Reclaiming Madrid:
The (Re)emergence of a Movement Resisting Touristification

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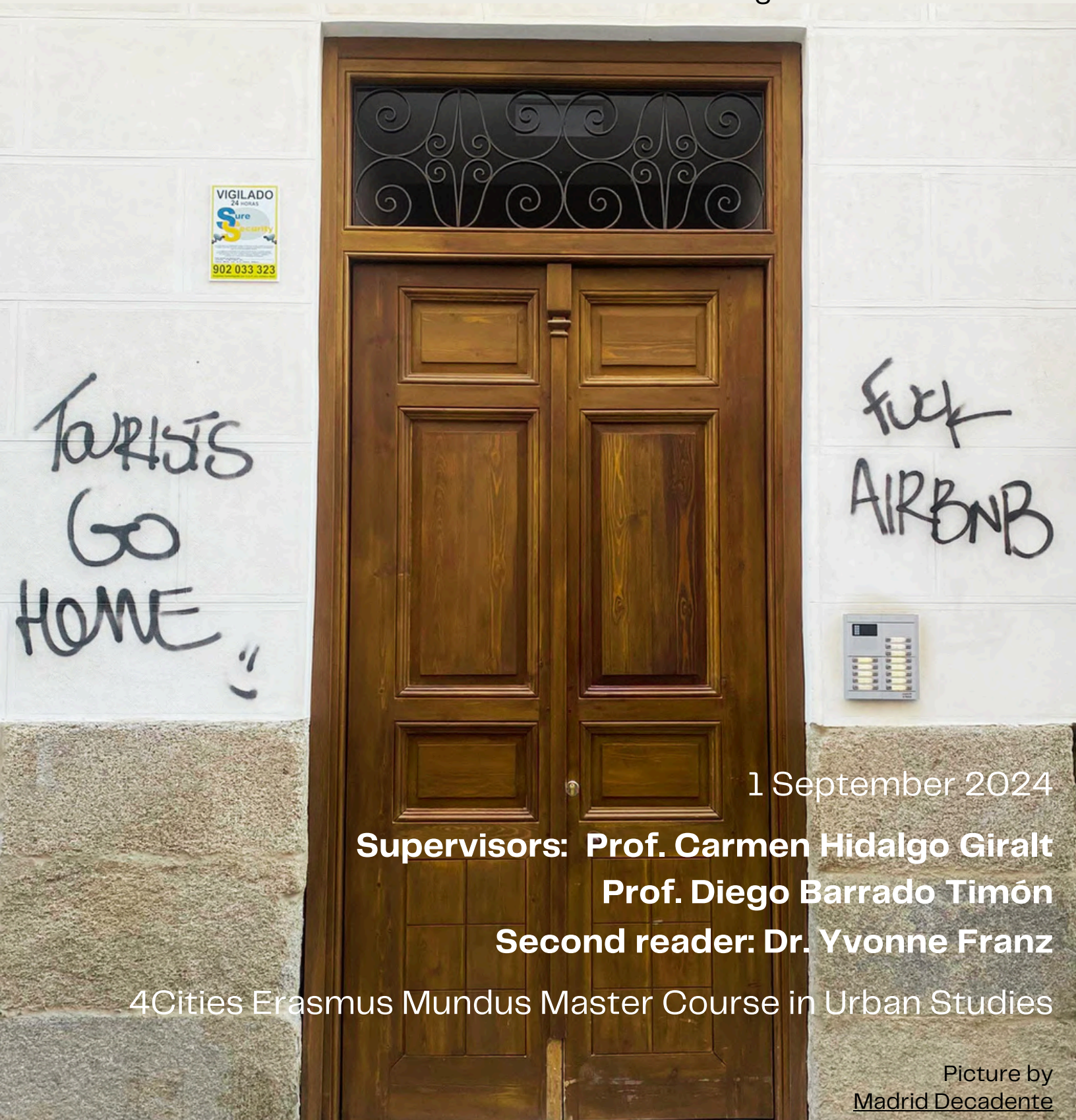

1 September 2024

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4Cities Erasmus Mundus Master Course in Urban Studies

Picture by
Madrid Decadente

Image 1: Banners hung on the balconies of Calle Tribulete 8, in solidarity with their neighbors facing eviction across the street, in Tribulete 7.

All images in this thesis are by the author, unless stated otherwise.

Acknowledgements

To my parents and my brother, for their unending unconditional support;

to Dieynaba, Kenza, Maya, and all my day ones for always sticking around and for being the sisters I always wished I had;

to my Food Systems and my Renier Chalon girls, for making me feel at home in so many different ways and so many different places;

to each of my 4Citizens, for being a part of this wild experience with me and for opening my mind and my heart every single day throughout;

to Carmen and Diego, for putting up with my chaos and inspiring me to believe in this work;

and to everyone who participated in this research, for showing me a different side to the city that saw me grow up; for giving me hope for the future and for teaching me invaluable lessons about life, community, and dignity.

Abstract

The burgeoning tourism industry is increasingly encroaching upon urban space in different contexts throughout the globe, causing a series of socio-spatial transformations in the commercial and urban fabric of cities and exacerbating pressures on local housing markets, particularly as Airbnb and the short-term tourist rental (STR) sector continues to thrive. These processes have been analyzed in the literature through lenses of 'tourism gentrification' or 'touristification', and there has been an emerging strand of literature focused specifically on citizen mobilizations resisting such dynamics.

While other Spanish cities like Barcelona have been at the forefront of this literature, the capital city of Madrid has often taken a secondary role as it had not traditionally been regarded as one of the key tourist destinations within the country, something that seems to be rapidly changing. Although some research has been conducted into touristification and resistance in Madrid, all of it focused on mobilizations that took place before or shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic, which had profound effects on tourism, touristification, and networks of resistance.

This paper, through an ethnographic investigation spanning several months, in-depth interviews, and dozens of participant observation events, seeks to paint a picture of the (re)emerging social movement resisting touristification in Madrid, particularly focusing on the web of actors involved and the narratives and strategies that are defining this new wave of collective action. Through this investigation, a complex, interconnected, and spirited movement is illustrated, with a diverse set of strategies undertaken at different scales in efforts to reappropriate urban space and reclaim the right to the city amidst touristification.

Abstrakt (DE)

Die aufkeimende Tourismusindustrie dringt in verschiedenen Kontexten auf der ganzen Welt zunehmend in den städtischen Raum ein und verursacht eine Reihe von sozialräumlichen Veränderungen im kommerziellen und städtischen Gefüge der Städte sowie einen zunehmenden Druck auf die lokalen Wohnungsmärkte, insbesondere da Airbnb und der Sektor der kurzfristigen touristischen Vermietung (STR) weiter florieren. Diese Prozesse wurden in der Literatur unter dem Blickwinkel der „touristischen Gentrifizierung" oder „Touristifizierung" analysiert, und es gibt auch einen neuen Literaturstrang, der sich speziell auf die Mobilisierung der Bürger gegen diese Dynamik konzentriert.

Obwohl andere spanische Städte wie Barcelona in dieser Literatur an vorderster Front stehen, hat die Hauptstadt Madrid oft eine untergeordnete Rolle gespielt, da sie traditionell nicht als eines der wichtigsten touristischen Ziele des Landes galt, was sich nun aber rasch zu ändern scheint. Zwar gibt es einige Forschungsarbeiten über die Touristifizierung und den Widerstand in Madrid, doch konzentrierten sich alle auf Mobilisierungen, die vor oder kurz nach der Covid-19-Pandemie stattfanden, die tiefgreifende Auswirkungen auf den Tourismus, die Touristifizierung und die Widerstandsnetze hatte.

Die vorliegende Arbeit versucht durch eine mehrmonatige ethnografische Untersuchung, Tiefeninterviews und Dutzende von teilnehmenden Beobachtungen ein Bild der (neu) entstehenden sozialen Bewegung gegen die Touristifizierung in Madrid zu zeichnen, wobei sie sich insbesondere auf das Netz der beteiligten Akteure und die Narrative und Strategien konzentriert, die diese neue Welle kollektiver Aktionen bestimmen. Durch diese Untersuchung wird eine komplexe, vernetzte und lebendige Bewegung veranschaulicht, die mit einer Vielzahl von Strategien auf verschiedenen Ebenen versucht, sich den städtischen Raum wieder anzueignen und das Recht auf die Stadt inmitten des Tourismus zurückzufordern.

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Introduction

Growing up in Madrid, between the central neighborhoods of Chamberí and Malasaña, I never really noticed much tourism pressure in my city. Of course there were areas like Sol or Plaza Mayor that concentrated large numbers of tourists at all times, but this was a very localized phenomenon that didn't really spill over to other areas, even those relatively close to these tourist hotspots, like my own. I did, however, notice how gentrification processes spatially manifested themselves in the neighborhood (long before I even knew what 'gentrification' meant), particularly through transformations in the commercial fabric. I specifically remember being 13 years old and walking down Manuela Malasaña Street every Wednesday to go to music class, and noticing an Ethiopian restaurant shut down to be replaced with a neo-tavern with the words "Tapas Hipster" written on the window.

In recent years, however, the tide seems to have quickly turned: the artists and designers with horn-rimmed glasses of yesterday have been replaced with tourists taking photos for Instagram and wheeling their suitcases down the narrow streets of Malasaña. Tourism has quickly proliferated in many of Madrid's neighborhoods, particularly in the center, as Barcelona is increasingly seen as 'ruined' by mass tourism (or *muerta de éxito* [dead from success], as we say in Spanish), and travelers turn to Madrid in their search for the authentic Spanish experience. Malasaña, due to its reputation as an alternative, 'cool', and 'artsy' neighborhood, has become a magnet for tourism, which has led to a new wave of socio-spatial reconfigurations in the neighborhood: overpriced lofts have been replaced with overpriced Airbnbs, American candy shops have been replaced with specialty coffee or co-working spaces, and "Tapas Hipster" has been replaced by "EatMyTrip," an 'innovative brunch' place serving açai bowls, "American pancakes" and 15€ poached eggs, with thousands of Google reviews largely in English.

Touristification, then, is something I have coexisted with for years, watching from the sidelines as the process completely transforms the streets I grew up on and learning to adapt my daily practices to these trends. Covid-19, however, felt like a turning point. Perhaps due to the total lack of tourist activity during the lockdown months, when things went back to normal the pressures of tourism on the city felt much more palpable. Tourism was suddenly something that was being widely spoken about, as central

streets like Fuencarral or Preciados became practically impossible to traverse, Airbnb lock boxes became ubiquitous, and local businesses were increasingly lost to the brunch/specialty coffee industrial complex (there are now 12 of them within a 1km radius of my house). I also noticed how people became increasingly fed up, with yellow banners reading "SOS: Neighbors in danger of extinction" becoming increasingly common in my area and other central neighborhoods.

For the purpose of this thesis, my idea was to investigate this touristification process in my city and, specifically, whether there has been a citizen movement aimed at combating its effects. Although my original proposal raised some critiques, with some dismissing it as not particularly relevant because 'no such movement exists in Madrid' (a very common narrative that frames Madrid as a city devoid of social mobilizations and networks of resistance), I was inspired by existing works on the topic—many of them carried out by my supervisors, Carmen and Diego—and decided to persevere, determined to prove these critics wrong. Through months of ethnographic fieldwork and deep personal implications and commitments forged in the process, I have managed to do just that: my research illustrates the (re)emergence of a diverse, complex, and spirited movement made up of many different groups, associations, activists and residents, working together to reappropriate urban spaces and reclaim their right to the city in the face of touristification and dispossession.

I will begin this paper by reviewing the literature on tourism as a force of neoliberal accumulation, as well as theories of financialization of housing and touristification, urban social movements (USMs) and strategies of resistance in the neoliberal and touristified city. I will then zoom in to the case of Madrid, explaining the importance of tourism in the Spanish and Madrilenian context and reviewing existing literature on touristification processes and the movements that have historically resisted them in Madrid. I will then move on to explain my methodology, starting with my research paradigm and positionality followed by a more in-depth description of the ethnographic methods used to conduct my research. A results section will follow, divided into sub-sections determined through a thematic analysis of my data, with a subsequent discussion of the correlations and differences that arise between my findings and existing theories in the literature. I will conclude by explaining the significance

and limitations of my research, and posing some open ended questions of potential interest for future research.

Literature Review

1. Political economy of tourism

a. Global tourism & development

Tourism is a complicated and multifaceted process, the definition of which has been the subject of much debate in the literature, with some authors going as far as declaring it effectively "indefinable" (Sharpley 2015:17). For the purpose of this research, I will follow the definition put forward by Goeldner and Richie (2012:4) whereby tourism can be understood "as the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors." A tourist, on the other hand, is defined by UN Tourism as "a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure, or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited" (United Nations 2010:10).

During the post-WW2 Fordist era, where economic prosperity in the Global North fostered the rapid growth of international middle classes, global tourism flows saw a massive surge (Fletcher 2011). Since then, tourism has been widely regarded as an attractive and effective (and sometimes the only) means of achieving development (Schubert et al. 2011) in many different geographical contexts. Though the residents of areas mass-developed for tourism have often accepted these dominant narratives and have learned to shape their local practices to adapt to them (Nogués-Pedregal 2008), it is imperative to be critical of such narratives and of models of unfettered tourism in the name of development. Tourism development must be critically understood as a form of power (Mowforth and Munt 2016); a process necessarily built on unequal power relations which can have "potentially disastrous ecological and social implications" (Liodakis 2019:2). As I will explain in the following section, this is the case because tourism is, fundamentally, "a productive force in the neoliberal city paradigm" (Milano 2018a:554).

b. Urban tourism as neoliberal accumulation

i. Neoliberalism and urbanization

Neoliberalism, an ideology that emerged in the late 1930s as a response to Keynesianism (Mosedale 2016), is based on "the belief that open, competitive, and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development" (Brenner and Theodore 2002:350). Brenner and Theodore (ibid.) outline the inherent links between neoliberalism and urbanization, explaining that neoliberal development hinges, in Lefebvrian (1991) terms, on the production of spaces of capitalist consumption and accumulation. Here, cities gain particular salience as "the production of the city and the real estate market [have] been some of the main engines of capital accumulation" (Vives Miró 2011:2) under neoliberalism, becoming key strategic arenas for the advancement of neoliberal initiatives (Brenner and Theodore 2002).

Particularly since the 1990s, there has been an entrepreneurial turn (Harvey 1989) in urban governance whereby local governments have engaged in a new urban politics (Hall and Hubbard 1996), in collaboration with private actors, that seek to place cities at the center of global neoliberal competition. This urbanization of neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore 2002) has changed the role of the state insofar as local governments are now more preoccupied with market processes in detriment to their traditional role of redistribution and service provision for residents. The entrepreneurial city (Harvey 1989) emerged in a context of de-industrialization in many Global North cities, where there was an important shift towards service-based economies, with "consumption, culture and leisure [taking] center stage in cities' political economy as productive sectors in their own right" (Novy and Colomb 2017:9). In this context, urban tourism became one of the most important strategies to enhance a city's market competitiveness.

ii. Tourism and neoliberalism

It is now important to delve into the connections between neoliberalism and the tourism industry. In early tourism research, Britton (1982:331) made an explicit link between tourism and

capitalism, referring to the tourism industry as "a product of metropolitan capitalist enterprise." Tourism has especially thrived under the neoliberal era, as it is an industry that greatly relies on the commodification of a territory's resources, heritage, and environment (Wearing et al. 2019) and the freedom of movement of both people and capital (Wood 2009). Not only does tourism rely on increasing neoliberalization due to its dependence on processes of deregulation, decentralization, and commodification, but its very nature also assists neoliberalization by "helping to progressively bind the world within a single integrated economy" (Fletcher 2023:2). Furthermore, tourism has also become a tool that can be used to "solve" some of capitalism's inherent problems, such as the crisis of overaccumulation which requires certain 'fixes' in order to ensure economic viability (Harvey 1989). Tourism offers a 'spatial fix' for such crises as it provides "new geographical locations where [excess capital] can be [exported and] reinvested in novel development" (Fletcher 2011:448).

The fundamental dynamism of capital means that the geographical landscapes it produces are periodically rendered obsolete by its own expansion, and for this reason neoliberalism necessitates constant processes of creative destruction in its territorial arrangements (Brenner and Theodore 2002). In this sense, neoliberalism always privileges specific territories for accumulation, producing uneven spatial development (Smith 1984; Massey 1985; Brenner and Theodore 2002). Some of these processes of creative destruction include the restructuring of urban housing markets, transformations in the built environment and urban form, or re-representations of the city (ibid.). All of these processes are often linked to the promotion of urban tourism as a vehicle for urban renewal and economic development, and urban tourism destinations have increasingly embraced such processes as they move towards a "hyperneoliberal development agenda" (Amore and Hall 2017:6).

iii. Tourism & urban development

The growth of tourism industries in many European cities particularly since the 1990s must be understood within the context of rapid deindustrialization, wherein a decline in industrial productivity has led numerous cities towards a growth model reliant on the development of service industries focused on tourism and leisure activities (Egresi 2018). With shifting international divisions of labor, cities

throughout the Global North became post-Fordist 'service centers' (Mowforth and Munt 2016). This has particularly been the case following the 2008 global financial crisis, which especially affected cities throughout Southern Europe. Tourism, often understood as an effective solution in times of economic crisis (Bianchi and Milano 2024), was embraced during this period as a critical survival strategy for many of these cities.

Following a neoliberal model of accumulation, cities become—in the jargon of Molotch (1976)—'entertainment machines' (Lloyd and Nichols Clark 2001), meaning culture is leveraged to enhance the city's economic wellbeing, and entertainment, leisure, and tourism activities become the principal vehicles for urban economic viability. In this context, cities develop specific brands to attract consumers, investors, and tourists (Simas et al. 2021), becoming what Jacques (2005:16) refers to as "cities of spectacle"—cities whose history, culture, and idiosyncrasies are commodified and marketed in palatable ways to appeal to as broad a (tourist) consumer-base as possible. As all neoliberal processes, urban tourism development has not achieved its alleged goal of generating economic wealth and resources that trickle down to the benefit of the population at large. Instead, it has been a main driver of social polarization, an intensification of inequalities, and uneven development (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Novy and Colomb 2017).

iv. The postmodern turn and commodification of culture

The postmodern turn in capitalism, linked to the economic restructuring from industrial to post-industrial society and subsequent shift from Fordist to post-Fordist urban regimes (Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991), sees the commodification of culture as one of its central tenets (Wynne and O'Connor 1998). Collective symbolic capital, defined by Harvey (2001:405) as "special marks of distinction that attach to some place, which have a significant drawing power upon the flows of capital more generally," is essential for the achievement of monopoly rents—a form of rent extraction where exclusive control over a specific resource generates the ability to trade them at highly competitive prices. Through the enhancement of a city's collective symbolic capital, urban spaces can become monopoly rents of their own (ibid.). In a postmodern context, culture can be a powerful tool for the generation of collective

symbolic capital, and thus commodification of culture becomes a vital strategy of urban entrepreneurialism.

This has important implications for tourism promotion as well. Rifkin (2000:194) conceptualizes tourism as the utmost "commodification of cultural experience": tourism transmutes culture and cultural differences into commodified experiences that can be staged and sold (Lapointe et al. 2018). The production of the 'historic centers' of cities is thus fundamentally informed and conditioned by tourist imaginaries and myths in order to generate profit through increased tourist traffic (Hiernaux and González 2014; Sequera and Gil 2018). This process goes hand in hand with the production of 'heritage' as a resource to be commodified for tourist consumption, where social and cultural meanings are reconceptualized as 'cultural heritage,' a marketable good that transnational organizations such as UNESCO, UN Tourism, or the European Union have promoted as a driver of tourism and economic development (Nogués-Pedregal 2008). Culture thus becomes materialized in things that can be consumed by tourists, such as food, performances, or attractions (Nogués-Pedregal 2008), in a process that can either alienate local residents or force them to "internalize [such] commodification through essentialization as a way to save their culture in the global market economy" (Lapointe et al. 2018:28). This produces a de-contextualization of culture that detaches residents from "their own historical roots, [inhibiting the promotion] of a shared cultural memory and [...] regenerative social development" (Nogués-Pedregal 2008:154).

This process has been amplified by the emergence of what Hiernaux and González (2014) call 'post-tourists,' who seek authenticity and to venture "off the beaten track" (Quaglieri Domínguez and Scarnato 2017:126) to experience what 'real' urban life is like in tourist destinations. This relates to Zukin's (2008) work on 'consuming authenticity,' where traditionally deprived or working-class areas of the city become the main 'spaces of representation' (Lefebvre 1991) for outsider imaginaries of 'the authentic,' attracting "bohemian cultural producers" (Zukin 2008:745) and causing a "chain of successive commodification that builds new spaces on the idea of the 'traditional neighborhood'" (Rodríguez 2018:292), economically and symbolically excluding long-time residents (Zukin 2008).

2. Touristification

a. Touristification and gentrification: a semantic debate

Tourism development in the entrepreneurial city has had very tangible effects on the socio-spatial configuration of urban spaces. The nomenclature of such processes, however, has been debated in the literature. Gentrification, a term originally coined by Glass (1964) and expanded on by Smith (1996), refers to a process of urban transformation whereby traditionally working-class neighborhoods are renovated or redeveloped through speculation and reinvestment, causing an influx of wealthier people, displacing original residents, and altering the socio-spatial configuration of the neighborhood. Gentrification is arguably the most widely studied urban transformation process (Jover and Díaz-Parra 2020), meaning that most of the literature regarding the impacts of tourism development on urban socio-spatial reconfigurations have linked the process, in one way or another, to gentrification. Gotham (2005:1099) was the first to introduce the term 'tourism gentrification' in the context of the French Quarter of New Orleans, defining it as "the transformation of a middle-class neighborhood into a relatively affluent and exclusive enclave marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues." Since then, there has been a wealth of literature that has instrumentalized the term or similar iterations (e.g. Gravari-Barbas and Guinand 2017; Betancur 2014; Vives Miró 2011; Hiernaux and González 2014; Cócola Gant 2016; Mermet 2017; Sigler and Wachsmuth 2016; Lees et al. 2016).

The term 'touristification,' on the other hand, emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in regards to sustainable tourism and the transformation of space into tourism space in an array of geographic locations such as Malta (Young 1983), Bali (Picard 1995) and Mediterranean tourist resorts (Knafou 1996). While in its origins the term was more so used to refer to the reconfiguration of local cultural traditions and subjectivities into products for tourist consumption, its recent use has often become conflated with 'tourism gentrification', and Cummings (2015) posits that it has essentially come to be used as a metonym for gentrification. Nevertheless, this use of the term has been highly contested in recent years, and the lack of clarity and consensus regarding its actual meaning—especially as it leaves

the academic sphere and increasingly appears in popular discourse—has led some scholars to fear it might become an 'empty concept' (Ojeda and Kieffer 2020).

For the purpose of this paper, I find Gil's (2023:1130) definition of 'touristification' most comprehensive and useful, whereby it can be understood as "the complete transformation of the urban space into a tourist space, where tourism is transformed from a 'cultural practice' into a new urban policy strategy in a multifaceted process of urban change, where both local and transnational actors intervene with the aim of attracting visitors and investors." Touristification, through an accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2004) of public space, housing, and local businesses for tourist consumption (Rodríguez Medela et al. 2018), strips residents of their lived environment both materially and symbolically (Sequera and Nofre 2018), causing displacement and the erosion of the urban fabric.

Sequera and Nofre (2018) and Jover and Díaz-Parra (2020) extensively explain why touristification and gentrification must be understood as two distinct processes, essentially positing that the centrality of class and the long-term replacement of a resident population, both of which are foundational aspects of gentrification, are a lot more ambiguous when it comes to touristification. For one, tourists are not necessarily of a different or higher socioeconomic class than the residents of the neighborhoods they visit; they do not have a "central symbolic, cultural and economic 'elitist' role" (Sequera and Nofre 2018:848) that is a necessary component of 'classical' gentrification processes. Additionally, tourists do not represent a population that is going to displace another by permanently settling in their inhabited space, as the very nature of tourism involves mobility and ephemerality. In fact, Jover and Díaz-Parra (2020) posit that touristification could have a completely different effect in this regard: by repurposing urban areas exclusively for the consumption and enjoyment of tourists, this might produce material and symbolic consequences that discourage privileged classes from ever wanting to relocate to such areas, now regarded as degraded by tourism. In this sense, touristification can more so lead to a displacement of *all* residents from a given territory, as opposed to a replacement of working-class communities with wealthier ones like in traditional gentrification.

