emergence and development of ethnographic knowledge and empathy, *Critical Arts*, 30(3): 322-340.

Edensor T. (2000) Staging Tourism. Tourists as Performers, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2): 322-344.

El Periodico (2014) El límite de la capacidad turística de la Rambla, http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/opinion/limite-capacidad-turistica-rambla-3221990

Faist T. (2013) The mobility turn: a new paradigm for the social sciences?, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(11): 1637-1646.

Gadamer H. G. (1994) *Truth and Method* (2nd ed), New York: Continuum.

García-Palomares, J. C., Gutierrez, J. and Mínguez, C. (2015) Identification of tourist

hot spots based on social networks: A comparative analysis of European metropolises using photo-sharing services and GIS, *Applied Geography*, 63:408-417.

Garlick S. (2002) Revealing the Unseen: Tourism, Art and Photography, *Cultural Studies*, 16(2): 289-305.

Gómez Cruz E. and Meyer E. T. (2012) Creation and Control in the Photographic Process: iPhones and the emerging fifth moment of photography, *Photographies*, 5(2): 203-221.

Haldrup M. and Larsen J. (2010) *Tourism, Performance and the Everyday. Consuming the Orient*. New York: Routledge.

Hamer C. (2016) A collaborative methodology between photography and performance in ethnographically informed research, *Critical Arts*, 30(3): 341-356.

Harwood, S. and El-Manstrly, D. (2012) The Performativity Turn in Tourism' University of Edinburgh Business School Working Paper Series, vol. 12/05, University of Edinburgh Business School.

Hawkins H. (2011) Dialogues and Doings: Sketching the Relationships Between Geography and Art, *Geography Compass*, 5(7): 464-478.

Heidegger M. (1977) *The Age of the World Picture in The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Holmes, B. (2007) Continental Drift: Activist Research, From Geopolitics to Geopoetics, in (eds) Shukaitis S. and Graeber, D, *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization*, Oakland: AK Press, pp. 39-43.

Horst H. and Hjorth L. (2014) Visualising ethnography: ethnography's role in art and visual cultures, *Visual Studies*, 29(2): 125-127.

Jensen M. T. (2014) Engaging with mobile methods: Tourism research and the production of the mobile, in Meged J. W., Blichfeldt B. S., Hansen L. A. and Hvass K. S. (Eds), *Tourism Methodologies – New Perspectives, Practices and Procedures*, Copenhagen, Business Press, pp. 77-96.

Jensen M. T. (2016) Distorted representation in visual tourism research, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(6): 545-563.

Larsen J. (2006) Geographies of Tourism Photography: Choreographies and Performances, in Falkheimer J. and Jansson A. (Eds), *Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*, Gøteborg: NORDICOM, pp. 243-261.

Larsen J. (2008) Practices and Flows of Digital Photography: An Ethnographic Framework", *Mobilities*, 3(1): 141-160.

Latham A. (2003) Research, performance, and doing human geography: some reflections on the diary-photograph, diary-interview method", *Environment and Planning A*, 35: 1993-2017.

Latham A. and McCormack D. (2009) Thinking with images in non-representational cities: vignettes from Berlin", *Area*, 41(3): 252-262.

Loftus, A. (2009) Intervening in the environment of the everyday, *Geoforum*, 40: 326–334.

Lorimer H. (2005) Cultural geography: the business of being 'more-than-representational, *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(1): 83-94.

Lund K. (2005) Seeing in motion and the touching eye: walking over Scotland's mountains", *Etnofoor*, 181: 27-42.

MacCannell D. (1976) *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books.

Massey D. (2005) *For space*, London: Sage.

Merriman P., Revill G., Cresswell T., Lorimer H., Matless D., Rose G. and Wylie J. (2008) Landscape, mobility, practice", *Social & Cultural Geography*, 9(2): 191-212.

Mirzoeff N. (2002) *The visual culture reader*, London: Routledge.

Noy, C. (2008). Pages as stages: A performance approach to visitor books, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2): 509-528.

O'Neill, M., Giddens, S., Breatnach, P., Bagley, C., Bourne, D., & Judge, T. (2002). Renewed methodologies for social research: Ethno-mimesis as performative praxis, *The Sociological Review*, 50(1): 69–88

Obrador-Pons P. (2007) A haptic geography of the beach: naked bodies, vision and touch, *Social and Cultural Geography*, 8(1): 123-41.

OPA (2019) Sticking around: Poster Art as Activism in Venice, *The Urban Transcripts Journal,* Available online: http://journal.urbantranscripts.org/article/sticking-around-poster-art-activism-venice-opa/

Patterson M., (2009) Haptic geographies: ethnography, haptic knowledges and sensuous dispositions, *Progress in Human Geography*,33(6): 766-788.

Picard D. and Robinson M., (2009) *The framed world : tourism, tourists, and*

photography, London: Ashgate.

Pinder D., (2008) Urban interventions: art, politics and pedagogy", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32: 730-736.

Pink S. (2009) *Doing sensory ethnography,* London: Sage Publications.

Pink S. (2011) Sensory digital photography: re- thinking 'moving' and the image, *Visual Studies*, 26: 4-13.

Pink S., Hubbard P., O'Neill M. and Radley A. (2010) Walking across disciplines: from ethnography to arts practice, *Visual Studies*, 25(1): 1-7.

Pinney C. (200) What do pictures want now? Rural consumers of images, in Edwards E. and Bhaumik K. (Eds), *India. Visual sense:* A cultural reader, Oxford: Berg.

Rakic, T. and Chambers, D. (2010) Innovative Techniques in Tourism Research: An Exploration of Visual Methods and Academic Filmmaking, *International Journal of Tourism Research* (12): 379-389 .

Radley A., Chamberlain K., Hodgetts D., Stolte O. and Groot S. (2010) From means to occasion: Walking in the life of homeless people", *Visual Studies*, 25(1): 36-45.

Roberts, L. and Andrews, H. (2013) (Un)doing Tourism Anthropology: Outline of a Field of Practice, *Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends*, 5(2): 13-38.

Rose G. (2008) Using Photographs as Illustrations in Human Geography, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 32 (1): 151-160.

Rutten K. (2016) Art, ethnography and practice-led research, *Critical Arts*, 30(3): 295-306.

Sansi R. (2015) Public disorder and the politics of aesthetics in Barcelona, *Journal of Material Culture,* 20(4): 429–442.

Scarles C. (2009) Becoming Tourist: Renegotiating the Visual in the Tourist Experience, *Environment and Planning D Society and Space*, 27 (3): 465-488.

Scarles C. (2010) Where words fail, visuals ignite. Opportunities for Visual Autoethnography in Tourism Research, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37: 905-926.

Sheller M. and Urry J. (2016) Mobilizing the new mobilities paradigm, *Applied Mobilities*, 1 (1): 10-25.

Simpson P. (2012) Apprehending everyday rhythms: rhythmanalysis, time-lapse photography, and the space-times of street performance, *Cultural Geographies*, 19 (4): 423-445.

Spinney J. (2015) Close encounters? Mobile methods, (post)phenomenology and affect, *Cultural Geographies*, 22 (2): 231-246.

Urry J. (1990) *The tourist gaze: leisure and travel in contemporary societies*, London: Sage Publications.

John U. and Larsen J. (2011) *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, London: Sage Publications.

