

Open Paper The City is Ours



ZEMOS98

Open Paper

The City is Ours

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Introduction

THE CITY LESS LIVED

Nothing said of Aglaura is true, and yet these accounts create a solid and compact image of a city, whereas the haphazard opinions which might be inferred from living there have less substance. This is the result: the city that they speak of has much of what is needed to exist, whereas the city that exists on its site, exists less.

Cities and Names 1.

Invisible cities by Italo Calvino

The cities that we live in today are comparable to the Aglaura that Calvino speaks of. In the shadow of the hotspots that are pointed out by guides, in adds, and the tourism board there lies a different reality in which the city exists less for the citizen than it does for the tourist. A facade of symbols that conceal the material conditions of the people who live in them. And this citizen does not only exist less here, but he is urged to assume the role of an extra in this tragicomedy that is the city – a picture perfect scene for the viewer: the tourist.

In the course of 2018, the tourism industry amassed 82.6 million tourists in Spain, surpassing the record of the previous year. In the shadows of the Ministry of Tourism's celebrations and the companies that owed their success to this industry, a new and uncertain reality was taking shape: the precarious working nature of employees in the service sector; the rise of holiday rentals and the impact of this on the housing market; a spike in cheaper holiday destinations like Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey; or the Thomas Cook bankruptcy which resulted in the closure of up to five hundred hotels. To ignore the symptoms that indicate the fragility of this industry does not mean they will simply disappear. If anything this inaction will accentuate the inequality and precariousness of the conditions that citizens have to put up with.

There are three categories that people living in cities today fall into under the tourism industry: a consumer, an extra (they must become part of the backdrop of a stage set for the tourist), or a loser (a waste product of this aggressive and ruthless system). The diverse cultures of the city and the distinct heritages that colour it are taken out of context and commodified as tourist products devoid of meaning or history. Daily life is tur-

ned into a museum, and between the poorly parked electric scooters and every bus stop poster hailing the arrival of the new Triple Cheeseburger, public spaces become insufferable. Either you consume or you exist to serve the consumer. What does not belong to this version of the city is denied as false, cast out to the sidelines, and repressed. It is waste to be disposed of.

Consequently, the tourism industry finds itself at the centre of an unsolvable paradox: in the process of placing value on heritage, its sites and cultures are consumed. They are pushed to the brink of an extinction whereby there are not significant features left to even distinguish them as a shell of what they were. In spite of all this, cities continue to pursue this course, sailing on the edge of all reason, just about existing, because as Jane Jacobs once said: "there is no logic that can be imposed on cities; the people are what make them, and it the people, then, and not the buildings which need to take precedence in our policy".

We must ask what it means to be a city, to live in an urban space. Yes we can take lessons from history, but we must avoid the temptation to be overcome by nostalgia, or dwell on tales of identity. Cities have changed, and the ways they are narrated should include experiences of those who feel marginalised within them. They should feature those who do not normally feature in the stories of cultural tradition in the city. In another passage of *Invisible Cities*, it is said that there exist two types of city: "those that through years of change and transformation continue to adapt to the needs of the people, and those where these same desires and needs destroy or are destroyed by the city".

Bringing these desires once again to light and rejecting the ones that have been imposed means being able to identify the desires of the citizen. It means crafting these desires from the same motives that brought humans into cohabitation in the first place. We must call on the law to define the city in the face of the unifying visions of technocrats and Blackstones, and demand change from those public institutions that submit before their overpowering inertia. Yet how can we hope to recover the story of the city if at the same time we leave its definition open to others who will muscle their way in and propose new meanings for it?

It is not surprising that we entrust the answer to this question to Henri LeFebvre. “Right to the city” has been invoked as a slogan with almost magical properties to counter any process of dispossession within cities. This overuse of the term has resulted in a back and forth discussions over its meaning – a solution as impactful as using a finger to plug a hole in the hull of a ship. On the other hand, we are still throwing ourselves at the parts of LeFebvre’s text that are left open to interpretation.

From a distance, the city appears to us as if unified under the gaze of those who hold power who, in giving half-effective solutions which favour political and economic interests, claim to be all knowing. LeFebvre proposes, however, that when we talk about unity we should think about it differently: he suggests the principle of a united city where wisdom and knowledge cooperate strategically with one another. Furthermore, he proposes to let recreation, understood in its broadest meaning and deepest sense, once again reclaim its centrality in our society. “Sport is recreational, as is theatre. Activities for children and teenagers are equally far from negligible. Fairs and all sorts of communal games persist in the interspace of consumer-led society, hidden beneath the skin of this supposedly respectable society which claims to be structured and systematic, and which qualifies itself in technical terms.”

We want to take back the right to define the city in terms of a game. A game founded on the ruins of logic where once upon a time cities may have stood. A game which can be shared “between the different pieces of the social set, which proclaims itself to have a supreme, important, and perhaps serious value that can be used to overcome the challenges that the city faces.” A game that raises an imagination contrary to the one that already exists, an imagination that does not succumb to the temptation to avoid one’s problems – but to confront the conditions of our existence face to face. In “The city is ours” we played seriously to imagine another form of living in our cities, to take back our right to live in them. And who knows? Maybe this spark will ignite the timbers of cities elsewhere.

WHY THE CITY IS OURS?

The City is Ours is intended to be both a practical and inspirational tool for:

Individuals struggling against the dispossession of our cities. Gentrification, touristification and other related phenomena in today’s cities are usually experienced by citizens firsthand. Organising to fight these issues together is the only way we can bring about significant change and create the cities we want to live in. This Open Paper includes a series of practical tools that aim to further develop a sense of belonging among citizens.

Organisations developing tools and mechanisms that reclaim the city as a place to live in, confronted with the views of technocrats and financial companies all around the world that strive to turn our cities into amusement parks where both public space and citizens are measured purely by their market value. We believe that exploring new narratives can help the material side of these struggles by providing a broader perspective on the challenges we face.

