



The Other's Wave: Ethnographic Insights on Three "Tsunamis of Tourism" in Barcelona

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Abstract

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, the case of Barcelona was an emblematic example of how a city had turned into an iconic tourism destination in a few decades thanks to smart, yet incautious, tourism development policies based on the most attractive features the city is endowed with. The paper is a critical reflection analyzing the major complications, called "tsunamis", the city of Barcelona has faced in recent years: political instability, terrorism and tourismophobia. The paper aims at 1) retracing the causes and motivations but also community reactions and sociocultural consequences to the three tsunamis, and 2) trying to learn lessons from the Barcelonan case study proposing solutions to the tourismophobia phenomenon. The results stem from an ethnographic fieldwork undertaken during the IPAC Summer School in 2018, whose aim was to understand the paradox of international tourism, at once bringing economic benefits but creating sociocultural disequilibria. The analysis considers written sources and the participant observation during the ethnographic fieldworks in Barcelona.

Keywords

Tourismophobia, Tsunamis of tourism, Barcelomania, Mass tourism, Political instability, Terrorism

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Introduction

La única calle en la tierra que desearía que no terminara nunca (The only street in the world that I wish it would never end). This way the Andalusian poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) described the Barcelonan famous promenade, La Rambla: the essence of the city of Barcelona in 1.2 kilometers. According to the poet, La Rambla was a symbol, a meeting point and a place of dialogue. But right before COVID-19 outbreak, the *passeig* was an entanglement of tourists and, instead of being the favorite space for poets or artists, symbolized the conversion of the city of Barcelona into a mass tourism icon or, better, into a touristic thematic park.

The present work is part of a reflection begun at the 2018 International Summer School of IPAC, the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Université Laval in Quebec City (Canada), whose fieldwork was undertaken in Barcelona, a city that completely transformed itself in the timespan of a few years, becoming a world-renowned tourism giant. Probably, the biggest paradox of tourism lies in the fact that it is a sector capable of generating as many benefits, and the economic one outweighs the others, as many social pressures in the touristic destination if tourism is poorly managed (Robinson & Picard, 2006). The Summer School was titled *Barcelomania and touristophobia: museality and urbanity pushed to the extreme* and aimed at studying the paradox of international tourism. The field study in Barcelona, and in the region of Catalonia (two outdoor field visits took place in the cities of Tarragona and Girona), from the 4th to the 13th June 2018 has allowed a deeper understanding of the research question and how to approach the touristic problems affecting the city. Directly and symbolically, La Rambla was the scene of several *waves* that struck the Catalan city in 2017. Within a few months, the three “tsunamis” that I illustrate in this study have occurred and even crossed: the Catalan independence referendum, two terrorist attacks and the phenomenon of tourismophobia.

The data collected and the reflection of the paper stem from both written sources (scientific articles) and from the ethnographic fieldwork, considering the notes taken during the experts’ conferences attended in situ, as well as the field observations (Barcelona, Tarragona, Girona) and the exchanges had with tourists and residents. Observations, impressions and conversations which had taken place in the field were written down in a logbook. The ethnographic method is particularly apt for tourism-related research, as pointed out by many research scholars (Nash, 2000; Palmer, 2001, 2009; Graburn, 2002; Cole, 2005; Salazar, 2011; Andrews *et al.*, 2019; Leite *et al.*, 2019). Direct observation corresponds to *witnessing the social behavior of individuals or groups in the very places of their activities or their residences without modifying the ordinary course* (Peretz, 2004, p.14). In order to minimize the bias during the data collection process (Laperrière, 2009), we introduced ourselves to the field of study first in theory, through several readings related to the Barcelona Model,

CIs, the governmentality and the innovation of the city of Barcelona (Saint-Pierre, 2004; Montaner, 2006; Bel & Warner, 2009; Ter Minassian, 2010; McDonogh, 2011; Bonnafont, 2015; Pecot and De Barnier, 2015; Coll-Martínez *et al.*, 2017; Zapata-Barrero, 2017; Zarlenga & Capdevila, 2018). This reflective *préalable* aims to reflect the *theoretical path of researchers in their intention to explain the observed situation* (Fortin & Gagnon, 2016, p.318). In fact, within the framework of this study, participant observation (PO) is essential and very explanatory of the “world of participants” and integrates, say complements, the information collected through the written sources. The purpose of the field of study is to draw *a cultural portrait or a synthesis showing the complexity of all aspects of the life of a group* (Wolcott, 1999). In the method used, pros and cons should be extrapolated. In terms of limits, the disadvantage is the risk of bias from the observer in the field, and during exchanges. On the other hand, the wealth of content and data obtained during the fieldwork is unparalleled in comparison to other methods, such as questionnaires.

