

**PROJECT:** THE RIGHT TO THE CITY AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF TOURISM: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO MEDIA DISCOURSES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS' DISSENT IN VENICE, AMSTERDAM AND BARCELONA

**PUBLIC REFERENCE INTERVIEW CODE:** BAR03

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**LANGUAGE:** SPANISH

**TRANSLATION:** DR ALEXANDER ARAYA LÓPEZ

**SELF-REPORTED GENDER OF THE HUMAN PARTICIPANT:** FEMALE

**AGE OF THE HUMAN PARTICIPANT:** 20-29 YEARS OLD

**COLLECTIVE:** ARRAN

**INTERVIEWER:** DR ALEXANDER ARAYA LÓPEZ

**DISCIPLINE:** SOCIOLOGY

**PAGES:** 6

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THIS INTERVIEW FOLLOWED THE ETHICS GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS AND A WRITTEN CONSENT FORM WAS SIGNED BY THE HUMAN PARTICIPANT, AFTER DISCUSSING THE OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND POTENTIAL RISKS AND HARMS ASSOCIATED TO THE INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY. THE ETHICS COMMITTEE AT CA' FOSCARI, UNIVERSITY OF VENICE APPROVED THE ETHICS GUIDELINES FOR THE «RIGHTS UP» PROJECT ON JULY 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2018.

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**HOW TO USE THIS TRANSCRIPT?** THE FOLLOWING TRANSCRIPT IS A NON-LITERAL TRANSLATION FROM SPANISH TO ENGLISH. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION, WHEN DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE RESEARCHER, HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN SQUARED BRACKETS. SOME DATA HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE TO POTENTIAL HARM TO THE HUMAN PARTICIPANT OR DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS. ACCESS TO THE ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT IN SPANISH COULD BE OBTAINED ON A CASE BY CASES BASIS. THE ORIGINAL AUDIO FILE WILL NOT BE SHARED. THE NAMES OF PUBLIC SPACES, BUSINESSES, POLITICIANS OR INSTITUTIONS MENTIONED BY THE INTERVIEWEE HAVE BEEN INCLUDED, WHEN THIS INFORMATION IS CONSIDERED “SAFE” ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF “NO HARM” APROPOS THE HUMAN PARTICIPANT.

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**Interviewer:** Let's see... Can you talk?

**Subject BAR03:** Yes. Do you hear me?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Subject BAR03:** Great.

**Interviewer:** The first question is, have you lived long enough in Barcelona to see a “before” and “after” mass tourism?

**Subject BAR03:** Pfff... Well, let's see, relatively... Because it's true that I was born in Barcelona post [19]92, let's say... After the Olympic Games... And considering that, it's true that, yes, for sure, the last ten years, this has been growing exponentially... But it is also true that, since I can remember... I have always lived Barcelona as a touristic city... and touristic in the sense of mass tourism... and not like a residual thing... It's true that since the 2000s, Barcelona has been one of the main cities in Spain for tourism, and in Europe too... So, no... I don't have a memory of a Barcelona without tourists... Or without some mass tourism...

**Interviewer:** Ok. If you have to identify the three more urgent or serious problems that tourism is generating in Barcelona, which ones are these three?