Funders interested in experimenting with new narratives for reclaiming the right to the city. Together with the organisational capacity of the movement, we believe in the need for testing innovative ways of acknowledging the difficulties that arise in increasingly commodified cities. The City is Ours, both the gathering and this Open Paper, aims to create counter-narrative communication tools for a bigger media impact. This Open Paper summarises the main outcomes of The City is Ours, a gathering in the format of a hack-camp that took place in Seville, the 24–26 October 2019. The City is Ours is an activity developed within the framework of MediActivism, a project financed by Erasmus+ and coordinated by the European Cultural Foundation. In addition to this gathering, MediActivism aims to produce a series of activities and media content in different contexts, bringing visibility and increased scale to debates involving the right to the city. Its goal is to have an impact on social awareness surrounding housing and public space, forging connections between what happens at local, national and translocal levels.

ABSTRACT: WHAT WILL YOU FIND HERE?

The City is Ours Open Paper dives deeper into narrative strategies to further develop a true sense of participation by a wider range of society in relation to themes like gentrification, touristification, housing, public space, identity and memory. In order to reflect on these topics in a meaningful way, we rely on the potential of peer-to-peer learning spaces with cross-sectoral approaches. We also rely on the capacity of playful transformation as a tool for challenging the limits of our cities. Some of the tools that you will find in this paper were developed within the context of Seville's own struggles, but all of them can serve as both an inspiration and a replicable tool for use in other contexts. Feel free to use, modify or remix them as fits your needs.

ZEMOS98

ZEMOS98 mediates between institutions, collectives, social enterprises and other actors with the goal of creating cross-sectoral spaces for political dialogue. It does so by developing diverse participatory processes, caring for the commons, working towards hacking mainstream narratives and designing counter-narrative media productions.

zemos98.org / [@zemos98](https://twitter.com/zemos98) / info@zemos98.org

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CREDITS

The contents of this Open Paper have been designed and developed collaboratively by the participants of The City is Ours: Ana Álvarez, Xabier Artázcoz, Roozbeh Behtaji, Miguel Bravo Candela, Margaux Capel, Coline Charbonnier, Julieta Dentone, Pablo Domínguez, Nina Edström, Samuel Fernández Pichel, Paco González, Dawid Krawczyk, José Laulhé, Jorge Linheira, Iva Marčetić, Javier Martínez, Santiago Martínez-Pais, Mirreia Mora, Xapo Ortega, Ivana Pejić, Alex Peña, Jelena Prtoric, Nikola Pucarevic, Sara Rad, Arantza Respaldiza, Marta Rodríguez, Mateja Rot, Alfonso Sánchez Uzabal, Juanlu Sánchez, Bernar Sañudo, Natalia Sawka, Lucía Sell, Kike Suárez, Ysabel Torralbo and Guillermo Zapata.

Hacking the souvenir

WHAT'S THE ROLE OF SOUVENIRS IN THE GLOBAL TOURISM INDUSTRY?

A pivotal moment in the explosive growth in souvenir sales came in 1893, when the Chicago World's Fair attracted 28 million people over the course of six months. According to the author of *Souvenir*, it was this World Expo that popularised the sale of spoons featuring allegorical images. And so, with these spoons, the mass consumption souvenir was born.

The spoons' explosive popularity in Chicago was not by chance, but rather the result of a very well-organized marketing campaign run by jewellers' associations: a couple of years earlier they had disseminated pamphlets and paid for advertisements claiming that the sale of commemorative spoons was a success in Europe. This was a complete lie, but it didn't matter: the commercial success of this object was astounding, and of course the fad spread to the rest of Europe.

Similarly, a few centuries earlier, during the Middle Ages, the Catholic religion found a way to finance itself by promoting the sale of relics associated with pilgrimage routes. Medieval pilgrimages to Jerusalem—and to any place in Europe that possessed a Christian relic (almost all of which were false)—gave rise to a souvenir market that enabled travellers, upon returning to their homelands, to prove that they had fulfilled their purpose. To have holy water or the Camino de Santiago pilgrim shell, to bring back a small stone from Rome or a little earth from Palestine was to possess a certain degree of power.

Potts establishes five categories of souvenirs: the “piece-of-the-rock”, which is a physical keepsake such as minerals, rocks, or dry leaves; “local products”, such as Moroccan rugs or spicy sweets from Mexico; “pictorial images” such as postcards, refrigerator magnets and calendars; “markers”, such as t-shirts or cups bearing the name of a city, museum or attraction; and finally, “symbolic short-hand”, which are miniatures of the Great Wall of China or the Leaning Tower of Pisa, etc. The first two customs, Potts points out, have been around from time immemorial, while the rest are products intended for a mass market.

WHY IS HACKING RELEVANT? THE TYPES OF ANTI-SOUVENIRS WE DEVELOPED AND THEIR MEANINGS

There's no better way to create the fiction of tourism than with a souvenir. What used to be travel is now simply tourism, which has one and only aim: to confirm the advertised reality of a place. Artistic heritage is now just a backdrop that confirms: “I was here”.

A city's narrative—apparently there's only one possible narrative—has become a list of places where we can share content and show that we have “checked in”, confirming a predefined reality. This is what artist and activist Toni Serra calls the “veil of images”.

Our proposal to hack the souvenir is an attempt to chip away at the images that have been built for our cities, all made with tourism in mind. Souvenir hacking is a tool that combines activism and artistic practices with the goal of social transformation. We've created different types of anti-souvenirs to help understand the complexity of the discourse surrounding these objects.

1. The paradoxical souvenir or inadvertent anti-souvenir

This is something which, without meaning to, becomes a parody of tourism and of the souvenir itself. Many are products of globalisation, as the manufacturing industry is centred in China and products are then distributed all over the world. Souvenirs are a breeding ground for kitsch and there are plenty of examples: an image of La Giralda as a souvenir of Cordoba, a Valencian paella magnet in Asturias, or a mug printed with Picasso's famous La Guernica—a painting of the massacre during the Spanish Civil War. These “symbolic objects”, to use the categories proposed by Potts, can be found in any souvenir shop, and we can simply take them out of their context. By re-contextualising them, for example by using them in activist campaigns, we are playing with alienation and enhancing the debate about the papier-mâché society we live in.