Catalan National and Touristic Context

Second largest city of Spain with a population of 1.6 million inhabitants in 2020 within city limits (INE, 2020), Barcelona is the fourth most visited city in Europe by international tourists after London (19.6), Paris (15.45) and Istanbul (9.16) (Statista, 2018). The Barcelonan tourism narrative relies, broadly speaking, on three facts characterizing the city embodied, first, in its modernism (Catalan art and its Catalan artists *with a universal vocation* (Carrera, 2014, p.125), its connotation of fashion and cultural city...) and in its cosmopolitanism. Barcelona has a reputation of being a Mediterranean festive city, the second reason for its touristic success, and, ultimately, it is known for the openness of its inhabitants, favored by the *proximity to France and Europe and its access to the Mediterranean* (Carrera, 2014, p.129).

The tourism figures of Catalonia and Barcelona show important tourist flows. Tourism is the most dynamic industry in Catalonia (12% of its GDP) (Eurorégion Pyrénées-Méditerranée, 2018). It is the most visited Autonomous Community in Spain by international tourists totaling 19 million in tourism receipts, followed by the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands. Total tourist spending in Catalonia reached 19.2 trillion euros in 2017. Following Barcelona's tourism development policies, the number of overnight stays in the Catalan capital tripled by 3.8 million in 1990 to 12.4 million in 2008 (Turisme Barcelona, 2009), figures not taking into account excursionists and cruise tourists and excluding those who stayed in a non-hotel infrastructure (Airbnb, for example). In 2016, the number of tourists amounted to 8.36 million (Statista, 2018) and, since the number of inhabitants of Barcelona is equal to 1.6 million, the tourist-inhabitant ratio equals 10 tourists per Barcelonan (Paquot, 2016, p.87).

The main anti-tourism criticism made to Barcelona concerns a prioritization, by the city and the regional governments, of policies in favor of an economic growth engendered by tourism (instead of policies directed to the welfare of the population of Barcelona) and of immigration (Delgado, 2007, p.242). Barcelona has become a touristic icon on a global scale like the cities of Prague and Venice. At the same time, the inhabitants of the *barrios* (neighborhoods) where the tourist influx is major, experience the feeling:

To be no longer at home, but rather in a sort of 'human safari' where tourists armed with cameras and cell phones come to photograph you and do not hesitate to enter the courtyards, the dead-ends, the gardens (Paquot, 2016, p.87).

Barcelona Model and Barcelomania: Identity Creation of the City of Barcelona

One of the most emblematic and controversial cases of tourism development in Spain is represented by the city of Barcelona and its model taking the name of the city itself. To (re)trace the development of tourism in Barcelona, we should go back to the end of Franco's dictatorship and the beginning of the democratization, socialization and *touristization* of the city. This very beginning is called *Barcelona model* and represents the reason behind the touristic success of the Catalan capital and the phenomenon of *Barcelomania*, intended as the touristic appeal and obsession tourists have for Barcelona. I agree with other researchers when asserting that the existence and direct application of a single Barcelona model concerning the renewal of the city is debatable (McNeill, 1999; Marshall, 2000; Monclus, 2003; Casellas & Pallares-Barbera, 2009). However, distinctive features of urban and cultural development of the city since the 1980s are identifiable: the unique governance based on a strong citizen support and the innovative combination of cultural activities and the urban regeneration of the city (González & Healey, 2005). The modernization of Barcelona after Franco's death and the democratic elections of 1979 are shaped by three distinctive phases of urban transformation, i.e. from a governance going from a bottom-up community-based approach until the end of the 1990s to a top-down approach dominated by the private sector and with more hegemonic features in the early 2000s (Monclus, 2003).

The cultural transformation of the 'Barcelona model'

1025

Table 1 Phases of urban transformation in Barcelona since 1979

	Role of Culture	Governance	Inclusivity/Redistribution
Phase 1	Foster democratic urban Catalan identity and civic pride	Dialogue with citizens	Provision of collective, public services such as schools Provision of new public spaces (democratization of urban spaces) Provision of public housing
Phase 2	Architectural expression and urban pride Marketing the city for the Olympic Games Promoting urban lifestyles	Consensus	Provision of civic centres and libraries Renovation of museums Renovation of cultural infrastructure (e.g. theatres)
Phase 3	Functional tool Support 'knowledge economy' and cultural industries	Hegemonic; top-down organized participation	Top-down organized festivals Promotion of 'interculturality'

Figure 1. The cultural transformation of the 'Barcelona model'. Table in Degen and García (2012, p.1025).