Vannini P. and Stewart L. M. (2017) The GoPro gaze", *Cultural geographies*, 24(1): 149-155.

Westwood, S., Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. (2006). Situation, Participation and Reflexivity in Tourism Research: furthering interpretative approaches to tourism enquiry, *Tourism Recreation Research*, Vol.31(2): 33-41.

6. (Auto)ethnographical insights

6.1 Who are the protesters?

The objective of the present investigation is to offer a proper reflection on how processes of touristification break up and assemble new (creative) militancies. The constant presence in the field – longterm and wide-ranging – allowed me to follow different groups who oppose the commodification of the urban space and, conjunctly, to take first-hand action. The different practices suggest some final remarks. I will go through them as a sort of spiral. Indeed, in this chapter I want to present some general observations emerged from the multisited research, connecting the first part to the ethnographic section. After entering into detailed practices, here I will complement the analysis with some broader insights that help in the comprehension of the present study.

In the study *Utopías artísticas de revuelta[93]* (2014), in which Claremond Road, Reclaim the Street and Ciudad del Sol experiences are analysed, Ramírez Blanco underlines how performances and direct action are dealing with the crisis of political representation, for which people do not trust anymore on professional politicians and their capacity of conveying people's desires. Moreover, according to Saltzman (2016), who has been studying Post-15M grassroots interventions in and for public space, in the last years the need to change tactics led to a focus on a smaller and more local scale (Castells, 2012). Due to a loss of confidence in the huge revolutionary expectations (Saltzman, 2016) and because of a sense of disorientation while facing macro-global processes that accelerates meso-local transformation (Zanardi, 2019), activists relocated their energies. In doing so, the neighbourhood, as field of action, has acquired an ever-increasing value for everyday struggles.

If initially impotence can cause a certain sense of powerlessness due to the fact of facing the intersection and opacity of different agents who use the tourist development as a source of plus-value, at a later stage such relocation energises people to bring forward their experiential protest.

---

[93] Artistic utopias of riot.

Such reflections have been pointed out in the analysis of Fem Plaça, in which the organisers themselves explained how they felt disappointed in respect to traditional protests in 2013 and how they were in want of expressing their disaffection in a more proactive way. This is also the case of La Vida. Indeed, it was a share condition to consider the events organised in there and in the public space in front of the building as a tool to reclaim the presence of those who oppose the selling-off by having a good time. This was also perceived as a means to strengthen the relationships of the neighbourhood in opposition to the anonymity of the tourist city (Fielnotes, 2018). Similarly, the choir in Venice and the social theatre group in Barcelona confirmed this aspect. The rehearsals and meetings represented a moment of levity, to connect with other neighbours without making the situation heavy, as it is perceived in other – more technical – groups in which people participate (Fieldnotes, 2017). Of course, as exposed, moments of debates and confrontations were not missing. Nonetheless, their participations represent a moment of politically engaged and vivacious action. As a consequence, these ludic features should not be interpreted as frivolous. Indeed, the creative elements disseminate political messages by intervening directly in the normal order of things where the ludic and creative dimensions of our urban life are increasingly regulated (Rancière, 1999). Therefore, the first thing I want to highlight is the dismissive conception of performance as something ephemeral (Sansi, 2015) as, in these cases, the performance analysed so far represent symbolic battles to regain the use of the public space. These practices, as described, take back to a social, convivial and a more aware sphere those activities that the actual city exploit to generate profit.

Within a context of symbolic violence, as described by Bourdieu (1977), exercised through the imposition of a given vision which creates consensus and hides power relations, the act of gathering in the public space holds a powerful creative force that involves a political will to intend differently the way of living and experiencing the city. This happens through seemingly small actions that create interference in the imposed system (De Certeau, 1990), which reinforce themselves in ideological marks for those who take part. Moreover, these new spaces of resistance highlight the urban effervescence characterised by different levels of participations. This is what McDonald (2002) defines as 'fluidarity', which is the culture of networking, characterised by the

refusal of political platforms and the rejection of institutional leadership formats and the redistribution in affinity groups.

As already exposed in the previous chapters, many participants of Fem Plaça are part of, or better come from, Xarxa Ciutat Vella, connected to the broader tradition of the Neighbourhood Associations of the city. Their struggle is part of a trajectory that saw their participations to 15M occupations. Additionally, some of them are among the founders of *ABTS* (Neighbourhood Assembly for Sustainable Tourism created on 2016) and have been following the creation of the *Sindicat de Lloguers* (Tenants Union founded in 2017). Likewise, the *Coro delle Lamentele* and *Teatre sobre la Marcha* involve people who are also active in other groups, among which *Poveglia per Tutti* and *La Vida* in Venice and *Agorà Juan Andrés* in the Catalan centre, as well as supporting other social groups of the city. As regarding *La Vida*, some of the participants have a long tradition in urban activism, coming from other experiences of *centri sociali* and neighbourhood associations, or from the protests of the 1970s (as regarding the older ones). Moreover, recently, some of them have contributed to the creation of an Observatory on housing issue[94] in 2018 and have been present since the beginning on the SET network. This is also the case for ABTS.

Taken as a whole, this serves to further refute the idea that certain interstitial creative actions are ineffectual moments. Rather, they confirm a profound commitment in the social life of the cities in which they are located, whose aim is to produce a meaningful change on urban dynamics. Accordingly, the criticism of the touristified city brings together new forms of transversal participation, backed up by daily practices charged with political values pointing out the emergence of a class struggle. But which class are we talking about?

From the perspective of urban movements, the neoliberalization of first world cities have been hitting not only already disadvantaged, but increasingly youth, students and more segments of the middle class (Mayer, 2013). It is precisely the latter that brings forward the opposition to touristification processes. Indeed, as I could observe, among the groups' participants we find architects, urban planners, anthropologists or geographers, designers and more in general high-quality educated people who have

---

[94] Namely, the observatory is called OCIO *Osservatorio Civico indipendente sulla casa e sulla residenza* (Indipendent Civic Observatory on the housing and residency).

started to mobilise and use their skills to contribute in the building of social protest actions. Of course this has a specific declination according to the specific case studies I have been presenting. As regarding the choir and the theatre, some participants are professional musicians and actors. Namely, the teacher of *Coro delle Lamentele* is a singing teacher and one of the musicians has been playing bass professionally in several local groups. Instead, in Barcelona two people are professional actors who give their help in writing out the group's plays. Alongside, in Fem Plaça and La Vida it was, and still is, fundamental the contribution of architects and urban planners. In the Catalan case their role was to study the planimetry of the selected square, to investigate on the change of use of the portion of public space and to print map in which such information was then available to all those people interested in knowing something more about the place in which the event was held. In Venice, such professional skills were put at the service to make explicit why, according to the city master plan, the building could not be sold to a private investor and turn into a restaurant. As the case went on, a more formal group on urban issues was formed, composed by the participants themselves who met on regular basis to further study the official documentation of the city council and to delegitimise the selling. Beyond and complementary to this, it is also important to highlight how these collectives are also uniting efforts with engaged academics, if the distinction still makes any sense, in a process whose borders blur. Evidence of this is given by some publications in scientific journals, clear demonstration of the intersection of the lines of inquiry of the academic and activist fields in this new phase of their recent history. Of course, this cannot be generalised and does not involve the whole collectives. Anyway, some of them, because of their educational trajectory, have been publishing articles and reports. Among the several pieces of work that have been published, we found contributions on journal on political ecology, urbanism and tourism geopolitics. The special issue of the journal *Ecología Política* of 2016, dedicated to Political Ecology of Tourism, called for more attention on protests connected to the touristification and tourist monoculture that are revealing tourism as a form of dispossession. In that edition, contributions by academics and activists can be found: Pardo (who is member of Fem Plaça, ABTS and SET among others) and Medrano (2016) with a contribution entitled *La lucha por el decrecimiento turístico: el*

caso de Barcelona[95]. In 2017, Pardo again, together with Cocola-Gant (Research Fellow in Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lisbon) wrote an article published in *Urbanistica Tre, Giornale Online di Urbanistica*, on the grassroots movements resisting tourism gentrification in Barcelona. In 2019, Alba Sud[96] proposed a special issue entitled *Tourism in the Mediterranean Geopolitic*, which contain an annex of Pardo and Gomez, both activists, on *'Social Movements' experiencies. South Europe as a political space against touristification'*[97].