2. Anti-system merchandise or the alternative souvenir

An object which uses the “marker” souvenir (t-shirt, mug, badge, etc.) or the “pictorial image” souvenir to promote activism or actions against the system. This type of anti-souvenir holds at its core the contradiction of remaining a serialised consumer product that can be turned into a mass-market product. The alternative souvenir rarely questions the practice of consumption itself, since the subversion is in the message. An iconic example is how the photograph that Alberto Díaz (Korda) took of Che Guevara has been reproduced on thousands of t-shirts, key rings, and patches. Another more recent case is how the textile industry has co-opted feminist slogans to print them on a large scale.

3. The anti-souvenir

This is an object that explicitly critiques the very concept of the souvenir. It is an object that is meaningless as a souvenir, and, by using the code of the “symbolic object”, the “pictorial image” or the “marker”, it hacks the idea of the souvenir. Hacking here is understood as the use of alienation to achieve a critical and activism-oriented way of thinking. Some very clear examples can be found in the works of Brazilian artist Rafael Puetter, who developed a series of objects for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro: a toy car, for example, riddled with 111 bullet holes—a reference to the violence used by the military police to carry out evictions in various neighbourhoods.

OUTPUTS

1. Card game: why / what

The “Memories of Seville” card game was designed to be an alternative souvenir. The game is completely playable; it follows the typical rules of a memory card game. The cards are laid out face down and then picked up in turns until players find pairs of images. The game acts as a critical reflection on tourism in two ways:

- The pairs of images that have been selected are composed of common mass tourism images: trolleys, low-cost airlines, junk food. No specific images of the city appear.
- Although it’s called “Memories of Seville” a version for any location can be made simply by changing the name of the city, since these “memories of tourism” exist in every city affected by mass tourism.

The game is made up of 12 pairs (24 cards) that have been printed on adhesive paper so they can be stuck onto a normal deck of cards. A modifiable template has been designed so that anyone can create their own version. You can download it here:



2. Map: why / what

Based on other examples of critical cartography, a sticker kit was prototyped to hack tourist maps of the city of Seville. The sticker kit will be distributed as an alternative souvenir since it has been designed to identify problems such as gentrification, touristification or issues of mobility. The kit is accompanied by a legend that provides more information to help you locate these areas. It also includes various icons, such as a penis for the Seville Tower, Cathedrals of Consumption (for shopping centres) and a UFO to designate spaces as Cultural Factories or to highlight specific issues such as the exhumation of Queipo de Llano de la Macarena or the government's neglect of the Cruzcampo Market. The sticker kit can be easily updated and is downloadable.



3. Candle: why / what

This rubbish bin candle was designed as an anti-souvenir. The burning dumpster figures frequently in street protests as a kind of barricade. Specifically, both the sticker and the packaging explicitly reference the Barcelona riots that took place in October 2019 following the sentencing of politicians and city officials after their so-called trial. The well-known slogan "I ♥ Barcelona" has been replaced by "I ✨ Barcelona", not only as a form of alienation but also as a criticism of those who have questioned the protests because they affect the "image" of the city. The fact that it is in the shape of a rubbish bin neutralises it as an object of mass consumption.



EXTERNAL REFERENCES (PARTICIPANTS IN THE ROUNDTABLE)

Other relevant projects and references:

www.europeansouvenirs.eu

Live cinema show produced by the European Cultural Foundation in collaboration with ZEMOS98. The show deals with memories, tourism and migration.

monstruario2016.com

Online store of anti-souvenirs produced by Rafael Puetter for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

malaga2026.net

A group project that critiques tourism in the city of Málaga. The project contains artist Rogelio López's multimedia installation "Almost all Picasso," which features real and fake souvenirs: <https://www.lopezcuencia.com/casi-de-todo-picasso/>

noquedandemonios.com/recreativos-federico

Arcade games, some of which feature souvenirs that reference Federico García Lorca's stage plays. An exo-dramatic project produced by Alex Peña.

eltopo.org/duquelas-traigo-turismo-y-flamenco

"Duquelas Traigo: turismo y flamenco," an article published in EL TOPO by Pablo Domínguez about the exoticism and fictional construction of the world capital of flamenco, Seville.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uJRDyontfs

An Associated Press (AP) report about a souvenir shop run by FARC guerrilla fighters.

Credits:

Who was at the roundtable?

Ale Peña, Mireia Mora, Jose Lauhle, Ysabel Pituskaya, Julieta Dentone, Jorge Linheira, Pablo Domínguez and Jorge Romero. Hosted by Pedro Jiménez -ZEMOS98-.



Interventions in public spaces

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PUBLIC SPACE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RECLAIM IT?

La Giralda is one of the main symbols of Seville. It is the name given to the bell tower at the cathedral of Santa Maria de la Sede in the city of Seville, in Andalusia (Spain). The lower two thirds of the tower correspond to the minaret of the city's old mosque, which dates from the late twelfth century in the Almohad era, while the upper third was built on top of the existing tower during the Christian era to house the bells. At the top of the tower sits a ball that acts as a base for a bronze statue: The Triumph of Faith. The statue functions as a weather vane, and was nicknamed La Giralda ("the one who turns"). Eventually this name became the common name for the whole tower.

La Giralda is 104.1 metres high and for centuries it was the tallest tower in Spain and one of the tallest buildings in the country. For years, with the exception of two bridges built during the 1992 Universal Exhibition, it was the tallest building in Seville. When the construction of the Pelli Tower (whose official name is the Seville Tower: a skyscraper owned by CaixaBank) was confirmed at the beginning of the 2010 decade, a political and social debate arose about whether or not it was appropriate to build a building that would exceed 180 metres; the argument was that it would have a notable impact on the image of the city as a whole, depriving La Giralda of its status as the tallest building in the city. Curiously, both cases share something that seems to go unnoticed during these aesthetic debates: in both, the state of public space is corrupted in favour of private interests.