Criticism related to this model has been raised. Delgado (2007) traces the flaws of the Barcelona model by situating the city in the contemporary international context and defining it as a post-industrial and capitalist city. According to Con Iglesias (2009), the city has been converted into a consumer product via an extraordinary marketing operation, the Olympic Games in the front line, for the sale of its brand-new image. Among others, Vives (2018) provides guidance concerning Barcelona's transformation into the world's leading smart city, while Calzada (2018) examines Barcelona's transition from the conventional smart city approach to the new experimental urban development mode, exploring the "techno-stakeholders" in smart cities (Calzada, 2021). While the model has initially been the vehicle for economic growth and city development in several sectors, tourism included (Wilson & Antón, 2016), the medium-term consequences of the model are beginning to worry and the city itself is not only questioning its sustainability for the long-term but also attempting *to rewrite past policies from a further democratic standpoint by including aspects such as social justice and rights, collectivism, Catalanism and its identitarian pathway* (Calzada, 2020). According to multiple authors (Bakici *et al.*, 2013; Karvonen *et al.*, 2018; Calzada & Almirall, 2019), Barcelona's smart policy agenda is shifting from a dominant techno-cratic approach to a preferable techno-logical sovereignty. From here, Barcelonan socio-cultural concerns will be called the *tsunamis of tourism* in Barcelona.

My posture is based on the fact that the three tsunamis were caused by the mismanagement of the Barcelona model and by a more capitalistic than social and sustainable will to take advantage of the metamorphosis of the city. The word tsunami

seems the ideal term to use for the aims of the present study because Barcelona has suffered, and is undergoing, multiple tsunamis whose triggering element was its tourism development model. The term tsunami applied to the Barcelona context is borrowed from Dolores Sánchez Aguilera, Professor of Geography at the University of Barcelona, who used it during her lecture *The three tsunamis of tourism in Barcelona* on June 4, 2018. It is very likely though that the first time we hear of a “touristic tsunami” dates back to the campaign of the CUP (*Candidatura d’Unitat Popular*), a Catalan independence political party, when a manifesto explaining how to behave in the event of a touristic tsunami is published.



Figure 2. Què fer en cas de tsunami turístic? (What to do in the event of a tourist tsunami?).
Source: Infotur Barcelona (2018).

The three tsunamis correspond to political instability, terrorism and tourismophobia. They represent the three waves crashing into the "Barcelonan organism" and can be interpreted as the three major complications the city faced until early 2020. Taking the scale of three different matrices (political, terrorist and touristic), the waves intersect, overlap and fit into a very precise geopolitical and socio-cultural context, in the "big picture" of the city, reflected in a specific need, more universal than circumscribed to the city of Barcelona: the current problem to relate to the Other and the need to know how to dialogue and exchange with the Other in a better way. In the three sections that follow, the three tsunamis are reconstructed in terms of historical origin, causes and motivations as well as community reactions and sociocultural consequences, and lessons from the Barcelona tourism case study are drawn.

Tsunami #1: Political Instability ("Us", the Catalans)

Nationalism and independence are an important part within the Catalan political discourse. During the fieldwork in Girona, I discovered that behind the popularity of a city that has become renown thanks to the filming of the medieval-fantasy American series *Game of Thrones* lies the most independentist city of Catalonia. This aspect is an inconspicuous element to film tourists' passionate yet politically-inexperienced eyes. The pride of Catalans residing in the city is palpable, from the terraces of houses to the entrances of restaurants, and demonstrated by the yellow flags, symbol of Catalan independence, waving in the wind.

