

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

TOURISM AND CONSUMPTION OF URBAN SPACE IN BARCELONA. ANALYSIS OF THE RESIDENT- TOURIST RELATIONSHIP IN THE LA BARCELONETA NEIGHBOURHOOD

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The organization of consumption and of space, through urbanization, became essential for the dynamics of capitalism, becoming an instrument par excellence, to absorb the surplus of capital. Large amounts of associated capital have been set in motion and “created new landscapes where capital circulates in contradictory ways” (Harvey, 2011), through mechanisms in which public institutions become an important partner.

Also, tourists become central agents since there is no tourist destination without tourists. The production of space is based on the needs and aspirations of those who pay to consume this tourist destination.

The objectives of the paper are, on the one hand, the analysis of the situation in which the Barcelona urban planning process has been developed, and how it, through the process of gentrification, has preempted the value of use over the exchange value. On the other, it emphasizes the main socio-territorial consequences, the loss of housing and public space, a context that has generated conflicts and promoted the neighbourhood organization towards a movement of resistance and demand.

The central approach developed in this text is based on the premise that the basis of the conflicts between residents, visitors and real estate agents is in the conflicting interests surrounding the process for the use of the territory. This is so because, as the tourist flow intensifies, the process of deterritorialization of the residents and territorialization of the foreigners becomes more evident.

The structure and methodological proposal, part of an introductory bibliographic study in which it is reviewed, how the impact of the tourist activity on the place of destination has been treated, in the last four decades, in which this activity has gone through a sig-

nificant transformation and the number of tourists has reached records. This shows how tourism activities interact with their geographical environment and promote changes in the socio-spatial structure of the territories.

Next, this study proposes an analysis from some perspectives that are essential for the apprehension of a phenomenon that is increasingly present in the cities, due to the expansion of mass tourism: the change of perception of residents in relation to tourist activity and tourists, which evidences a feeling and attitude of rejection, although in different degrees, and linked to different aspects.

For the contextualization of this problem, we chose the city of Barcelona, which, due to its characteristics, covers a wide range of requirements considered fundamental and, *a posteriori*, we selected one of its neighbourhoods most saturated by the process of mass tourism, La Barceloneta, located in the central district called *Ciutat Vella*.

To obtain current information about the municipal context and the La Barceloneta neighbourhood we consulted newspapers and websites, interviewed three representatives of neighbourhood associations and participated in the activities that these entities promoted between June 2016 and September 2017, a period in which that include two summers, season with greater saturation of foreigners.

On the one hand, the manuscript analyses the initiatives of Barcelona's public institutions for the promotion of tourism as an expanding economic activity, and their commitment is directly related to the magnitude of this flow. On the other hand, attention is paid to key conditions in the formation of the perception towards the tourist, such as the degree of contact and frequency of the resident in the crowded places of foreigners and the attitude of these with the natives, although also the level of loss of quality of life depending on the development of the activity. Depending on how these elements are articulated with each other and with the intensity of the tourist flow, the degree of involvement may be greater and, therefore, the level of rejection as well.

Likewise, it underlines the consequences that the implementation of the 'Barcelona model' has had in the territorial reconfiguration of the city of Barcelona, and more specifically in the way of reproducing daily life in the residents of the La Barceloneta maritime neighbourhood, one of the main tourist areas of Barcelona

For this, this text exposes the particularities of a situation in which the demands of visitors disagree with the daily needs of residents, and then it reflects on how this process has driven neighbourhood organization and protests. These last ones have demanded that the use of public space be regulated, as well as the transformation of the habitual residences in houses of tourist use (VUT), a process that has expelled a great number of neighbours.

These, and other correlative issues are those that permeate the present debate, in which, starting from the Barcelona area, the paper evaluates the socio-territorial impacts that mass tourism has caused in neighbourhood of La Barceloneta.

The conclusion reached is that, in the district of La Barceloneta, located in the district of Ciutat Vella, which receives more tourists, with 17 thousand hotel beds and close to 600 homes for tourist use, there is a difficult relationship between the residents and the visitors.

In this dynamic is a process of gentrification, guided by the construction of hotels and the increase of accommodation modalities associated with the change in the use of residential housing, but also by the expansion of leisure areas. All this with the purpose of

increasing the number of foreigners and consolidating mass tourism, a logic that, in the last decade, has been fostered by the tourism packages associated with low cost flights and platforms such as Airbnb and Homeaway, but which has generated a speculative process that has led to a fragmentation of the social tissue and has led to the loss of part of its population.