In the case of La Giralda, the tower was not even registered (shorturl.at/ceBM0) as a church-owned property. Despite its unique location, its clear role as a heritage site (UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site in 1987) and the numerous public investments to convert the area into a pedestrian zone, thus eliminating traffic pollution, the Church was able to declare this property as its own (by paying 30 euros: shorturl.at/dnPRT) and, in doing so, ensured that the 9 million euros paid for visits each year would go into its coffers and not into the public treasury. In the case of La Torre Sevilla,

as recently as 2011 the Municipal Government (then led by the conservative party PP) declared that it would be impossible to allocate the space to Cajasol (the bank that was promoting the tower's development at the time) as it was "Land of Public and Social Interest to Puerto Triana" (shorturl.at/fzAFU). Almost 10 years later, what we find is a building in which Caixaforum (a cultural offshoot of CaixaBank) is housed alongside a shopping centre filled with businesses operated by large chains that operate in other similar spaces across the country. That is to say, both buildings pay a total of 0 euros directly into the public coffers.

These two cases are good examples not only of corruption but also of a distortion of the concept of public space as an equitable and universal meeting place. Public space ends up being transformed into a theme park for tourists or designed as a space to build shopping centres where the only way to participate is as a consumer. The struggle to understand public space as a communal gathering place, a place of togetherness, for citizens—as opposed to a tradeable commodity for promoting private interests—is taking place in all the major European cities, not just in Seville. The call for a space that serves as a commons and is not mediated by capital, continues to be one of the main activist struggles in places like London, Marseille, Ljubljana, Warsaw, Belgrade and Zagreb, to name a few.

OUTPUTS

The work developed by the "Intervention in the Public Space" roundtable during "The City Is Ours" Hackcamp arose from a process whereby each participant, a total of 8 people living in 6 different cities—Ljubljana, Zagreb, Marseille, Stockholm, Barcelona and Seville—talked about local fights to protect non-privatised public space. Some of the issues that were raised included the lack of social spaces where people could meet without participating in consumerism; the price of housing; the widespread use of electric scooters for tourist purposes; cruise ships and their environmental impact; and the visible and non-visible borders that divide the city between commercial areas and move disadvantaged areas (in many cases, one being very close to the other).

All these issues were grouped into 4 major themes:

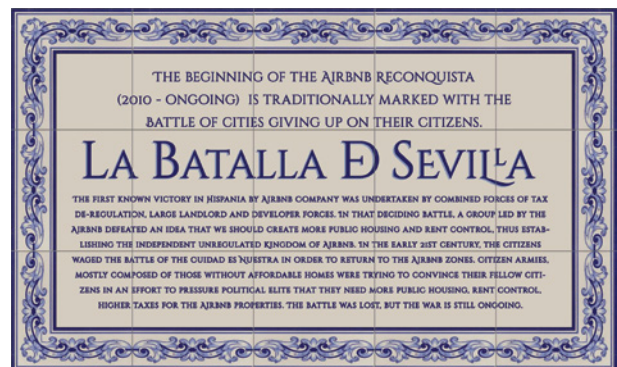
1. Sustainability
2. Togetherness
3. Commodification of Leisure
4. Borders

The first of these is understood to be activities in public spaces that seek to promote mass tourism but that end up affecting the environmental, social and cultural sustainability of the city. The second, as the protection of social spaces that generate encounters between citizens not mediated by consumption or mass tourism (togetherness) and that reinforce the feeling of belonging to a non-commercialised city. The third, very much related to the previous one, is the constant process of privatisation of public space that ends up forcing citizens to participate in the city exclusively through commercial activities that centre around consumption or tourism. And lastly, the existence of physical or symbolic borders that commercially divide the city, generating economic inequalities, urban planning problems and social imbalances.

The aim of the roundtable, looking beyond these thematic distinctions, was to produce graphic or visual devices that could be placed in the city and thus intervene in public space with critical, reflective and proactive messages addressing the issues outlined by the Hackcamp and roundtable. A total of 7 outputs were produced:

1. The Battle of Seville: a false historical mosaic

The basic idea was to imitate an official mosaic based on those found in certain historical sites around Seville and use that style to convey a “false historical account”. In this case, it tells the story of The Battle of Seville: after the Deregulated Kingdom of AirBNB had taken control of the city, a group of citizens fought a battle to liberate entire neighbourhoods that had been conquered by AirBNB. A lost battle in a war that is still ongoing.



2. AirBNB Zone

These stickers can be used to designate areas of the city that are full of AirBNB tourist apartments. The decal includes the City Council of Seville logo, as if it were an official government notice issued to alert citizens or tourists. This ironic visual seeks to criticise the massive and unregulated influx of tourist apartments in our cities.



3. Getting Some Fresh Air Is Anti-Capitalist

This phrase was used by one of the members of the roundtable during a debriefing session on recent projects. The idea was to explain that there are still practices and spaces that are not mediated by consumption. Getting fresh air (*tomar el fresco* in Spanish) is a very common practice throughout Spain's Mediterranean region. It consists of taking a chair, bringing it out to the street and spending time chatting with neighbours. It is a common practice among older women as a way to deal with the lack of air conditioning in their homes. The poster imitates the style of *Trainspotting* and depicts a group of women in Valencia "getting some fresh air" (<https://7televalencia.com/municipios-valencianos-fresca/>).



4. RIP Alameda Multiplex Cinema

The main idea was to generate an obituary that would then be placed in a public space in the city. In this case, the obituary could be used to mark urban spaces (public or private) that have recently closed down to make way for buildings with new uses, thus reinforcing the narrative of endless tourism. The obituary pictured above concerns an old cinema located in the centre of Seville that will be demolished to make way for a hotel (shorturl.at/irDG4).



5. Endangered species: a shop where everybody knows your name

The main idea here was to take the "Endangered Species" sign as a starting point and produce stickers as a way of defending the small shops and neighbourhood establishments that have been spared the impact of gentrification and continue to provide basic services while fulfilling a key social function for the community ecosystem of our neighbourhoods and cities.



6. A Map in Search of Another Centre

The central idea here was to produce a map that subverts the way maps usually focus on specific predetermined tourist sites. In this case, by identifying other spaces that, first, have clear cultural value but are not usually included in the typical tourist programme and, second, are located on the outskirts of the city, a map was generated where photographs of these places physically covered the centre of the city, thus creating “another centre” and another way of conceptualising the city.