Throughout its history and, in particular, since the second half of the 19th century, Catalonia has been marked by nationalist movements. Its culture and language have been the identity vectors to be retrieved and defended in a discourse and in a desire to recognize Catalonia as a cultural space, even as a nation in its own right (Castellet, 1983; Sobrequés, 2012; Prat de la Riba, 2013). Later, this politico-cultural movement of provincialist matrix is identified with the name of *Renaixença* (Renaissance, in Catalan) and represents the beginning of a national awakening where part of the Barcelonan elite (i.e. the bourgeoisie, the main defenders of the movement) and Catalan society (especially intellectuals) organized to build a collective and identity memory marked by a *coherent vision of the past of Barcelona and Spain* (Michonneau, 2000, p.10). The practice of this *policy of liberal-provincialist memory* (*ibid.*, p.13) began in the 1830s until the years of the Spanish Civil War and ended with the start of Franco's dictatorship. The *Renaixença* takes its most powerful and persuasive form in the revalorization of heritage, particularly urban (Balaguer, 1865), bringing to an idealization of the Catalan past; a past where Catalans were part of this blossoming, aptly called a renaissance, both in political and cultural terms (García, 1998, p.51).

Initially, social division dominated the Barcelonan society but, from and during the Catalan Renaissance, elements of memory converged towards an effectively common

identity and a shared political effort, sold as past but, on the contrary, belonging to contemporaneity. These elements justify the assertion of several authors that Catalan nationalism is not of ethnic order but is fundamentally cultural (Castellet, 1983; Sobrequés, 2012; Prat de la Riba, 2013). Under Franco's regime, heritage becomes a vehicle for political propaganda and promotion of the regime itself. The growth of the tourism sector fits into the main objectives of this propaganda. During the nearly forty years of Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975), the Catalan "flagships" mentioned earlier, culture and language, were however denied and banned everywhere in Spain, replaced by a dominant totalitarian policy and a common imposed vehicular language. Once the Generalitat of Catalonia was re-established in 1977 and the Spanish Constitution adopted in 1978, a recovery of cultural and linguistic freedoms was in action as well as a democratic transition and cultural, urban and museum effervescence (Carrera, 2014).

If, on the one hand, democratization and socialization processes were visible in Catalonia following Franco's dictatorship and resulted in the flowering of Catalan culture, on the other hand, mobilizations and Catalanist society's radicalizations perform today more than ever. The political situation is aggravated for several reasons, from the 2008 global economic crisis to, and this point is crucial, the annulment of 14 articles in the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia which altered the concept of "Catalan nation". Released on 9 July 2010 by the *Tribunal Constitucional* (Constitutional Court), the full judgement was interposed by 99 Deputies of the Popular Parliamentary Group of Congress in relation to various provisions of Organic Law 6/2006, reforming the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. Called *Pleno. Sentencia 31/2010. Recurso de inconstitucionalidad 8045-2006*, the resolution annuls 14 articles of the Statute and reinterprets 27 more (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2010). Two of the 14 articles declared unconstitutional refer to the Catalan flagships previously mentioned: culture and language. In fact, the Constitutional Court (TC) believes that the Constitution *does not know any other nation than the Spanish* (p.272) and that *the Catalan people is nothing but a species of 'Spanish citizenship'* (p.271) and, therefore, the Statute of Catalonia does not have interpretative legal effectiveness. The magistrates point out repeatedly that Catalonia cannot be a nation in the legal sense since the idea of *'Catalonia as a nation' stands against 'the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation' on which the Constitution is based* (p.23). It is interesting here to point out the use of small (Catalonia as a nation) and capital letters (Spanish Nation) for the term nation. With regard to national symbols, they must be understood as *symbols of a nationality constituted as an autonomous community* (p.269), without this creating *competition or contradiction with the symbols of the Spanish Nation* (p.272). Concerning the linguistic aspect, if the magistrates, on the one hand, endorse the school model of linguistic immersion in Catalan (but also stress that Spanish should be considered vehicular language), they also warn, on the other hand, that the right of citizens to be

served in either language is only enforceable in relations with public authorities, so that an obligation cannot be imposed directly on private sector relations and makes it clear that the Administration *cannot have preference for either language* (p.275).

These tensions consequently led to the most politically direct means of claiming one's own cultural identity: a referendum for independence, which took place on October 1, 2017 and where the 'yes' won (90%). It is not the yes in itself that is of interest in the context of this work but the fact that 1) Catalonia has asked for a separatist referendum although it is already a region with autonomous status, and that 2) the language it claims for the administration and for the media is already official (with Castilian) according to the Spanish Constitution. Moreover, Catalan is already spoken by the majority of the population and is taught in schools where it is the language of instruction. If we follow the path that Catalonia has taken from the 19th century to present days, we notice that the discourse on its political instability being prioritized over others is that of a difficult and conflicting *coexistence between the culture, the territory and the state* (Carrera, 2014, p.129). Judit Carrera, director of the CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona), affirms that *this ability to claim one's own identity by dialoguing with the world is the common thread in the history of Catalan culture* (Carrera, 2014, p.125). Was the referendum a means, more symbolic than legal, to dialogue with the world and to assert its own culture and language in a "closed" Spanish state context? A question that also makes us wonder if, in 2020, a "modern community" is capable of defending its "cultural sovereignty" without having to have officially recognized its sovereignty as a full nation. These questions remain on the agenda, and not only on the Catalan scene.