Moreover, further proof is given by some initiatives organized over the last couple of years. For example, on the 6th of April 2017, within the seminar Economy and Political Ecology of Tourism organized by HIDRA[98] cooperative and Alba Sud at MACBA Museum in Barcelona, the conference *La necesidad (urgente) de un decrecimiento turístico. Experiencias de Mallorca y Barcelona*[99] took place (Fig. 6.1). Among the various speeches planned, the event saw the participation as keynote speakers of Margalida Ramis (both activist of GOB Balearic Ornithological No Profit Group[100] and associate lecturer at the Balearic Island University), Daniel Pardo (Fem Plaça, ABTS, SET) and Macià Blàsquez (both member of GOB and Alba Sud, and senior lecturer in the department of geography at Balearic Islands University).

---

[95] The fight for tourist de-growth: the Barcelona case.
[96] Alba Sud is a Catalan association, specialized in Research and Communication for Development, and founded in Barcelona in 2002. The association present itself as a platform of exchange and joint work between professionals from distinct disciplines related to the Research and Communication for Development from different parts of the world.
[97] Experiencias de movimientos sociales. El sur de Europa como espacio político anti-turistización
[98] HIDRA is a cooperative that provides investigations and trainings to public, community and private entities on urban economy and broader issue related to the city.
[99] The (urgent) need for a tourist degrowth
[100] Founded in 1973, the Balearic Group of Ornithology and Defense of Nature (GOB) was originally formed as a group of bird lovers and watchers, but with time has established itself as a leading force in the fight against the environment destruction brought about by the rapid transformation of the Balearic landscape.

Figure 6.1 Image used for the event at MACBA 'Economic and Political Ecology of Tourism'.
Source: macba.cat

In Venice, on the 14th and 15th of April 2018, the activist group *La Vida* together with the association *Poveglia per Tutti*, were the promoters of a conference entitled *L'altro uso. Usi civici e patrimonio pubblico. Dalla vendita alla gestione collettiva comunitaria* (The other use. Civic use and public property. From the sale to the community collective management). The event saw the participation of different groups from all around Italy, collectives and academics and, despite the fact that the event was organized by two groups of activists, it took place in one of the university buildings of IUAV (*Istituto Universitario di Architettura Venezia*, University Institute of Architecture Venice). Moreover, in July 2018, within some events of the Biennial of Architecture, the United State Pavilion fomented a day of meetings on issues related to the right to the city (Fig. 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Poster of the event organized by US Pavilion at Biennial Architecture 2018. The picture used in the poster is taken by the manifestation organised after the eviction of La Vida in March 2018. Source: labiennale.org

The organization was then left to three groups that had to coordinate their work: *La Vida*, *ASC* (*Assemblea Sociale per la Casa*, Social Assembly for the Housing) and a team of architects of IUAV[101]. Finally, the last one example is given by a round table organised within the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) meeting in Venice, July 2019, entitled "Urban social movements and citizens' mobilisations in the tourist city: key forces to change the political agenda around tourism". The academic meeting was host by IUAV, but the event, which was introduced by a geographer and an urban planner, was chaired by different activists of the Italian section of the SET

---

[101] Within the Urban and Territorial Analysis Laboratory of IUAV, led by professor Laura Fregolent, several studies concerning the present conditions of Venice have been undertaken. These are the studies I have been mentioning in the ethnographic chapter on Intentional Camera Movement.

network (some of which are part of *La Vida*, while others are also within academia) and was host by SALE docks[102].

Part of these events could suggest some contradictions. Let me go through it for a moment before coming back to the issue.

Some activities proposed by some of these groups have, in a sense, entered in the range of offers of tourist attractions. As it has been explained elsewhere (Fraeser, 2016), tourism-related policies are part of a broader neoliberal urban agenda deploying creativity for urban marketing purposes in the context of inter-city competition. Thus, subcultural alternative activities and spaces can be subjects of processes of co-optation and instrumentalization. This can be the case of the MACBA that hosted the events on political ecology of tourism, in which also activists were present. The same can be said for the Venice Biennal in which community initiatives can themselves become the object of tourism practices or of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990). In addition and specifically, both Institutions' trajectory can be quite controversial. Indeed, since its establishment, the MACBA received international recognitions for being an example of urban intervention and good practice, acclaimed internationally for its interaction between residency and tertiary economical activities (Delgado, 2008). If the protest of more than twenty years ago against the installation of the museum in an area in which the neighbours were asking social services seems now an event of the past, similar voices of protests came back in 2019. In this last year, people have asked that the old Misericordia Chapel, which was given in concession to the MACBA Institution in 2013 by the previous City Administration of Trias, was transferred to the City Council property again so to built a new primary healthcare centre for the neighbourhood, as the spaces of the old one are not sufficient anymore. Such events gave rise to local discontent due to the denial of the Museum, which has planned to install a permanent collection in there. Despite the counter-hegemonic discourses and alternative events such as the one against touristification, the museum keeps on maintaining its hegemonic position (Sansi, 2015) and still remains an agent of gentrification and 'artistification' within the 'Barcelona model' (Delgado, 2008).

---

[102] SALE docks is an independent space for contemporary art built in 2007 by a group of activists from *centri sociali* of the city.

Concurrently, similar reasoning can be done by referring to the Biennal Insitution in Venice. Can one get more institusionalised than that by participating in its agenda of events? Of course it should be distinguished who the people that organise are from the Insitution from which they are backed up. These cases point out how agency concerns a more complex relation, multi-faceted and plural, that people have in relation to society. Indeed, agency can be found within power structures. This suggests rethinking such concept not only as emancipatory and sovversive; rather, it can be simply active. The question is not on how norme can be subverted, but on the posible ways such norm is experienced. In the case of La Vida, this gave rise to some internal debates on the decision to participate or not to the event, and if the US Pavillon was in a certain sense taking advantage of the collective or if it was a good opportunity to spread the issue and raise awareness on collateral effects of tourism in Venice to a larger public.

Such discussions suggest a constant internal negotiation to ensure different thoughts can coexist productively and brings me to notice in first person what other authors have argued (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Indeed, the importance of sharing lifestyles and cultural codes within the social movement – which were central to the movements of the 1960-1970s – are not eliminated but are confined to smaller units within the new collectives that seek to work together for common goals. This enhances the ability of participants to deploy their differences and make them coexist productively, marking the novelty of these forms of organization. Accordingly, the actual wave of mobilization has the effect of appeasing some internal discrepancies, uniting people in transversal way into more diverse and flexible coalitions by using wider modes of action against the monocultural use of the city.