7. Using Images to Break Down Symbolic Borders

In the city of Marseille there is a neighbourhood (La Belle de Mai) that is not very well known but has ideal conditions for citizens to congregate in. The problem is that the place is offset by train tracks and must be accessed by passing through a tunnel. The idea that arose was to post public notices in an adjacent location that informs passersby that this space is only a five-minute walk away. By doing this, we demonstrated how to use an image to subvert a symbolic border.



All these practices were inspired by two presentations: the one given by **Iva Marcetic** about the Right to the City movement in Zagreb (https://monoskop.org/Right_to_the_City_Zagreb), which is witnessing a rampant privatisation of public spaces around the Sava River; and the one given by **Paco González**, in which he provided several examples of how signage and graphic interventions can be used to denounce the non-private use of public space (such as those that, imitating public signage, were installed in the city of San José to encourage citizens to walk (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bike/16895166858/>) to certain places and not to drive; or the advertising hacks in NY, such as the “editable walls” (<https://beforeidieproject.com>) that feature messages from citizens declaring what they would like to do before they die, or the street vendor manual (shorturl.at/syzH1) developed by the Centre for Urban Pedagogy).

Credits

The roundtable was formed by Mateja Rot, Iva Marcetic, Jelena Prtoric, Lucía Sell, Ana Álvarez, Javier Martínez, Paco González and Sara Rad. Facilitated by Felipe G. Gil from ZEMOS98.



Mapping Precarity in the Tourism Sector in Seville

*This prototype is under development.
Updates will be posted on zemos98.org.*

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PRECARIETY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR?

Precarity and tourism may seem like two opposing concepts, but the facts and figures tell a very different story. When confronted with the widespread cliché that tourism generates employment, we must ask ourselves what type of employment and what does this mean for the rights of employees in the tourism industry? Recently, the tourism industry has had a devastating impact on the daily lives of many people. Difficulty acquiring housing (in terms of buying or renting), gentrification, and the disenfranchisement of citizens in urban centres due to urban privatisation and commercialisation are just some of the problems around which different struggles have formed in an attempt to rethink our urban planning models. Nevertheless, it is clear that we lack a critical narrative around the precarity of the tourism sector as an industry that does not stop growing. In 2019, a number of unions voiced their concern that, despite the increase in business profits, little to no improvement had been reflected in the living or working conditions of the workforce that keeps bars, hotels and souvenir shops running. Improving the physical and material working conditions of those who sustain this sector is a question of social justice, but neither the industry nor the average tourist seem willing to give up having their cake and eating it too. Once again, we see that petty, middle class custom of putting individuals' desires ahead of collective rights.

If we focus on the city of Seville, the data that we find should give us enough reason to do away with the whole myth of tourism equalling employment. The summer of 2019 marked a new historical record in the amount of tourists arriving in the city, as it was chosen by Lonely Planet in 2018 as the best large city to visit in the world. However, this pivotal moment for the tourism industry has not managed to change the Andalusian capital's ranking as the region with the ninth highest unemployment rate in Europe. The Seville shown in postcards stands in contrast to the marathon working days, poor treatment and episodes of physical and psychological violence endured by the very

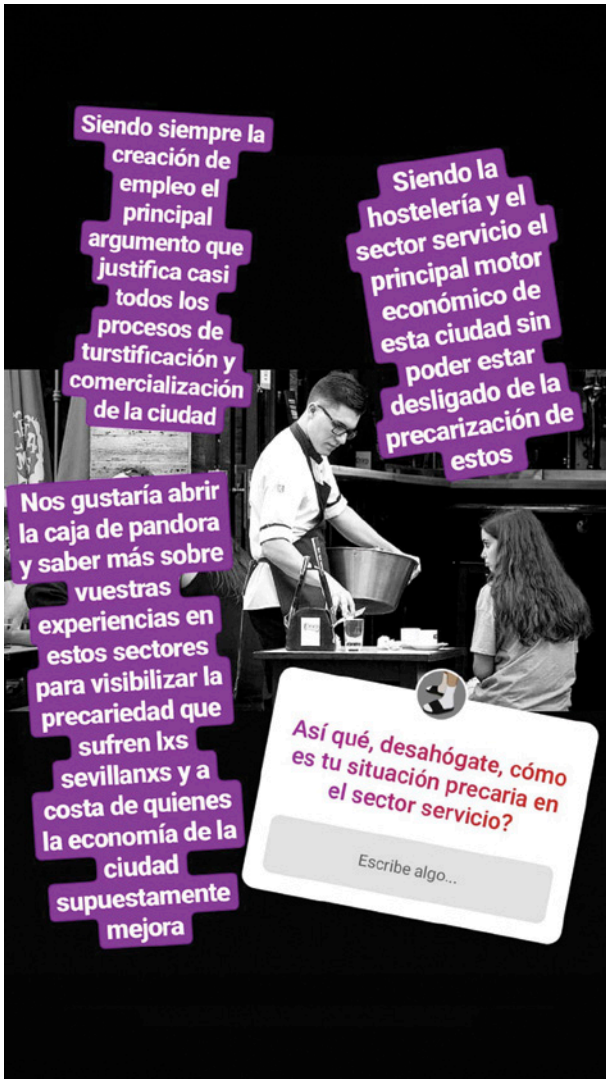
people who sustain the city's picture-perfect image for tourists. The service sector employs around 70% of the population of Seville, but more than 90% of the contracts issued are short-term—some lasting fewer than seven days. But contract length is not the only issue; these contracts do not even meet the minimum labour standards laid out in industry agreements, and, far from what is generally thought to be true, the wealth of the industry is not reflected in the city's per capita income. Meanwhile, labour inspections in the tourism sector are as rare as unicorns.

Faced with such misinformation, we must urgently point out the precarity of workers in the Seville tourism industry. We must challenge official narratives that celebrate the exponential growth of tourism as an indisputable sign of economic progress. We must encourage everyone to reflect on what effect the tourism explosion really has on Seville.

OUTPUTS

Jartura is a collective made up of young Andalusians who use artistic practices and contemporary narratives to denounce neoliberalism and financial speculators for the way they disregard, plunder and commercialise Andalusian culture. Their concerns focus on issues such as touristification, gentrification, racism, sexism and Andalusia-phobia.