This is not to say that the two processes are opposed to one another. In fact, they "can be considered co-actors in the production of post-industrial landscapes" (Cócola Gant 2018:284) insofar

as they work simultaneously and cooperatively to reconfigure urban space for the purpose of rent extraction. This is especially the case in contexts, like Southern European cities, where deindustrialization or recession have been most insidious for the economy, pushing urban policy towards strategies of entrepreneurialism and revitalization (Sequera and Nofre 2018; Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019). This also has some key policy implications, where strategies historically used to combat gentrification (i.e. protections for tenants) may also be useful in the fight against touristification (Jover and Díaz-Parra 2020).

b. Touristification & housing

The interrelation between touristification and gentrification is nowhere more visible than in the large-scale processes of Airbnbization taking place in many urban tourism destinations. An ever-growing amount of housing is being removed from the residential rental market and reconverted into short-term tourist rentals (from here on shortened as STRs), displacing residents and rapidly changing the socio-spatial configuration of housing blocks and, subsequently, entire neighborhoods into spaces for tourism consumption. Especially in cities' historic centers, the burgeoning informal STR sector is producing urban transformations at an unprecedented rate, posing significant risks for urban governance and the liveability of these neighborhoods (Sequera and Nofre 2018).

i. Rise of Airbnb and the 'sharing economy' in tourism

It is impossible to discuss the topic of STR proliferation without talking about the most important actor involved: Airbnb. Airbnb emerged in 2008 as a form of 'sharing economy' (Guttentag 2015), originally conceptualized as an alternative to the neoliberal, impersonal model that had governed the tourism industry for decades (Wearing et al. 2019). Once a small home-sharing platform, it offered a form of decommodified, collaborative consumption (Gurran and Phibbs 2017) through peer-to-peer (*p2p*) accommodation, existing outside of the market sphere and "free from the predations of private corporations and international investors" (Wearing et al. 2019:36).

Years later, Airbnb has become the undisputed world leader in the STR sector; a hospitality magnate competing with the largest hotel chains in the world (Gurran and Phibbs 2017). Digital technology has made this STR market widely accessible to people throughout the world, propelling its massive growth in recent years and effectively creating a new form of housing—a gray area between residential dwellings and hotel accommodation—that has proven to be wildly profitable for property owners (Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018), often freeing them from the constraints imposed by tenancy laws (Gil 2023). Much like other forms of 'sharing economy' with a strong profit potential (e.g. Uber), Airbnb has been quickly co-opted by the same market forces, private corporations, and investment actors it sought to provide an alternative to (Cócola Gant 2016; Morozov 2018; Wearing et al. 2019). Most Airbnb offers are posted by professionalized, multi-property-owning actors in the hospitality industry, as opposed to the peer-to-peer, personalized, amateur host model it once promised (Sequera and Gil 2018). This means that, far from the sharing economy, Airbnb has become a consolidated leader in real estate speculation, causing the replacement of many residential dwellings with more profitable STRs and the rapid increase of housing prices in central neighborhoods, pushing out low-income populations from such areas (Simas et al. 2021).

For neighbors who now have to live alongside STRs, daily life is becoming more difficult as they increasingly have to deal with the touristification of their residential buildings, with constant flows of short-term residents that cause damage, noise, and littering (Arias Sans and Quaglieri Domínguez 2016), as well as occasional direct confrontations with residents (Wearing et al. 2019). In short, the presence of such STRs in residential buildings poses a threat for both housing affordability and community cohesion, eroding the very 'local life' it aims to commodify for tourist consumption (Arias Sans and Quaglieri Domínguez 2016). Airbnb has also become increasingly scattered in many tourist cities, encroaching on traditionally residential areas and spreading the effects of touristification to neighborhoods that had been previously spared (Egresi 2018).

Residents of cities particularly affected by the proliferation of STRs, such as Barcelona and Venice, have made their grievances known through public protests, prompting some local governments to attempt to regulate this sector more firmly. The local governments of cities across the globe, from

Barcelona to New York, London and Amsterdam, have attempted to enforce a number of policies limiting the operation of STRs, particularly because Airbnb tends to undermine existing land-use and housing regulations put in place to protect residents' access to housing (Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018). Such policies may include banning STRs in residential buildings, prosecuting landlords who attempt to evict tenants in order to set up an STR, or banning STRs altogether, among others (Gurran and Phibbs 2017). Regulations have often seen limited success, however, as they are very hard to enforce when Airbnb allows owners to list their properties irregularly, without needing to prove they comply with existing local legislation and registration requirements (Wearing et al. 2019). Even in cities like Palma de Mallorca, New York City, or Los Angeles, where regulations have been most restrictive, illegal STR practices still run rampant and are seemingly difficult to detect and prevent (Morell 2018; Gurran and Phibbs 2017).

ii. STR rent gaps and financialization of housing

The spread of Airbnb and other STRs more generally must be essentially understood as a form of financialization of housing, a process that can be described as the increased use of housing "as an investment asset integrated in a globalized financial market" (Rolnik 2013:1059), reconceptualizing housing from a human right and social good to a "new frontier for capital accumulation" (ibid.). STRs have created new rent gaps (Smith 1979) in the real estate sector, altering notions of profitability and market practices along with it. Rent gaps, as per Neil Smith (ibid.), refer to the difference between the current profit being extracted from a property and its potential profit if said property were repurposed or redeveloped. As Wachsmuth and Weisler (2018) explain, Airbnb and STRs more broadly have very quickly and systematically generated rent gaps in neighborhoods that attract the most tourist activity as they provide a more profitable alternative to traditional rental properties.

Importantly, the unfettered spread of STRs in a city or neighborhood's housing stock can have extremely insidious effects on local residents as it effectively creates a global, rather than local, demand for housing (Malet Calvo et al. 2018), especially as STRs are increasingly used by not only short-term tourists but also medium-term residents of a transnational middle class made up of international

students, digital nomads, pensionists, and professional freelancers (ibid.). This global competition for housing has been exacerbated by foreign investors and multinational corporations purchasing properties in increasingly diverse geographic locations (Rolnik 2013) as well as digital platforms that amplify global accessibility to local real estate markets (Malet Calvo et al. 2018). Foreign salaries and capital are now taken into consideration by property owners when calculating the profits they could garner by closing the STR-generated rent gap (ibid.), making housing progressively more unattainable for local residents.

Cócola Gant (2016), following Marcuse's (1985) model of the different types of displacement caused by gentrification, theorizes on how these might apply to STRs. He concludes that there are three different types of displacement at play when it comes to touristification and STRs: direct displacement, i.e. the eviction or non-renewal of tenancy contracts in order to repurpose residential property into STRs; exclusionary displacement, referring to the affordability pressures and reduced housing supply that stop new residents from moving to an area; and displacement pressure, which he understands as the disruptions caused by the cohabitation of residents with 'transient consumers,' paired with constant pressures from real estate investors wanting to buy residential flats for STR development. He describes this process as a vicious cycle of "collective displacement" previously unheard of in traditional gentrification, ultimately causing a "substitution of residential life by tourism" (Cócola-Gant 2016:290). In terms of the geographical distribution of such displacement, some have theorized that, unlike gentrification—which primarily targets lower-income neighborhoods—the effects of STR assetization on collective displacement will be more noticeable in culturally desirable or internationally recognizable areas, which tend to be central neighborhoods or those that have already undergone gentrification processes due to their cultural cachet (Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018). Gil (2023) claims that, for this reason, STRs cannot necessarily be blamed for touristification processes as it is more likely the other way around: STRs will proliferate in those areas that have already been touristified.

Different from gentrification, this process could be understood as a touristification of housing. Gil (2023:1126), however, uses the term 'STR housing assetization,' a "specific form of housing financialization that develops within a specific socioeconomic and historical context." According to

him, the conflictual relationship caused by STR assetization are a product of housing financialization and not tourism, and the ones held responsible must be real estate developers, not tourists; he finds it counterproductive when the fight against STRs is discursively framed as a fight against touristification, focusing on coexistence problems rather than the core problem of speculation and assetization of housing. At a public policy level, he finds that policies and regulations focused on protecting residents' right to affordable housing have infinitely more potential of alleviating the problem than those focused on restricting tourism, citing the example of the Covid-19 pandemic, where tourism abruptly halted for several months yet STRs were not returned to the rental market and the spatial displacement produced by them was not altered by an absence of tourists. Strict housing policies are, according to Gil, the only potential barrier to the emergence of STR-induced rent gaps.

c. Commercial touristification

Another key element in the socio-spatial transformation of urban spaces and dispossession of local residents caused by tourism development is commercial touristification, which can be understood as two parallel mechanisms: the loss of local commerce, replaced with new establishments geared toward tourist consumption, and the subsequent touristification of the labor market, now dominated by precarious jobs in the tourist service sector.

As growing numbers of tourists flock to specific urban areas, the demand for tourist-oriented businesses and activities grows accordingly, replacing the traditional retail landscape with new establishments that are inaccessible or of little use for residents (Gil 2023). Small-scale neighborhood shops and restaurants begin to shut down and are replaced by chains, bars, or trendier establishments (Gravari-Barbas and Guinand 2017) as their clientele is driven out of the neighborhood or their own rent is raised to unattainable levels. This loss and replacement of local commerce can take two different forms. On the one hand there is a scenario, particularly prevalent in historic city centers with well-established touristification processes, where there is a Disneyfication of urban space, involving the "standardization of the urban landscape through the rapid expansion of low-cost franchised retailing" (Sequera and Nofre 2018) like souvenir shops.

An alternative form of commercial touristification is the replacement of traditional retail with themed consumption spaces that seek to evoke the character of the neighborhoods they exist in, although with an aesthetic and sophistication foreign to them and geared towards an audience different from their original residents (Rodríguez 2018). This relates, again, to the notion of the postmodern tourist that seeks authenticity in the traveling experience, and it is a way for cities to diversify their tourism offer to attract new tourist capital to alternative areas of the city that lack unique attractions that tourists tend to flock to (ibid.). This dynamic tends to correlate with a process of sophistication of cultural industries and, particularly, of gourmetization (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019), where the culinary industry provides a key stage for the production of symbolic capital and urban entrepreneurship. Importantly, this is not solely linked to tourism, as the 'advanced consumers' that flock to these scenified spaces can be both tourists and well-off residents (ibid.). In this context, it might be helpful to conceptualize some residents as part of a global postmodern middle-class that, through globalization, has come to enjoy many of the same consumption habits as the tourists who visit their city (Quaglieri Domínguez and Scarnato 2017). Regardless, these types of establishments are often inaccessible for the residents that live in the neighborhoods they exist in, alienating them from their inhabited space (Rodríguez 2018).

This turn in urban production with the tourist as the main consumer has created an economy riddled with precarious, temporary, and 'submerged economy' labor (Sequera and Gil 2018). This can be understood as part of a broader process of deterioration of working conditions and downward pressure on wages caused by "economic restructuring and rationalization that have become the hallmark of neoliberal economic policy" (Bianchi 2015:315), with the tourism and hospitality sectors as the clearest examples of a sort of race to the bottom in the labor market characterized by "low wages, long and antisocial hours, a lack of job security, a high incidence of part-time and seasonal work, health and safety concerns, and in some cases, outright abuse and exploitation" (ibid.). This is evidence of the fact that, as lauded as tourism often is for its economic benefits, the capital it creates stays at the level of investors and developers and does not trickle down to the people working in these industries; locals do

not benefit from tourism as they share the costs of it without receiving any of the benefits (Egresi 2018; Wearing et al. 2019).

d. Touristification of public space

Lastly, touristification can also affect the public space of neighborhoods and residents' access to it. Regeneration of public space is a central strategy in cities' attempts at revitalization (Barata-Salgueiro et al. 2017). For instance, art and cultural interventions in public spaces or the rehabilitation of public heritage can help in the rebranding of a city's image and increase its attractiveness for tourists (Baudry 2017). This often involves an early 'sanitation' of areas that might be attractive for tourists through increased police presence, surveillance, and the displacement of people and practices that might be perceived as an obstacle to the production of the city as it exists in the tourist imaginary.

Another way in which public space is instrumentalized in order to extract tourist rents is through privatization strategies. These often relate to the commodification of public space through bar and café terraces (Mansilla and Milano 2018), such as in Lisbon (Barata-Salgueiro et al. 2017), Barcelona (Cócola Gant 2016), or Paris (Gravari-Barbas and Jacquot 2017). Barcelona's La Rambla, its most famous street and one of the most transited by tourists, has largely become occupied by tourist services, with large swaths of it covered by outdoors cafe and restaurant seating, making it difficult to circulate (Simas et al. 2021).

Other issues related to the touristification of public space are the saturation of such spaces with constant tourist traffic (Quaglieri Domínguez and Scarnato 2017) and the subsequent environmental pressures this might pose, such as pollution and littering (Novy and Colomb 2017:19). Congestion affects public space and also public transport, which can negatively impact residents' mobility during peak tourist seasons (Malet Calvo et al. 2018). Transport infrastructure specifically created for tourists also saturates public spaces and roads and creates acoustic and atmospheric contamination that neighbors have complained about, an example being the tourist Tuk-Tuks that are becoming increasingly ubiquitous in European tourist destinations. As Malet Calvo et al (2018) explain, the

problem with these Tuk-Tuks goes beyond saturation of public thoroughfares: it can help spread the effects of touristification to areas of the city that were previously less accessible for tourists.

Another example of the impacts of touristification on public space is the alienation of neighbors from their residential areas caused by the anti-social behavior of nightlife tourists. As Nofre et al. (2018) explain through the case of La Barceloneta neighborhood in Barcelona, 'drunk tourism,' or the type of tourism that is governed by nightlife, can have very detrimental effects for community liveability and coexistence. This is especially the case in those cities that have specifically promoted youth- and tourist-oriented nightlife as a strategy for city-marketing and tourism development in the context of economic stagnation, as is the case in many Southern European locales (ibid.). Beyond simply partying at these establishments, many of the tourists that engage in this type of tourism get highly inebriated and take to the streets at late night or early morning hours, making noise, being disrespectful or voyeuristic, and generally engaging in anti-social behavior like public urination or violence (Sequera and Nofre 2018). Residents have complained about this type of behavior, as they see their public spaces being turned into a 'playground' for drunken tourists who "[do] things that [they] would never dare to do in their hometown" (Egresi 2018:708).

e. In sum: erosion of the urban fabric

Overall, the effects of touristification on residents can be summarized as a collective displacement (Cócola Gant 2016) and an erosion of the urban fabric. The exodus of residents and local businesses combined with the reconfiguration of commercial and public spaces for tourist consumption causes a "touristification of everyday life" (Quaglieri Domínguez and Scarnato 2017:108) and subsequent urban disintegration characterized by the erosion of the social, commercial, and cultural fabric of neighborhoods (Malet Calvo et al. 2018). Such processes can deactivate a neighborhood's cultural dynamism, put an end to the inter-recognition among neighbors, and wear down its associative fabric, causing sport and cultural facilities to disappear (ibid.). As former Mayor of Barcelona Ada Colau put it in 2017, this is a paradoxical phenomenon where "uncontrolled mass tourism ends up destroying

the very things that made a city attractive to visitors in the first place: the unique atmosphere of the local culture" (quoted in Egresi 2018:710).

3. Resistance

This begs the question: what are people doing to resist such touristification and related processes of dispossession and displacement? The following section will provide an overview of existing mobilizations, narratives, and strategies, and their position vis-à-vis existing theory on urban social movements.

a. Social movements in the neoliberal city

We must start this inquiry through a discussion of the literature regarding urban social movements (from here on shortened as USMs), starting with Manuel Castells (1983) and *The city and the grassroots*, a seminal text that brought USMs to the fore of urban sociology and social movement studies. Although critiqued for its lack of analytical rigor (Pickvance 1985) and its quasi-positivism (Miller 2006), the book was groundbreaking in its introduction of Lefebvrian concepts of space into the realm of USMs, honing in on the importance of the production of space and subsequent spatial relations and struggles in the genesis of social movements in the neoliberal city (ibid.). Castells also moves away from stricter Marxian conceptualizations where social movements must necessarily be a result of historically predicted class struggle. This is in line with Fainstein and Hirst's (1995) conceptualization of 'old' and 'new' social movements—i.e. those that emerged due to the class structure of industrial capitalism and focused on the material inequalities produced by it, versus newer ones that cut across class lines and are increasingly mobilized through non-material considerations—with USMs representing a type of *new* social movement, operating outside the realm of production and focused instead on changing urban meanings. Castells (1983:319) posits that urban social movements function on the basis of three basic goals: "collective consumption trade unionism," referring to the reappropriation of urban space by residents for its use value and for collective consumption, rather than its value as a commodity or exchange product; "community," referring to a search for cultural identity

and the maintenance or creation of local cultures; and "citizen movement," referring to the desire for participatory democracy and self-management at the local and neighborhood level.

It is nevertheless key to acknowledge the city as "a fundamental part of the productive sphere in capitalist societies," (Mansilla 2018:279), meaning that, even if USMs are not articulated explicitly as 'class struggles' in the Marxist sense, they must be understood as movements that have emerged because, and not in spite, of capitalism, the neoliberal urban model, and its material and symbolic effects on space and on people's relationships to it (ibid.). In this sense, the neoliberal city can be understood as an inherently conflictual space (Harvey 2013) where the discord inherent to capitalist relations of production is acted out (Mansilla and Milano 2018). As Mansilla (2018:282) puts it, the "emptying of the factories" in post-Fordist society has not made the relations of production disappear, it has instead elevated them to the spatial plane by turning cities into commodities (Lefebvre [1968]1996), leading to a sort of class struggle between USMs and urban entrepreneurs, developers, and bureaucracies that promote such commodification of space. Sequera and Gil (2018) see neighborhood struggles as a way to counter the effects of neoliberal hegemony and to promote new social conditions and alternative citizen networks of solidarity and mutual support.

b. Social movements in the touristified city

If we follow the understanding of touristification as a neoliberal strategy for the commodification of the city, then, this conceptualization of USMs as a way for residents to symbolically reappropriate urban space (Rolnik 2013) can be very useful in understanding the emergence, narratives, and strategies of anti-touristification movements in cities across the globe. Resident discontent in the face of high tourism pressure is not a new phenomenon: it has been a topic of discussion in the literature since global mass tourism flows began in the late 20th century, with Doxey's (1975) Irridex and O'Reilly's (1986) Tourism Carrying Capacity as two early conceptual models that can still be useful for analyzing tourist-resident relations today. Following Doxey's model, one might argue that the residents of many tourist destinations have, in recent years, reached a situation of irritation or even antagonism regarding tourist flows or the neoliberal tourism model more broadly. Particularly since the 1990s, many

touristic cities have seen the rise of anti-touristification (or anti-tourism, as they're often verbalized) demonstrations (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019), especially in cities that have felt the pressures of unfettered tourism for years, like Barcelona (Simas et al. 2021; Egresi 2018; Romagnoli 2021), Berlin (Novy 2013; Novy 2017), and Venice (Vianello 2017; Schemmer 2022), but also in places as diverse as Rio de Janeiro, Reykjavik, Goa, and Hong Kong (Milano 2018a; 2018b). Although each city's context is different and thus so are the actors, discourses, and strategies employed, they all have in common the contestation of the dominant narrative that frames tourism as a fundamental and necessary vehicle for the revitalization of urban economies (Sequera and Gil 2018).

Importantly, many cities have witnessed a "politicization of tourism" and subsequent "touristification of social movements" (Milano 2018a:555), where tourism has taken a position in the agenda of many different USMs, such as labor unions, neighborhood associations, and social and environmental movements. Traditionally more focused on issues like labor precarity, healthcare and education, these movements have begun to identify tourism development as one of the key drivers of inequality and precarity, particularly housing related, and have joined more *ad hoc* associations in their fight against touristification (Milano 2018a). Tourism has thus become politicized as these movements have given it much visibility in the spheres of local politics and media, pushing it to the fore of public debate (ibid.).

Liodakis (2019:12) explains the surge of this 'insubordinate resistance' as "a struggle against the dominant pattern of tourism" where the people working in or living alongside unfettered tourism development bear the social and ecological costs while all the profit it generates is captured by transnational capital. In a similar vein, Fletcher (2018) conceptualizes such anti-touristification movements as an extension of Polanyi's (1944) 'double movement,' where capitalist development commonly incites popular resistance against its negative impacts. Unlike traditional workers' countermovements, however, these anti-touristification USMs are, according to Romero-Padilla et al. (2019) *new urban social movements* insofar as they are articulated along social, cultural, and spatial dimensions—i.e. they are non-hierarchical, autonomous movements ran by citizens of varying ideologies and socio-economic and cultural profiles, with a plurality of demands mostly at the local and

spatial level, focused on "specific issues and the concrete daily space they inhabit" (ibid.:9), shifting away from more general, global demands.

Novy and Colomb (2019), in a critical review of their pioneering *Protest and resistance in the tourist city* (Novy and Colomb 2017), which offers the most comprehensive and geographically diverse probe into anti-touristification movements to date, propose a useful analytical typology for the multiplicity of movements that have emerged across different contexts. They propose that such movements are highly diverse in both their nature and their aims: there are some mobilizations with touristification as their central focus, usually aimed at specific local-level issues or types of tourism (like anti-'party tourism' coalitions in Hvar, Croatia, or anti-cruise ship campaigns in Venice); some hyper-focused on the issue of housing, STRs and Airbnb, usually in coalition with existing housing justice campaigns; a few city-wide movements explicitly fighting against the tourism and urban development model, as in Barcelona and Lisbon; and some cities where tourism is not the main focus, but has rather become embedded in broader struggles regarding urban issues like tenants' rights and management of public space, as in San Francisco or Prague, among others.

c. Narratives and strategies

The critical discourses espoused by the activists involved in these movements often mobilize concepts like expulsion, speculation, housing precarity, inequality and homogenization (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019), and a 'return of the city to its inhabitants' (Romagnoli 2021:114). The most common one, by far, is Lefebvre's ([1968] 1996) "right to the city," a concept almost universally embraced by such movements, whether explicitly or implicitly. It is also a claim that has transcended class divisions, becoming popular among working- and middle-classes (Sequera and Nofre 2018). The right to the city can be understood as not only the right to use, access, and enjoy the city (Sequera and Gil 2018), but also to participate in the social and political production of urban space (Novy and Colomb 2019). In Lefebvrian (1991) terms, the 'right to the city' is a claim in favor of the use value of urban space as opposed to its exchange value, as the latter has been privileged through the

appropriation of urban symbolic capital for the development of tourism (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019).

Another concept that has emerged in these movements is tourism degrowth, which aims to provide alternatives to the tourism monoculture dominating many urban economies through limitations on the public financing of the tourism sector and regulations on STRs and hospitality industries (Milano 2018b). This degrowth discourse is in direct opposition to dominant narratives espoused, for instance, by transnational organizations like UN Tourism that claim that "Growth is not the enemy. [...] Tourism growth can and should lead to economic prosperity, jobs and resources to fund environmental protection and cultural preservation, as well as community development" (Rifai 2017). Tourism degrowth also aims to move away from dominant 'sustainable tourism' narratives that obscure the imbalances of resources and power inherent to tourism (Novy and Colomb 2017). Milano (2018b) rejects the term 'sustainable tourism,' opting instead for 'low-impact tourism,' which is more realistic and does not negate tourism's inherent impacts.

Some of the strategies undertaken by these movements have become widely disseminated in the media, particularly more flashy ones in Barcelona, which has, for years, been one of the global epicenters of touristification processes, debates, and resistances (Milano 2018a). These actions include protests, marches, graffiti, banners, or direct confrontations with tourists or tourist infrastructure, and sometimes more creative endeavors like the incursion of residents on the famous street of La Rambla with their own tables, chairs and dinners as a way to protest the unfettered proliferation of terraces that were obstructing residents' mobility and access to public space (Simas et al. 2021).

As Mansilla (2018) puts it, the capitalist system manifests itself in cities not just directly, but also indirectly by molding collective identities and solidarities. In this sense, the very nature of capitalism fosters the formation of informal networks that can be the breeding ground for the emergence of USMs. Not only have a range of different social, environmental, and political movements converged in the fight against touristification, but so have regular people from both working- and middle-class backgrounds who live in rapidly touristifying neighborhoods and see the process as an equalizing experience (Sequera and Nofre 2018). In Barcelona, movements have managed to establish affinities with academia, the

media, political parties, and neighborhood associations (Milano 2018a), increasing their legitimacy and visibility and allowing them to become increasingly formalized political actors (Sequera and Gil 2018). In many places, like San Francisco, unlikely and heterogeneous alliances have been forged between inherently antagonistic actors, such as workers' and tenants' organizations and the hotel lobby, who have seen in the spread of STRs a common enemy (ibid.; Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018).