Going back to the analysis of who the protesters are and the channel they use for their knowledge dissemination, the fact that such intersectionality is taking place more and more often confirms the extreme fluidarity of the present moment (Mayer, 2013).

If historically the initiatives to reclaim the public space were carried out by working classes[103], nowadays the *savoir-faire* of protest is complemented by the knowledge and intellectual competences of the activists themselves. Such evolution turns the participants not mere agents rather creators of critical content that allows the

---

[103] See the distinction between Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) and new social movement (NSM) theory in chapter 2.

legitimation of their actions and the questioning of dominant power relations. Moreover, the intersection and collaboration confirm how activists and academics are both representatives of the middle class. This brings forward the analysis on the specific channels of dissemination that each wave of mobilization has used over the years. This complements what Juris (2005) argues while referring to the alterglobalization period as a reflection of the technological patterns built on the internalisation of the cultural and social logics that characterised it. Indeed, each period of mobilization is characterised by specific media and the actual moment gives voice to its struggle by using the tools that belong to it, such as social media and in this case also scientific channels.

As activists nowadays have the knowledge and capacities to mediate with other institutionalised actors and are incubators of their own body of critical analysis, I found myself negotiating my own positioning and role within such a context. I will go through such topic in the next section.

6.2 Personal self-reflective nuances

Hale defined activist research as "a method through which we affirm a political alignment with an organized group of people in struggle, and allow dialogue with them to shape each phase of the process, from conception of the research topic to data collection to verification and dissemination of the results." (2006: 97). Moreover, politically committed research is characterised by the use of engaged ethnography as a way to contribute to movements goals while using embedded ethnographic position to generate knowledge of movement practices and dynamics (Juris, 2007). According to Juris, such an approach is meant to challenge the division between the researcher and the activist. By using a dual position as an organizer and researcher, the social scientist can gain access to movement networks, but also generate deeper knowledge and more innovative theoretical insights about movement practices, experiences, emotions, and internal political struggles and debates than would otherwise be possible. Reasoning on his positioning, Juris highlights his interest in everyday activist practices, experiences and subjectivities while reflecting on how to address power imbalances between activists and researchers. Similarly, in their contribution of knowledge production on

social movements Derickson and Routledge (2015) suggest that "research questions should be triangulated to consider not only the scholarly merit but the intellectual and political projects the findings will advance and the research questions of interest to community and social movement collaborators" (2015:1).

If initially I was inspired by such reflections, going on and looking back I would affirm that this is not exactly the case for the present research. In fact, as already mentioned, within these groups, in which theoretical basis and activism blur, the role of the engaged researcher is redefined. As on open process, such investigation discovered new possibilities that turned into new opportunities.

Holmes and Marcus (2012) use the term para-ethnography to refer to the collaboration between the anthropologist and other experts in the creation, negotiation and sharing of critical knowledges. The word 'para' refers to an auxiliary process in which different people (in this case the activist researcher and the activists themselves) are deeply working together. Additionally, as it has been noticed elsewhere (Sansi, 2017), in many ways the forms of work are participative and based on assembly, so that each specialization is difficult to distinguish. Subsequently, the 'authorship' of the actions results quite irrelevant. Therefore, it is not a mutual recognition, but rather an exchange between partners. This is what Sansi (2017) defines as a post-autonomous moment and I argue it best describes the present path I have been walking on. Rather than fair collaboration, post-autonomy represents a process of participation, in which the participants become part of larger wholes perhaps to the expense of their autonomy. What 'participation' suggests is more than an equivalent value, but getting involved with, in this case, a political practice. Therefore, the question now is: "What does knowledge become when it renounces the comfort of 'critical distance' with regards to the 'object,' and adopts a point of view based on struggles? How is the ability to research experienced when it becomes part of the experience of life, when it becomes potential to create?" (Casa-Cortes and Cobarrubias 2010: 235). According to Marcus, the condition of para-ethnography in contemporary fieldwork projects invites the experimentation with new forms and formats to meet these challenges. For Marcus, experimentation has shifted from the textual outcomes to fieldwork practices themselves; these practices today are not only multisited, but participative and collaborative, and their outcome may not be the traditional ethnographic monograph,

but it may take many other, more ephemeral and indeterminate forms (Marcus, 2010). If Marcus proposes it as a methodological tool *a priori*, in my case this has represented a geopoetic imaginary evolution within the academic and activist geography (Holmes, 2007), an awareness that has grown during the fieldwork[104] and has been systematized only at a later stage. For this reason, I propose such reasoning here, after the ethnographic chapters, as part of the research outcomes.

Finally, the intermingling of my 'lateral' experimental praxis (Marcus, 2013) in which I rethought and enacted ethnographic method together with the self legitimation of activist of talking for themselves through 'incursion' in academic channels, led also to consider who have the right to talk about social movement and create critical knowledge. This can hence represent a step forward in the Lefebvrian concept of the right to the city: the fading of (non-technocratic) scientific knowledge production as a keystone aspect of the new urban tourism mobilizations (Vianello, 2016). To recognize that there is no more distinction between intellectuals and social movements in conceptualisations of knowledge production (Autonomous Geographies Collectives, 2010) allows considering new forms of politics constituted by 'hybrid forums' in which science, art, politics and other forms of knowledge participate from each other to address situations of uncertainty (Sansi, 2015). These new actors are questioning the hegemony and the commodification of the actual historical urban moment, experimenting forms of questioning. In what follows I will propose a final broader reflection on this.

6.3 Is it a matter of NYMBism? A conclusion

In the present multisited research in which different levels intersect and overlap, I want to put forward some final considerations.

D'Eramo, during a speech he gave at La Vida in December 2017 (Fieldnotes, 2017), talked about a sort of collective schizophrenia in which we are all tourist disregarding other tourists. If this could sound too excessive, it surely points out the complexity of our time.

---

[104] As explained in the previous autoethnographic chapter.

In the previous chapter I underlined my personal multipositioning, being myself a researcher, an activist and a tourist as well. Now, as some could easy accuse by reading the present research or similar ones, it is important to acknowledge that, more broadly, middle-class individuals are often prolific travellers themselves, despite the fact that they oppose to certain processes of overcrowding, landscape modification and urban space appropriation. This of course has certain kernel of truth, which is hardly falsifiable. Nonetheless, the awareness of the negative and side effects of the tourist industry on the (urban) environment are triggering some reformulation in the way activists travel. Although they are still a few ones, during my fieldwork I could notice how some activists are moving towards more conscious way of selection and are reducing their frequency of travel. Some of them often decide to go only where they have some friends or relatives that can host them, so not to have an impact on the destination. Despite the fact that Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR tourism) is one of the most ancient and widespread forms of tourism, which often eludes statistical data, it was interesting to note how the self-narration of this way of travelling is assuming a political nuance. While talking with some activists about this issue, I was said that they firmly decide not to go to some specific destination because of the awareness of the tourist impact they can have of the urban life of the city and how they prefer to revise their choices.