They express themselves by giving a voice to the most disadvantaged populations and creating narratives to be used as ammunition against the powers that be. In doing so, the most natural place for their discourse to take root has been on social media, with its modern-day forms of language: memes, gifs, stories, Facebook posts, etc. And precisely on one of these social networks, Instagram, a question in the form of a poll was posed a few months ago which ended up resulting in the hackcamp roundtable, a project focused on mapping out the trail of precarity and how it relates to the process of touristification in Seville.



The huge response generated by the poll led the collective to want to probe deeper into the relationship between precarity and tourism: What traces of precarity does touristification leave on cities? Is there more precarity in the service sector in areas that have more tourism? Starting with these questions, we began to investigate in a roundtable made up of experts in anthropology, journalism, activism and social research with the aim of using data visualisation tools to find answers.

After consulting one another, albeit with a limited amount of time for gathering the necessary data, we agreed to develop a simple website that would show an image of a tourist site in Seville linked to one of the testimonies of precarity from the Jartura poll. This website would answer our question of how to give visibility to these stories of precarity. But before coming to this final result, we had to divide up the work based on the necessary tools for populating the website. The outputs were as follows:

1. Gathering Data: Research on Precarity in the Tourism Sector

We gathered data using a Google Doc questionnaire designed to quantitatively and qualitatively organise the testimonies of tourism workers in Seville. We then selected questions based on an initial sample of 31 testimonies taken from Jartura's social media networks as an answer to the following question: "Have you ever experienced an unfair situation while working in the service sector?" Seventeen categories were identified that were then further divided into five subcategories related to the precarity of working conditions: contracts, schedules, health, salary and violence. The final version of the questionnaire contained 24 questions.

Jartura stories available here: shorturl.at/qxJQS in Spanish, with original screenshots here: shorturl.at/bfqu3

Using these testimonies as a starting point, we then analysed the data that they provided and developed a series of categories in a spreadsheet. The result is a survey that will continue to gather new stories to be shared on our website.

The survey will be the main tool for collecting new data and stories, which we will use to populate the map.

2. Maps & Cartography:

Visualising Hot Zones of Precarity in Seville

The goal of this cartography project is to represent, on the map of Seville, different personal narratives of people affected by precarity and workplace abuse in the tourism industry. The data that populate this map were gathered via the survey developed for the website *El Mal Turismo* (Bad Tourism). The data is in CSV format and, in order to be linked to the map, certain steps will have to be taken, depending on the online digital platform that ends up being used. In the case of Google Maps: open a new layer, select “Import” and link to the CSV which will have to be shared via Google Drive.

STEP 1: In order to visualise the data, we used Google Maps. These are the different types of data that we uploaded:

1. A layer of individual narratives: taken from the CSV shared with the rest of the *El Mal Turismo* project.
2. A layer of contextual information about Seville: taken from the statistical grid on job seekers by the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia and from the Household Income Distribution Map by the National Statistics Institute’s Experimental Statistics Service. The goal of this first step is to display the information gathered from the website by posting stories and photos of where they occurred in order to give third-party viewers a clear picture of what is happening.

STEP 2: Creating dedicated zones that indicate areas with a high concentration of precarity. This should be done using a layer of vector-based spatial data (streets/roads) as a base. This linear base layer can then be superimposed upon the data layer of dots (cases). This should be done using GIS software (QGIS, ArcGIS, etc.) in a process called “spatial join”. This process will extract the number of cases that “fall” within certain lines (streets) and put it into a new column of the shape file. Once calculated, we can run an analysis and find the zones with the greatest number of cases of precarity. These zones are then marked to indicate that they are “hot zones of precarity.” The purpose of this second stage is to understand the processes and dynamics that reproduce the model of labour precarity in different areas of Seville. The delineation and concentration of “hot zones” enables us, in turn, to compare data with other types of studies related to the effects of gentrification and touristification.

STEP 3: Create a statistical representation of Seville’s current situation so it can be used comparatively by other cities experiencing similar challenges. We have not prescribed the use of any particular visualisation software, since the statistical renderings, whether in the form of graphs or histograms, will depend on the data obtained and their various descriptive qualities. The purpose of this third step is to try to categorise and visualise the profiles of the people employed in this sector and under what conditions they carry out

El mal turismo

¡Hola! Estamos realizando un estudio sobre las condiciones laborales de las personas que trabaja en el sector turístico. Si trabajas o has trabajado en este sector, pedimos tu colaboración. Este cuestionario es totalmente anónimo y la información que nos proporcionas va a ser tratada de manera estrictamente confidencial y será utilizada con el fin de elaborar una estadística sobre las condiciones laborales en el sector turístico en Sevilla.

¿Has tenido alguna experiencia de precariedad laboral vinculada al sector servicios en Sevilla?

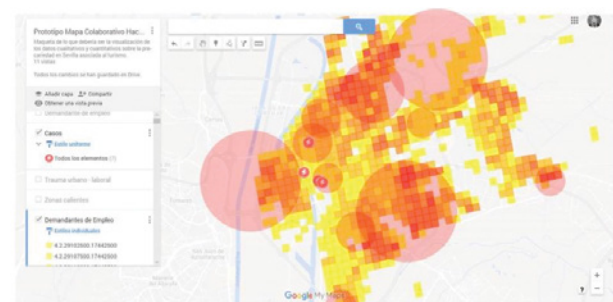
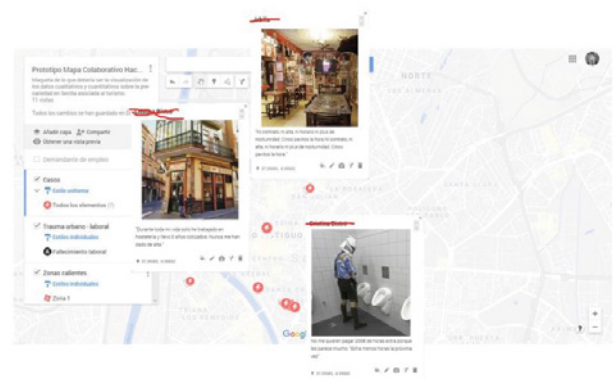
Sí