**Subject BAR03:** Well, in one part, there is the issue of gentrification... No? And basically... with the issue of the tourist rentals [IN SPANISH: "PISOS TURÍSTICOS"]... Airbnb... and also the use of public land to build... I mean, tourist accommodation... All this has contributed to increase the housing prices in Barcelona and... at a point in time also, with all the real estate speculation... I mean, with the bubble at that time, and later with the rents... It is already problematic... The housing prices, in most of the cities [IN SPAIN]... In Barcelona, this intensifies... With the issue of... There is all this part of the exploitation of housing as a touristic resource... and for that reason, it implies an increase in the rents... that it basically means the progressive expulsion from the neighborhoods to the periphery... and after that, right out of the city... This is one side... Then, there is whole part regarding the ecological impact... of all the issue with the cruises, and in general... Well, more than anything, the cruises... Because Barcelona is one of the main ports for cruises in Europe, and for that reason, all this has an impact... And then... Well, I can think of a couple more... It could be the overuse of the public space... And how tourism has invaded several parts of the city... Making it impossible to balance all this mass tourism, especially at some specific times of the year, with the people who live there... Basically... And how all the productive model is focused on tourism too... And for that reason, it makes it impossible to balance the life of the people who live in Barcelona with the tourists that only come for... While it generates some spaces that are almost theme parks... And I would add a fourth one, which refers to the type of economic and productive model that all this generates... In the sense that, tourism in general... What it creates is jobs that are basically... In which there is basically exploitation of the workers, at specific times of the year... And with salaries quite low in the services sector...

**Interviewer:** Ok. What is the local government doing? In order to counteract this situation.

**Subject BAR03:** Yes. Let's see. It's true that since the change in the government... No? When Barcelona in Common [BARCELONA EN COMÚ] came to power... at that time... Yes, it was part of the elections, stating that they would take measures to end all these... disadvantages that the tourism means for the city... But, in reality, there has not been a change in the model... I mean, in the sense that, yes, there is the moratorium of the licenses for tourist rentals... and for hotels in some parts of the city... No? But, in reality, there has not been a change in the model... There is not a real will for... trying to put a stop to... the wave of tourists that is there... because in the end, they changed a little from the discourse of problematizing tourism, in the beginning... just to end up assuming that tourism is a positive economic activity for the city, in the end...

**Interviewer:** How is the young group Arran created?

**Subject BAR03:** Sure... Let's see... We are a youth organization that was created seven years ago... Well, we are reaching almost eight [YEARS]... And that is a fusion of two organizations that already existed... And yes, the issue of tourism for us, is one of the subjects that we have touched, and yes, it's true that we are very well known for some of our actions related to tourism... but it is not the only... I mean, we are an organization that... No? We are left-wing, Independentist... that... The issue of tourism is part of the most evident contradictions of the economic system...

**Interviewer:** So, you have had several protest acts that have caused a bit of scandal, and that have even been labelled as acts of terrorism, in the local and international press... For example, the case of the sightseeing bus... What is your opinion about the role of media, apropos the protests that you are doing?

**Subject BAR03:** Well, in the end, media has always played the same role... It is also true that not all the media play this role... In the end, it depends who they serve... But it is true that a big part of the media, in the end, they side with the status quo and the system... and therefore, any protest act that goes beyond a certain margin of... the social consensus... and that is a direct affront against the economic interests... Well, it exposes itself to this type of criminalization... by the media...

**Interviewer:** You are also active in social networks... Is this an effective way to engage in protest?

**Subject BAR03:** Well, we understand that... In the end, if the objective is to reach all the people that we can... and with the objective of... generating hegemony... and of winning... in the end... Well, we have to use all the necessary media and resources... And it is clear that the social networks, and more in our case because we are a youth organization, well, they have an impact... An impact... And yes, it is true that they give you an opportunity... It is true that they are not neutral spaces, but they give you an opportunity, for the organization itself, to decide the type of message that it sends or does not send... Without the direct filter of the mass media... That in some cases they [MEDIA] do the work that is required, but in others... Well, they don't... There is a filter about the type of information that they offer...

**Interviewer:** They have proposed several solutions for the issue of tourism. There is the solution of creating a ticket, like they did in Park Güell; or of devising new areas to bring the tourists, in order to diversify; or to increase taxes and to appeal to a different type of tourism, luxury tourism, sport tourism... Do you think any of these solutions works for Barcelona?