The rise in the prices of real estate, the replacement of part of the neighbours carried out through the acquisition of houses and buildings by national and foreign investment groups, encouraging or forcing the departure of residents whose low incomes do not allow paying higher rents or participate in rehabilitation projects of their building, are some of the consequences.

In the process of turistification of cities that is usually accompanied by the process of gentrification, housing and public space as use value, are transformed into exchange value, that is, into merchandise.

Regarding the rental of houses for tourist use in neighbourhood of La Barceloneta, the expulsion of neighbours occurs in two contexts. One, through the process of gentrification that takes place through real estate mobbing in which investment groups acquire entire buildings taking advantage of some gaps in the Urban Leasing Law (LAU), to speed up the process of vacating rental housing and its transformation into houses for tourist use. Among the strategies used are economic coercion and intimidation of tenants.

Another context is that of the dynamics that exist in the coexistence between residential housing and housing for tourist use. The excesses of the groups of tourists, derived from incivilities and noise caused in the latter and / or in their common areas when they enter and leave at dawn, have generated a conflictive coexistence in many neighbourhood communities and have provoked an attitude of disagreement, and in specific cases, even of rejection towards outsiders.

With respect to the appropriation of public space, streets, squares, beaches, sidewalks near restaurants, bars and other businesses, these have gone through a process of appropriation and privatization so that, on many occasions, to use it Consumption is necessary.

In the Paseo Juan de Borbón (former Paseo Nacional), the few restaurants that weren't replaced by others focused to the demand of outsiders who occupy part of the sidewalks with their terraces and advertising panels. In the same way, the Paseo Marítimo hosts a few bars for the visiting public.

Incorporated in this dynamic, are the small businesses that replaced much of their traditional products with others linked to the demand of visitors and others that were replaced by stores that offer a wide range of fast food, alcoholic beverages and souvenirs during the 24 hours of the day, and that are beyond the needs of the neighbourhood.

It is a dynamic that deterritorialises residents regarding their daily life and way of life, and that has been reflected in the Barometer of Barcelona, published by the City Council, in which 19% of Barcelona residents think that tourism is the most serious problem in the city.

About the neighbourhood of La Barceloneta, the neighbours have organized themselves in associations, have protested against this "tourist model" and demanded the end of the licenses of the houses for tourist use, of the replacement of the traditional shops by others destined to the tourism, mass tourism and the privatization of public spaces such as plazas, sidewalks, beaches, public markets.

It is a broad social movement in which the neighbourhood associations of the one most affected neighbourhoods of Barcelona have called on all citizens to attend the organized marches with the aim of expressing the refusal of residents to policies that encourage this “predatory tourism” and to demand a change of model towards a more sustainable tourism, in which it is essential to decrease the number of visitors and activities inherent in this dynamic, and instead to propose a diversification of economic activities.

This process of organization, awareness and protests has put pressure on Barcelona City Council, which at the beginning of 2017 approved the Special Urbanistic Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT), a fundamental instrument for regulating the activities of tourist accommodation.

This conjuncture corroborates with the studies conducted by George Doxey and other authors, in which, based on our analysis in the Barceloneta neighbourhood, it can be observed that there is a strong relationship between the tourist development phase and the way the local population perceives the tourist impacts. The high rate of irritability observed among the neighbours reflects the tourist overcrowding, the destruction of the socio-economic tissue and the neighbourhood mobilization towards possible solutions, among which are, for example, complaints of illegal tourist housing, mass demonstrations and the pressures made before the City Council of Barcelona so that the management of tourist activities considers the needs and the demand of the natives.

The manuscript concludes corroborating the studies carried out by George Doxey and other authors, in which, from the analysis carried out in neighbourhood of La Barceloneta, which shows that there is a strong relationship between the tourist development phase and the way in which the local population perceives the tourist impacts. The high rate of irritability observed among the neighbours reflects the poor state of the latter due to the overcrowding of tourism and the destruction of the local social tissue. The community mobilization seeks possible solutions by denouncing illegal tourist housing and lobbying the Barcelona City Council so that the management of tourist activities considers the needs and demands of the citizens.