No

Quizás

Explicanos brevemente tu experiencia de precariedad laboral en Sevilla

Tu respuesta

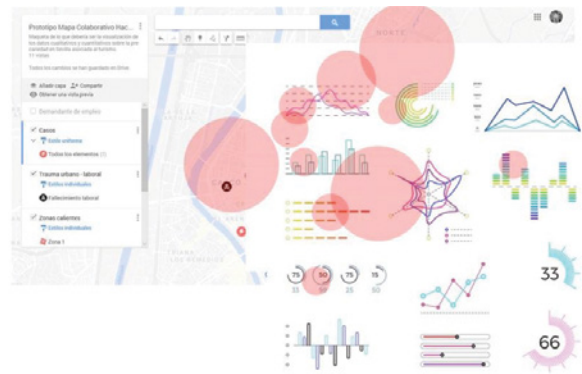


their work. As mentioned above, it would be very interesting to be able to compare these results with other similar data gathered in cities both in Spain and abroad.

The final prototype can be seen here: <http://shorturl.at/bdqTX>

3. Voices: Ironic Postcards about the Dark Side of Tourism

As the third and final and most narrative element, a series of ironic anti-postcards would be created, pairing one of the testimonies with an image of one of Seville's most famous tourist sites. The final product would be a postcard that when distributed could give a dissenting voice to those working behind the scenes of the tourism industry.



“We had to call our bosses on the phone to ask for permission to go to the toilet.”



“My whole life I have only worked in the hotel industry and have been included in the social security system for none of those years. They never registered me to be eligible for any social security benefits.”



EL MAL TURISMO: A WEBSITE TO COMPILE THE THREE OUTPUTS

We decided to take these three outputs and set up a website that would serve as a prototype:
<https://turismomal.montera34.com/>

It is a simple application that displays an image of a Seville tourist site together with a testimony of precarity based on data from Jartura. It also introduces a map for geolocating said testimonies and a section called *Desahógate* (Let it all out!) with a form for people to continue providing their personal experiences. And finally, there are postcards that disclose another narrative of tourism.

We wanted to begin with something simple, a minimum viable product (the spreadsheet) and, from there, to imagine different public applications: a questionnaire, a website, maps and a radical postcard. All of these tools attempt to make viral the message that the tourism industry does not, as they claim, generate enough wealth to justify the unchecked and counter-productive growth of our cities. *El Mal Turismo* aims to create a collective narrative that denounces precarity, carrying out data visualisation while highlighting the importance of life stories, offering an anti-hegemonic narrative about tourism and economic growth, particularly in a city that seems to worship tourism and its structures. Underneath Seville's superficial sheen lies an underbelly of precarity. *El Mal Turismo* seeks to compile and share the voices that never get heard by the outside world.

EXTERNAL REFERENCES

Jartura's Instagram account:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/ButQ5lWhgad/>

Google Maps Data for Seville: <http://shorturl.at/wLST2>

The AirBnB effect in Seville. Analysis and raw socioeconomic data about the city of Seville:
<https://code.montera34.com/airbnb/airbnb.sevilla>

The case of Philadelphia, "La potencia sindical de un excel compartido":
https://www.eldiario.es/tecnologia/potencia-compartido-trabajadores-Unidos-precariidad_0_954704963.html

Montera 34:
<https://montera34.com/>



Countering the Imagery of Tourism

They say that a tourist can go around the world jumping from Airbnb to Airbnb without knowing, at any moment, what city she is in. The decorative sameness in tourist flats, whether run by individuals or by large companies, is a symptom of how the various corporate image factories operate through the tourism industry in its various forms.

The universe of images built around the tourist experience plays a fundamental role in the transformation of cities. On the one hand, these transformations are material, articulated through the urban planning of public institutions and the spread of tourism on digital platforms; on the other hand, the transformations are immaterial, made by auctioning off the most superficial displays of cultural identity. The global tourism industry offers packages in which a place's tangible and intangible heritage are props for an experience that is billed as unique, but which in reality is no more than the superficial adaptation of experiences and dynamics that are repeated in every other place in the world.

At the other end of this vast visual universe stands the tourist. You might think that with the spread of Instagram, Tripadvisor, and Pinterest, the production of travel imagery and its ability to portray travel in a different way would be liberated. However, the tourist ends up becoming the best promoter of this fragmented reality sold by travel agencies, reproducing the same discourses and the same images, as pointed out by Martin Parr in some of his photographic work.

If the image-based industries tend to repeat the same emotions and experiences, the image consumer tends to concentrate her attention on those key moments in which she believes these experiences are concentrated. In Instagram stories we don't show our knees crammed against the back of a Ryanair seat, the endless queues for institutionalised heritage museums, or the frozen paella that we were served (well, maybe the latter). We might also not find any representations that escape the preconceived ideas of the places we visit. When reality ceases to confirm or disprove the images we see, it is the images themselves that confirm a pre-determined reality.



On several occasions, Georges Didi-Huberman has used a metaphor that can help us grasp the essence of the visual landscape that is presented to us and that we ourselves represent. His metaphors also help to link these narratives to the material transformations that the visual landscape produces. The French author speaks of the photographic mechanisms of overexposure, which occurs when a negative is exposed to an excessive amount of light; and of underexposure, which is the opposite process, when a negative is exposed to an insufficient amount of light. The visual imagery of tourism over-exposes some realities and, in the same process, under-exposes others. It over-exposes the more superficial folkloric manifestations of tourism, while it under-exposes the community relations that allow and encourage the existence of these very same manifestations. The hypervisibility of some images tends to strip away meaning from what they represent, making it purely a consumer experience; meanwhile, the obscurity surrounding the practices that make these cultural expressions possible leaves them on the margins, at risk of disappearing.