**Subject BAR03:** Well, let's see.... For us, any solution that aims at generating an elitist model of tourism, like the issue of luxury tourism, it's evident that... It could be of interest to bring people here that will spend more money... but, in the end, this is not our model... I mean, we... I don't know how to tell you that... We are not against the tourist... Because a part of the European working-class are tourists, at some point during the year... or in their life[TIME]... And in the end, it's a matter of the model... So, anything that focus on generating an elitist model of tourism in which only people come, people that can... It won't work for us... I believe that generating new zones for tourism in Barcelona and to decentralize... Let's see, the idea has some sense... Like not all the hotels have to be in the same area and etcetera and etcetera... But, if in the end, this means having the same amount of tourists, and distributing them all over the city... Instead of expulsing the people from one zone of the city, you diversify, and they also come to your neighborhood and, they also make the prices of your neighborhood to go up,

because now it is also a place for building tourist rentals... Then, that is also not a solution... I believe, our model is more focused on... On... At least, considering all the disadvantages that mass tourism implies for the cities, at least it should benefit the local population... So, the idea of tourist taxes seems to have more sense, as palliative measures, surely... But...

**Interviewer:** Ok. You had an action at Park Güell, with the dragon, as part of the protests against the ticket. I have talked to other activists about Park Güell, and they insist in the necessity of keeping the park free... What is your official position?

**Subject BAR03:** Sure, we, in general... We would never situate ourselves in favor of the privatization of any public spaces... We understand that public spaces should be public... In this sense, we agree with the people from the area of Park Güell that defend that it has to be a public space...

**Interviewer:** Do you take part in any international group? Do you collaborate with other groups, in the topic of tourism?

**Subject BAR03:** In this sense... The truth is, no... It is true that we have solidarity networks, and [NETWORKS] of encounter with other organizations... But, in general, in the topic of tourism... and especially in tourism... We don't have any...

**Interviewer:** Ok. Now, I have a question more about the affective dimension. When you engage in activism, do you believe that you are changing things and feel empowered? Or contrary to that, do you feel impotence because you are fighting economic interests that are too strong?

**Subject BAR03:** No. Let's see... We understand that when one participates politically, and gets involved, it is because you believe there is a possibility for change... And I believe that in this sense... that... that... As I understand it, it is something that empowers you... and the way it has to work is... to see that... even if sometimes it is not easy or immediate... because you are fighting someone bigger and stronger than you... Well, you do that because it matters, because in the end, you believe it is possible...

**Interviewer:** Of the series of questions that I have for all the activists, I have a last one... What is the future of Barcelona? With the current model? Where does it go?

**Subject BAR03:** Let's see... It has been told several times that Barcelona is going to become Venice, or a theme park, and all that... I don't think we are at that point... Yes, it is true that Barcelona... Barcelona doesn't have a productive model exclusively based on tourism, even now... And the idea that it could become exclusively a touristic city, I believe it is not... At least, in the short term, it is not what it is going to be... But it is true that, if we continue with the same model of mass tourism, and without any kind of measure that really aims at fostering a change... The future of Barcelona is... well... each time less neighbors... The expulsion of the neighbors to the periphery... until, practically all the city becomes unlivable... Being it due to the cost of life, being it because it is not compatible with the flow of tourists that come... But... I think, the future in the end, is this one... A city without life...

**Interviewer:** These are some additional questions about Arran. The first one is on the subject of... Do you perceive, as part of the fight for the rights of those protesting against tourism, do you feel that there are important issues of race and gender included in these struggles?

**Subject BAR03:** Well, let's see... In the end... I believe that, as with all that has to do with the economic system, yes, there are... We were talking that one of the main problems about tourism is the productive model that it generates, and the kind of jobs that it creates... above all, in the third [SECTOR]... in the services sector... That this is a sector that is particularly precarious... And in this sector, the people who frequently work are women, mainly... and also migrant people... That are the people that end up taking these more precarious jobs... For that reason, for example, all the issue with the hotels and the fight that has been done by Las Kellys [A COLLECTIVE OF HOTEL HOUSEKEEPERS], that are the people who clean the hotels... This is a clear axis of gender and race here... And about the type of people that are performing these jobs... But it is not something exclusive of tourism, in itself...