What emerges is an increasingly personal stance in front of the tourist industry. Nonetheless, moving keeps on playing an important role in people's life and travel still represents a moment to escape routine. Such perception has its basis in the industrial division of work and free time. The overturning of such cultural practices would required a much more profound change and such dichotomy highlights the impossibility to split tourism as both a neoliberal tool, which is contested, and a cultural practice, which call into question a much broader redefinition of cultural habits. For these reasons, despite the fact that tourism has to be thought as heavy industry, it is misleading to perceive this phenomenon as impacting on static local realities, in which hosts and guests are two polarised extremities (Bruner, 2005; Zanardi, 2019). By simplifying the complex dialectical process of the contemporary mobility era would end up creating an epistemological obstacle for the real understanding of the present historical moment, which is made of a dense network of actions and retroactions

(Zanardi, 2019). As underlined by Bruner (2005), it is fundamentally imprecise to conceive a local community as a mere passive receptor of an external tourist invader. On the contrary, hosts are the product of ceaseless, dialectical renegotiation between endogenous and exogenous forces. Within such complexity, it should not be surprising to hear voices that blame those who criticise and resist tourism for being hypocritical, paradoxical and parochial and for being a gentry that fights against gentrification and touristification.

The inhabitants that oppose processes of touristification, ultimately are not themselves sometimes people who came to settle in an urban area for the same reasons that draw visitors? Could we talk about NYMBism collectives when referring to the actual mobilizations in different cities? According to my fieldwork, the acronym, which stands for Not In My Back Yard i.e. the defence of narrow interests around issues of individual property and consumption, would sound naïve as well as deceptive. Indeed, alongside the slow change of habits in travelling to demystify tourist ideology, what above all refutes such categorization of the urban collectives I have been with, is the trajectory of having been focusing on housing issues at local and international level. In the constant reformulation and processuality of the present moment, what counts is the struggle for the building of a city in which people can live and stay. This is not about denying tourism *tout court*. Rather, it conveys the need to devise a city in which the tourism management and the urban plan are dedicated not only to tourism industry, but also to the preservation of residents' needs and quality of life. If in the classical examples of gentrification, disadvantaged social groups were replaces with more upper-income ones, whose purpose was to settle down, within touristification processes the settled population is replaces with an intermittent one. What follows is a looseness of attachment (physical, geographic, social), being *in* but not *of* the place (Franklin, 2003). Therefore, the present struggles are for the reduction of new forms of crossing places by consuming, in favour of a balanced city that takes into account those people who have chosen to invest their time and get involved in the social relations and the different urban functions a city can – and should – offer. This can help in overcoming some distinctions between gentrifiers coming from outside and historical residents, but rather as long-term inhabitants and the many temporal users. To corroborate such statements is the fact that several activists I have been talking with are not precisely native to the two

cities under consideration here. Be it for educational reasons, for work or other personal reasons they moved to Venice and Barcelona and decided to stay and invest their life in there. According to these groups, the dominant discourse should hence focus on tourism degrowth and on resident people (old and new ones), which are often omitted in official discussions. Just to give an example of this lack lets go back for a moment to the study commissioned by the European TRAN Committee[105] I have been mentioning at the beginning of this study. At the end of the research, the Committee provides a pragmatic overview of 121 policy measures, distributed over 17 cities that can be further improve to prevent or address overtourism. It is interesting to note how many of these suggestions are focused on tourism and tourists, such as improving, developing and promoting capacity and time spent by visitors; move events to less visited parts of the destinations; promote shoulder months and low season. Despite the fact that the study acknowledges overcrowding as an emerging topic, with related alienated residential problems, only less than ten measures are oriented through people who live the city, local commerce and on housing issues related to accommodations and privatisation expansion. On the contrary, the responses identify high-quality tourism as a valid solution to face the negative impact tourism is having on the urban life. Such stance reproduces a class distinction based on the spending power and eludes the concept of degrowth. According to the new born network SET, first, there should be more equality in the distribution of the benefits of this sector, so to trigger a virtuous circle in which local communities have decision-making power. Second, a diversification of the tourist economy, on which urban centres too often rely on, should follow.

Finally, by presenting this chapter in a sort of spiral in which each section benefits of and intersects with the analysis of the previous one I wanted to highlight the different forms of agency emerging within the discussion of tourism mobilisation. The study of the creative repertoires of action is just one of the broader tools the middle class is using to legitimise its opposition to the touristified city. Moreover, the complexity of the mobility time in which we are immersed invites to make explicit some inner nuances and paradoxes, which far from diminish the importance of such collectives, are necessary to avoid reductionist simplifications.

---

[105] Chapter 1, on the deconstructing of the overtourism term.

In the last chapter I will propose some further conclusions on the present research and tourism studies within which it is included.

References

Autonomous Geographies Collective (2010) Beyond scholar activism: Making strategic interventions inside and out- side the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 9 (2): 245–75.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) Sur le pouvoir symbolique, *Annales* 3 : 405-411.

Brenner, N., Marcuse, P., and Mayer, M. (eds) (2012) *Cities for People, not for Profit*, London and New York: Routledge.

Bruner, E.(2005) *Culture on Tour. Ethnographies of Travel*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Casa-Cortes, M. and Cobarrubias, S. (2010) Transatlantic translations: detectives and researchers for the revolution(s) in Team Colors Collective, (eds) *Uses of a whirlwind: movement, movements, and contemporary radical currents in the United States* Edinburgh: AK Press, 227-243.

Cocola-Gant, A. and Pardo, D. (2017) Resisting tourism fentrification: the experience of grassroots movements in Barcelona, URBANISTICA Tre giornale on-line di urbanistica 13(5): 33-39.

Castells, M. (2012) *Networks of Outrage and Hope,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Delgado, M. (2008) La artistización de las políticas urbanas. El lugar de la cultura en las dinámicas de reapropiacóón capitalista de la ciudad, 26-30 May 2008 X COloquio Internaciona de Geocrítica. Available at: http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/-xcol/393.htm

Derickson, K., D. and Routledge, P. (2015) Resourcing Scholar-Activism: Collaboration, Transformation, and the Production of Knowledge, *Professional Geographer*, 67 (1): 1-7.

Hale, C. (2006) Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology, *Cultural Anthropology* 21(1): 96-120.

Holmes, B. (2007) Continental Drift: Activist Research, From Geopolitics to Geopoetics, in (eds) Shukaitis S. and Graeber, D, *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization*, Oakland: AK Press, pp. 39-43.

Juris, J. S. (2007) Practicing Militant Ethnography with the Movement for Global Resistence in Barcelona, in (eds) Shukaitis S. and Graeber, D, *Constituent*

Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization, Oakland: AK Press, pp. 164-176.

Marcus, G., (2013) Experimental forms for the expression of norms in the ethnography of the contemporary, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3 (2): 197–217.

Mayer, M. (2013) First world urban activism. Beyond austerity urbanism and creative city politics, *City*, 17(1): 5–19.

Medrano, H., F. and Pardo, D. (2016) La lucha por el decrecimiento turístico: el caso de Barcelona, *Ecología política* (52): 104-106.

Pardo, D. and Gomez, R. (2019) Experiencias de movimientos sociales. El sur de Europa como espacio político anti-turistización, in Cañada, E. (ed.) *El turismo en la geopolítica del Mediterraneo*, Serie Informes en Contraste, núm. 9: 89-95.