Importantly, following Harvey (2001), movements that wish to achieve anything beyond the local level must move past 'militant particularism' and establish broader connections. This might be particularly relevant in the context of anti-touristification mobilizations, seeing as tourism inherently blurs spatial boundaries (Mansilla and Milano 2018), meaning a jumping of scales, in Smith's (1992) words, is necessary if the movement is to gain traction at a transnational level. To this end, anti-touristification movements have been in constant communication with one another and have helped inspire and co-constitute each other's strategies since their very inception in the 1990s, when Berlin and Barcelona became leading examples for many cities that followed throughout Europe, America, and Asia (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019; Romagnoli 2021).

This is not to say that local-level resistance is not an integral and fundamental part of anti-touristification USMs. In fact, some of the most important aspects of resistance are those that take place at the most micro-level. Chatterton and Pickerill (2010:486) criticize scale-jumping as an "academic imposition" on social movements, instead advocating for the "emancipatory potential amongst everyday micro-examples," which they think of as the specific practices undertaken to "challenge, deal with and imagine alternatives to life under capitalism in the everyday" (ibid.:475), or "the dirty, real work of activism" (ibid.:476). Many of these practices involve community and resilience building, reworking the self as a political actor, and materially resisting everyday inequalities, with the central goal of rejecting individualism and working towards a socialized and collectivist self (ibid.). Essentially, just as capitalism is reproduced in everyday social practices and relations, everyday practices can also be sites for the imagination of a life beyond capitalism (ibid.). Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso (2018) mobilize Smith's concept of scale-jumping and use it to refer to the possibility of jumping scales between the body, the home, and the neighborhood as sites of resistance.

In the touristified city, Sequera and Nofre (2018:851) use the term "everyday dialectics" to refer to the discourses, practices, and stories that constitute residents' acts of daily resistance and resilience against dispossession. Importantly, such small-scale acts are usually informed by local historical and cultural contexts, and the "strategic mobilization of (collective) identity" (Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso 2018:403) is often used as a tool to foster organized mobilization against dispossession in neighborhoods where a strong historical or political identity is present. The culture, character, and collective memory of a neighborhood can be used as a means to strengthen social cohesion and inspire mobilization among local residents, and can provide a "significant theoretical and conceptual background [...] useful for resistance" (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019:28). Such practices can be as simple as reproducing and reinforcing Jane Jacobs' (1961) 'ballet of the street' of intricately crafted relations among neighbors, or the 'identity resilience' represented by florists selling flowers on La Rambla, who silently reproduce a centuries-long cultural activity symbolic to the city of Barcelona amidst souvenir shops and terraces filled with tourists (Romagnoli 2021). Other examples more explicitly mobilize a neighborhood or a city's cultural idiosyncrasy as a weapon of resistance, like the 2016 'jazz funeral' held by residents of New Orleans with coffins reading "RIP affordable housing" and "RIP real neighbors," in protest of Airbnb and touristification (Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018:5).

d. The "tourismophobia" debate

As Romagnoli (2021:113) puts it, "the response to the intensity of the tourist phenomenon does indeed have the character of popular resistance," and like most popular resistances, it has received backlash and counteraction by those parties that have stakes in the tourism model that is being contested. The most notable example of such counteractions has been the increasing dissemination of the term "tourismophobia" in the media and popular discourse. The term, which emerged in a 2008 article by Spanish anthropologist Manuel Delgado Ruiz (2008), could be defined as a phenomenon caused by aversion or social rejection felt by local residents towards tourists (Ramírez-Vázquez and De la Cruz-Dávila 2020). However, its use has been criticized by activists and neighborhood associations for attempting to stigmatize any sort of criticism towards the current tourism model (Simas et al. 2021)

and for its sensationalism (Milano 2018a). "Tourismophobia" is arguably a reactive and politically instrumental concept that has emerged in order to discredit popular responses to the neoliberal tourism model (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019) through the use of social justice-adjacent jargon that seeks to classify such resistant residents as essentially bigoted or xenophobic (Simas et al. 2021), nullifying the transformative potential of existing movements and campaigns (Rodríguez Medela et al. 2018).

This is not to say that antagonistic relationships and interactions between residents and tourists are an unheard of phenomenon, many residents have in fact grown to harbor feelings of resentment towards a tourist class that they view as, at least somewhat, responsible for the transformations and pressures their city is suffering through tourism (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019). One must look no further than the recent incident in Barcelona where protesters squirted water at tourists as a demonstration against mass tourism (Guy 2024), which quickly made international headlines and sparked a worldwide debate about 'tourismophobia' in Barcelona and beyond. To this end, I find Hiernaux and González's (2014) analysis very interesting and elucidating, whereby tourists inhabit a sort of fantasy realm in their travels that allows them to turn a blind eye towards the antagonisms and the 'horrors' that might underlie the model of tourism they are engaging in. Tourists' conception of a place they are visiting is informed by signs created by either other tourists or by tourism bureaucrats, through tour guide discourses, photographs, souvenirs, etc.; signs that are 'aggressive' and alienating for the resident that then feels uncomfortable and might lash out against the perceived 'invaders' (ibid.:66). Hiernaux and González thus propose that the tourist be conceptualized as a different form of resident, as the status of 'temporary visitor' is what exonerates them of any agency or responsibility in their contribution to a process that, for residents, causes medium- and long-term transformations and dispossessions.

Case

1. Tourism in the Spanish context

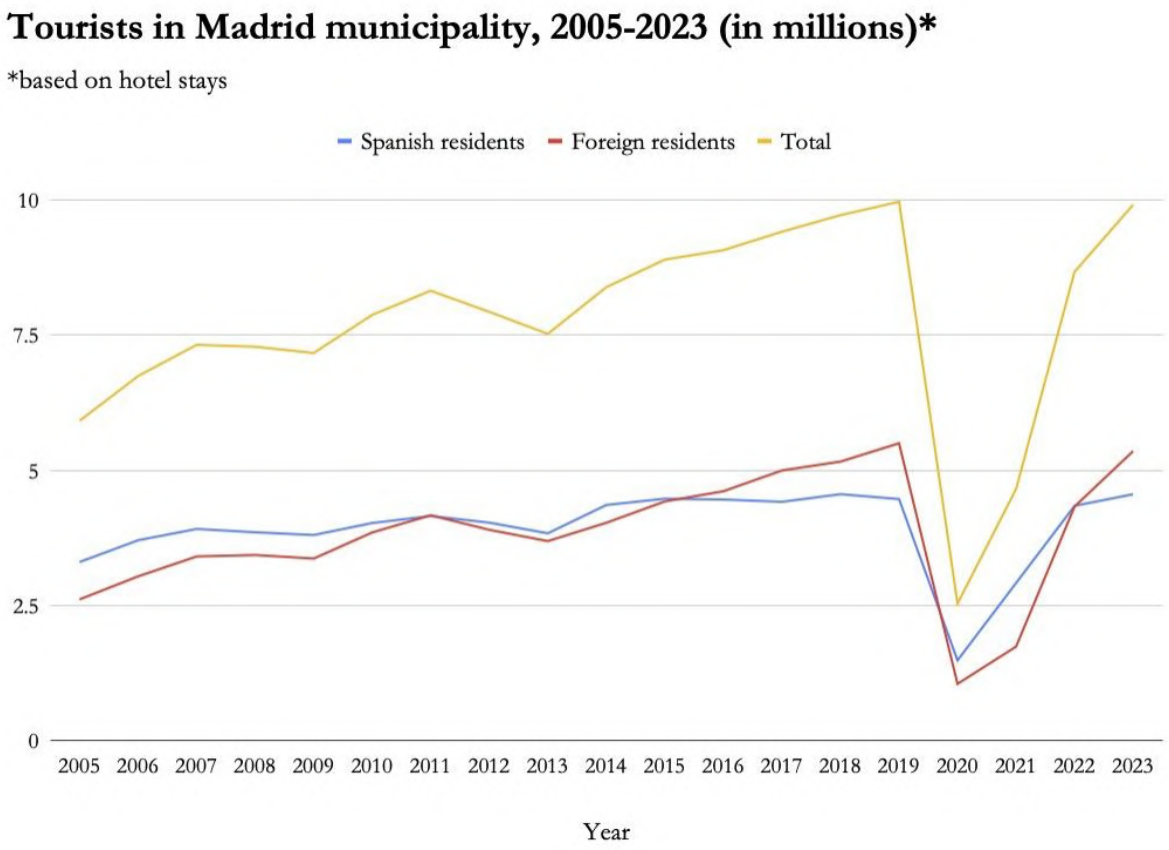
Tourism has historically been particularly salient in the Spanish context. Tourism development became a critical economic, political and ideological tool for Franco's dictatorial regime in the late 1940s and early 1950s, with the end of autarky and the reincorporation of Spain into international relations and global capitalism (Mansilla and Milano 2018). It allowed the regime to improve Spain's international image, and it generated funds that could be used for the implementation of development policies throughout the country (ibid.). Spain took advantage of the post-WW2 emergence of mass tourism in Europe through an economic model known as *desarrollismo*, or developmentalism (ibid.), focused on increasing Spain's GDP and industrial competitiveness, largely financed through income generated by tourism development and remittances from millions of emigrated workers (Moviéndote 2020). The promotion of the Spanish tourism industry, however, was "premised on intersecting logics of exploitation and expropriation" (Bianchi and Milano 2024:4), leading to the creation of a sort of "European semiperiphery of pleasure" (Vives Miró 2011:1).

Tourism continued as a central strategy for development beyond the dictatorship. Towards the 1990s and 2000s, it became the main vehicle for the entrepreneurial revitalization of Spanish cities, with large scale projects aimed at redeveloping historic districts (Jover and Díaz-Parra 2020) or mega-events like the 1992 Barcelona Olympics or the World Exposition in Seville as a "conduit for investments in urban real estate and the capture of monopoly rents from tourism-related consumption" (Bianchi and Milano 2024:6). The phenomenon of urban tourism became particularly salient after the 2008 crisis and the emergence of STRs as a method of capital accumulation (ibid.). Even though Covid-19 put an abrupt halt to tourism in the country and brought to light the precarity of an economic model almost entirely dependent on tourism (ibid.), tourism has quickly recovered since the pandemic and is now reaching new heights, with a record 85.1 million international visitors and over 108 billion euros in tourist expenditure in 2023 (ICEX 2024a), accounting for 12.8% of the country's GDP and 70.8% of economic growth for that year (ICEX 2024b).

2. Tourism and touristification in Madrid

Tourism in Madrid has been steadily growing for years at a rapid pace, as shown by the graph below (**Figure 1**). Except for the sharp decline in the 2020/1 period due to Covid-19, the number of tourists visiting the city has been going up consistently for the last two decades, with a ~4 million difference between 2005 and 2023. It is also important to note that the data shown below is limited in scope as it only includes those tourists that stayed in hotels, meaning day trippers or people who stay in STRs are unaccounted for.

Figure 1



Source: own elaboration, using INE statistics for 'puntos turísticos'

The National Statistics Institute of Spain (INE) does provide data for the total yearly amount of international tourist arrivals in the Community of Madrid, which for the year 2023 was around 7.8 million—almost 2.5 million more than those who stayed at hotels in the city, which could mean nearly

32% of international tourists in Madrid potentially stay at STRs (Comunidad de Madrid 2023a). Tourism in the Community of Madrid (and particularly international tourism) is quickly recovering from the pandemic slump, closing 2023 with the highest number of international arrivals ever recorded and with even more growth in 2024, with 11.31% more tourists staying in hotels and 29% more international arrivals in February 2024 than February 2023, potentially heading towards new records (Comunidad de Madrid 2024a; 2024b).

Tourism was largely promoted as an economic driver following the Great Recession (Sequera and Gil 2018), and specifically between 2011 and 2015 when, in a period of austerity policies and decreased government intervention, both the regional and municipal governments of Madrid favored the growth of the tourism industry with no regulations as a way out of the crisis (Velasco González et al. 2019). The industry has also largely benefited from infrastructural developments in Madrid's airport and main train stations, attracting increasing (and cheaper) traffic of visitors (Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2021). Today, tourism does generate significant wealth in the Community of Madrid, with tourism expenditures reaching an all-time high of 13.3 billion euros in 2023 (Comunidad de Madrid 2023b), and 424,390 residents employed in tourism-related industries—12.9% of all employment in the region (Comunidad de Madrid 2023c).

Nevertheless, the negative effects of such tourism development are becoming palpable, especially regarding housing. STRs, amplified by digital technologies like in many other cities, have been an issue in Madrid for years, with discontent dating back to the mid 2010s. Their spread and speed of proliferation, however, has greatly increased in recent times. Currently there are, according to official sources, 13,502 STRs in Madrid, only 1,092 of which (~8.1%) are legal, i.e. with a valid license—though estimates by watchdog website Inside Airbnb put the number of total STRs closer to 25,500 (Hormigo 2024). The issue of STRs has reached a critical point where one in every four rental properties in the Centro district is now an STR (Aranda 2024), with only a minority of them operated under a collaborative economy model, instead owned by professional developers or large property holders (Gil and Sequera 2018).

Regulation of STRs in Spain falls under the jurisdiction of regional and municipal governments. While the right-wing, neoliberal regional government hasn't put any limitations in place, some regulations do exist at the municipal level, although the previous municipal government—a left-wing coalition that had campaigned on the basis of benefiting neighbors rather than market actors—was extremely slow to react (Ardura Urquiaga et al. 2019). It was only in April 2019, at the end of former mayor Manuela Carmena's term, that the Special Plan for the Regulation of the Use of Tertiary Services in Hospitality (PEH) was approved. The normative, finally approved by Madrid's High Courts of Justice in 2021, seeks to preserve residential use of housing in the center of Madrid and spread STRs to farther districts in order to reduce the concentration of tourism pressure in specific areas (Velasco González et al. 2019), through the division of the city into three rings where no STRs are allowed in residential buildings within the two more central rings unless the apartment has independent access to the street (i.e. only when it is on the ground floor, at street level). Even though there was a change of municipal government in 2019, the new right-wing government has largely left these regulations untouched. However, it's hardly implemented due to a lack of specific inspection mechanisms put in place, where the municipality relies almost entirely on complaints filed by neighbors themselves (ibid.), as well as legal barriers in those cases that are prosecuted, involving lengthy legal processes marred with appeals (Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022a).

Other issues of touristification in Madrid have to do with the degradation of the commercial and urban fabric of the city's central areas, and particularly in the Centro district which suffers from the most tourism and STR pressure as it is where most historical and cultural heritage is concentrated (Cabrerizo et al. 2016). Central neighborhoods like Lavapiés, Malasaña or La Latina have been the subject of promotional discourses that construct them as places where tourists can witness and experience the 'traditional' Madrilenian lifestyle (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019). Neighbors have complained about issues like the displacement and replacement of local populations with tourists and subsequent divestment from public infrastructure and services like education and healthcare in such neighborhoods (Velasco González et al. 2019); the disappearance of local businesses in favor of chain stores or those aimed at tourist consumption (Cabrerizo et al. 2016); changes to the cultural sphere and

loss of local identity in traditional neighborhoods (Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022a); 'gourmetization' of the gastronomy industry (ibid.); degradation of public spaces (ibid.); the spread of bars and nightlife establishments (Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022b); or cohabitation problems with noisy or disrespectful tourists (ibid.).

3. Resistance in Madrid

For the purpose of my investigation, it is imperative to review existing literature on movements resisting touristification in Madrid. Though nowhere near as ubiquitous in the literature as the paradigmatic example of Barcelona, with its stronger restrictions and its myriad movements, associations, and campaigns fighting mass tourism and touristification (Arias Sans and Quaglieri Domínguez 2016; Mansilla 2018; Mansilla and Milano 2018; Romagnoli 2021; Simas et al. 2021), there has been some attention paid to the case of Madrid in recent years. Contrary to some assertions that there exists no "critical associative fabric organized around the issue [of touristification]" (Rodríguez Medela et al 2018:330), and even if smaller and less propagated in the media than in some other cities, Madrid has recently had a number of movements and organizations focused on combating such processes, with tourism-related housing problems as the most determinant element informing these social mobilizations and their political discourses (Velasco González et al. 2019).

For instance, a number of articles discuss the movement 'Lavapiés, ¿dónde vas?' (LdV), active between 2016 and early 2020 and arguably the most important and influential group in the pre-Covid anti-touristification struggle of Madrid (Sequera and Gil 2018; Jover et al. 2018; Sequera and Nofre 2019; Velasco González et al. 2019). LdV was a coalition movement formed by parents' associations, anticapitalist activists, and civil society, among others, and it organized a number of different mobilizations to publicly denounce the insidious effects of unfettered tourism on the neighborhood of Lavapiés specifically. Unlike the more disruptive campaigns witnessed in Barcelona, LdV's protest strategy was more creative and used satire as a way to illustrate the ills of touristification (Sequera and Gil 2018). Through their innovative campaigns, LdV gained much media attention and brought the issue of touristification to the forefront of Madrilenian public discourse.

Many of the movements throughout the years have similarly been concentrated in Lavapiés, a central working-class *barrio* with a very strong historical, cultural, and political identity dating back to the 18th century, when it was an important rural migrant settlement and a site of industrial proletarian mobilization (Giacomasso and Castillo Mena 2022)—an identity which has seen it at the center of many of the struggles in Madrid's history. In fact, much of Castell's (1983) theory on USMs was grounded on the case of the Citizen Movement in 1970s Madrid and Lavapiés specifically, where, in the context of large-scale urban regeneration projects, dictatorial repression and real estate speculation, a number of associations emerged across Madrid's neighborhoods to reappropriate the city through creative protests and the revival of cultural traditions and community life. The neighborhood thus became an organizational base (ibid.), and Lavapiés' La Corrala neighborhood association had a central role in this process and in the 1974 creation of what would later become the Regional Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Madrid (FRAVM). Lavapiés and other traditional working-class neighborhoods had particular significance in a movement that, though it did cut across class lines, was much more militant and organized in such districts (ibid.). Years later, in the 1990s and 2000s, Lavapiés became the site of a battle against a number of urban renewal projects that a diverse, inter-generational coalition of activists viewed as a key first step towards gentrification and tourism promotion (Díaz Orueta 2007). Lavapiés has also long hosted a wide array of residents involved in the creative industries who, far from being part of a gentrifying 'creative class' (Florida 2002), are embedded in the neighborhood fabric and participate in such mobilizations (Díaz Orueta 2007).

There has also been literature discussing different movements, such as the SOS movements that popped up in a series of central neighborhoods (Malasaña, Chamberí, Centro...) before Covid-19 with the motto "Neighbors at risk of extinction," bringing light to many issues related to touristification, like pollution, noise, and a loss of access to public spaces (Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022b). Articles have also focused on the FRAVM, which has led much of the fight against touristification and STRs in recent years and has been adamant in denouncing the lack of implementation mechanisms for the regulations that are in place (Velasco González et al. 2019; Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022b). Velasco González et al. (2019) note that this 'associative sphere' of movements and organizations fighting touristification is a

complex network made up of diverse groups, coalescing in some respects and more fractured in others. For instance, some level of unlikely allyship has emerged between neighborhood associations and hospitality stakeholders insofar as STRs are seen as a common problem for both, although they have completely different ideas and approaches regarding the issue of touristification more broadly (ibid.). Additional research has focused on the role of social media, and how academics and journalists have used it to publicly call out Airbnb and criticize the STR industry and touristification in general, forging digital geographies of resistance and "virtual resistance communities" made up of disillusioned residents (Wilson et al. 2022:1096).

However, it is important to note that most of this research took place in a pre- or shortly post-Covid-19 context. A lot has changed since then, and many of the movements that were once at the forefront of the struggle have either ceased operations altogether (like LdV and the SOS movements) or taken a back seat. For this reason, I want to focus this thesis on the re-emergence of a resistance movement against touristification in Madrid, as the city is now in a critical moment where tourism appears to not only have fully recovered from Covid-19 stagnation, but to be growing at great speed towards uncharted heights—with a paralleled dramatic increase in its salience and politicization in the media and in public discourse. It is my intention through the following sections of this paper to investigate which residents, associations, and groups have now taken center stage and what narratives and strategies might be defining this new post-Covid wave of anti-touristification resistance in Madrid. In Hidalgo-Giralt et al. (2022b)'s research, a representative from one of Madrid's neighborhood associations claimed that there was exhaustion among these associations and a need for a new broader, cross-neighborhood movement that could mobilize residents from across the city. It is the purpose of my research, thus, to find out whether this has in fact happened, and if so, what, where, and how it is happening, as well as who is involved.

This, then, leads to my research question:

What are the actors, strategies, discourses, and negotiations defining the (re)emerging social movement resisting touristification in Madrid?

Methodology

1. Conceptual Framework

a. Research paradigm

My research fundamentally stems from a critical paradigm grounded in an ontological position of historical realism where realities are multiple and socially constructed, "shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values" (Scotland 2012:13) that have been reified into a series of structures, power relations and systems of inequality within society. Relatedly, a constructivist paradigm is also embraced in my research, following an interpretivist epistemology where reality is socially constructed but also situated and relative to specific contexts (Al-Saggaf and Williamson 2006). This is crucial for my research, as my aim is to center knowledge produced by individuals and groups, informed by their subjective experiences, interpretations, and interactions with their surroundings—surroundings that are conditioned and constructed through unequal power relations and structures of domination. I believe critical and constructivist paradigms can work alongside one another to not only acknowledge systemic processes that shape people's realities and experiences, but also provide a "humanistic and respectful approach to the researched and their cultural as well as social and psychological realities," (Pilarska 2021:64) recognizing their role in constructing situated knowledge informed by their cultural contexts, past experiences, and beliefs.

For the specific purpose of my research, this approach can help me discern how individuals' and groups' cultural contexts, experiences, and situated realities can help shape their forms of mobilization and resistance in the face of systemic processes of dispossession, such as touristification. I'm interested in how the narratives that people espouse regarding such structures of domination—inherently informed by their subjectivities—can be instrumental in constructing strategies of resistance and resilience. I am particularly interested in the lived experiences and narratives regarding touristification at the most grassroots level, from individual neighbors suffering the consequences of unfettered tourism development in their neighborhoods and buildings, to small, traditional businesses facing a loss of

clientele and alienation in touristified neighborhoods, to associations, groups, and organizations that work together and with other communities and individuals to build networks of solidarity and resistance.

b. Methodology

In order to best find answers for my research question and taking into account my research paradigm, a qualitative approach that allows me to explore subjective experiences and interpretations at a smaller scale makes most sense, as opposed to quantitative approaches more geared towards the production of quantifiable and generalizable data. In my case, ethnography offers the most comprehensive and compelling methodological framework, for a number of reasons. Ethnography is defined by Saldaña (2011:4-5) as "the observation and documentation of social life in order to render an account of a group's culture," with "culture" here referring to "[social] knowledge that is learned and shared and that people use to generate behavior and interpret experience" (McCurdy et al. 2005:5-6). In an ethnography, the researcher becomes a participant in the activities of the group that is being studied, donning him the ability to observe actions within their everyday contexts as opposed to under conditions created by the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007), which allows him to undertake an exploratory and open-minded approach where the fieldwork process itself shapes the course and the specificities of the research. In my case, then, an ethnographic approach will allow me to immerse myself in the everyday lived realities of the groups and individuals involved in resistance movements against touristification, providing a nuanced understanding of their narratives, values, relationships, and strategies.

Ethnography has been hailed in the literature as an exemplar way to gain insights into the power relations underpinning tourism (Nogués-Pedregal 2016; Romagnoli 2021), and, specifically, to determine how touristification processes affect the fabric of everyday life in urban neighborhoods (Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018). It is not surprising, then, that many articles focused on investigating processes of resistance to touristification have engaged in ethnographic research to gain a holistic

understanding of the actors, narratives, negotiations, and strategies underpinning such mobilizations (Mansilla 2018; Sequera and Gil 2018; Arkaraprasertkul 2017; Fraeser 2017; Romagnoli 2021).

c. Considerations: reflexivity, positionality, and ethics

There are, of course, some issues that come with ethnographic research, and particularly with participant observation. On the one hand, there is the issue of objectivity that has been used to disparage observation-based research methods. Here I wish to stress that, in Saldaña's (2011:23) words: "there are no such thing as "neutral," "bias-free," or "objective" lenses for qualitative researchers." Qualitative research is fundamentally informed by the researchers' own life experiences, values, gender, race etc., as these are all aspects of one's identity that shape everyday life and ways of understanding the world and one's surroundings. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) similarly posit that social research cannot possibly be carried out in a vacuum away from society and from the researcher's own biography; such research is inherently affected by social processes and personal characteristics. This of course means that the researcher must reflect on his biases and preconceptions before, during, and after research is conducted (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011), meaning reflexivity is a crucial element to ensure the credibility of the research.