Tsunami #2: Terrorism (the "Other", the Terrorists)

An initial decline in tourism revenues in Catalonia, as well as the shift to the second plan of the debate on the referendum for the independence of Catalonia in October 2017, took place when two attacks, claimed by the Islamic State, occurred in the Autonomous Community: in the city of Barcelona on August 17, 2017 and in Cambrils on the night of August 18, 2017. A second tsunami materializes not with an aversion of the Catalans against the central(izing) Spanish State but with a fear of the Other, here the terrorist acting according to religious fanaticism, that of the radical Salafism of the jihadist organization called Daesh. While it is interesting, and above all useful, to study the reasons and impacts of terrorist attacks linked to violent Islamism around the world, our aim here is to clarify the relationship linking terrorism with tourism and how the "touristic tsunami" in Barcelona represents the start of the terrorist wave that struck it by explaining the causes behind a terrorist attack whose target, both physical and symbolic, is the visitor.

In the years 1960-1970, the main *raison* of terrorism was politics. Today, religion is the trigger in the terrorist impulse and terrorism usually concerns Islamic areas in the world, whether the country is Arab (such as the countries of the Middle East or the

Maghreb) or not, for example in Europe (Domboróczy, 2010). Terrorism and tourism have certain basic characteristics in common: crossing national borders, involving (inter)national protagonists, and using travel and communication technologies to make themselves known (Sönmez, 1998). Notwithstanding the different matrix of the two activities, opposing life and death, intense tourist activity can represent a trigger for a terrorist attack. We can even say that tourism attracts terrorism, and that terrorism uses tourism as a means to convey a message (Romagnoli, 2016). Wassim Nasr (2016), specialist in jihadist movements, says that the aim of the attacks by the Islamic State is:

To claim the most victims among nationals of countries that are members of the coalition against the Islamic State. As usual, it is intended to frighten, to undermine the public freedoms of Western states, to radicalize opinion.

City-exaltation of cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2008) and in the peak of the touristic summer season, Barcelona has suffered a fierce attack on Barcelona's most famous and most frequented pedestrian alley, La Rambla (El País, 2020). The terrorist attack killed 15 people and left 43 injured (Le Monde, 2020). The same *modus operandi* was used in the attack in Cambrils. The number of nationalities hit by the attack in the famous Catalan promenade is equal to 32. If, on the one hand, the cosmopolitanism characterizing the city of Barcelona constitutes a pull factor in the city's tourism narrative, the fact of being a city that several nationals of Western developed countries visit (Le Figaro, 2020) and being part of a country engaged in the international coalition against Daesh (Huffington Post, 2020), represents the *ratio essendi* of a terrorist operation targeting both residents and tourists. In short, Barcelona's cosmopolitanism is reflected in a kind of double-edged sword in the tourism-terrorism paradigm, and the actions perpetrated by terrorists should be conceived in an-eye-for-an-eye-tooth-for-tooth formula against the countries representing the Arab-Muslim coalition in Iraq and Syria or against countries which hinder the development of the transnational jihadist ideology. It is not about attacking international tourists per se, the goal is to make terrorists' ideological goals as much visible as possible (Hall & O'Sullivan, 1996). In the case of Barcelona, we can trace several reasons which are added to the terrorist impulse: 1) The socioeconomic factor (poverty, high unemployment rate, urban concentration of the population, xenophobic, anti-Moroccan and anti-Pakistani tensions), 2) The religious factor (Islamic State propaganda, jihadist concentration, ideological void), 3) The strength of the symbol (Barcelona and its tourism are positioned in the festive, Western, gay-friendly and open city narrative).

Tourists are targeted as symbolic representatives of the "Other". They are "visiting ambassadors" from another country. From here, the importance of visual media, such as television or photojournalism, which come into play and have a significant impact on international public opinion. The formula for making attacks "appetizing"

from a media viewpoint is that when nationals of another country, or one's fellow citizens, are involved in a terrorist attack, media coverage is assured (Weimann & Winn, 1994). Once the tourist, and therefore the country (s)he represents, is struck, the ideological message of the terrorists is amplified and feared. Therefore, tourists become a valuable resource for terrorists to attract international attention (Sönmez, 1998).