Polletta, F. (2002) *Freedom is an endless meeting: Democracy in American social movements*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Polletta, F. and Jasper, J. (2001) Collective Identity and Social Movements, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27:283–305.

Rancière, J. (1999) Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.3

Ramírez-Blanco, J. (2014) *Utopías Artisticas de Revuelta*, Madrid: Cátedra.

Saltzman, M. (2016) Post-15M Grassroots Interventions in and for Public Space - Resurgence in Everyday Forms of Control and Resistance, in (eds) Pereira Zazo O. and Torres, S. *Spain After the 15M: the 99% Speaks Out*.

Sansi, R. (2017) Anthropology beyond itself, Visual Ethnography 6(2): 49:67.

Sansi, R. (2015) Public disorder and the politics of aesthetics in Barcelona, Journal of Material Culture 20(4): 429–442.

Shukaitis, S. and Graeber, D. (2007) eds *Constituent imagination:militant investigations/collective theorization*, Edinburgh: AK Press.

Zanardi, C. (2019) Complexity-cage. Toward a critical deconstruction of "tourism-phobia", The Urban Transcript 2(1) available online: http://journal.urbantranscripts.org/article/complexity-cage-toward-critical-deconstruction-tourism-phobia-clara-zanardi/

Conclusioni

'A landscape without flowers or magnificent woods may be depressing […], but flowers and trees should not make us forget the earth beneath, which has a secret life and a richness of its own' (Lefebvre 1991:87)

Nel momento in cui mi trovo a scrivere le conclusioni di questa ricerca, il dibattito sull'*overtourism* è ben lontano dall'essersi esaurito. Anzi, la questione sembra diffondersi a macchia d'olio tra la maggior parte delle città turistiche del mondo, le quali fanno uso di questo dispositivo "estrattivo" per continuare a garantirsi uno sviluppo economico in cui il significato sociale e la materialità dello spazio sono incorporati all'interno del processo di produzione. Parlare quindi di conclusioni potrebbe sembrare alquanto riduttivo e inadeguato. Ciò nonostante, è doveroso ripercorrere quanto esposto sin qui e offrire delle riflessioni finali rispetto al lavoro condotto.

Fin dal primo capitolo si è cercato di evidenziare come il turismo, strumento neoliberale di un'industria globale, sia in costante crescita in una traiettoria di sviluppo lunga un secolo, tanto da arrivare a parlare di 'età del turismo'. Il presente lavoro di ricerca ha voluto fornire inizialmente alcuni strumenti di decostruzione atti a leggere gli avvenimenti come parte di un unico processo evolutivo che va oltre le specificità delle singole città e riproduce degli schemi comuni nel corso del tempo. In seguito, i centri urbani di Barcellona e Venezia hanno fornito valide evidenze empiriche sulle tensioni e i conflitti riguardanti il processo di mercificazione della città turistica, frutto di pianificazioni strategiche e non semplice esito di un'incondizionata evoluzione storica.

In una situazione tanto diffusa quanto complessa, la comprensione della genealogia della città turistica è stata quindi fondamentale per lo sviluppo di uno studio che ha voluto restituire i percorsi di alcune proteste, poco diffuse dai media internazionali, ma non per questo meno importanti. In un momento storico in cui le classi e i discorsi dominanti cercano di svalutare azioni di critica verso l'estremo predominare del turismo, mi è sembrato necessario offrire un'analisi che mettesse in luce la complessità di un fenomeno molto spesso ridotto a semplice ostilità tra ospite e turista (Bruner,

2005). Tale visione, identificata come ostacolo al buon funzionamento della città, omette invece scelte politiche e dinamiche di mercato che provocano il depauperamento della polifunzionalità dei centri urbani.

Attraverso l'analisi dei casi presentati, in cui azioni locali fanno fronte alla svendita del patrimonio pubblico e alla monocultura che porta all'omologazione dello spazio e delle pratiche urbane, si è cercato di porre in evidenza come l'immaginario di protesta agisce direttamente in microlocalità grazie alla produzione di immagini e pratiche. In questo senso si è ribaltato il concetto che Harvey (2013) utilizza riferendosi alle specificità di ogni ciclo di accumulazione del capitale, definite come soluzioni spazio-temporali, applicandole alla controparte urbana che sviluppa una territorialità contingente e circostanziale.

All'interno della complessità della città turistificata che apparentemente promuove uguaglianza ma che indirettamente reprime ciò che non rientra nella sua ideologia di sviluppo, la ricerca portata a termine ha cercato di ridefinire il luogo e la posta in gioco della politica intesa come forma di esperienza e la capacità di creare un nuovo ambiente narrativo. *Fem Plaça*, l'esperienza della Vida così come il Coro delle Lamentele, il *Teatro sobre la Marcha* e la ricerca visuale sono stati per me dei modi di partecipare all'emergere di pratiche sospese tra il visibile e l'invisibile. Riprendendo la contrapposizione tra *politics* e *police* offerta da Rancière, in cui "the police says that there is nothing to see on a road, that there is nothing to do but move along […] that the space of circulating is nothing other than the space of circulation" (Rancière, 2010:87), le esperienze proposte contribuiscono invece a trasformare lo spazio in un luogo per il manifestarsi di un soggetto che afferma la propria presenza in contrapposizione al transitare (e al consumare). Attraverso pratiche conviviali, spettacoli e modi alternativi di fotografare e fare esperienza della pratica turistica si cerca di riconfigurare lo spazio e le attività che possono essere svolte al suo interno, alterando così ciò che è sensibile/visibile nella dimensione quotidiana.

Così come è stato esplicitato nell'introduzione, in questo percorso esplorativo il denominatore comune di approccio e conoscenza è stata la creatività. In chiusura va sottolineato come tale concetto sia da intendere nella sua accezione più ampia di sperimentazione estetica che trascende i limiti di ciò che è considerato essere il pensiero e la pratica comune. Inoltre, attraverso i casi presentati, la creatività si è dimostrata

essere un concetto dal potenziale sociale e socievole, culturalmente specifica e prodotta a livello comunitario, incorporata nel desiderio (e divertimento) di costruire un contesto di emancipazione (Edensor, 2010). Infatti, nelle occupazioni temporanee di piazza e nella creazione di canzoni, ma anche nella ricerca fotografica collaborativa, la creatività si presenta come relazionale "involving persons in those mutually constitutive relationships through which […] they continually participate in each other's coming-into-being" (Hallam and Ingold, 2007:6).

Il significato di creatività è stato indagato nelle sue sfaccettature, addentrandosi nella comprensione dei paesaggi vernacolari e del quotidiano, focalizzandosi sulla relazione tra collettivi urbani e spazio pubblico e sulla potenzialità che tale strumento ha di generare valori non orientati al profitto economico e non omologati. All'interno di questo processo, la creatività non è da intendersi però come mera innovazione, bensì rappresenta la capacità di mantenere a un livello sociale pratiche di cui si appropria la città per la messa in valore di tipo economico. Riuscire a conservare determinate attività su un piano che non sia economico richiede l'attuazione di una serie di qualità creative (Hallam e Ingold, 2007) che diventano strategie per affermare un'identità attraverso azioni sedimentate nel tempo e non per forza nuove e insolite (Butler, 1989). Come si è visto, di fronte ad una sempre maggiore omologazione e alienazione sociale dovuta all'uso dei centri urbani, la politicizzazione del quotidiano e del corpo si articola in un antagonismo incorporato che cerca di alterare relazioni socio-spaziali. Nel ridefinire l'urbano attraverso il contrasto e la giustapposizione, la presenza corporale insinua un modo di vivere la città all'interno di un altro in cui pratiche simili si caricano di significati diversi, se non opposti. Fare piazza per creare occasioni d'incontro, cantare la svendita in determinati luoghi contesi, criticare l'omologazione delle pratiche turistiche significa opporre un mondo ad un altro, o meglio inserirsi criticamente in quello dominante. Le azioni incorporate, come un'agopuntura sociale, creano delle spaccature (Butler, 1989) nella definizione istituzionale della realtà e producono significati alternativi nel modo di vivere e muoversi nello spazio.