It is therefore relevant here to discuss my positionality as a researcher, as my personal life, experiences, and political views have been fundamental in shaping this research process. As someone born and raised in Madrid, between the neighborhoods of Chamberí and Malasaña, touristification is hardly a phenomenon that I can study from afar, purporting to hold an 'objective' point of view. Malasaña is a neighborhood that has been subjected to some of the most intense gentrification processes the city of Madrid has seen, making it largely unrecognizable to those who knew it as a hub of counterculture, urban tribes, drugs, and prostitution in the late 20th century. Even within my lifetime I have noticed the neighborhood change dramatically, first through more traditional gentrification processes and, in recent years, through aggressive touristification, with the proliferation of vintage shops and boutiques, co-working and co-living spaces, brunch restaurants, specialty coffee spots and other businesses aimed at tourist consumption.

From the closure of businesses and restaurants I grew up frequenting, to seeing the "SOS: Neighbors in danger of extinction" signs plaster the balconies of my area, to avoiding certain streets I grew up on as to not deal with the overcrowding, to hearing the American foreign exchange students who live in the international dorm next door to my house come back from partying at 5am on a Tuesday... Touristification has been a part of my life for years, and it is also ever-present in conversations with family or friends who also feel their neighborhood slowly slipping away. For this reason, my critical perspective on tourism development and touristification is grounded in my own life experiences. I acknowledge this fact and embrace it as part of my research: my interest in studying anti-touristification resistance movements in Madrid goes beyond an academic inquiry and is informed by my desire to want to take part in the reimagining and remaking of my city as a liveable place for its residents, especially those most vulnerable who face the brunt of touristification in ways I can't even imagine due to my privileged position as someone from a comfortable middle-class background, who has never, and will likely never, experience housing precarity. I don't think this necessarily forfeits objectivity in my research, it instead drives me to want to gain a more profound understanding of these movements and of the people and processes involved in them, pushing me to conduct a more comprehensive and in-depth investigation.

The other main issue that comes up with ethnographic research is ethics. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) outline a number of ethical dilemmas that often come up in this type of research, the main ones being informed consent, privacy or confidentiality, exploitation, and maintaining relationships with research participants. In order to keep my research process as ethical as possible, it's important to make sure I practice informed consent and utmost confidentiality with all the people involved in it. This includes being open about my research questions and aims, both in interviews and when conducting participant observation. In terms of exploitation and maintaining relationships, I believe this applies more to traditional anthropological ethnographic research where typically white, Western researchers would infiltrate indigenous communities in foreign countries, spend significant periods of time building relationships with locals, and then leave to never come back, while basking in the glory of publishing 'groundbreaking' work that rarely gave credit

(intellectual or monetary) to the people being researched. In my case, it is definitely my intention to maintain relationships with my research participants beyond this paper, as I have personal and political motivations and stakes in this movement and wish to be a part of it in the long-term. Similarly, I wish to conduct this research democratically, with consent and enthusiasm from participants, and do not intend to gain anything from it, so I don't believe there are exploitative dynamics at play.

2. Methods

a. Data collection

Following this methodology, then, my data collection consisted mostly of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, as well as general observations (i.e. on the street; outside of specific events/activities for participant observation), photography, scanning of local media and newspapers, and some degree of digital ethnography.

i. Participant observation

Participant observation was the bulk of my research, and it happened quite organically and unintentionally. Out of my own personal interest, I had started following a number of bloggers and journalists on Instagram whose pages cover social and political issues and grassroots campaigns going on in different parts of the city, such as Madrid No Frills and Somos Malasaña. I eventually followed the **Sindicato de Inquilinas e Inquilinos de Madrid** (Madrid Tenants' Union, from here on out '**Sindicato**') as well, and on April 22nd I randomly happened to see their Instagram Story, where they were advertising the bi-weekly meeting of their 'Nodo Centro' ('Centro' Node, which is the territorial branch of the Sindicato for the central districts of Centro, Arganzuela and Retiro) happening that day at squatted cultural center **CSO La Rosa**. I decided to go, thinking it would be a pretty large event and I would be able to sit back and maybe take notes without necessarily engaging. However, when I arrived there were only about 10-15 of us sitting in a circle. Shortly thereafter I found myself having to introduce myself to the group, explaining where I live and why I had decided to come. I told them my name, that

I'm a neighbor of the Centro district, and that I was there out of curiosity and perhaps also to do some research for my thesis about touristification. I was quickly embraced by the group, who were happy to see many new faces in the room. Shortly after the meeting started I realized a few things: a) there are movements in Madrid a lot more organized and politicized than I had imagined, contrary to the preconception I had had that my research question would eventually need tweaking due to the lack of a prominent movement in Madrid, and b) touristification and Airbnb specifically were central themes in the narratives and campaigns of these movements.

From that day on, I participated in over 23 participant observation activities over the course of 3 months, becoming increasingly embedded in several of the movements and campaigns related to the Sindicato, some completely unrelated to my thesis. I became a member of the Sindicato and of its working group specifically focused on STRs, helping organize the campaign against STRs and a protest in Lavapiés on June 1st. I also got involved with two of the *bloques en lucha* that the Sindicato works with (Tribulete 7 and Galileo 22), going to some of their block meetings and negotiations and helping brainstorm demonstrations and other strategies of resistance. I took part in a wide range of activities, from protests, meetings, and brigades to assemblies, negotiations with developers, and parties. I also became an active participant of a number of WhatsApp and Telegram groups, some of which focused specifically on touristification (such as the Sindicato's STR working group and a group called 'Centro vs. Tourist Apartments' made up of neighbors in the area) and others on issues of housing more broadly. Whenever I was added to a new group, I would send an initial message stating my name, where I live, and explaining my research aims as part of the reason why I had joined the group. Everyone was always comfortable with this, and I soon realized there are quite a few journalists, academics and researchers in these circles. Data was collected in the form of field notes, written in the Notes app of my phone during or right after the different events, as well as through short, informal conversations with other members of the movement or with local residents in the area. Below is a chart showing the different activities I took part in as part of my participant observation process for this research:

Figure 2: Participant observation events attended

Event	Type of event	Location	Date	Organizer(s)
Acción Teatral Tribulete 7	*Bloque en lucha* demonstration / public gathering	Calle Tribulete 7 (Lavapiés)	17/03/2024	Neighbors of Tribulete 7
Vermú de Bienvenida CSO La Rosa	Cultural squat inauguration event	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	23/03/2024	CSO La Rosa
Reunión Nodo Centro-Arganzuela-Retiro	Union meeting (district-specific)	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	22/04/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas
Reunión Nodo Centro-Arganzuela-Retiro	Union meeting (district-specific)	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	06/05/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas
Asamblea manifestación "Lavapiés al Límite"	Protest planning meeting	Centro Social Tres Peces Tres (Lavapiés)	08/05/2024	17 associations based in Lavapiés
Asamblea general del Sindicato de Inquilinas	Union meeting (general, city-wide)	Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo (Arganzuela)	10/05/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas
Reunión Nodo Centro-Arganzuela-Retiro	Union meeting (district-specific)	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	20/05/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas
Vecinas a la Fresca: Volvemos	Public gathering	Plaza Arturo Barea (Lavapiés)	22/05/2024	Vecinas a la Fresca & Sindicato de Inquilinas

Event	Type of event	Location	Date	Organizer(s)
Demonstration against Premios Asprima-SIMA (real estate fair & awards ceremony in Madrid)	Protest	Fundación Real Fábrica de Tapices (Retiro)	23/05/2024	Number of housing associations, including Sindicato de Inquilinas & PAH (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages)
Lavapiés al Límite: Contra la Destrucción de los Barrios, ¡Nos Quedamos!	Protest against "the destruction of the neighborhood"	Lavapiés neighborhood	01/06/2024	Consortium of associations based in Lavapiés
Reunión de bloque Galileo 22	*Bloque en lucha* meeting	Online (Zoom)	10/06/2024	Neighbors of Galileo 22
Brigadas Vecinales vs. Pisos Turísticos	Neighborhood brigade vs. STRs	Lavapiés neighborhood	10/06/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas
#FueraPisosTurísticos: Las Vecinas nos Unimos contra la Turistificación de nuestra Ciudad	Public meeting / debate about STRs	Ateneo La Maliciosa (Arganzuela)	12/06/2024	FRAVM & Sindicato de Inquilinas
Fiesta de la Resistencia: Nos Quedamos	*Bloque en lucha* demonstration / public gathering	Calle San Ildefonso 20 (Lavapiés)	15/06/2024	Neighbors of San Ildefonso 20 & Sindicato de Inquilinas
Brigadas Vecinales vs. Pisos Turísticos	Neighborhood brigade vs. STRs	La Latina neighborhood	24/06/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas

Event	**Type of event**	**Location**	**Date**	**Organizer(s)**
Repensando el Modelo de Ciudad: Airbnb e Idealista vs Refugios Climáticos y Redes Comunitarias	Workshop, rethinking the urban model	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	25/06/2024	CSO La Rosa
Concentración ¡No al Cierre!	Protest / public gathering / concert	Escuela Popular de Música y Danza (Chamberí)	03/07/2024	Escuela Popular de Música y Danza
Reunión de bloque Galileo 22	*Bloque en lucha* meeting	Calle Galileo 22 (Chamberí)	04/07/2024	Neighbors of Galileo 22
#ConVosotrasSí: El Proyecto Duque de Alba 13 Se Queda	Talk / celebration	Traficantes de Sueños bookshop (Lavapiés)	05/07/2024	Librería Traficantes de Sueños
Reunión de bloque Tribulete 7	*Bloque en lucha* meeting	Casino de la Reina Park (Lavapiés)	07/07/2024	Neighbors of Tribulete 7
Negociación Elix-Tribulete 7	Negotiation between *bloque en lucha* and real estate fund	Plaza de l@s Comunes (Arganzuela)	10/07/2024	Elix Rental Housing & neighbors of Tribulete 7
Reunión Nodo Centro-Arganzuela-Retiro	Union meeting (district-specific)	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	15/07/2024	Sindicato de Inquilinas
Fiesta de despedida Calzados Vinigon	Shoe shop closing party	Calzados Vinigon (Lavapiés)	16/07/2024	Calzados Vinigon
Reunión de bloque Galileo 22	*Bloque en lucha* meeting	Calle Galileo 22 (Chamberí)	23/07/2024	Neighbors of Galileo 22

Image 2: Acción Teatral Tribulete 7

Image 3: Lavapiés al Límite

Image 4: Vermú de Bienvenida CSO La Rosa

Image 5: Vecinas a la Fresca: Volvemos

Image 6: Reunión Centro Nodo-Arganzuela-Retiro

Image 7: Demonstration against Premios Asprima-SIMA

Image 8: #FueraPisosTurísticos: Las Vecinas nos Unimos contra la Turistificación de nuestra Ciudad

Image 9: #ConVosotrasSí: El Proyecto Duque de Alba 13 Se Queda

Image 10: Repensando el Modelo de Ciudad: Airbnb e Idealista vs Refugios Climáticos y Redes Comunitarias

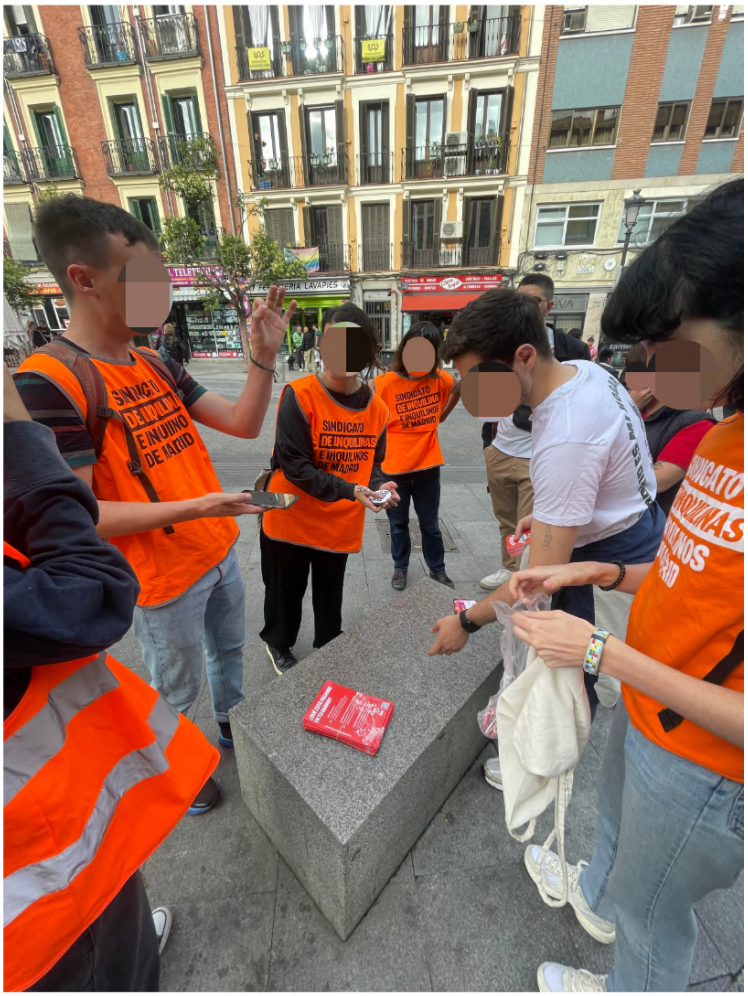


Image 11: Brigadas Vecinales vs. Pisos Turísticos (Lavapiés)

Here I find it useful to refer to Mansilla's (2018) ethnographic research in the #EnsPlantem movement resisting touristification in the Poblenou neighborhood of Barcelona. Mansilla undertook his research for almost a year and was a very active participant within the movement throughout that time. He rejects notions that becoming an active participant in the movement that he was researching might have forfeited objectivity or scientific rigor in his analysis, explaining that such level of implication in fact allows the researcher to access a type, quality, and quantity of information that would otherwise be impossible to obtain. Mansilla is, at the same time, inspired by Michael Herzfeld (2010), whose heavily involved ethnographic research into a Bangkok community facing displacement in the name of historical heritage conservation was widely criticized by anthropologists of a more positivist disposition, who claimed such level of direct involvement was scholarly inappropriate and would produce 'contaminated' data. Herzfeld responded by explaining that the data quality he could produce was infinitely more valuable *because of* such involvement, which had allowed him to access a high level of depth and insight into networks of activists, students, and microcosmic Thai politics. The parallels with my research process are evident, and I completely resonate with Mansilla and Herzfeld: I think my level of involvement, commitment, and passion for the cause I'm researching didn't curtail objectivity as much as it offered invaluable access to information, practices, and spaces that would have otherwise been beyond a researcher's reach.

Many of the associations and groups that emerged as key actors through my observations are very active on social media (particularly Instagram and Twitter/X), so I also conducted some degree of digital ethnography as I collected screenshots and made notes of narratives, strategies, and relationships that I saw emerge through social media interactions. Such observation methods allowed me to gain a deep and holistic understanding of the different actors involved in the struggle against touristification, the structures of the movements and organizations, the networks forged between them, as well as the narratives and strategies that are espoused by different sectors within the movement.

ii. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were the other main component of my research, used as a tool to gain deeper insight into specific topics and narratives that emerged through my observations. As theorized by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), my observations were extremely helpful in the process of sampling, i.e. deciding *who* I should conduct interviews with, and *why*. Through this lengthy process of observation, I came to realize there were a few main narratives/themes that kept coming up and that, in my eyes, represented a few different strands of the anti-touristification movement that were worth looking into further. I thus decided to interview: two people organized in housing movements (**Sindicato** and **Tribulete 7**), a representative from the Regional Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Madrid (**FRAVM**), a representative from a community-organized semi-public space (**CSO La Rosa**), a small business owner (**Calzados Vinigon**), someone involved in the 'tourismophobia' debate (in this case a British journalist based in Lavapiés neighborhood: **Madrid No Frills**), and a couple of local residents who could offer a more de-politicized view on the issue of touristification in central areas.

I reached out to each of the interviewees either through WhatsApp, Instagram, or in person, where I explained the nature and aims of my research and asked whether they would be willing to participate. Right before conducting the interview, I asked each of them if they were comfortable with me audio-recording our conversation (they all said yes) and if they wished to remain anonymous in my research (they all said no). I think it's important to note here that by the time I started asking people for interviews I had already been highly involved in the movement and in several organizations and campaigns for several months, so I had become a part of the community and gained people's trust to the point where the process of asking for (and conducting) interviews was quite informal and relaxed.

I decided to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews, as I went into each one knowing more or less what questions I wanted to touch on but was open to engaging in broader conversation about adjacent topics and ideas. Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, though for the purpose of this paper I will translate any quotes or excerpts into English. Interviews were conducted mostly after my participant observation process was close to done, between July 3rd and 15th 2024 (with one earlier exception). Below is a chart with more detailed information about each interview:

Figure 3: Semi-structured interviews conducted

Name of interviewee	Gender	Age	Role / organization	Date of interview	Place of interview	Language	Duration
Giada	F	25	Resident of Lavapiés	30/04/2024	Bar in Lavapiés	Spanish	29 minutes
Sabina	F	44	Sindicato de Inquilinas e Inquilinos de Madrid (Tenants' Union of Madrid)	03/07/2024	Bar in Arganzuela	Spanish	41 minutes
Alejandro	M	22	Resident of Gran Vía / Malasaña	05/07/2024	Bar in Malasaña	Spanish	39 minutes
Leah	F	39	Journalist, Madrid No Frills	09/07/2024	Online (Zoom)	English	36 minutes
Antonia	F	57	Neighbor of *bloque en lucha* Tribulete 7	09/07/2024	Her home, Calle Tribulete 7 (Lavapiés)	Spanish	2 hours 11 minutes
Víctor	M	66	FRAVM (Regional Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Madrid)	10/07/2024	FRAVM headquarters (Lavapiés)	Spanish	44 minutes

María Jesús	F	58	Shoe shop owner, Calzados Vinigon	12/07/2024	Calzados Vinigon (Lavapiés)	Spanish	45 minutes
Marina	F	36	CSO La Rosa	15/07/2024	CSO La Rosa (La Latina)	Spanish	23 minutes

b. Data analysis

Even though I went into my interviews already having some broad themes in mind, where each of them was intentionally meant to represent a 'strand' or a narrative that I had found relevant through my months of participant observation, I transcribed all interviews and used MAXQDA software to help organize my transcripts and field notes into a clearer set of themes. In this way, I used broad themes I had already thought of beforehand, such as 'Housing,' 'Public space,' 'Commercial fabric,' 'Neighborhood fabric,' and 'Tourismophobia' as means to code the raw data into more defined groups. My original approach to coding was thus very deductive insofar as the themes didn't emerge organically from the data but were rather a precursor that conditioned the subsequent coding of the data. However, in doing this, I realized a lot of the codes were very interconnected, making the organization of data into demarcated groups a very difficult process. For instance, even though some explicit mentions of the 'Neighborhood fabric' did take place in interviews, this theme was intrinsically linked to the idea of an eroded 'Commercial fabric' or loss of 'Public spaces,' meaning it would make little sense to divide them as entirely independent analytical frameworks. Therefore, for the purpose of my data analysis and presentation, I decided it would be best to divide my results into three broader categories that each encompasses all of these themes to one extent or another: 'Narratives,' 'Strategies,' and 'Alliances, discrepancies, and debates.' I then coded the data based on this new framework, with a number of sub-themes under each category, allowing more room to show the degree of interconnectedness, complexity, and the myriad relationships that define this movement. In order to provide a visual representation of these complex relationships and interactions between different actors, I was inspired by the holistic

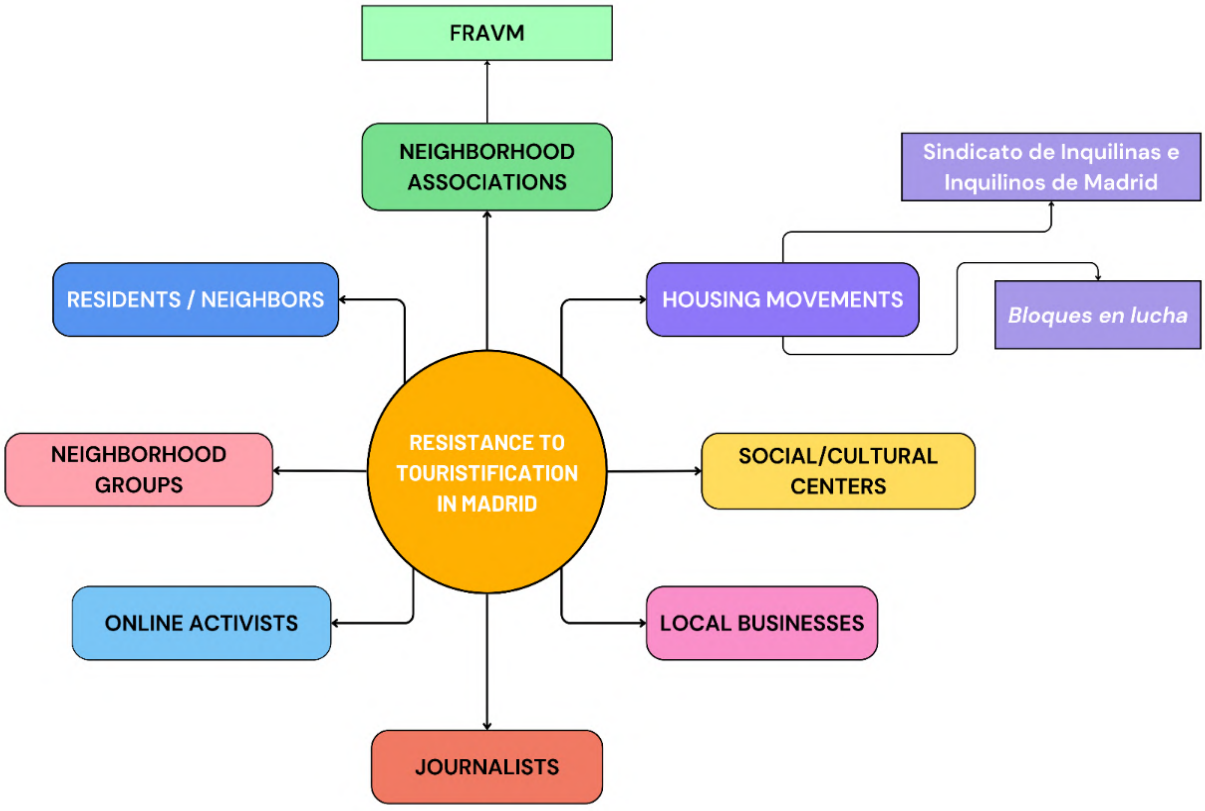
approach of systems thinking to make a stakeholder map that shows the main categories of actors I identified as involved in the movement resisting touristification, the actors themselves, and the relationships and interdependencies between them. I will show this visual and further explain at the end of my Results section (**Figure 5**).

Results

Actors

Before delving into the thematic analysis of my results, it's important to set the scene by briefly introducing the web of actors, groups, and organizations involved in the anti-touristification movement in Madrid. This web is wide-spanning and heavily interrelated, and below is a simplified diagram showing the general categories into which the elements of this movement can be divided (**Figure 4**). Through my thematic analysis I will elucidate many of the interconnections, alliances, and debates that define the movement and the relationships within it, finishing with an updated diagram that uses systems thinking tools to offer a visual representation for some of these dynamics.

Figure 4: General categories of actors involved in the anti-touristification movement in Madrid



Source: Own elaboration

Thematic analysis

1. Narratives

a. Housing

i. Airbnb, gentrification and housing precarity

Undoubtedly, the most common narrative regarding touristification that came up in my investigation was issues of housing and STRs—or VUT (*Viviendas de Uso Turístico*, i.e. Housing for Tourist Use), as they are known in the Spanish context—, with Airbnb having particular salience. Housing-related touristification has clearly taken center stage in current debates, particularly heightened by the ongoing housing crisis in Spain. It is thus impossible to discuss touristification in Madrid without first and foremost tackling the issue of Airbnb and STRs, with the most common narrative being the idea of an expulsion of traditional residents to accommodate tourists.

It's hardly surprising, then, that the **Sindicato de Inquilinas e Inquilinos de Madrid** (Tenants Union of Madrid; from here on, just **Sindicato**) has become a (if not *the*) central actor in the fight against touristification; the discursive link forged between gentrification, tourism, and the eviction of residents has propelled the union's salience to new heights in the public arena. Since the beginning of the 2023-24 work year, the Sindicato has worked tirelessly to build strategic narratives and networks to strengthen the emerging movement. The Centro-Arganzuela-Retiro territorial node of the Sindicato—which deals with the area of Madrid with the highest tourism pressure and concentration of STRs (i.e. the center)—launched a working group focused specifically on STRs earlier this year. I spoke to Sabina, an activist part of the Sindicato's communications team who also participates in the STR working group, who posited that there is "a wild proliferation of tourist apartments" that is "expelling us from our homes so they can be transformed into short-term accommodation. The rental prices of the little housing that is still available has increased by up to 100% in many cases, making it inaccessible and

displacing us from our *barrios*[1]" (personal communication, 3 July 2024). This is conceived as a "violation of people's right to adequate housing enshrined in the Spanish Constitution" (ibid.). At a workshop (**Image 10**) held at **CSO La Rosa**—a squatted social and cultural center inaugurated in March 2024 in the neighborhood of La Latina under the premise of creating a new social and political axis in central Madrid and a bastion of resistance against gentrification and touristification—on June 25th, Sabina also mentioned the fact that STRs cause 'invisible evictions,' as landlords decline to renew rental contracts in order to repurpose their properties as STRs.