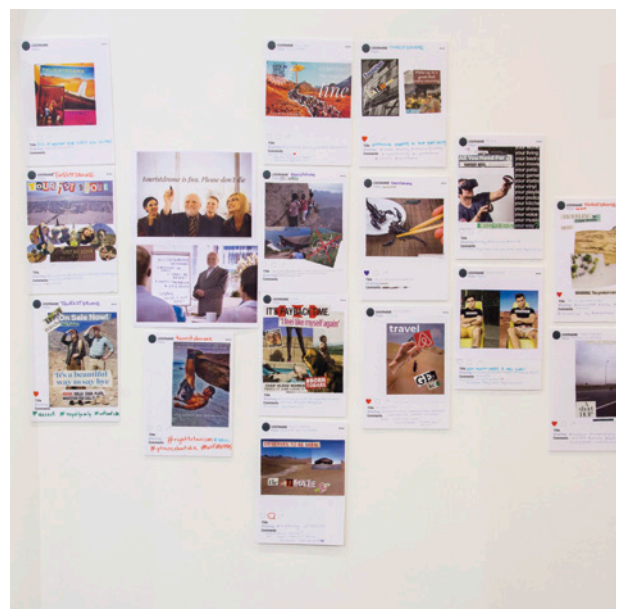
How can we subvert this visual imagery which, under the aegis of consumption, tends to homogenise the experience of travel? Expropriating the means of production of these images would be ideal, but for the moment we should be satisfied with experiments and actions more within our reach. The subversion of this imagery, using humour as a common thread, will not replace the masterpiece film that tourism has become. However, it does have two functions that we consider important: the ability to raise questions that somewhat destabilise its foundations, and the ability to unite us under the common barricade of comic relief.

OUTPUT

Based on conversations about the impact of images associated with tourism and how to address this issue, a group of international participants developed a storytelling framework made up of photographic collages that depict different scenes using the instagram format.

TOURISTDROME. SAND IS NOT SAD!

Touristdrome is the ultimate post-tourism-industry theme park for our post-capitalist era. With our cities completely destroyed by the hordes of tourists, Touristdrome presents itself as the only space where it is possible to continue behaving like a tourist. Located in the middle of the desert, the tourist will be able to have all the experiences of a trip in one single space in the middle of nowhere. As its slogan says, sand is not sad. So cheer up and discover your inner self by travelling to Touristdrome!



ACTIVITIES

Touristdrome works tirelessly to develop the most modern technologies that allow the tourist experience to be recreated in all its fullness. Today, some of the most popular activities are:

1. The Never-Ending Line:

This activity is inspired by the endless queues that once wrapped around historical monuments in cities all around the world. The Never-Ending Line will allow you to relive those precious moments of waiting, saving you the hassle of having to visit the monument later. The average waiting time is 16 hours.

2. Get stabbed in the streets of Fakecelona

Check out this season's novelty, exclusively developed for risk-takers and adrenaline junkies! Here, you will be able to venture into a reproduction of the streets of Barcelona, where you will have the chance to be stabbed by a native of the city. You will then be taken to a mock public hospital where you will be able to enjoy waiting for hours to receive treatment.

3. Getting sunburnt

With your ticket, you will receive a mat so you can lie down on the desert sand and sunbathe until you turn as red as a tomato. Most visitors decide to put this activity at the top of their busy schedule so they can show off their burnt skin for the rest of their stay in the park.

4. The Instagram Arena

The Instagram Arena is the ideal place for taking a selfie without dying in the process, since it is located where no cliffs are to be found. Touristdrome offers an exhilarating place where you won't have to worry about good photo composition. Without the background of any particular city, the Instagram Arena provides the ideal setting for taking the best selfies.

5. The Pre-Collapse Interactive Heritage Museum

If you were eager to see the Eiffel Tower, the Coliseum, La Giralda or the Sagrada Familia when they still existed, this museum is a must-see during your stay at Touristdrome. You will find 3D reconstructions of the most important monuments in the world all in the same space, built at a scale of 1:10.

6. Origins

Touristdrome, a theme park that reenacts a mock tourist experience, was created by one of the most famous companies before the collapse, which was dedicated to creating mock furniture. It was popularly known as IKEA. During the months before its launch, the concept reached an unprecedented stock market price due to the high demand of destinationless tourists who had fled their cities. However, a few months after it opened, a tourist died while engaging in extreme sports; this caused the stock market price to plummet, never fully recovering from that moment.



7. Have the Complete Touristdrome Experience!

The traveller has two possibilities for reaching the theme park. You can either take a plane, arrive at an airport in the middle of nowhere, and then drag your suitcase for approximately six hours until you see the park's electrified fence; or you can have the authentic Mad Max VIP experience, for which you will be provided with a customised version of the film's car so that you can cross the desert in just under an hour.

As for the food available at the theme park, you can enjoy authentic global cuisine, whatever that means. There is also a very expensive gluten-free vegan menu available. As it is located in the middle of the desert, Touristdrome imports all the food for these dishes, creating an environmental impact of catastrophic proportions, which only the most exquisite palates can access.

Finally, in the souvenir shop you can find the perfect souvenir of your holiday: a plastic bottle filled with desert sand. This, of course, creates other imbalances in the Touristdrome ecosystem; sand becomes a scarce commodity. The huge amounts of rubbish generated are processed and turned into sand for the park grounds—the perfect solution!

We are sure all of this has inspired you to book your next holiday at the Touristdrome. If you never have holidays, you can still come: at Touristdrome there are no employees—the tourist *is* the worker.

External references:

Rodolphe Christin, *Anti-Tourism Manual*

Georges Didi-Huberman, "People Exposed, People as Extras"

Martin Parr



This roundtable was comprised of Ivana Pejic, Bernar Sañudo, Guillermo Zapata, Agnieszka Wisniewska, Nikola Pucarevic, Nina Ēdstrom, Roozbeh Behtaji, Margaux Capel and Lucas Tello.

Credits

The “Mapping precarity around the touristification of Seville” roundtable was made up of Juan Luis Sánchez, Kike Suárez and Santiago Pais from Colectivo Jartura; Alfonso Sánchez Uzábal from Montera 34; Xapo Ortega, Marta Rodríguez, Miguel Bravo from Inquilinato de Sevilla; and Xabier Artázcoz, Arantxa Respaldiza and Sofía Coca from ZEMOS98.

MEDIACTIVISM
FOR THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

ZEMOS98
MEDIATING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



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