Tsunami #3: Tourismophobia ("Us" and the "Other" at the same time, the Tourists)

This is a warning sign. Any city that sacrifices itself on the altar of mass tourism will be abandoned by its people when they can no longer afford the cost of housing, food, and basic everyday necessities. (Colau, 2014)

Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona (2015-present)

Until the terrorist attacks claimed by the Islamic State on August 17 and 18, 2017, another "wave" dominated Barcelona's scene, that of mass tourism and its nuisances (Lamant, 2017). Stencils in the walls of the city read "Tourists = Terrorists", the silent signal that tourists are the cause of such negative effects on Barcelonan culture and society and that their attitude is put, symbolically, on the same level of terrorist activities. The first effects of the touristic success of the city of Barcelona are starting to emerge to the point that it risks dying of its success (Romagnoli, 2020). One example among many are the protests against mass tourism in the form of a movement called #TouristGoHome (Egresi, 2018; Forbes, 2018), which has spread across several European cities and has one of its most active and influential representatives in the city of Barcelona. In the wake of protest movements against tourism comes the third tsunami: tourismophobia. Literally translatable with "the fear of tourism" and not to be confused with the concept of overtourism (Soydanbay, 2017; Séraphin *et al.*, 2020), the recent creation of this neologism designates:

This form of tiredness of the inhabitants before, in bulk, soaring rents, the disappearance of local shops, the proliferation of precarious jobs or the pressure on the water resources of the city (Lamant, 2017, p.16).

Eduardo Chibás's documentary *Bye Bye Barcelona* (available on YouTube) provides valuable insight into the city's tourism phenomenon by describing the *residents' dissatisfaction with the uncontrolled influx of arrogant tourists* (Paquot, 2016, p.87). Such dissent began in the 1990s in several cities worldwide (Colomb & Novy, 2016; Novy & Colomb, 2016; Milano & Mansilla, 2018), and the scientific literature touching on the case of Barcelona has helped shape the main characteristics related to the protests against the intensification of tourism (Arias & Russo, 2017; Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2018; Jover *et al.*, 2018; Milano & Mansilla, 2018). Until recently, tourismophobia translated in multiple demonstrations and acts of protests

that drew the media attention, and Barcelona was no exception (Goodwin, 2017; Lambea Llop, 2017; National Geographic, 2017). Barcelona is a city “built” by its own citizens, a bourgeois city, endowed with a very strong identity and, with few surprises, the responses and reactions to the tourist wave are evident through the action of three main actors: the municipality of Barcelona, Catalan anarchist groups and the local population.

1. Concerning the municipality of the city of Barcelona, we find in the first line Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona since 2015, and her citizen platform constituted in political party called *Barcelona in Comú* (Barcelona in Common). Colau makes tourism one of her priorities in a line in favor of a regulated decrease of tourism. Among the measures adopted, I quote:

A moratorium on the opening of new hotels in the city center in 2015, or fines against the Airbnb platform, when inspectors detect housing that compete with hotels, but not having a tourist permit (In Lamant, 2017, p.17). (My translation)

In a way, Ada Colau theorized her response to tourismophobia. During an interview in July 2017, she affirms:

It is not, of course, to put an end to tourism, but rather to imagine a model of more sustainable tourism at the city level, spreading the benefits across the neighborhoods, including the poorest (ones) (*ibid.*, p.16). (My translation)

2. As for the anarchist groups, several acts of vandalism are traceable, making Barcelona one of the “European Capitals”, or even the “birthplace” (Ballester, 2018), of tourismophobia. For example, on July 27, 2017, young Catalan anti-capitalist and pro-independence activists forming the Arran group stopped the race of a tourist bus, punctured its tires and tagged the windshield of the vehicle with the words *El turisme mata els barris* (Tourism kills the neighborhoods), a clear sign of protest against the touristic invasion that Barcelona undergoes throughout the year and, in particular, during the summer period. The act was filmed and shared on social networks to have a wider sounding board and as an incentive for other cities to react to problems created by mass tourism. Barcelona’s anarchists have described it as an act of “self-defense” (Lamant, 2017, p.16). Other less publicized episodes include travel agencies’ gates locked with silicone, punctured tires of the city’s rental bikes and attacks on tourism infrastructures (Huete & Mantecon, 2018).