The **FRAVM** (Regional Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Madrid; originally founded in the 1970s and serving as an umbrella organization for the many different neighborhood associations throughout the city) has similarly focused many of its recent activities on the problem of STRs, launching an Office for People Affected by Tourist Housing at its Lavapiés headquarters in October 2023, and expanding it in April 2024 through an additional office. I spoke to Víctor Rey, the director of this Office, who explained to me that STRs are "heavily exacerbating an already-existing nationwide housing crisis," as "residential housing is repurposed for tourist use, heightening pressures in the rental market" (personal communication, 10 July 2024). Alejandro, a resident of the hugely touristic Gran Vía area, claims that, in his experience, it has gotten at least twice as expensive to find a room in a shared apartment in the central areas of Madrid since he arrived in the city in 2021.

Importantly, these narratives of expulsion of neighbors in favor of STR development are not hyperbolic. There is a current trend rapidly developing in many of Madrid's central neighborhoods where developers or real estate investment trusts are buying entire housing blocks (i.e. vertical properties; buildings owned by a single landlord), immediately terminating all rental contracts with the purpose of evicting all tenants and redeveloping the building for, ostensibly, STR or luxury housing use. A number of these blocks' residents have refused to go down without a fight and have, with the help of the

[1] I use the word *barrio* here, and will do so throughout the paper, as it holds a lot more significance than the English "neighborhood"; the word *barrio* often implies a distinct identity and culture, as well as a level of neighborhood cohesion and associative fabric.

Sindicato, become collectively organized as ***bloques en lucha***, or "blocks at war." Blocks of particular relevance in my investigation include: **Tribulete 7**, Galileo 22, San Ildefonso 20, General Lacy 22, and Buenavista 25 & Zurita 22 (jointly organized). The residents of these blocks embody the consequences of housing touristification at the most personal and carnal level and have become iconic figures in the current anti-touristification movement. Antonia, a 57-year-old resident of the Tribulete 7 *bloque* (in Lavapiés) tells me that she has been living in the building for 3 years, ever since "gentrification expelled her from [the neighborhood of] Malasaña" (personal communication, 9 July 2024). Now, she's once again at risk of displacement, and she says her and many of her neighbors are "in very vulnerable situations; [they] don't know what will happen [to them] if they're forced out of their homes" (ibid.). Similar narratives of vulnerability were present at some of the demonstrations carried out by the *bloques en lucha* (more on this under 'Strategies'), where signs could be read stating "SOS: They're kicking us out; working-class retirees" (**Image 13**) or "SOS: More than 50 families on the streets" (**Image 12**).

Images 12 & **13**: Banners protesting the purchase of the Tribulete 7 *bloque*

Antonia doesn't know for a fact whether Tribulete 7 has been bought to develop STRs, as she claims the investors that bought it—a company named Elix Rental Housing—are scared of publicly stating their intentions due to the acute politicization of the Airbnb model in the current Spanish climate. However, she thinks it is the most likely outcome, as the same company has been known to buy buildings in Barcelona and redevelop them into Airbnb blocks in the past. This leads me to another important narrative in the anti-touristification fight: the targeting and vilification of real estate investment companies involved in these dynamics, nicknamed *fondos buitre* ("vulture funds") by many of the actors involved. At the demonstration carried out by the neighbors of Tribulete 7 on March 17th, people could be heard chanting "Get the vultures out of our *barrios*!" and real-size puppets, costumes, and other vulture imagery was paraded at several *bloque en lucha* demonstrations (**Images 14** & **15)** and the 'Lavapiés al límite' protest on June 1st (**Images 16** & **17**). In the flyer handed out at their March 17th demonstration, the neighbors of Tribulete 7 also made a point of denouncing the fact that these real estate investment trusts (called SOCIMIs in Spain) do not pay corporate income tax and are not taxed on their profits; they are given free rein to use housing as a vehicle for speculation with little financial or legal constraints.

Images 14, **15**, **16** & **17**: Vulture imagery in Tribulete 7, Galileo 22, and Lavapiés al Límite demonstrations

At an open debate held by the Sindicato and FRAVM on June 12th, a neighbor claimed that the problem doesn't lie with STRs but rather with housing speculation, to which Víctor replied that STRs are a major problem as soon as they become a dominant, invasive sector within the housing market. Marina from La Rosa similarly declares that tourism is problematic as it has become a "marker for financial investment," attracting "large developers who find in STRs a vehicle for capital extraction" (personal communication, 15 July 2024). Antonia explains that Airbnb in its conception was actually a positive thing and a form of collaborative economy that helped many of her friends stay afloat following the 2008 recession, where they would rent out an extra room in their house to tourists or let someone sleep on their couch for a small fee, but it has now been co-opted by SOCIMIs that displace residents under the premise of "improving the housing stock of the city" (personal communication, 9 July 2024). She also claims that in both Madrid and Barcelona most STRs are operated by developers rather than individual landlords, although she thinks housing speculation has become ingrained as a normal and valid way of making a living in Spanish culture, encouraging smaller-scale landlords to also engage in these tactics.

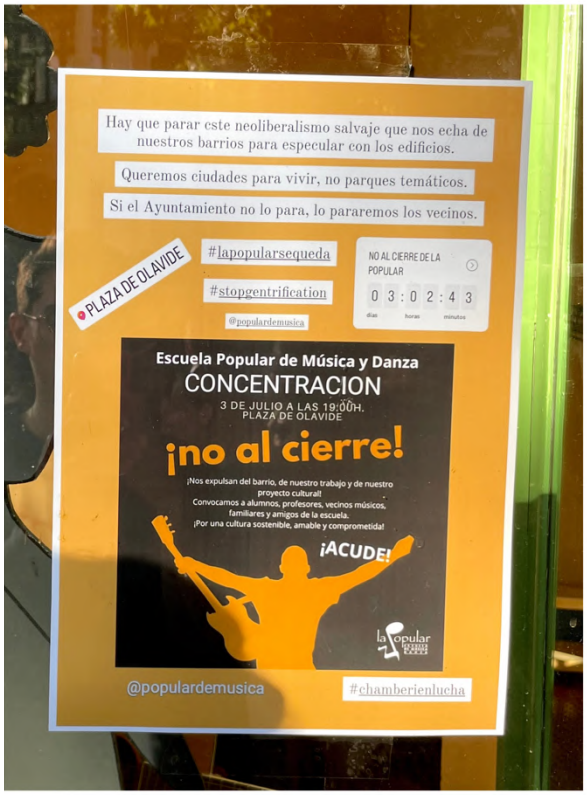


Image 18: Poster on the window of the Escuela Popular de Música y Danza, linking "untamed neoliberalism" and "speculation" with 'gentrification" and the conversion of cities into "theme parks"

Overall, there is a clear discursive link between housing touristification through STR development and gentrification. Sabina does make a distinction between the two processes, explaining that "gentrification is more a question of social class and purchasing power [and a] displacement of working-class people from neighborhoods by a wealthier class," whereas touristification causes a similar impact through the "displacement of the working class, or people in general, from their neighborhoods, yet caused by a fluctuation of

people who maybe spend five days a year here, and whose presence is seasonal" (personal communication, 3 July 2024). Nevertheless, she does posit that the two processes are often linked, where "first comes the expulsion of the *vecinas*[2], and then comes the conversion of the *barrio* into a theme park" (ibid.).

ii. Growing geographical spread

A related and more recent problem that came up in my investigation is the growing spread of this housing touristification issue into neighborhoods that hadn't felt such pressures in the past. Even though the Centro district is still the most impacted, with approximately 52% of all STRs according to Víctor, and thus is where most Sindicato and FRAVM activity has taken place, there are signs of this trend rapidly surging in more peripheral neighborhoods. When asked about the temporality and geographies of the STR phenomenon in Madrid, Víctor tells me that Airbnb first arrived in Madrid in 2014/5 and peaked in 2019, and regardless of the abrupt pause caused by Covid-19, the number of STRs has been exponentially growing since 2021. He explains that, even though it started predominantly in the most central areas, such as Sol and Barrio de las Letras, STRs quickly spread to neighboring areas like Chueca, Malasaña and Lavapiés, and we are now starting to witness their expansion throughout the entire region of Madrid. As he puts it, STRs have "now overcome the M-30 [i.e. the ring road surrounding the central districts of the city]" (Víctor, personal communication, 10 July 2024) and are appearing in traditionally more marginalized areas like Villaverde Alto or Puente de Vallecas, particularly when there is a metro stop nearby that can easily connect tourists to the city center within minutes. Similarly, Alejandro tells me many of his friends who live in peripheral neighborhoods have started noticing tourists circulating in their areas, something previously unheard of.

[2] Many left-leaning people and organizations in Spain have chosen to use the feminine plural form as opposed to the traditional 'neutral masculine' form, as a sort of feminist statement. *Vecinas* is thus a somewhat politicized term commonly heard in anti-touristification narratives, and I will often use it in place of the English "neighbors."

Sabina, who lives at the very edge of the Arganzuela neighborhood (an area previously not transited by tourists) tells me she increasingly hears German and English on her bus during her morning commute. She says: "*guiris*[3] no longer care if they are at Kilometer-0 [in Sol, the very center of Madrid] or beyond the M-30" (personal communication, 3 July 2024), and she also posits that speculators see business opportunities everywhere, and even peripheral, working-class neighborhoods have elements that can be instrumentalized to attract tourist capital, such as Chinatown in Usera or the Madrid Río park in Arganzuela. She also claims that these neighborhoods have the advantage of having witnessed the 'wave' of Airbnbization progressively build up towards their areas, so they've had more time to prepare and establish networks and strategies of resistance, something the residents of central neighborhoods didn't have time to do. In my ethnographic fieldwork, I noticed that even though most mobilizations took place within the Centro district, there is growing discontent and emerging movements beyond this area, such as in Puerta del Ángel.

An interesting development regarding the increased spread of housing touristification is the fact that middle-class or wealthy residents of traditionally bourgeois areas are starting to also fall victim to these dynamics, potentially leading to a sort of equalization that could be very beneficial for the strength of the movement. Leah from Lavapiés-based social and political commentary blog **Madrid No Frills** tells me: "It affects all of us now. And I think that is the trigger for the new revolution around housing emergency: it's now affecting the middle classes, and you've got to listen to the middle classes because they're the ones who are involved in the media and the ones who have actually got a very powerful voice" (personal communication, 9 July 2024). Similarly, Víctor tells me that people in bourgeois *barrios* fear that the spread of touristification might tarnish the upscale identity of their neighborhoods, pushing many of them to become interested in getting involved with the FRAVM and the movement at large, something never seen before. I noticed similar dynamics through my fieldwork as well, specifically through an emerging strand of dissatisfied residents in the bourgeois district of Chamberí, where the effects of touristification are quickly spreading through STRs and the loss of community spaces. As I

[3] *Guiri* is a word traditionally used in Spain to refer to Northern European tourists, usually with derogatory undertones.

live within this district, I have been personally involved in the coordination of this nascent movement, where a group chat has recently been created to potentially become a new territorial node of the Sindicato.

iii. Local-tourist coexistence

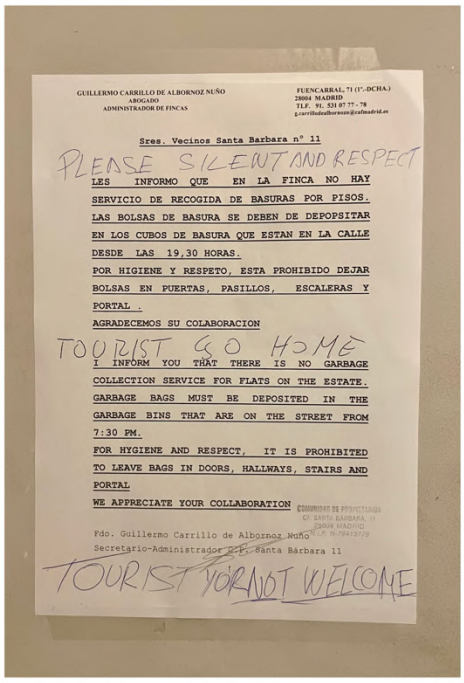
Another key narrative regarding the touristification of housing through STRs is the issues it's causing for livability, and the strains it's placing on local-tourist coexistence. Víctor tells me that the issue with STRs is that they have "penetrated residential buildings inhabited by *vecinos* and *vecinas*, causing inevitable clashes" (personal communication, 10 July 2024). According to him, it is unconscionable for an economic activity to take place in residential spaces, and neighbors are increasingly annoyed by the disruptions caused by tourists arriving late at night, confusedly ringing intercoms or doorbells, throwing parties, and raising security concerns. At a *bloque en lucha* meeting in Galileo 22, a *vecina* tells me that tourists often come to Madrid from places like England or Germany to party and go wild, which is particularly disruptive for those neighbors unfortunate enough to live next to one of the STRs where these parties are hosted.

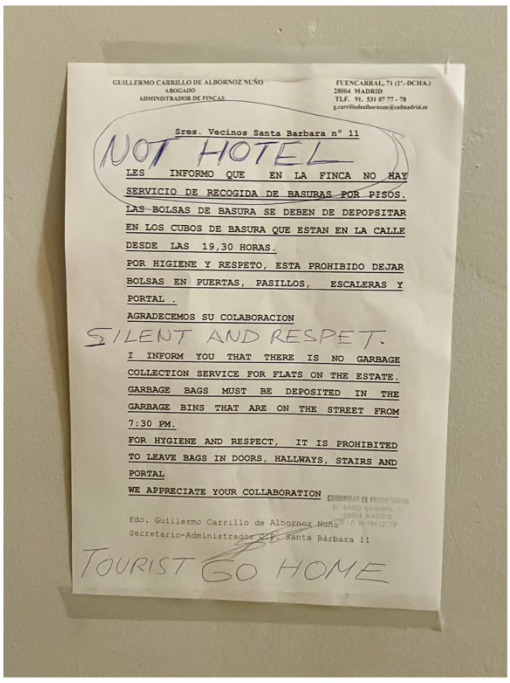
Image 19: Apartment in Tirso de Molina (Lavapiés) with signs reading: "SOS Central Madrid: Neighbors in danger of extinction," "Noise, trash, foul smell" and "We don't want a dumpsite at our doorstep!"

Alejandro isn't bothered by the Airbnb a few floors below him in his building, though he mentions some of his neighbors do dislike the presence of different unknown people in the common spaces of the building every few days. Sabina, whose building also has STRs in it, disagrees: she

talks about the filth tourists generate in common spaces, noise, partying, and damages inflicted upon the elevator, causing it to routinely malfunction. Noise seems to be a recurring issue: a woman encountered during one of the STR brigades (more on this under 'Strategies') tells us that some of her elderly neighbors have started moving their mattresses into their kitchens as to not have to hear the noise coming from the Airbnbs with which their bedrooms share a patio, and a man tells us that he's often woken up by the sound of suitcases being wheeled down his street. Two women who came to the Sindicato meeting on May 20th also described disruptions caused by tourists cooking noisily at inappropriate times.

In a group chat called 'Centro vs. Pisos Turísticos', for neighbors of central Madrid seeking to combat the STR phenomenon, many *vecinas* have complained about the garbage situation in their buildings, where tourists, in fear of being fined by their Airbnb hosts for not taking out the trash before they leave and ignoring the correct garbage disposal mechanisms and schedules, simply leave their garbage in common spaces of the building or right outside of it before they leave, leading to rat infestations and terrible smells—especially in the Summer months, where trash will soon start rotting in the Madrid heat.





Images 20 & **21**: Garbage collection PSA found inside a residential building in Malasaña, with handwriting condemning tourists and demanding silence and respect

iv. Government inaction

Lastly, a key narrative related to housing touristification is the illegality of most STRs in Madrid, and the government's complete inaction in this regard. Even though the municipal government led by mayor Almeida recently suspended all new STR licenses and vowed to increase sanctions, inspections, transparency and restrictions, the associations involved in the movement are highly skeptical. Víctor points out the fact that the government's published number of supposed STRs in Madrid is completely wrong, as they claim that there are about 13,500 STRs in the city—only around 1,000 of which are legal and licensed—while the FRAVM's own investigations provide a number closer to 26,000. This would mean that the municipality's already shocking statistic of 94% unlicensed, illegal STRs is in reality even more staggering, as the base number used is much lower than the actual one. He blames both the municipal and regional governments for doing nothing more than empty words and gestures, announcing the drafting of new regulations while routinely ignoring the ones that have been in place since the 2010s (i.e. the PEH, explained in my 'Case' section). The Sindicato is similarly skeptical, with Sabina claiming that, at the institutional level, there are more stakes in the tourism business than in citizens' wellbeing, which explains why no resources are allocated for the inspection and sanctioning of illegal STRs—with only 61 inspectors in the entire Madrid region for *all* matters related to commercial activity. Antonia and Leah similarly criticize the regional and municipal governments' laissez-faire approach where 'freedom' has become a proxy for unfettered touristification of the housing market at the expense of residents. The Olavide music school claims unfettered neoliberalism and speculation is turning cities into theme parks and, "if City Hall doesn't stop it, us *vecinos* will" (**Image 18**).

b. Commercial fabric

Narratives espoused by those involved in the anti-touristification movement are also often related to the commercial fabric of Madrid's neighborhoods, affected by the loss of local businesses and by the precarization of labor due to the growing tourism-related job market.

According to these narratives, there are two main dynamics causing the loss of local businesses in touristifying areas of Madrid. For one, existing regulations that relegate all (legal) STRs in central areas to ground floors of buildings (i.e. so they have independent access to the street, as per the PEH) have propelled the conversion of small establishments into STRs. This is a trend that both the Sindicato and FRAVM have denounced, with Víctor claiming that there has been a huge concentration of investment for this purpose specifically in the neighborhoods of Lavapiés and Tetuán, with a rapid decrease in small businesses in these areas. Through the anti-STR brigade the Sindicato did in La Latina neighborhood on June 24th (see 'Strategies'), this process became very clear to me. Much more so than in Lavapiés or any other neighborhood, I noticed how there were entire streets in La Latina—particularly as you get closer to Gran Vía de San Francisco—where there are 0 commercial establishments left, all of them now turned into STRs.

Image 22: The building directly next to La Rosa is now entirely STRs, including the ground floor property, which used to be an optician

The other dynamic is the replacement of smaller, traditional businesses by ones more adjusted to the consumption patterns of tourists. At the workshop held in CSO La Rosa on June 25th, a representative from ecological organization Amigos de la Tierra posited that the real issue with touristification is not necessarily increased pressure on the rental market (which he views as already under extreme pressure regardless of STRs), but because a lack of *vecinas* means a lack of infrastructure catering to the needs of said *vecinas*, including *tiendas de primera necesidad* (i.e. stores selling essential daily life products, there's

no accurate English translation). Similarly, Sabina believes "the local businesses we used to go to on our day to day are disappearing to be replaced by more STRs or by chain stores that aren't representative of the local identity of the *barrios*, nor do they serve the needs of the *vecinas* living in them" (personal communication, 3 July 2024).

Image 23: In Calle Miguel Servet (Lavapiés), what was once a pharmacy is now a luggage storage

Image 24: Specialty coffee is rapidly proliferating in Chamberí. This one, in Calle Vallehermoso, has German and English writing on it, though no Spanish

Marina posits that increased international tourism usually involves flows of tourists with higher purchasing power, which leads to a replacement of traditional businesses by more 'upscale' ones unaffordable by local standards. Likewise, at the public event hosted by Lavapiés-based collective **Vecinas a la Fresca** on May 22nd (**Image 5**), when asked how touristification was affecting their daily lives many attendees responded saying they missed affordable, local businesses now replaced expensive coffee shops, bakeries or brunch restaurants that don't cater to their needs (or their salaries). Alejandro mentions a lack of affordable grocery stores and fruit shops in his area, explaining that the traditional

market below his house (Mercado de los Mostenses) has become very 'gourmet' and expensive. Giada mentions that small businesses are decreasing in her neighborhood of Lavapiés, while bars and unnecessary, gimmicky shops aimed at tourists are on the rise: "Who seriously needs a liquid nitrogen ice cream shop near their house?" (personal communication, 30 April 2024). Antonia summarizes these points well when she says that "The people of the *barrio* spend their money in the *barrio* because they live there, and the type of businesses is much more varied because they go to the dentist, to get a shirt altered, to the veterinary, to get new glasses, to yoga class... It's not just the takeaway food for tourists to take back to their Airbnbs" (personal communication, 9 July 2024).

Image 25: In the popular Malasaña street Corredera Alta de San Pablo, notions store 'La Pequeñita' (third on the left)—there since the post-Civil War era—is the last vestige of the neighborhood's traditional commercial fabric, surrounded by concept stores, vintage boutiques, artisanal donuts and matcha lattes

The reality is that many small businesses in touristifying neighborhoods are massively struggling, oftentimes no longer able to pay increasing rent prices amid a decreasing local clientele. This is very much the case for María Jesús, the owner of recently-shut shoe shop **Calzados Vinigon**, which was located in Tribulete 7 (*bloque en lucha* in Lavapiés). María Jesús, holding back tears, tells me about the history of her shop, which was originally opened by her grandmother in the 1940s and had been

generationally passed down since. Even though she had been fighting for years to keep her shop afloat, she explains that a combination of the growing online shopping industry and the transformation of the *barrio* through the growth of tourism has made it impossible for her to retain enough clientele to keep going. She says there is little place left for shops like hers, which are built on the intimate relationships between buyer and seller as two neighbors of the same *barrio*, and instead you see more and more tacos, empanadas, or cupcake shops aimed at foreign tourists. She mentions that even some of her pharmacist friends have been struggling with their businesses, as they also need to find ways to adapt to new tourist clienteles (she jokes that maybe stocking up on hangover medicine is the way to go). She sees little future for the other small shops still open in the area, such as comic book, artisanal furniture, or hardware shops, explaining that, once you've had to sell your shop, there's no way to find a new establishment in the same neighborhood with the current real estate prices, unless you're a large chain or a franchise.

The other issue related to touristification of the commercial fabric that comes up in my research is the precarity of the types of labor that touristification promotes. Sabina posits that only developers and large businesses are benefiting from the supposed 'tourism dollars,' as regular people are forced to join a highly precarious, and unstable labor market in the hospitality and service industries, with miserable working conditions and minimum wages that are hardly enough to cover rent in the current housing market. As she puts it: "We do not live off tourism, tourism lives off us" (personal communication, 3 July 2024). Alejandro, who works as a cashier at a grocery store in the busy shopping street of Fuencarral, tells me that his work is much more stressful ever since he was moved to a store in a heavily touristified area; most of his clientele is now made up of tourists who are often rude and don't bother trying to speak Spanish to him, even though he speaks very little English.

c. Public, communal, and cultural space

Another of the key narratives defining the movement is the loss of public, communal, and cultural spaces for residents' use in their *barrios*. Sabina talks about an "invasion of our streets, saturation of public space, and occupation of parks" by tourists (personal communication, 3 July 2024) and Víctor

claims that many parents with young children are leaving central areas due to a lack of care and maintenance of the few public and cultural spaces in the area, which is largely caused by the displacement of the *vecinas* that had traditionally cared for them. One of the common narratives among locals in the May 22nd Vecinas a la Fresca gathering was discontent over a loss of spaces of socialization and public gathering outside the realm of consumerism, a concern echoed by Giada who tells me the increased transience of the local population (i.e. tourists) is causing a loss of "third spaces where one can just be, without the need to consume" (personal communication, 30 April 2024).

Giada explains that this lack of public space is especially dramatic in summer, when a lack of green spaces in her neighborhood of Lavapiés only gives her the option of either staying at home or going to spaces of consumption where there is air conditioning. At the June 25th workshop in La Rosa, representatives from both the Sindicato and ecological organizations voiced similar concerns, positing that the touristification of *barrios* leads to the development of infrastructure hyper-focused on consumerism, with lacking green spaces that can act as critical climatic shelters in the Madrid summer heat.