**Interviewer:** Sure. I want to clarify some information about actions that have been attributed to Arran, but that have not been recognized by the group... or I don't know if you have recognized them... We are talking about... You did this activity with the dragon at Park Güell...

**Subject BAR03:** Uh-huh...

**Interviewer:** Then there was the attack, in big quotation marks [IN SPANISH: "MUY ENTRE COMILLAS"], against the sightseeing bus...

**Subject BAR03:** Uh-huh...

**Interviewer:** And later there were some posters, regarding the practice of balconing [A PRACTICE OF JUMPING OFF BUILDINGS]. Was this organized by you?

**Subject BAR03:** No.

**Interviewer:** No. And the attack, attack against the hotels in Poblenou, with some paint... No?

**Subject BAR03:** I don't have any confirmation right now.

**Interviewer:** Ok. About the attack... or the supposed... Let's better say, the protest... The protest involving the sightseeing bus... You made your own video and you put it in your channels in YouTube and your social networks... I have found several news articles that said that British tourists were threatened... and that there was a knife... Is this information truthful?

**Subject BAR03:** No.

**Interviewer:** No. Ok. Let me think. Last question... About the issue of the violence in the protest... Do you consider that the type of protest that you do is violent?

**Subject BAR03:** [SIGHS] In a way, I would say that... And considering the examples that we are talking about [THE ACTION INVOLVING THE SIGHTSEEING BUS AND THE LATER PROTESTS AT PARK GÜELL], I would not say violence, I think it is used in a biased manner. But it is also true that we want to antagonize this idea... that violence delegitimizes, but that the violence of the state, the violence of the system, is both tolerated and accepted. In the end, we are talking about who has the legitimate use, or legal [USE], of violence and... and... in the end... Violence could be a tool for the working and oppressed classes, against the

system. And we don't strictly condemn, in this sense, any action for the mere fact that it implies violence. But it is true that... when we talk about chaining ourselves to the dragon at Park Güell, clearly, we could not speak of violence... And, at the most, we are talking about actions that break the social consensus, and the social peace, and all that... It is easily labeled as violence. But we are talking about objects, so in that sense, no...

**Interviewer\*:** Associated to the questions about the issue of violence... Do you feel that you effectively managed to capture the attention of local media when you get involved in these protest acts?

**Subject BAR03:** It is evident... I mean, in the end... The motive that it pursues... It is clear that sometimes this type of actions does not create a material change, at that precise moment... But what we have analyzed is that it allows us to put some topics on the table... and in the public agenda... that we could not have done in another way... I mean, if we stand one day with a banner in front of some place, maybe this does not reach the media... But the action of the sightseeing bus does, and it generates interest, and it comes out... It allows us to debate and talk about these issues. In this sense, yes, it manages to capture the attention.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned the fight against cruises... And as part of my research, that I'm talking to several activists in different places... Barcelona recently appeared in a report by Transport and Environment as one of the most affected cities in terms of air pollution from cruises... and Venice has a strong movement against cruises, with the movement No Grandi Navi [NO BIG SHIPS]... Is there any interest in the groups fighting against tourism, do you perceive that cruises have become a cause...?

**Subject BAR03:** Well, I think it is true that maybe there was not any awareness... I mean, it was not an especially problematized topic... But it is true that... In general, in front of all the emergency of mass tourism, no? And if you see the numbers, you discover that a big part of these tourists are tourists that come only for one day and they go away... And that they come with cruises... and also with the new wave of awareness regarding the climate emergency and the pollution... All these factors together could have made that, at a stroke, the issue of cruises is generating more interest, than it has had until today... But, yes, there is a sharp awareness that the issue of cruises is a problem...

**Interviewer:** Ok. Perfect. That's it.

\*THIS QUESTION WAS RECORDED SEPARATELY DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUES.

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