In questi momenti di incontro le persone si relazionano in spazi *in-between* che sono personali e politici allo stesso tempo. La performance alimenta il coinvolgimento all'interno di un'eterotopia localizzata (Foucault, 1986) ricca di contraddizioni e

rivelatrice delle preoccupazioni delle persone che abitano la complessità politica del quotidiano.

Gli spazi performati che si creano durante queste azioni operano rendendo esplicito l'ordine dominante esistente. Tale destabilizzazione introduce il concetto di contingenza nel momento presente e dimostra che se l'ordine delle cose è socialmente prodotto, di conseguenza è anche soggetto a modifiche. Si generano così diversi *timescapes* e modalità di produrre un diverso e più dinamico senso dello spazio, in cui la dimensione creativo-affettiva della protesta produce una risonanza effettiva all'interno della critica alla città turistificata.

Parimenti, come messo in evidenza da Juris (2014), anche altre attività interne aiutano ad identificare i collettivi urbani come un continuum tra performance più o meno pubbliche. La scrittura di email nelle mailing list, il continuo confrontarsi tramite i gruppi whatsapp, o la circolazione del materiale interno, devono essere intesi nel loro aspetto performativo, intendendo per performance ogni qualsivoglia pratica che faccia riferimento alla produzione di significati ed idee alternativi. Il dissenso, dal potenziale trasformativo del qui ed ora, si esprime così in un ritorno alle relazioni di vicinato, prevalentemente mediante un *quiet activism* (Pottinger, 2016). Operando a scala ridotta, meno evidente e più modesta, questi casi di studio contribuiscono ad ampliare la nozione di trasgressione, concetto da intendere non nella sua accezione violenta bensì in una dimensione accessibile grazie alle sue caratteristiche ludiche, riflessive e creative, elementi normalmente regolati nell'ordine urbano dominante.

Pertanto, sebbene alcuni autori pongano l'accento su come sia ormai più facile immaginare la fine del mondo piuttosto che del capitalismo (Fisher, 2009), i mezzi di produzione propri di questo sistema sono solo un possibile modo di organizzare l'uso delle risorse e il suo scambio, e le possibilità di costruire pratiche politiche collettive, informali e di socialità sono sempre più variegate e presenti. Così dunque, oltre ai concetti di creatività e trasgressione, lo studio condotto ha permesso di ridefinire la produttività che va oltre i ristretti ambienti economici, in cui la creazione di legami di fiducia, benessere e convivialità sono la causa e l'effetto di pratiche la cui ragion d'essere si basa su un processo condiviso e collettivo.

Come sottolineato da Routledge (2015), i collettivi di protesta agiscono dallo spazio (*from space*), mobilitandosi politicamente a partire dalle condizioni materiali dei loro

luoghi; nello spazio (*in space*) appropriandosene come gruppo attraverso un posizionamento preciso; attraverso lo spazio (*through space*) con marce o mobilità varia; e infine facendo lo spazio (*make space*), ovvero creando le condizioni per un maggiore coinvolgimento (Routledge, 2015). La creatività, il *quiet activism* e la produttività sociale diventano parte di ciò che sostiene l'attivismo e coniugano l'effimero con ciò che è duraturo. Forse, più di ogni altra cosa, grazie a questi elementi si creano spazi in cui gli attivisti sentono di poter affrontare questioni altrimenti percepite come insormontabili (Shepard et al., 2008), alimentando invece azioni consecutive in una comunità inclusiva formata da gruppi affini.

Così, dunque, questi nuovi collettivi emergenti all'interno di contesti di crisi economica, in cui il turismo rappresenta una rapida via d'uscita, possono essere identificati come "cultura di chiunque" (Caballud e Fernàndez-Savater, 2017). Le recenti mobilitazioni urbane e gli spazi in cui si muovono sono in grado di farsi carico – a livello di pratica e con la loro presenza fisica – della dimensione relazione e comunitaria, articolandole in modo "orizzontale". Rappresentano infatti un invito a pratiche alternative che superino forme gerarchiche, individualistiche ed esclusive. La protesta creativa è in grado di far avvicinare alle lotte diverse persone (non solo quelle con un passato già politicamente schierato e attivo) che altrimenti avrebbero mantenuto le distanze. Ciò non deve però essere inteso come una mancanza di radicalità. Al contrario, rappresenta un passaggio fondamentale per produrre coesione sociale, identità di quartiere e socialità, in uno spazio della possibilità che aspira ad un cambiamento graduale e sistematico all'interno della città neoliberale.

Innegabilmente, tutte queste osservazioni non sarebbero state possibili se la ricerca non fosse stata caratterizzata da una forte trasversalità, la quale ha permesso di collegare lo studio di singole azioni interstiziali. Nell'attuale momento storico, in cui si assiste ad una continua mobilitazione dal basso, limitare lo studio a un solo gruppo sarebbe risultato rischioso, portando alla creazione di discorsi retorici (Garnier, 2018) che non avrebbero preso compiutamente in considerazione l'impatto concreto che tali gruppi hanno sull'evoluzione della critica alla città turistificata e dei movimenti più in generale.

Pertanto, in questa esplorazione, è stata fondamentale la rottura con le classiche dicotomie del locale/globale o *lifeworld/system* (Marcus, 1995). Ovvero, seguendo

quanto proposto da Neveling e Wergin (2009), la presente ricerca ha cercato di adottare un approccio congiunto per analizzare i concetti di luogo, cultura e politica, abbandonando la dicotomia assoluta di locale *vs* globale, servendosi invece di una meta-prospettiva in cui il focus è stato ridefinito continuamente giacché in ognuna di queste categorie è sempre presente una parte dell'altra.

Perciò, analizzando le diverse geografie dei gruppi di protesta, si è cercato di mettere in evidenza, oltre all'estetica e alla politica dello spazio anche la questione di scala che contraddistingue le mobilitazioni attuali, da ricollegare alla dimensione relazionale di rete. Ciò è stato reso possibile grazie alla mobilità garantita dalla ricerca multi-situata. Infatti, una volta superate le preoccupazioni metodologiche che possono insorgere in questo tipo di ricerca sui limiti dell'etnografia, il potersi muovere trasversalmente rispetto a identità e spazi del sistema mondo (Marcus, 1995), innovando le pratiche di ricerca, ha rappresentato un valore aggiunto per ampliare scenari e orizzonti. Parallelamente, questo tipo di approccio ha confutato l'idea che valuta esperienze interstiziali incapaci di minacciare il dominio di ideologie dominanti e le considera soggette, prima o poi, ad essere eliminate dalle forze dell'ordine, essere integrate all'interno di spazi di consumo culturali o disgregarsi per la stanchezza dei partecipanti (Garnier, 2018).