The nightlife element of tourism in Madrid also affects public space, with both Giada and Leah telling me that the increase of drunk, rowdy, tourists on the streets has not only caused public space to become filthier, but it also has made them, as women, more uncomfortable walking around in their neighborhoods. Additionally, neighbors in the 'Centro vs. Pisos Turísticos' group chat often complain about the invasion of public space by tourist Tuk-Tuks and guided cycle tours, which further congest the district's already busy thoroughfares and make their daily commutes and walking around their neighborhood a more uncomfortable experience.

An interesting dynamic that comes through in my investigation is the ways in which small businesses can actually often act as sort of public spaces, or important sites of community building in touristifying neighborhoods where access to public space is increasingly scarcer. For instance, Leah tells me that María Jesús' shoe shop had become much more than a shoe shop over the years; with its comfortable seats and its ceiling fan (**Image 26**), coupled with María Jesús' hospitality and sociability, the space had become "essentially a public square" (Leah, personal communication, 9 July 2024), with people routinely gathering there to chat, socialize, and spend time with their *vecinas*. María Jesús tells me that that has been the nature of her shop for decades; she explains that her shop had become a space for fostering connections among locals, especially in a neighborhood as diverse as Lavapiés, where on any given day you could find Senegalese and Bangladeshi mothers with their children, elderly Spanish men with their dogs, and young LGBT residents having conversations and learning from one another, all in this tiny shoe shop. With the closure of Calzados Vinigon, Lavapiés thus loses a key 'public space' in a neighborhood already severely lacking in that regard. The importance of this space for the neighborhood became clear at the closing party on July 16th (**Image 27**), when the shop filled with neighbors eating, drinking, dancing, and crying together, rejoicing and celebrating María Jesús one last time.

Image 26: With its ceiling fan and comfortable seats, María Jesús' shop had become a sort of public space and climatic shelter for the *vecinas*

Image 27: At the shoe shop closing party, neighbors from across the neighborhood rejoice one last time. María Jesús can't hold back tears as she hugs a *vecina* she grew up side by side with in Tribulete 7—a block they now both face displacement from

Traficantes de Sueños book shop, also in Lavapiés, is another example of a small business that has become a key space for community building and political and social organization for Madrilenians. At the July 5th celebration held by the book shop (**Image 9**) after they managed to negotiate with their landlord who had been trying to sell the space earlier this year, a spokesperson tells us how they have managed, through crowdfunding and support from the network of *vecinas* they had spent years building, to stop the conversion of their space into an STR and keep one of the last vestiges of social and communal space in central Madrid afloat—a "space of life, joy, and dignity for the *vecinas*" (anonymized, public speech, 5 July 2024). In Chamberí neighborhood, the Escuela Popular de Música y Danza hasn't been as lucky: like Tribulete 7, the entire building has been bought by developers, purportedly for STR development, and this small music and dance school is facing imminent closure. This cultural center, located in the recently redeveloped Olavide Plaza and frequented by many of the

barrio's children for almost 30 years, had become an important gathering space, and the attendees at the July 3rd demonstration against its closure (more on this in 'Strategies') used slogans like "Who is Olavide going to be for?".

d. Neighborhood fabric (*Tejido del barrio*)

All of these narratives related to housing, commercial, and public space, feed into a broader narrative that touristification is causing a loss of the *tejido del barrio* (literally 'neighborhood fabric,' though the term is not common in English). According to Sabina, the displacement of neighbors, the loss of local businesses and public space, as well as the saturation of public services exacerbated by touristification causes a disintegration of community networks and the social fabric throughout Madrid's *barrios*.

Another common narrative, which was echoed in both Sindicato meetings and the Vecinas a la Fresca May 22nd gathering, is the conversion of Madrid into a theme park at the expense of its residents and the identity of the *barrios*. At the May 23rd protest against a real estate fair/awards ceremony held in Madrid (**Image 7**), a Lavapiés neighbor tells me: "Why would I want to keep living in a neighborhood with which I identify less and less? If they don't kick you out one way, they find another way to do so" (anonymized, personal communication, 23 May 2024). The loss of neighborhood identity is a very common narrative. Antonia, who moved to Malasaña in the 1980s and lived there for almost 40 years before being displaced, describes the dramatic changes the neighborhood's identity and 'fabric' suffered throughout her time there; even though at first her and her friends thought the municipal efforts of 'revitalizing' the area's architecture and public spaces was a positive thing, they soon realized the expulsion of prostitutes and drug users didn't end there: as working-class residents they were next in the chain of displacement. As the bars she had frequented since she was a teenager disappeared and were replaced by cupcake shops and picturesque boutiques frequented by the growing tourist population, she realized the neighborhood she had grew up in was long gone; even before she was physically displaced from it, she had already become alienated through these transformations.

The owners of the music school in Olavide Plaza also link 'neighborhood fabric' to local culture, claiming that the loss of cultural spaces like theirs causes a loss of a neighborhood's identity and dispossesses residents from their *barrio* (**Image 29**). Marina fears the same might be in store for Lavapiés, whose identity as a diverse and gritty neighborhood is increasingly used to attract tourists seeking a 'different' type of experience; she believes this can lead to Lavapiés becoming another "photocopied neighborhood" (personal communication, 15 July 2024) with the same chain stores, food and boutiques as every other touristified area.

Image 28: Sign at 'Lavapiés al Límite' protest reading: "Without families, or health centers, or schools, or libraries, or local businesses, or swimming pools, or friends"

Image 29: Sign at Escuela Popular de Música y Danza demonstration reading: "Speculative greed expels the *vecinas* and the social fabric. Let's support and care for one another"

2. Strategies

At their May 22nd gathering, the organizers from Vecinas a la Fresca asserted that the only way to fight the erosion of the neighborhood fabric is through collective mobilization and the creation of a powerful organizational base of *vecinas*. This leads me to this next section, which seeks to outline the range of

strategies undertaken by the different actors and groups involved in this re-emerging movement to resist the touristification of their neighborhoods.

a. Investigation and outreach

One of the key, foundational strategies undertaken by many of the actors within the movement has been the task of a) investigating touristification processes, and b) disseminating this information through a variety of media and communication methods. In terms of investigation, both the FRAVM and the Sindicato have made it a priority to meticulously map the presence of STRs in different neighborhoods using information from sources like watchdog website Inside Airbnb, and contrasting this information with the licenses granted and the official data published by the municipal government, creating interactive maps showing the spread of legal and illegal STRs throughout the city. The Sindicato also conducts research on the people behind the real estate investment trusts involved in the purchase of *bloques en lucha*, gathering information that can be used to publicly condemn these speculators and harm their reputations.

Outreach is an essential strategy to help the issue of touristification permeate into broader public debates and discourses, and for raising awareness of the impacts these processes are having on residents and neighborhoods. Such outreach has taken several forms. For one, the Sindicato and the *bloques en lucha* have made significant use of the press to publicize their plight and the issue of STR-fueled speculation and evictions, with both Antonia and María Jesús appearing on a number of newspapers and TV programs explaining the situation faced by Tribulete 7. Through my time working with the Sindicato, I soon realized there are a number of so-called 'friendly press outlets' that the Sindicato and similar organizations routinely call to their different demonstrations in order to garner press attention—such as *elDiario.es* or *El Salto*—not to mention the key role played by smaller, neighborhood-based blogs, press outlets, and online activists, often ran by people personally involved in urban social movements, who use their own websites or social media like Twitter or Instagram to disseminate information from a grassroots perspective often absent in traditional media outlets. Some examples are

xLavapiés, Somos Malasaña, Madrid Decadente and Leah's Madrid No Frills. In fact, Leah has been closely working with the *vecinas* of Tribulete 7 in the making of a documentary movie about their plight, named 'Soy Tribulete 7'.

The FRAVM also considers the press as a fundamental vehicle for the growth of the movement, and Víctor has also been interviewed by many radio, TV, and newspaper outlets. He claims that there is nothing more effective than a public condemnation in the media, and he has used this platform to bring light to the municipality's complete inaction and lack of resources used to combat illegal STR proliferation. He believes the newfound ubiquity of the issue in media outlets has made the local administration uncomfortable and is largely what has pushed them towards announcing new measures and vowing to start seriously tackling the problem.

Another key strategy for dissemination is through workshops, assemblies, and debates. Starting in January 2024, the Sindicato and FRAVM launched a joint campaign to raise the alarm bells around STRs in different neighborhoods of the city center, hosting 3 different open assemblies between January and March in 3 different neighborhoods (La Latina, Arganzuela, and Ibiza), with the slogan 'Sick of tourist apartments in your *barrio*?'. The joint campaign culminated with a public debate on June 12th (**Image 8**), titled "*Vecinas* organized against the touristification of our city," where dozens of neighbors from throughout the city attended and debated topics of STRs, the sustainability of tourism, and the approaches that should be taken to fight these processes. CSO La Rosa hosted an open workshop on June 25th, led by activists from a range of organizations (including the Sindicato, ecological associations, and public space initiatives) focused on rethinking the urban model, linking the issue of STRs with the loss of climatic shelters and community networks in the city. As Marina tells me, it is one of La Rosa's key goals to foster a space for not only political and social mobilization, but also debate, dissemination, and collaborative learning.

b. Direct action

Another strategy of resistance is direct action, which can be divided into legal action and activism.

i. Legal action

Legal action against touristification has been a task almost entirely undertaken by the FRAVM, who are leading the legal battle specifically against STRs. Víctor outlines the three legal strategies being conducted by the FRAVM in this regard. Firstly, they are filing mass reports to public administrations against STRs that they have found to be unlicensed. He tells me the FRAVM has filed a total of around 15,500 reports against illegal STRs in the last few years, although he's unhappy with the response received from the regional and municipal authorities, or lack thereof. He says that, due to the administration's unwillingness to actually tackle the STR issue, there are many legal strategies used to prolong, convolute, or invalidate the legal process altogether. Out of all the reports filed by the FRAVM, only 512 files had been opened by regional authorities, and only 23 of reported STRs had been sanctioned. This is a staggeringly low number, but Víctor remains hopeful that the legal avenue may still bear its fruits, especially as public pressure on the administrations continues to grow. Another strategy pursued by the FRAVM is the legal counseling of neighbors, who, under the Horizontal Property Law and Royal Decree-Law 2019/7, are entitled to decide whether STRs should be

Image 30: Poster at the FRAVM headquarters advertising their STR-specific legal office, reading "Are STRs keeping you up at night? Defend yourself and stop their expansion in your building!"

allowed at all in their residential buildings; if 3/5 of a 'community of landowners'[4] decide against allowing STRs, the ban becomes legally binding. The FRAVM thus helps neighbors navigate this legal process and officialize these proceedings[5]. Lastly, in the face of complete government inaction regarding the illegality of STRs and the reports filed by the organization, the FRAVM has begun pursuing direct judicial action against specific landlords or companies known to operate STRs without proper licenses. Víctor explains that, although not yet large-scale, the small victories that happen on a regular basis, where STRs are shut down thanks to the organization's actions, pushes them to keep going.

ii. Activism

The other branch of direct action against touristification in Madrid is more informal and activism-based, and almost entirely undertaken by the Sindicato. As part of its campaign against STRs launched this year, the Sindicato has pursued the strategy of *brigadas vecinales* (**Image 11**; 'neighbor brigades', inspired by the Sindicato's 'tenant brigades' used to organize tenants against exploitative landlords): brigades made up of concerned residents who patrol the streets for a day, handing out informational flyers about STRs and touristification (**Image 31**), placing condemnatory stickers on STR key-lock boxes and STR windows and doors (**Image 32**), and building networks with local businesses and neighbors who may also be concerned about touristification but were unaware of this nascent resistance movement. The Sindicato has thus created a 'self-defense kit' against STRs, with a range of different flyers, stickers, and QR codes that can be used to publicly denounce them and raise awareness. I was present at both brigades carried out this year, on June 10th and 24th (one in Lavapiés and one in La Latina), and had the chance to speak to many disillusioned neighbors and small business owners, who were not only enthusiastic about the brigade but asked us for stickers and flyers, told us they had been inspired to organize their blocks against the issue, and, in the case of some small shops, asked us to bring

[4] Legal term in the Spanish context (*comunidad de propietarios*), referring to all the property-owners in a residential building.

[5] The website for the FRAVM's Office for People Affected by Tourist Housing provides residents with legal information and templates to follow when pursuing such proceedings.

banners that we could hang from their shop windows. More radical options have also been suggested in many Sindicato meetings, where some members wish to pursue strategies like tampering STR lock boxes with silicone, blocking the entrance to STRs known to be illegal and stopping tourists from accessing them, or even squatting them. However, these actions have not been undertaken as of yet.

Images 31 & **32**: Flyers and stickers against STRs handed out at the *brigadas vecinales*. The flyer mentions displacement from the *barrio* due to rising rental prices and a loss of neighborhood fabric and identity

c. Quotidian acts of resistance

There are also strategies that residents can use to resist touristification through everyday, quotidian practices. Sabina explains that there is nothing more effective that a regular resident can do than simply talk to her *vecinas*, engage in conversations, build networks, and spread awareness of the ills of touristification. She says, "even though we can use social media and the press to raise awareness, there is nothing like 'putting one's body into the fight'; stepping outside and talking to people, that's what we can do as regular people" (personal communication, 3 July 2024). As per messages on the 'Centro vs. Pisos Turísticos' group chat and my own observations, additional anti-touristification strategies that people have undertaken in their daily lives include: wearing t-shirts or pins condemning STRs, placing

banners on their balconies denouncing illegal STRs in their building (**Images 37-39**), putting up posters in common areas of their building warning about the illegality of STRs or protesting against existing ones (**Images 33-36**), creating their own anti-touristification stickers and placing them around their neighborhoods (**Images 45-56**), and removing flyers that speculators seeking to buy properties have spread throughout their neighborhoods. This has led to an interesting dynamic, where a battlefront is developing through stickers and flyers in public space, with the sudden emergence of a number of pro-STR flyers throughout the city center (**Images 40-42**) and the subsequent tampering or replacement of said flyers with condemnatory stickers by residents (**Images 43** & **44**). Antonia also mentions responding to Instagram or Facebook comments as a way in which she practices "living room activism," by explaining to people the issues inherent to Airbnb through her own lived example (personal communication, 9 July 2024).

Image 33: "STRs are banned in this building, as decided by the landowners association" (Malasaña)

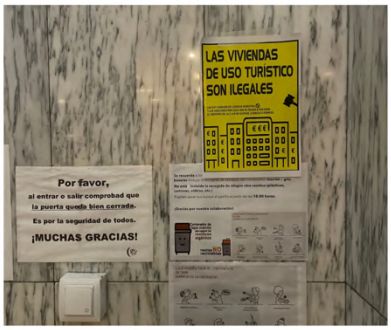


Image 34: "STRs are illegal, and sanctions are between 30,000 and 600,000€" (La Latina)

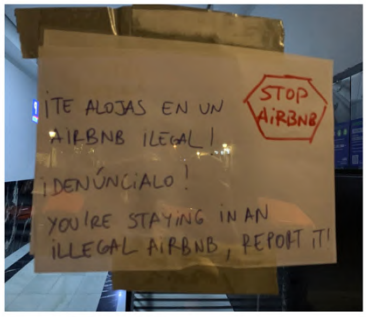


Image 35: "You are staying at an illegal Airbnb, report it!" (La Latina)

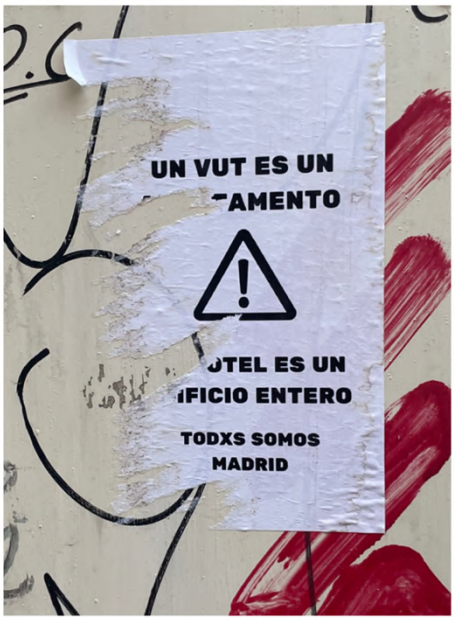
Image 36: "No STRs, next one gets a lawsuit" (Lavapiés)

Image 37: "The STR above me is illegal" (Palacio neighborhood)

Image 38: "In this building there are illegal STRs" (Palacio)

Image 39: "NO Tourist Apartments, Save Lavapiés"

Images 40-42: Flyers have begun popping up defending STRs. These read (left to right): "Yes to STRs for small owners: we are people offering a service and paying our taxes. We have a right to work. No to investment trusts!", "Don't you think you're being manipulated? Yes to Airbnb. Tourism is for all of us! Do you know who is funding the media harassment campaign against STRs in the *barrio*?", and "A STR is a family, a grandfather, a resident of Madrid... A hotel is money in Andorra and irreversible damage. Choose!"



Images 43 & **44**: Yet, the *vecinas* are fighting back. A member of the 'Centro vs Pisos Turísticos' group spoke to a man who was putting these up, and he told her he had been hired by a company to do so. Neighbors, thus, have been ripping them off or tampering with them. Image 43 now reads: "A STR is a mafia, a tragedy, a destructor of Madrid. A STR is money in Andorra and irreversible damage. Choose!"

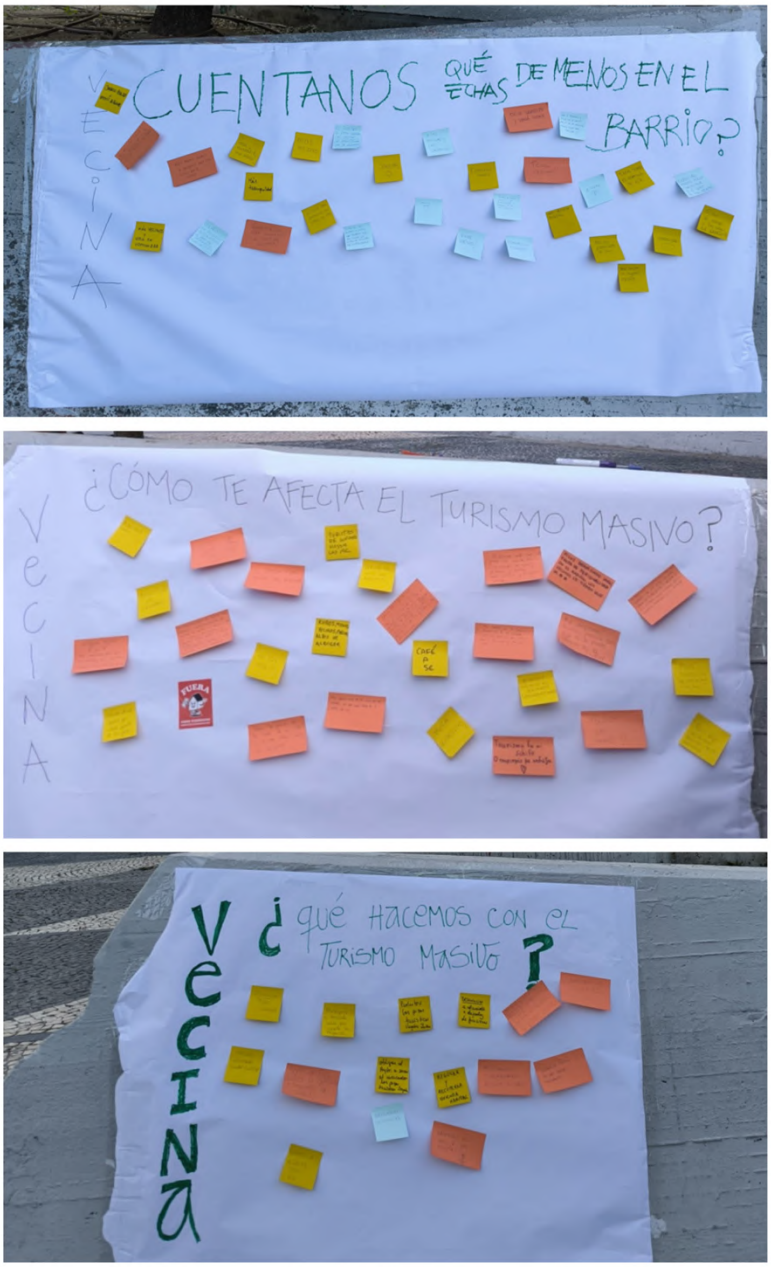
Images 45-56: Various anti-touristification (i.e. anti-STR) and anti-speculation stickers seen across Madrid

d. *"Hacer barrio"*

Many acts of quotidian resistance could also fall under one of the main strategies that come up through my results: "*hacer barrio*" (literally, "doing neighborhood", an expression used to refer to the act of inhabiting the *barrio*, as a collective experience through connections with one's neighbors, spatial surroundings, and neighborhood identity). As Leah defines it, *hacer barrio* is "to mobilize, to be involved in the community because we're stronger together. And that's the thesis of a social movement, is that it's got to be a collective movement" (personal communication, 9 July 2024). It is, essentially, the strengthening of the same *tejido del barrio*, or neighborhood fabric, that touristification necessarily erodes. As a member of the Sindicato put it in an assembly, *hacer barrio* means reinforcing a community of care, networks, and allyship, and building a collective imaginary of the *barrio* that allows the *vecinas*

to organize as one. It's not surprising, then, that *hacer barrio* has become one of the driving strategies of the anti-touristification movement.

While this has been achieved through smaller acts, like the creation of neighborhood-level group chats (such as Centro vs. Pisos Turísticos) to foster communication and convergence among *vecinas*, there have also been some initiatives aimed specifically at *hacer barrio*. One of these was the relaunching of Vecinas a la Fresca (literally "Neighbors in the Fresh Air"), a Lavapiés-based initiative focused on reclaiming public space for the *vecinas* amidst touristification, gentrification, and relentless police presence. It was founded in early 2023 but had been largely inactive since September of that year. In May, the collective restarted activities through a joint event with the Sindicato with the slogan "We're back: Organized, spirited, and joyful. We bring our chairs out to the *plaza* and drive the tourist flats out of the *barrio*." At the event, a spokeswoman said:



Images 47-49: At the Vecinas a la Fresca event, attendees were invited to use post-its to answer the following questions (from top to bottom): a) "*Vecina*, what do you miss in the *barrio*?", b) "*Vecina*, how does mass tourism affect you?" and c) "*Vecina*, what should we do about mass tourism?"

> "We're here today, occupying the *plaza* and public spaces. We can't forget that these spaces belong to the *vecinas* and our goal is thus to reappropriate our space. This is a political act, and we must be mindful of how powerful it is, in a society that wants to see us divided, for us *vecinas* to get together and get to know each other. Once we come to know one another, we lose the fear of organizing collectively. The *vecinas* are irreplaceable in the *barrio*, because we are the ones who built it and maintain it." (anonymized, public speech, 22 May 2024)

Other initiatives launched with the purpose of *hacer barrio* include social and cultural spaces like CSO La Rosa. Marina tells me that having a non-commercialized semi-public space like La Rosa in the middle of a rapidly touristifying neighborhood like La Latina is a way to provide neighbors with a space to engage in dissident leisure as well as political activities; a space of possibility where neighbors can get to know each other and also decide for themselves how they wish to make use of it. La Rosa not only offers a space for political dialogue and mobilization, but it also hosts free events like dance classes, yoga, movie screenings, and parties to foster community in the *barrio* in a de-commodified manner. Another spokesperson for La Rosa at the workshop held on June 25th echoes this narrative, describing the squat as a "neuralgic meeting place for neighbors from the *barrio* and from all over the city" (anonymized, public speech, 25 June 2024); a space for convergence and dialogue among residents of all backgrounds and ages that can be critical in creating a breeding ground for allyship in the anti-touristification movement. She says the space is quickly fostering interlocution and self-managed organizing among *vecinas*, giving the example of a group that comes to the squat for muay thai lessons who, in casually chatting about the food security problem in Lavapiés, decided to start their own food bank to serve the neighborhood.

e. Protests and refusing expulsion

Lastly, another strategy utilized in the movement resisting touristification has been protests and demonstrations. Although there have not yet been any protests with anti-touristification as the sole, specific mobilizing principle, it has nonetheless played an important role in several recent demonstrations.

Most centrally, there have been a number of demonstrations conducted by the residents of *bloques en lucha* throughout the city—though particularly in Lavapiés—as part of the "*Nos quedamos*" ("We are staying") strategy embraced by the resisting *vecinas*. During the process of this research, such demonstrations were held in Tribulete 7, San Ildefonso 20, General Lacy 22, and Buenavista 25, though I was only able to attend the first two. With the help of the Sindicato, these *bloques* have collectively organized to reclaim their homes in the face of STR-powered speculation and dispossession. After the decision to pursue organized resistance is made, these *bloques* follow the strategy of coordinating a demonstration to make their intentions known, to both the speculators they're at war with and the general public. Press and the *barrio*'s residents are called to the *bloque* as the neighbors read their manifesto and a celebration ensues. Something I noticed about these *bloque en lucha* demonstrations was their deeply celebratory nature, and how big a role culture played in both of them.