3. The local population adopts the means of the protest and of the demonstration to be heard and respected. During the summer of 2017, residents of Barcelona formed a human chain in the Barceloneta beach and, wearing yellow T-shirts (color associated with Catalan independence) saying Barceloneta is not for sale in Catalan, they prevented tourists from bathing and invited them to leave the beach. Several have been the anti-tourist slogans and parades in 2017 (7sur7, 2020).

From the anarchist group responsible for the acts of vandalism produced in 2017 to the top of the administration of the city of Barcelona, the consensus is that neither tourists nor tourism are to demonize nor should be considered the problem per se, although the concept of tourismophobia indicates an extreme aversion to tourism (Donaire, 2008; Milano, 2017) and residents' high degree of tourists' rejection (Abril-Sellares *et al.*, 2015). On the contrary, tourism growth is generally desired by emerging tourism destinations as a means of economic development and is indicated in places that would benefit from this market, all in a sustainable promotion discourse and using a bottom-up approach. The argument here is to understand how to deconstruct the "hegemonic tourism discourse" (Barrado-Timón & Hidalgo-Giralt, 2019) around Barcelona, how to decrease tourism in the Catalan capital and, likewise, in cities where tourismophobia has become an "infection" provoking protests and the local population's general dissatisfaction. If we were to diagnose the "tourismophobic infection" of the city of Barcelona, we would probably identify overcrowding as the main symptom, whose five main marks striking the "Barcelonan organism" are: 1) The marginalization of the resident population (in action in Barcelona and, even more worrying, it is the case of Venice where the depopulation of the city is called Ven-exodus), 2) A degraded touristic experience (Barcelona is the fourth most visited destination in Europe but also the fourth most disappointing to visit according to the tourist) (Chibás, 2020: minute 11:29), 3) Overloaded infrastructures (only in 2016, 1.2 million visitors rented their tourist accommodation via the Airbnb platform) (Shankman, 2017; Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2018), 4) Environmental damage (for example, cruise tourism causing contamination of marine waters or contributing to global warming) (Observatorio de Turismo Irresponsable, 2020), 5) The threat to the integrity of culture and heritage (for instance, the conversion of La Rambla from a Sunday walk for Barcelonans to the tourists' "runway") (WTTC, 2017, p.17).

According to Fabiola Mancinelli, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Barcelona, tourismophobia does not exist but it would be nothing more than the result of a tourist sales policy promoted by the media, from the Olympic Games of 1992 until now¹. As for whether we speak of touristophobia or tourismophobia, the response to the intensity of the tourist phenomenon does indeed have the character of popular resistance. In an article in the French daily newspaper *Libération*, we read about the reasons behind the reactions to the mismanagement of visitors in Spain:

Although the feeling of saturation is national [Spanish], it is expressed above all in the touristic regions where nationalism is strong. This is why the manifestations of rejection (symbolic or violent) are confined to the Catalan-speaking areas and, increasingly, to the Basque Country, healing its wounds after four decades of separatist terrorism (*Libération*, 2020). (My translation)

¹ Affirmed at the 2018 IPAC Summer School in Barcelona by Fabiola Mancinelli. Conference no. 5, *Tourism in Barcelona*. Barcelona: Sala de Juntas, Facultat de Geografia i Història (Spain).

So, it would not be about the tourist or tourism per se but about the fear of a loss of identity caused, in part, by the troubled, almost conflictual, resident-tourist relationship (Milano, 2017; Vainikka & Vainikka, 2018), and of a denial of the “citizen’s right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996 [1968]) in the face of the touristification of public spaces. From a place where different realities coexisted, the Rambla has become the symbol of the “Barcelonan theme park”. Touristified cities, including Barcelona, are taking a step back in order to control their tourist flows and return the city to its inhabitants. If we observe well, and this is what I retained most of the fieldwork, identity continues to impregnate spaces, even those most touristified. I find that the most successful and “visible” popular resistance to tourismophobia, or it would be better to define it an “identity resilience”, is represented by florists and the sale of flowers on La Rambla; the same flowers bought during Sunday walks by the inhabitants of Barcelona and that inspired poets, writers and playwrights. This corresponds to a silent identity among the souvenir shops and street vendors. What is the uniqueness of these flowers and why do they represent part of the identity of the Spanish capital of tourism? The passage of an article on the symbolism of flowers and florists at La Rambla clarifies this point and concludes the reflection on tourismophobia with a nuance of hope:

If the florists of La Rambla disappeared, Barcelona would become the saddest city in the world. It would be as if the Sagrada Família was dragged out, as if a hurricane tore apart the tiles of Gaudí’s works and La Boqueria only sold energy bars. Gray would seize the streets of the city and La Rambla, with its strength, determination and joy, would not smile again. That’s why La Rambla’s florists cannot leave. Neither do they intend. They have ensured that in this *calle* is always spring, whether it rains, it freezes, or it is super-hot. They settled in the nineteenth century and it is thanks to them that the walk began to swarm with people (La Rambla Barcelona, 2020). (My translation)

Conclusion

The present work has led us to reflect between the fictitious order of a Barcelona built through the Barcelona model as well as a city imagined by tourists according to sales and tourism promotion policies, and the reality of the contemporary disorder of a city both master and victim of its success.

From the flagship event of 1992, the holding of the Summer Olympics, Barcelona has been able to create its own city brand by combining several elements that have structured the city’s tourist narrative. What could be identified as a “second cultural *Renaixença*” for the city thanks to the Barcelona model is an example “Made in Barcelona” of combining citizen participation with the democratization of public spaces and an urban architectural flowering financed by tourism, alas uncontrolled, development. The Barcelona model has transformed the cultural imagination of the city of Barcelona, converting it into an open and globally renowned tourist

city. However, the prioritization of tourism growth policies (construction of hotel infrastructure, massive reception of cruise ships in the port, etc.) and the conversion of Barcelona into a tourism brand have supplanted the spirit of a model that had been created for the benefit of its inhabitants, to the point that the "tourist gold rush" is considered the beginning of the *cultural decadence* (Carrera, 2014, p.132) of the Catalan capital.

In a context of collective local bother, the "three tsunamis" of tourism in Barcelona are a valuable resource for reflecting on the causes of a "triple wave" caused by the Other. The materialization and centralization of the three tsunamis takes place in Barcelona because the city combines, feeds and, at times, resolves the tensions of Catalan culture. In this context, Barcelona is a real intercultural platform for the universal question about the "Us", especially in a time of globalization and massive immigration.

1 In the case of political instability, the accentuated Catalan independence process reflects a need for recognition by the Other (the Spanish State, the European Union, the whole world). The fear of a lack of Catalan identity and cultural recognition is a first "Us-the Other" paradigm established in the form of a constitutive problem of the Catalan political space, a problem still current and much felt.

2 As for terrorism, it seems that Barcelona's cosmopolitanism, its international tourist flows, whose figures for Western tourists are very high, and the large number of jihadists in the city (to be recruited and recruited), have propelled the terrorist attack in Barcelona in 2017. Although research on the links between terrorism and tourism, as well as the perceived risk in travel by the tourist, has been carried out, more attention is needed to deal with contemporary fear, real or perceived, of the Other.

3 The latest tsunami, tourismophobia, is a symbol of the Other's refusal. A refusal that occurs because *the people of Barcelona are fed up and refuse to become the Mickey's of a themed city* (Paquot, 2016, p.87). Too many tourists kill tourism, even more so in the absence of tourism regulations dedicated to the welfare of Barcelona and in a context where the control of public space is becoming increasingly less public (Delgado, 2007, p.242). At the same time, it is not about tourism per se (the what) but about the way in which tourists undertake tourism activities (the how). From an educational background (if we think of the Grand Tour back to the 18th century), the tourist activity moves towards the concept of an affirmation, even a confirmation, of oneself. According to David Picard, Professor of Tourism Anthropology, *many people take trips that correspond to their self-image or aspiration in terms of social status* (Femina, 2016). The rewarding nature of the trip may therefore remain the same but can we say the same about the travel goals of today's tourists?

To conclude, tourism should be rethought, not in its sole economic sense, but as a critical appreciation of discovering the Other. The responsibility is twofold. On the one hand, the local community should not start offering a standardized and redesigned product for mass consumption once tourism plays an important economic role. On the other hand, the tourist should adopt an attitude that is both exploratory, which implies an openness to discovering a place, and learning in a more documentary and informative approach before, during and after the trip. Tourists' mantra should be reflected in the famous quote by Jost Krippendorf, one of the founding fathers of sustainable tourism, who said: *It's your vacation, it's their daily life* (Krippendorf, 1987).

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