Ammettere che alcuni gruppi potrebbero avere vita breve non vuol dire non riconoscere l'importanza del processo attraverso cui, come esposto sopra, le persone possono condividere interessi e impegnarsi in progetti collettivi. Ciò permette di creare un'identità politica attraverso l'esperienza delle pratiche e un senso di importanza che trascende il caso specifico. In tal modo siamo invitati a guardare all'*agency* e al potere trasformatore che evolve nel tempo. Pertanto, queste resistenze culturali, lontane dall'essere considerate una vuota ritualità, contribuiscono a strategie più ampie di una nuova forma di impegno civico. Con specifico riferimento all'analisi offerta sin qui[106], ci troviamo di fronte ad una volontà di *jump of scale* (Smith, 1992). Pur rimanendo radicati nei propri territori e alle specificità delle lotte e alla durata che li caratterizzano, i singoli gruppi non vanno intesi come isolati e inefficaci. La prova è data dalla co-produzione di materiale critico tra attivisti ed accademici e dalla rete delle città del Sud d'Europa, la quale esprime la necessità di lottare in maniera congiunta tra territori e

---

[106] Mi riferisco soprattutto alle riflessioni del capitolo precedente.

aspira ad un *escalation* delle richieste dal livello locale alla sfera nazionale e internazionale attraverso un dissolvimento delle barriere spaziali che possa in questo modo facilitare un'opposizione unitaria, seppur formata da una pluralità di voci. Solo così ci si può opporre in maniera determinata al sovrapporsi di diversi agenti che rendono la città una monocultura (Note di campo, 2018).

Nuovamente, la continua evoluzione del processo sottolinea il divenire del corpo urbano e dello spazio, costantemente aperto al cambiamento, al divenire, sempre "in construction" (Massey, 2005). Questo aspetto ribadisce l'importanza di un atteggiamento ricettivo verso la grande ricchezza di collettivi e delle azioni locali emergenti, quindi di focalizzarsi sul processo e i repertori di azioni per documentare come le persone usino la propria cultura per opporsi a processi ormai ben noti.

L'analisi dell'estetica e delle poetiche dei gruppi ha fornito così la possibilità di definire meglio i nuovi e apparentemente meno mediatici collettivi urbani, e di indagare in che modo si generano, oltre a capire attraverso che tipo di dinamiche e negoziazioni vengono definite le singole azioni, offrendo in tal modo risultati che altri tipi di studi hanno fino ad ora difficilmente indagato e strutturato all'interno della messa in discussione dell'ideologia turistica. Infatti, sebbene la letteratura accademica su attivismo e turistificazione sia molto numerosa, ancora molto poco è stato prodotto sulla struttura interna dell'attivismo urbano in relazione al turismo e sul ruolo del ricercatore in questo specifico campo di ricerca.

Sempre di più, studi di questo tipo sono necessari, da un lato, per arricchire la già copiosa letteratura sui movimenti sociali e, dall'altro, per integrare il dibattito esistente sugli studi turistici (Ateljevic et al., 2007), garantendo una maggiore comprensione di questo campo di studi. Nel caso di Barcellona e Venezia, ma non solo, tali esperienze potrebbero auspicabilmente essere raccolte in un Atlas on-line in cui mappare i diversi collettivi che si generano nell'attuale momento storico come risposta all'eccessiva turistificazione, un osservatorio sociale in cui diverse discipline possano apportare il proprio contributo. Difatti, parafrasando quanto sostenuto da Graburn e Jafari quasi vent'anni fa (1991), la situazione è (ormai) sufficientemente chiara: nessuna singola disciplina può ospitare, trattare o comprendere in maniera approfondita il turismo, il quale può essere studiato soltanto oltrepassando i confini disciplinari ed esplorando prospettive multidisciplinari. In questo viaggio, accademico e personale, si può così

scorgere il complesso rapporto che caratterizza gli studi turistici e cogliere l'invito a lavorare "between the disciplines, blending various philosophies and techniques so that the particular disciplines do not stand apart but are brought together intentionally and explicitly to seek a synthesis" (Echtner & Jamal, 1997: 878-9). La post-disciplinarità non deve essere erroneamente concepita come un abbandono delle singole discipline, ma sfruttata in termini di capacità di apertura, interazione e integrazione. Si tratta di una necessità pragmatica di fronte alla complessità di questa tesi, in cui il sovrapporsi di diverse questioni può portare a paradossi e contraddizioni che solo un approccio multifocale può aiutare a comprendere.

Bibliografia

Ateljevic, A. Pritchard, A. e N. Morgan (2007) *The critical turn in tourism studies*, New York: Routledge.

Beckett, A., E, Bagguley, P. and Campbell, T. (2017) Foucault, social movements and heterotopic horizons: rupturing the order of things, *Social Movement Studies*, 16 (2): 169-181.

Butler, J. (1989) Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory, in (ed) Case, S. *Performing Feminism: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Coles, T. e Hall, C. M. (2006) Tourism and Post-disciplinary Enquiry, *Current Issue in Tourism* 9(4&5): 293-318.

Ecthner, C. M. e Jamal, T. B. (1997) The Disciplinary Dilemma of Tourism Studies, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24 (4) 868-883.

Edensor, T., D. Leslie, S. Millington and N. Rantisi (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London: Routledge

Garnier, J. P. (2018) Las Ciencias Sociales desde una Perspectiva Postcapitalista: ¿ Una Puerta Abierta a la Ciencia-Ficción?, *XV Coloquio Internacional de Geocrítica Las ciencias sociales y la edificación de una sociedad post-capitalista Barcelona*, 7-12 de mayo de 2018. Available at http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/XV-Coloquio/JeanPierreGarnier.pdf

Graburn, N., and J. Jafari (1991) Tourism Social Science, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 18:1-11.

Harrison, P. (2000) Making Sense: Embodiment and the Sensibilities of the Everyday, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18: 497-517.

Hallam, E. and Ingold, T. (2007) *Creativity and cultural improvisation*, London: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (2013) *Ciudades rebeldes. Del derecho de la ciudad a la revolución urbana*, Madrid: Akal.

Juris J., S. (2014) Embodying Protest: Culture and Performance within Social Movements. In (eds) Baumgarten B., Daphi P., Ullrich P. *Conceptualizing Culture in Social Movement Research*, London: Palgrave Macmillan

Lefebvre, H. (1991) Critique of Everyday Life, Vol. I, Introduction, London: Verso.

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*, London: Sage.

Melucci, A. (1989) *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individuals Needs in Contemporary Society*, London: Hutchnson Radius.

Pernecky, T., Munar, A., M. And Feighery, W. (2016) Tourism in a Postdisciplinary Milieu: Final Demarcation Points, *Tourism Analysis*, Vol. 21: 1-4.

Pinder, D. (2005) Arts of urban exploration, *Cultural Geographies* 12:383:411.

Routledge, P. (2015) Geografy and Social Movement, in (eds) Della Porta, D. and Diani, M. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shepard, B., Bogad, L. and Duncombe, S. (2008) Performing vs. the insurmountable: theatrics, activism, and social movements, *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, 4(3): 1-30.

Smith, N. (1992). Contours of a spatialized politics: Homeless vehicles and the production of geographical scale, *Social Text* 33: 55-81.