Images 50-52: Scenes from the 'Acción Teatral' at Tribulete 7

The Tribulete demonstration on March 17th (**Images 50-52**), titled 'Acción Teatral' ('Theatrical Demonstration'), according to Antonia followed the idea of: "If we're being thrown out on the streets, we might as well continue living our lives on the streets" (personal communication, 9 July 2024). For this reason, the *vecinas* had brought out furniture (couches, chairs, tables, even TVs and radiators) and were sitting in their bathrobes or pajamas, playing cards, playing with their children, knitting... It was

like nothing I'd seen before: a way to occupy public space and protest dispossession through a tongue-in-cheek performance of the quotidian. There was also a band of music playing, followed by a DJ and block party on the street and in María Jesús' shop, who tells me she's always more than happy to support the *bloque*'s mobilizations and offer her shop as a stage. This was the second big demonstration organized by Tribulete: the first one (in February) was musical, with a number of bands, singers, and poets performing in the different apartments within the building while crowds cheered below. Similarly, San Ildefonso 20's demonstration on June 15th (**Image 53**) was more like a block party than a protest, with bands playing music, children playing games on the street, and people drinking lemonade, chatting, and dancing. While these were still very much political mobilizations, with banners denouncing the vulture funds that seek to evict entire buildings worth of residents to develop STRs, the ambience felt joyful, communal, and almost celebratory. The *vecinas* of San Ildefonso accordingly titled their demonstration a "Resistance Party".

A main reason behind such creative, original, and popular protests is due to the fact that both of these *bloques* are in the neighborhood of Lavapiés. Antonia tells me that Tribulete 7 is representative of the idiosyncrasy of Lavapiés, a neighborhood defined by the mix between a traditional, working-class identity (known as *castizo* identity) with deep ties to early industrial proletarian mobilization, with a large number of residents involved in creative and cultural industries, as well as some marginalized populations like immigrants or the *gitanos* (Spanish Roma). Tribulete 7, with residents as diverse as a stage designer, a hospital receptionist, a screenwriter, a cleaner, several actors, musicians, Roma families, and Egyptian immigrants, represents the complex and diverse identity of the neighborhood, an identity that has been instrumental in staging collective action and mobilizations through the years. Antonia mentions how a current photo exhibit at a nearby cultural center shows images of citizen mobilizations regarding housing in the 1970s, explaining that such collective action has been historically embedded within the very fabric of the neighborhood.

The diversity of the neighborhood's fabric and identity is nowhere more visible than in the June 1st *Lavapiés al límite* (Lavapiés on the edge) protest, which gathered over 1,000 people and involved over 60 associations within the neighborhood. Borrowing the language from the anti-touristification

movement in the Canary Islands[6], the protest sought to raise awareness for many of the issues facing the neighborhood, including (among many others) police brutality against its West African population, the lack of green and public spaces, and the issue of touristification, spearheaded in this protest by a collective organization of the 4 *bloques en lucha* located in the neighborhood (**Image 54**). As Leah explains, this protest was another creative endeavor, organized as a 'route of gentrification,' where there were multiple stops along the way aimed at bringing light to specific issues, with music or dance performances at each one. Leah says "it was really fun for the neighbors, not this horrible, negative, stressful *lucha* [fight]. It was much more like, wow, look, here we are, we're a really strong community and this is our heritage, this belongs to us" (personal communication, 9 July 2024).

Image 53: At *bloque* Galileo 22's Resistance Party, children wait for a street cello and violin concert to begin

Image 54: At the 'Lavapiés al Límite' protest, *vecinas* from the Buenavista 25 and Zurita 22 *bloques* march alongside immigration activists, holding a banner reading "Borders kill"

Image 55: At the music school demonstration, people hold up signs reading "Don't destroy the *barrio*'s culture" and "Long live culture in Chamberí, for authentic *barrios*!"

[6] i.e. "*Canarias tiene un límite*", or "Canarias has a limit."

Importantly, the creative, culture-infused demonstrations in Lavapiés have made waves throughout the city and inspired other neighborhoods to carry out similar ones. The music school Escuela Popular de Música y Danza in Chamberí, organized collectively with the Sindicato and nearby *bloque en lucha* Galileo 22, was inspired by these protests in Lavapiés to conduct their own musical demonstration on July 3rd (**Image 55**), with many of their students taking to the *plaza* to play songs while neighbors from around the neighborhood displayed banners asserting "Culture can't be sold!" or "Less speculation and more culture in our *barrios*". The school has become a *bloque en lucha* in its own right and, together with the Galileo block, has inspired a new movement in a traditionally bourgeois neighborhood with little social or political activism, but with young, fed-up residents seeing their neighborhood be taken away from them by speculators, and inspired by the Lavapiés example to build their own culturally-informed resistance. Similarly, a representative from the Sindicato tells me in conversation that the organization's goal for this coming work year is to amplify the *bloque en lucha* strategy towards a *barrio en lucha* framework, collectively organizing entire *barrios* against touristification, gentrification, and dispossession.

3. Alliances, debates, discrepancies

It is now important to mention some of the alliances, disagreements, and debates that came up in my research between different actors within the movement.

a. Alliances

i. With one another

Although I have already touched on many of the collaborations and interrelations between actors, I think it's useful to sum these up here for clarity. For one, the two main actors in the movement (Sindicato and FRAVM) have actively collaborated through joint campaigns, information sessions, and open debates. As Víctor tells me, they maintain a cordial relationship and a sometimes collaborative one through specific projects, as it is important to strengthen the movement through allyship and

cooperation. The FRAVM is, in its nature, a collaborative organization, as its very genesis came from the union of a number of different neighborhood associations in the 1970s. The organization has only kept growing since, now encompassing over 300 associations and 220,000 affiliated members from throughout the region of Madrid. The FRAVM also maintains some institutional ties; it has a strong reputation and is thus able to access institutional spaces much more easily than other organizations. It receives public funding for some of its projects (though not directly for the organization's management), and periodically holds meetings with government actors—such as the delegate of the Central Government in the Community of Madrid and the Minister of Housing—to discuss matters affecting residents, such as STRs. Víctor also mentions his belief that the movement fighting STRs can build alliances with unlikely partners, such as the hotel sector: "Although there are many discrepancies, there is also a central axis around which we all converge. That includes, for instance, hospitality workers or the cleaners working in STRs, many of them under irregular conditions. If we want to exert real pressure, we must establish certain alliances with these affected parties" (personal communication, 10 July 2024).

The Sindicato—similarly collaborative in nature as it encompasses territorial nodes from throughout the city's districts, including Centro-Arganzuela-Retiro, Zona Sur, Ciudad Lineal, or Puerta del Ángel—also has ties to a number of organizations and centers in Madrid. Self-managed social and cultural centers like La Rosa, Tres Peces Tres, or Ateneo La Maliciosa are critical for the functioning of the Sindicato, as they provide spaces for the organization to conduct its meetings and its logistical operations, as well as spaces where they can store materials used in their campaigns. As Sabina explains, there is a working group within the Sindicato named 'Confederation of Struggles', aimed at building and strengthening relationships with other movements in the city. This is important for the anti-touristification movement, as "touristification means a loss of the right to the city, not just to housing" (Sabina, personal communication, 3 July 2024). Through campaigns like the May 22nd Vecinas a la Fresca event or the June 25th 'Rethinking the City Model: Airbnb and Idealista vs. Climatic Shelters and Community Networks' workshop in La Rosa (joint with environmental movements like Amigos de la Tierra and Ecologistas en Acción, and public space initiatives like Sputnik and La Rosa), the Sindicato

has sought to build a strong anti-touristification movement that encompasses residents' rights to community life and public and green space, as well as housing.

Lastly, the *bloques en lucha*—beyond the critical help provided by the Sindicato in their organization and through continued commitment and counsel throughout the legal and political process—have also received widespread support from many different organizations throughout the city, most visible in the June 1st 'Lavapiés al límite' protest where they marched alongside the Manteros [i.e. street vendors] Union, Valiente Bangla (an immigrant association), the National Labor Confederation, or the Space for Feminist Encounters, among many others. The *bloques* are also highly interconnected among themselves, offering each other advice and support. For instance, Galileo 22, which is under a gag order

Images 56 & **57**: The Lavapiés *bloques* enjoy support from pretty much everyone in the neighborhood. This local bar has put up posters advocating for the Tribulete 7 and General Lacy 22 *bloques*

imposed by Elix Rental Housing in exchange for a pause in legal action against the *vecinas*, has the help of other *bloques* like Tribulete or the Escuela Popular, who use their own demonstrations to bring attention to Galileo's plight as well. For Tribulete 7 specifically, Antonia tells me their demonstrations have seen the staunch support of not only María Jesús' shoe shop, but also a number of neighborhood groups and businesses, including local Lavapiés theater Teatro del Barrio (which was instrumental in staging their initial musical protest), Radio Lavapiés, La Corrala Neighborhood Association, Hola Vecinas (a neighborhood collective that organizes cultural workshops and offers free Spanish lessons to migrants and their children), 'Esta es una plaza' (a self-managed community garden and public space collective, which provided the space and materials for the creation of the vulture puppets used in demonstrations), and Museo Situado (a collaborative project between Reina Sofía Museum and several Lavapiés organizations that seeks to use public art as a form of social protest).

ii. With other cities

Although to a lesser extent, the movement also has ties to similar mobilizations in other cities and even other countries. A lot of these ties are primarily discursive, where the movement in Madrid is informed and inspired by similar ones in other cities both in Spain and beyond. At the joint event between the Sindicato and FRAVM on June 12th, a number of people said this is a time of hope in the Spanish context, as movements resisting touristification in the Canary Islands, Barcelona, Malaga, Majorca, and Cantabria inspire one another and create countrywide momentum. Víctor points at the Canary Islands as the starting point for this nationwide wave, as it put the issue of touristification at the center of national news media and introduced it into the national political agenda. The borrowing of the Canaries' logo for the Lavapiés protest is an example of this. Others at the June 12th event mentioned contexts beyond Spain, saying we should take note from cities like New York or San Francisco where similar movements have been successful in putting an end to STRs.

Beyond discursive links, there are also more tangible ties between the Madrid movement and others: the FRAVM, for one, is part of the National Confederation of Neighborhood Associations of Spain

(CEAV), where organizations from across the country draft joint proposals to be presented before the government. The Sindicato has strong ties to similar organizations in other cities: in its very inception in 2017 it was jointly created together with the Sindicat de Llogateres de Barcelona (Barcelona Tenants Union), and they maintain constant communication and coordination of activities, as well as with newer tenants unions in places like Malaga, Cadiz, Cantabria, and Tenerife. The unions hold nationwide meetings every year where they discuss common struggles and draft proposals for nationwide regulations of the housing market. According to Sabina, the Barcelona union is leading the way in terms of STR reforms, and the Madrid one has helped organize movements in other places: representatives traveled to Cantabria to help the Cantabria No Se Vende (Cantabria Is Not For Sale) movement coordinate the first anti-touristification demonstration there earlier this year, and the Cádiz Resiste movement asked the Madrid Sindicato for templates for stickers, flyers, and posters that could be used in their June 29th anti-touristification protest. There are similar partnerships with unions in other countries, with the first international gathering of tenants unions taking place this April in Barcelona, with representatives from over 60 organizations across 16 countries and a final Barcelona Declaration signed by all as a commitment to the continued coordination of global struggles against the commodification of housing.

b. Debates

i. Courses of action

One of the main disagreements that came up in my research between different actors involved in the movement has to do with appropriate strategies and courses of action that should be utilized to fight touristification. These discrepancies were most palpable in the sometimes strained relationship between the FRAVM and Sindicato, an issue that came up in a few of the Sindicato meetings and most noticeably in the joint debate held by the two organizations on June 12th. By the time I joined the Sindicato, the joint campaign with FRAVM was already coming to a close, having conducted three joint events and awaiting to coordinate a final one. At meetings, people from the Sindicato would often voice annoyance

at the coordination issues between the two organizations, but also about the FRAVM's less radical approach and politics. Essentially, the FRAVM advocates for a legal and press-focused campaign, while the Sindicato seeks to engage in direct action at the ground level. The Sindicato's 2023/4 anti-touristification campaign was thus explicitly divided into two phases, with the first phase consisting of these joint colloquiums with the FRAVM, and the second phase defined by more radical actions and street activism, including the brigades, the Vecinas a la Fresca event, the June 1st protest and the workshop at La Rosa.

These discrepancies became most apparent at the June 12th event. On the one hand, a representative from the Sindicato brought up the idea of targeting tourists directly (i.e. the same "Tourists Go Home" message that has become widespread in Barcelona through street graffiti) in order to tarnish Madrid's 'touristic image' and deter tourists from coming. Another Sindicato member similarly posited that legal action and pressure on politicians is important, but we would all be naïve to pretend like they're willing to do much, meaning we must move on towards a strategy of self-defense, and making it clear to tourists that they are not welcome here because their activities are systematically dispossessing locals[7]. This was met with resistance from several attendees, who argued that targeting tourists directly is inhumane and they're also unlikely to care or actually be receptive if you try explaining the problem to them; instead, the focus should be on the issue of housing precarity and on the politicians, speculators, and developers that are driving it. In this sense, STRs are conceptualized as a mere symptom of a larger problem of housing speculation.

Víctor, in line with these comments, explained that the FRAVM will not condone any type of violent or illegal action, and that there is a high risk of such actions being instrumentally sensationalized

[7] It is important to note here that this is not a position officially held by the Sindicato itself nor by many of its members. In many Sindicato meetings similar debates came up, with some participants saying that targeting a tourist is targeting the weakest link in the touristification chain, and it would be more useful to target speculators or to try establishing a dialogue with tourists.

in the media as a way to criminalize the struggle and situate it within a framework of 'tourismophobia', which can be extremely harmful to the cause.

ii. "Tourismophobia" and the nature of tourism

This leads me to the next topic of debate that came up through my research: the concept of "tourismophobia," which is intrinsically linked to debates regarding the very nature of tourism as an industry.

On the one hand, the FRAVM doesn't believe tourism to be inherently problematic and instead focuses its efforts specifically on the issue of STRs and the residential displacement caused by this model. Víctor tells me he doesn't like the term 'touristification' because he thinks the issue is not tourism but how tourism is managed and regulated. In his words: "We are not against tourism, we must be absolutely clear on that. We have always coexisted with tourism [and] tourism has an intrinsic value for us, as it

Images 58-60: Some stickers and graffiti have emerged directly targeting tourists, i.e. "Tourists go home" or "Tourists get out of our *barrio*". These were found in Malasaña (58, 60) and Lavapiés (59)

makes up more than 12% of our GDP and creates a lot of wealth and employment. The issue comes with how that wealth and employment is distributed, and how tourism is managed" (personal communication, 10 July 2024). Although he believes the mismanagement of tourism is causing conflicts and discontent among residents, he believes the word 'tourismophobia' is part of a strategy used by interested parties to criminalize social collectives and organizations.

Leah, on the other hand, believes tourismophobia is a very real phenomenon. Like the FRAVM, she posits that tourism, theoretically, shouldn't necessarily be a bad thing, but there aren't enough rules and regulations around it. Like Víctor, she dislikes the word 'touristification' because she believes it points the finger at tourists themselves rather than the real culprit, i.e. local governments. She expresses frustration that a narrative is spreading through her *barrio* of Lavapiés and throughout the rest of Madrid and Spain where tourists, and specifically foreign tourists, are blamed for all the problems caused by an unregulated tourism model promoted by local elites. She brings up the recent example of activists spraying water at foreign tourists in Barcelona, and tells me she, too, has been feeling a rise in tourism-fueled xenophobia in her neighborhood which is making her physically unsafe as a British person. She has started to feel unwanted in certain establishments, especially when speaking to her partner in English, and has had multiple people telling her to 'leave' or 'go back to her country' on her social media. Antonia agrees, feeling discouraged by the somewhat xenophobic turn some of the strategies are taking, and positing that "activism is being kind and polite, and explaining things. Not saying things like 'we should throw rocks at tourists'" (personal communication, 9 July 2024).

On the other hand, Sabina believes the word "tourismophobia" is ignorant, and, like Víctor, claims that it's a way to villainize people and movements defending the right to the city as xenophobic or intolerant. She goes on to question the very nature of tourism as an industry, saying:

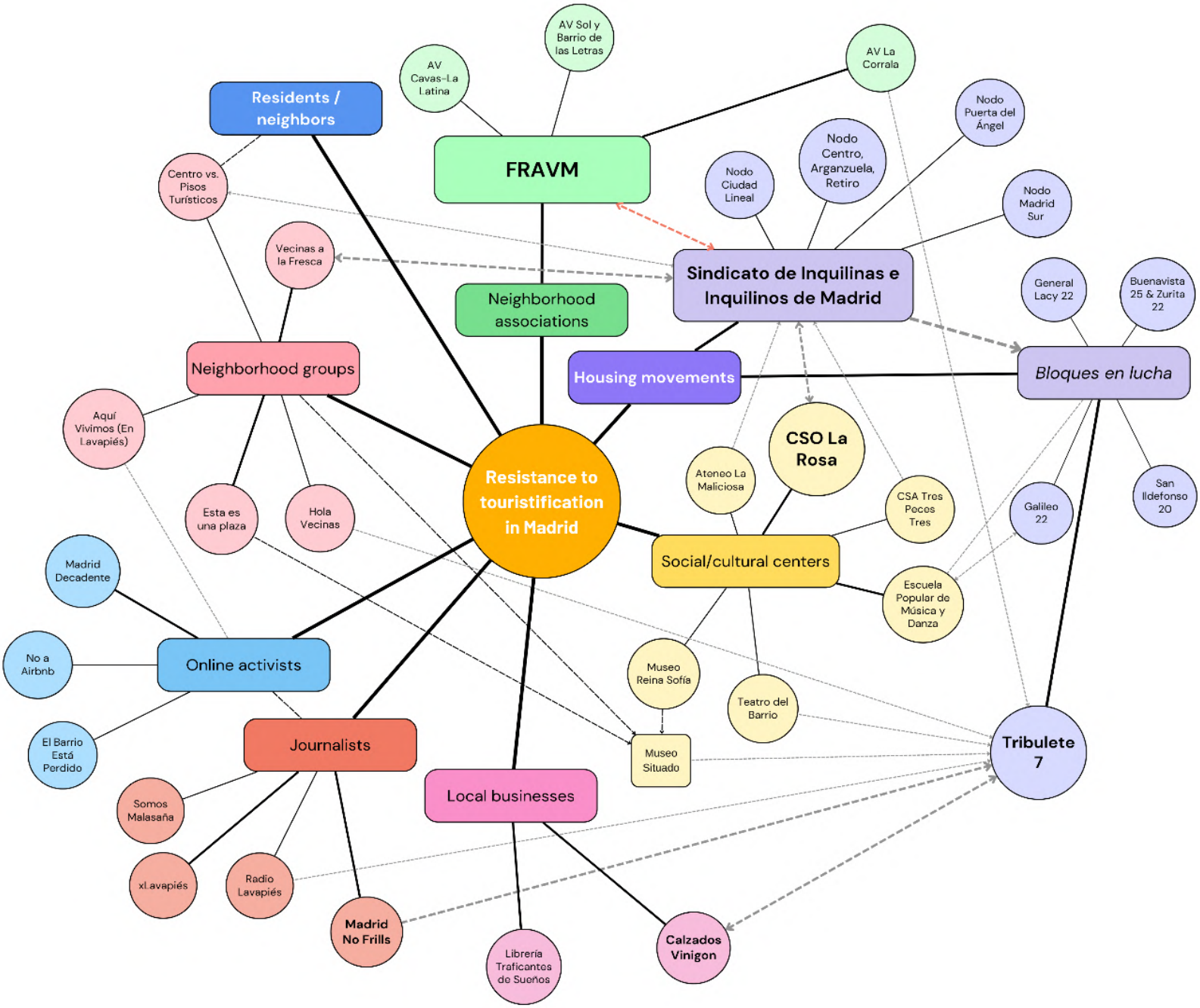
> "We can stay at the surface level and say that this is simply an issue because there is too much tourism and the city can't sustain it, or we can go a bit further and have a real, serious, profound debate about the sustainability of global tourism. So, no, I'm not 'tourismophobic', but I do have a phobia of untamed and unfettered tourism that takes precedence over people's lives. If that's what is meant by 'tourismophobia,' then I am one hundred percent a 'tourismophobe.' I don't want this tourism; I don't

> want an ampliation of the Barajas airport so 90 million more people can come every year. [...] It is a problem of sustainability: we are disposing of people so that we can continue generating a profit. [Tourism] is part of the necropolitics of capitalism: all the measures that cause the death of people, of cities, communities, culture, everything... in the name of money" (personal communication, 3 July 2024).

Marina raises similar concerns about the nature of tourism, explaining that, in her opinion, tourism should be severely restricted due to the impacts it has on everything from housing to environmental sustainability. She rejects the concept of a 'sustainable tourism,' as there is no real way for such a model to exist under capitalism. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that this is a controversial position given that most of us *are*, at one point or another, tourists ourselves—something that comes up repeatedly in my findings. Antonia and Alejandro, while recognizing the issues inherent to Airbnb and to tourism in its present model, both acknowledge the fact that they, too, enjoy traveling and might have been 'part of the problem' in places they have traveled to. The same question comes up at the June 25th workshop at La Rosa: is responsible tourism possible, and is there a way to inhabit a city other than your own without becoming part of the dynamics that conflate tourism with consumerism?

To conclude this section, below (**Figure 5**) is an updated version of the stakeholder map I began this chapter with, this time showing the wide range of actors and some of the alliances, debates, and deep-rooted connections that define an overall highly complex, dynamic, and interrelated social movement.

Figure 5: Web of actors and relationships defining the movement resisting touristification in Madrid



Source: Own elaboration

Note: Dotted lines show relationships, arrows show the transactional direction of such relationships, thickness of lines shows the importance of the actor or relationship within the movement (as per my findings), and gray lines show complete allyship whereas red shows some discrepancies between actors.

Discussion

1. Touristification

Many of my findings resonate with existing theories of touristification, although some specificities come up previously unexplored in the literature. The issues raised in the existing literature regarding touristification in Madrid (Cabrerizo et al. 2016; Velasco González et al. 2019; Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022a; 2022b) are still echoed in the narratives that define the movement today, and fall under the general categories of housing, commercial fabric, public space, and urban fabric.

a. Housing

The effects of touristification on housing—widely discussed in the literature, and particularly related to STR proliferation—are the main driver of the anti-touristification movement in Madrid, and central to the narratives and strategies espoused by the actors involved. Airbnb, as the leading figure in the Airbnb sector (Gurran and Phibbs 2017) is also a central actor in the anti-touristification narratives defining the movement in Madrid. For instance, some participants (like Antonia) highlight the importance of the *b2b*, collaborative economy model that defined Airbnb in its earliest inception and lament the machine of financialization of housing (Rolnik 2013) that it has now become through its professionalization and co-optation by investors and speculators—something also widely discussed in the literature (Guttentag 2015; Gurran and Phibbs 2017; Wearing et al. 2019).

Like much of the literature on touristification (Arias Sans and Quaglieri Domínguez 2016; Wearing et al. 2019; Simas et al. 2021), the narratives espoused by the FRAVM, Sindicato, online activists and residents involved in anti-touristification groups, focus on the tourist-resident coexistence issues caused by the increased encroachment of STRs on residential buildings. Issues of noise, damage, and littering are a common thread in these narratives, and are causing growing dissatisfaction among residents. Incorrect garbage disposal by tourists was a specifically salient issue that came up in my results,

with participants in several group chats regularly complaining about the filth generated by tourists staying at STRs in their buildings.

Cócola Gant's (2016) conceptualization of the types of displacement caused by STRs is also relevant to my results, with similar dynamics described in participants' narratives and personal accounts. Direct displacement, i.e. the eviction or non-renewal of tenancy contracts in order to repurpose residential property into STRs, is clear through the example of the *bloques en lucha*, where dozens of residents are at risk of expulsion and housing precarity at the hands of real estate investment trusts seeking to use their dwellings as sites of profit extraction through STRs. Exclusionary displacement, i.e. affordability pressures and reduced housing supply that stop new residents from moving to an area, is clear through the example of Antonia, who could no longer afford to live in Malasaña—a neighborhood she had been in for almost 40 years—due to the intense gentrification and subsequent touristification processes that have transformed the neighborhood and largely displaced its working-class population. As for the displacement pressure described by Cócola Gant (ibid.) as the disruptions caused by the cohabitation of residents with 'transient consumers,' paired with pressures from real estate investors wanting to buy residential flats for STR development, this is visible through the coexistence problems many residents complain about, as well as through the proliferation of leaflets and posters seeking to buy properties throughout the city which participants have been systematically removing as a form of quotidian resistance. As Cócola Gant (ibid.) explains, the combination of these three types leads to a collective displacement of the local population, something that is, then, arguably taking place in several of Madrid's *barrios*.

The growing geographic expansion of STRs that comes up in my research has also been discussed in existing literature. As Egresi (2018) explains, the Airbnb model has allowed for the increased scattering of STRs and tourist activity throughout traditionally residential neighborhoods that had previously been spared from tourism pressure. This is very much the case in my results, where several of my respondents describe the emergence of tourists in more peripheral areas like Arganzuela, Vallecas and Usera, where one was unlikely to encounter tourist activity up until very recently. While still mostly concentrated in central areas with the most cultural and historical heritage, as theorized in the literature

(Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018), Gil's (2023) claim that STRs only proliferate in already touristified areas and thus cannot be blamed for touristification processes does not ring true in the case of Madrid. As Víctor tells me, tourists in Madrid no longer care where they are staying as long as there is a metro station nearby that can bring them to the center within minutes; STRs in Madrid *are* fueling touristification in new areas because an efficient public transport system hugely lowers the stakes for tourists when choosing where to stay within the city. Something that also comes up in my results is the way in which this geographical spread of touristification can ignite dissatisfaction and plant the seed for collective action in (usually bourgeois) neighborhoods lacking a traditionally strong and politicized associative fabric, such as Chamberí, as dispossession by touristification is increasingly seen as a cross-class equalizing experience (Sequera and Nofre 2018).

Like in some of the literature on STRs (Gurran and Phibbs 2017; Morell 2018; Wearing et al. 2019), regulations in Madrid have clearly had very little success. While this literature usually points at difficulties in detection and enforcing prevention, a problem also discussed in the case of Madrid (Velasco González et al. 2019; Hidalgo-Giralt et al. 2022a), the narratives described in my findings point towards more deliberate attempts by the local government to ignore these regulations, and a deliberate refusal to destine resources for the purpose of detection and enforcement. In this sense, many of my participants concur with Vives Miró (2011) and conceptualize the state (the Madrid authorities, in this case) as key economic promoters with stakes in the marketing and commodification of the city through tourism development.

In terms of the touristification vs. gentrification debate that has widely permeated the literature, it is not nearly as present in the narratives espoused by actors within the movement in Madrid. In my findings, only Sabina explicitly makes the distinction between the two processes, posing similar arguments as Sequera and Nofre (2018) that highlight the fundamentally classed nature of gentrification, although, like Cócola Gant (2018) and Jover and Díaz-Parra (2020), she links the two processes, considering gentrification a common precursor of touristification. Generally, people involved in the movement consider the two processes to be fundamentally linked to one another, or even use the terms interchangeably, which might raise questions regarding the importance given in the literature to

this semantic distinction. Like in Jover and Díaz-Parra's (2020) theorizations, the link between the two processes may actually be useful insofar as strategies traditionally used to combat gentrification may be used to combat newer dynamics of touristification (something that is very much happening in Madrid—more on this later). While Sequera and Nofre (2018) stress the class dimension of gentrification, some of the participants in my research (like Marina) consider tourists, and particularly international tourists, to generally have higher purchasing power than locals within the Spanish context, meaning the class element is acknowledged but considered to be a constitutive element of touristification as well.

b. Commercial fabric & postmodern leisure

In terms of the effects of touristification on the commercial fabric of the city, my findings also strongly correlate with the existing literature. As Gravari-Barbas and Guinand (2017), Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt (2019), and Gil (2023) have explained, tourism expansion shifts the demand away from traditional, small businesses and towards tourism-oriented establishments, often characterized by gourmetization or homogenization processes. A clear example of this is the closure of María Jesús' shoe shop due to a lack of demand that she attributes to the shifting demographics of Lavapiés as an increasing number of residents is driven out of the *barrio* through touristification and gentrification processes, or the example Alejandro gives of the gourmetization and inaccessibility of traditional food markets for locals, like the one below his house that is now mostly frequented by tourists. Something that comes up in my research that is largely absent from the literature is the loss of local businesses specifically due to their repurposement as STRs, a dynamic that might be particularly salient in Madrid due to the existing regulations (i.e. the PEH) that only allow STRs in central areas if they're in ground-floor properties with independent street access.

Additionally, the precarity of work linked to touristification described by Sequera and Gil (2018) is echoed by Sabina, who agrees with Egresi (2018) and Wearing et al. (2019) that the tourism sector does not produce wealth that trickles down to its most low-ranking workers; it is a highly

economically beneficial industry for developers and investors but it creates precarious, temporary, low-paying jobs in the service industry.

My findings also link to broader trends in the consumption of authenticity and postmodern tourism described in much of the literature (Zukin 2008; Nogués-Pedregal 2008; Lapointe et al. 2018; Rodríguez 2018; Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019), where 'post-tourists' (Hiernaux and González 2014) increasingly travel seeking authenticity and to experience 'real' urban life in tourist destinations. This is very much the case in Madrid, where traditionally working-class or culturally distinct neighborhoods like Malasaña, La Latina, or Lavapiés increasingly become attractors of tourists who seek to not only see the traditional tourist attractions Madrid has to offer, but also experience the 'Madrilenian lifestyle' and popular culture. In my findings, Marina tells me Lavapiés' gritty and diverse identity is increasingly being marketed as a form of collective symbolic capital (Harvey 2001) to attract such tourists that seek a 'different' traveling experience (i.e. it was named the 'coolest' neighborhood in the world by Time Out magazine in 2018), and she fears the homogenizing effects this could have for the *barrio*'s commercial fabric. This narrative correlates with the conceptualization of tourism as a commodification of culture (Rifkin 2000) and the production of cities as entertainment machines (Lloyd and Nichols Clark 2001) with specific brands used to attract tourists and consumers (Simas et al. 2021).

Marina also tells me she fears La Rosa might become a tourist magnet in its own right, as other self-managed cultural spaces like La Tabacalera or Patio Maravillas lost their political edge as they grew into more commodified spaces frequented by people looking for 'alternative' leisure and even guided tours; she fears it could become an agent of gentrification in itself if a certain type of postmodern "bohemian cultural producers" (Zukin 2008:745) begin to frequent it with no stakes in its fundamentally political nature and objectives. Similarly, self-managed community garden "Esta es una plaza" in Lavapiés has had to put up signs banning guided tourist groups from the site, as their goal of creating a communal, public space for neighbors became eroded by swaths of tourists interested in witnessing 'alternative' urban practices.

c. Public space

Some of the same dynamics related to the touristification of public space are also visible in my results. The sanitation of public spaces for tourism development through increased policing, displacement of unsavory dwellers and removal of activities related to drugs and prostitution described by Malet Calvo et al. (2018) are echoed by Antonia when she recalls the touristification process of Malasaña that eventually led to her expulsion from the neighborhood. Víctor and many residents in anti-touristification group chats also complain about tourist Tuk-Tuks obstructing thoroughfares, enhancing congestion of public space and generally being a nuisance for locals, something Malet Calvo et al. (ibid.) also discuss through the case of Lisbon. The conflicts caused by inebriated nightlife tourists engaging in anti-social behavior (Nofre et al. 2018) also come up in my results, with both Giada and Leah mentioning a feeling of unsafety when walking around their own neighborhood at night and encountering groups of such tourists.

Something specific to my results and missing from the existing literature is the way in which commercial spaces can sometimes act as public space, especially in neighborhoods lacking public infrastructure (like Lavapiés). In this sense, shops with strong political traditions, like Traficantes de Sueños, or traditional businesses like María Jesús' shoe shop that have been in a neighborhood for generations can serve as meeting places for a diversity of residents who use the space not only for its intended commercial purpose but also to chat, spend time together, and reinforce community and/or political associative networks at the neighborhood level. As touristification causes these small businesses to disappear, so does their role as quasi-public spaces for locals to rejoice in. As per my findings, this might have specific importance in the case of Madrid due to the extreme temperatures the city experiences in the Summer months; a common narrative espoused by participants is the ecological impacts of touristification and the way in which it affects green spaces and climatic shelters in the city.

d. Urban fabric

This relates to a broader erosion of the urban fabric caused by touristification, also discussed in the literature (Quaglieri Domínguez and Scarnato 2017; Malet Calvo et al. 2018). The aforementioned

collective displacement (Cócola Gant 2016) of residential life from the neighborhood means that neighborhoods become devoid of not only residents but also services catering to them. This was repeatedly discussed by my participants, with Sabina and Víctor emphasizing the fact that a *barrio* with no residents means a *barrio* with no education, healthcare and other essential services that tourists don't normally need. Touristification can also break down the associative fabric of neighborhoods through the disappearance of residents and the commercial and public spaces traditionally used by them. Malet Calvo et al. (2018) mention how this deactivation of a neighborhood's cultural dynamism often leads to the disappearance of sport and cultural facilities, which could be linked to the closure of the Escuela Popular de Música y Danza in a neighborhood increasingly targeted for tourism and STR development (Chamberí). Touristifying neighborhoods risk losing the identity and culture that turned them into places of interest for tourist consumers to begin with, a dynamic that has clearly taken place in Malasaña (as per Antonia) and which many of my participants fear may also happen to Lavapiés if tourism continues encroaching on the neighborhood. The concept of *tejido del barrio* (neighborhood fabric), though uncommon in English and in existing literature, is regularly mobilized by actors in the Madrid context to describe the communal, cultural, and associative fabric of specific neighborhoods that is being increasingly lost to touristification, as residents become materially and symbolically alienated from their lived environment (Sequera and Nofre 2018).

2. Resistance

The movement resisting touristification in Madrid, as per my findings, also resonates with some of the existing literature on USMs and on anti-touristification movements in other contexts.

a. Links to USM theories and typologies

The movement in Madrid correlates with some traditional theories of USMs, particularly with those put forward by Castells (1983). According to Castells, USMs do not necessarily need to be founded upon class conflict, and function on the basis of three key goals, which he describes as: "collective consumption trade unionism," referring to the reappropriation of urban space by residents

for its use value rather than its commodity or exchange value; "community," referring to a search for cultural identity and the maintenance or creation of local cultures; and "citizen movement," referring to the desire for participatory democracy and self-management at the local and neighborhood level (ibid.:319). All of these very much apply to the re-emerging USM resisting touristification in Madrid. For one, the reappropriation of urban space for its use value and for the collective consumption of residents is a key goal of these movements fighting the commodification of cities for tourist consumption. Cultural identity and the maintenance or creation of local cultures is also key: Lavapiés, the neighborhood concentrating most anti-touristification activity, has mobilized many of its citizens based on the collective and historical identity of the *barrio*, and other areas like Chamberí have been inspired by these mobilizations to try to foster a similar neighborhood-level idiosyncrasy and cultural subjectivity that can be used to resist tourism-fueled dispossession. Lastly, self-management and participatory dynamics are key aspects of many of the groups that make up this movement.

Like the *new* social movements described in the literature (Fainstein and Hirst 1995; Romero-Padilla et al. 2019), the anti-touristification movement in Madrid is more so articulated along social, cultural and spatial dimensions than class ones; it is a non-hierarchical movement encompassing people from a plurality of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Similar to Mansilla's (2015) observations in anti-touristification currents in Poblenou (Barcelona), many of the groups involved in the current Madrid movement, such as the Sindicato, La Rosa or the FRAVM, have adopted horizontal and assembly-led participatory models. The importance of Lefebvrian concepts of space in USMs (Castells 1983; Romero-Padilla et al. 2019) is visible in the way the anti-touristification movement in Madrid focuses on struggles at the local, spatial level, and on the production of decommodified urban spaces for the *vecinas*.

In terms of the typology of anti-touristification movements put forward by Novy and Colomb (2019), the ongoing one in Madrid best aligns with their conceptualization of movements in cities where tourism is not the main focus but has rather become embedded in broader struggles focused on urban issues like tenants' rights or the management of public space, such as in Prague or San Francisco. As of now, there is no organized, unitary movement in Madrid mobilizing around the specific issue of

touristification. Instead, pre-existing organizations and groups, especially those focused on issues of housing (like the Sindicato), neighborhood associations (like the FRAVM), or cultural or public space endeavors (like La Rosa or Vecinas a la Fresca), have found in touristification a pressing issue that must be fought collectively as it drives inequality and precarity in many different aspects of urban life. This can be understood as a touristification of social movements (Milano 2018a) where tourism becomes politicized and takes a new central place in the agendas of existing USMs and associations like unions, neighborhood groups, and environmental movements. In this sense and through the involvement of housing organizations like the Sindicato, the movement in Madrid, as theorized by Jover and Díaz-Parra (2020), has managed to instrumentalize strategies traditionally used in the fight against gentrification in this new(er) fight against touristification (such as the Sindicato's STR-focused neighborhood brigades, inspired by their own tenant brigades). This is particularly clear through the *bloques en lucha*—communities of residents embodying the interrelated fight against gentrification and touristification and inspiring an emerging strategy of organizing entire neighborhoods as *barrios en lucha* against collective displacement.

Although not a traditional class struggle in the Marxist sense, the anti-touristification movement in Madrid is often articulated along anti-capitalist lines, as urban space is understood as "a fundamental part of the productive sphere in capitalist societies" (Mansilla 2018:279) and tourism as the utmost strategy for the commodification of the city as a vehicle for rent extraction. In this sense, the municipality of Madrid is seen by participants as an entrepreneurial actor in the neoliberal city, promoting accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2004) through dynamics akin to Brenner and Theodore's (2002) processes of creative destruction, such as the dismantlement of low-rent accommodation, transformation of the built environment, and re-representations of the city. Participants understand the municipal government's inaction amid the fast proliferation of illegal STRs as deliberate, precisely because they view the government as an entrepreneurial actor with financial stakes in tourism promotion. As a movement fundamentally resisting neoliberal processes of dispossession, then, it could be conceptualized as a Polanyian (1944) double movement, or a resistance against the dominant pattern of tourism, as theorized by Fletcher (2018) and Liodakis (2019). In this

context, participants like Marina and Sabina question the very nature and model of tourism under neoliberalism as an inherently extractive and unethical phenomenon, advocating—although not using the exact wording—for tourism degrowth as opposed to 'sustainable tourism' (Milano 2018b).

b. Narratives, strategies, debates

The narratives and discourses espoused by the actors involved in the movement in Madrid are very similar to those discussed in the literature, such as expulsion, speculation, inequality and homogenization (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019), with the most common one being the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre's [1968] 1996; Sequera and Nofre 2018), often implicit but also explicitly verbalized by some activists in the Sindicato. Again, narratives, as in the literature, focus on issues related to housing, commercial fabric, public space, urban fabric, and overall collective displacement.

Strategies, on the other hand, is an arena where my findings bring light to some more novel dynamics. This is not to say that there aren't similarities between the anti-touristification movement in Madrid and those in other contexts; many of the actions undertaken by the latter (Simas et al. 2021) are also present in Madrid, such as marches, protests, graffitis, and banners. In Madrid, the movement has also engaged in a 'jumping of scales' (Smith 1992), where it has managed to forge alliances with a number of movements and associations in national and international spheres. Like the movements described in Barcelona (Milano 2018a) and San Francisco (Wachsmuth and Weisler 2018), the one in Madrid has built networks with academia, the media, political parties, and even unlikely allies in the hotel lobby (or at least the FRAVM intends to do so), as a way to increase its visibility and give added strength and legitimacy to its demands. In this way, the movement in Madrid has managed to move beyond militant particularism (Harvey 2001), encompassing a broad range of organizations tackling a number of different urban issues. The literature on anti-touristification movements stresses the connections and communication between movements in different cities (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019; Romagnoli 2021), something clearly visible in my findings as the mobilizations in Madrid are not only inspired by those in other cities but are also beginning to inspire and provide material and organizational help to emerging movements in other cities across Spain.

The specificities of the strategies undertaken in Madrid are largely related to the importance of collective identity and micro-level resistance in such movements, something that has also been discussed in the literature (Mansilla 2018; Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso 2018; Sequera and Nofre 2018). The collective identity found in historic neighborhoods like Lavapiés can be understood as fostered by the inequalities and injustices produced by capitalism (Mansilla 2018), as it was largely built upon collective experiences of precarity linked to migration and labor. Lavapiés' identity and idiosyncrasy as a *barrio* has been an important organizational axis for generations, as analyzed by Castells (1983) in his study of the citizens' movements of 1970s Madrid. Many of the same dynamics described by Castells (1983) and Díaz Orueta (2007) are still present in Lavapiés today, with cultural traditions, community life, and informal networks of neighbors defining much of the current anti-touristification struggle, and are additionally inspiring other neighborhoods facing similar processes of dispossession but lacking this culturally-informed organizational base. Díaz Orueta (ibid.) mentions how long-established residents involved in creative industries are embedded in the neighborhood fabric of Lavapiés as opposed to being part of a gentrifying process. This is also relevant in my results, where creative actors have not only been avid supporters of the mobilizations undertaken by residents, but are also directly affected by touristification processes, as many of the *bloque en lucha* residents facing eviction are creatives themselves. The importance of collective identity is nowhere more visible than in these *bloques en lucha*, where entire blocks of neighbors construct common subjectivities that allow them to organize as blocks and create networks of alliances with other blocks facing similar struggles in their neighborhood and beyond. The *bloques en lucha* are an integral part of the anti-touristification movement in Madrid and are also very specific to this case; while Malet Calvo et al. (2018) discuss a similar dynamic in an apartment block in Lisbon's Mouraria neighborhood bought to develop STRs, the terminology of the *bloque en lucha* and the powerful city-wide organizational bases these blocks have helped build in Madrid is unheard of in the literature.

Collective identity can also be mobilized to inform strategies for quotidian resistance (Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso 2018), or the "everyday dialectics" of resistance (Sequera and Nofre 2018:851), visible in Madrid through many of the stickers, posters and banners used by residents to

protest touristification, which often mobilize identitarian concepts like the *barrio*. These small-scale, micro-examples of resistance, which Chatterton and Pickerill (2010:476) advocate for as the "dirty, real work of activism" and which Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso (2018) conceptualize as a different form of scale-jumping, between the body, the home, and the neighborhood as sites of resistance, have led to some interesting dynamics in Madrid. For instance, the sort of 'battle' going on at the street level between a range of pro- and anti-touristification actors through stickers, flyers, and posters, covering one another or being torn down by the opposition, is something not explored in existing literature. While some of these stickers and posters are provided by organizations like the Sindicato, many others have been homemade by individual residents and placed within their buildings or on the streets. These small resistances at the individual level can be explained by Castells' (1983:331) theory of USMs, whereby "when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community."

Some of the debates found in touristification literature also emerge in my results, namely the one surrounding the idea of 'tourismophobia'. Generally, the views espoused by my participants are similar to those proposed in the literature, where the term is used by urban entrepreneurs to disparage a movement legitimately reclaiming the right to the city and the use value of urban space (Milano 2018a; Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019; Simas et al. 2021). Some authors have adamantly argued against the use of the word 'touristification' particularly when talking about the problems caused by STRs (Gil 2023), arguing that such urban conflicts are a product of housing financialization and not tourism, and the ones held responsible must be real estate developers, not tourists. This resonates with my results, where Víctor and Leah both critique the term 'touristification' and a framing of the movement based around tourism, which they don't see as inherently bad. Yet, while it is true that the financialization of housing is at the core of the current STR conflict in cities, it is clear through my results that this is not the only issue caused by mass tourism and it's not the only issue actors involved in the movement are targeting, as the loss of the commercial and neighborhood fabric and access to public, communal and cultural spaces are also fundamental aspects of the collective displacement produced by touristification. In my findings, the movements involved are not oblivious to the issue of housing

assetization and speculation, and investors and developers are some of the most targeted in demonstrations, with chants like "out with vultures, rentists, and speculators from the *barrio*" being a common occurrence at these events. Gil (2023) advocates for housing policy as the only way to tackle the ills caused by STR assetization, and these policies are in fact the ones being pursued by the main actors in the movement, like the FRAVM and the Sindicato (which is, in itself, a housing movement). But a hyper-focus on the housing issue has the potential of obscuring some of the equally harmful dynamics inherent to unfettered tourism development, especially when trying to understand residents' grievances and the reasoning behind some of the antagonistic relationships that *do* emerge in touristified contexts (Barrado-Timón and Hidalgo-Giralt 2019) and which have also started manifesting themselves in Madrid.

It is unsurprising, then, that the logical conclusion some of my participants have arrived at is a need to question the fundamental nature of the current model underpinning the tourism industry, which strongly resonates to the links drawn in my Literature Review between neoliberalism, urbanization, and the idea of tourism as a 'spatial fix' for the problems inherent to capitalism (Fletcher 2011), and as a vehicle for urban entrepreneurialism, revitalization, and economic development (Novy and Colomb 2017; Fletcher 2023).

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to conduct an in-depth investigation into potential mobilizations re-emerging in Madrid following the Covid-19 pandemic, which had put an end to many of the previous movements protesting touristification and any momentum they had garnered over the years. I went into this research not knowing if such initiatives even existed, and was surprised to find a dynamic, complex, diverse, and inspiring resistance movement spanning a plurality of actors. Although I did discover some discrepancies within the movement regarding appropriate courses of action and terminologies, I also found strong organizational bases across several of the city's neighborhoods and powerful narratives and strategies that foster solidarity and instrumentalize the identity of the *barrios* to encourage residents to take action against the collective displacement produced by touristification. With rising touristification, the fabric of neighborhoods is lost as access to housing becomes growingly precarious, public and cultural spaces either disappear or become congested or commodified, and the commercial fabric of neighborhoods is eroded through a mass replacement of small, traditional businesses with new ones aimed at tourist or postmodern middle-class consumption. This erosion of the neighborhood fabric slowly 'kills' the *barrios* by displacing its residents and producing widespread socio-spatial transformations, pushing the remaining, resilient ones to react and resist. From quotidian acts of resistance undertaken by disillusioned residents in their daily lives, to musical and theatrical demonstrations that nurture joy and solidarity amidst imminent eviction and displacement, to multi-faceted protests that cultivate alliances between different social plights as citizens increasingly realize the fight for the right to the city is one that affects and equalizes all of us, this nascent movement in Madrid is a powerful example of how collective action is the only way to defend human dignity in the face of dispossession.

There are some limitations in my research that are worth discussing here, the main one being—as with most Master's theses—time constraints: this topic and this methodology could give way for a much more long-term research project, allowing for many more interviews and the unearthing of much more data. Something else worth noting is that, due to the nature and scope of my research and the aims of my research question, my project is uniquely concerned with the *resistance* to touristification at the

most grassroots level. However, a broader approach to the topic of touristification might allow researchers to also look into the narratives and strategies espoused by those who have stakes in the tourism industry, such as the existing lobby groups defending the interests of STR owners (Madrid Aloja at the regional level, Fevitur at the national level and with iterations in many Spanish provinces), tourism-powered businesses such as luggage lockers or tour guides, companies manufacturing STR lock boxes, etc., or to look into competencies, narratives and strategies at the institutional level—in the case of Spain, at municipal, regional, and federal levels. Given more time, this research approach might provide a more holistic understanding of the issue of touristification more broadly, which might have more valuable policy implications than a study that focuses exclusively on grassroots resistance.

Nevertheless, my research is of significance because it provides insights into how such processes of mobilization and the building of networks of resistance and solidarity might take places in a) cities that are more recently touristifying, as a lot of the literature focuses on those that have experienced decades-long touristification processes like Barcelona, Venice, or Berlin, and b) cities that have less well-established traditions of citizen mobilization, where Madrid is often understood in popular discourse as a 'reactionary' city with little activist significance—especially when compared to Barcelona, whose international projection and geopolitical importance as the capital of the contested region of Catalonia has created long-standing traditions of citizen protest. Madrid may be an example of how cities, even if they might have less established infrastructure of mobilization, can use cultural norms, alliances, and specific strategies to build a powerful and diverse popular resistance to dispossession.

Moving forward, it will be interesting to see how the movement progresses as touristification continues encroaching on growing swaths of the city and tourism becomes increasingly politicized in media and public discourses. How will the debates surrounding tourismophobia and the nature of tourism evolve? Will we witness rising hostility towards tourists? Will the idea that the tourism industry in its neoliberal iteration is fundamentally exploitative permeate into public consciousness, finally moving us away from development models built entirely upon it? And will the remarkable dynamics found in Lavapiés and in the *bloques en lucha* inspire other neighborhoods across the city, towards the

emergence of "*barrios en lucha*" that mobilize powerful collective identities and idiosyncrasies as weapons of resistance against displacement?

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