

“The Streets Will Always be Ours:”

Collective Action and Protest Practices in Barcelona



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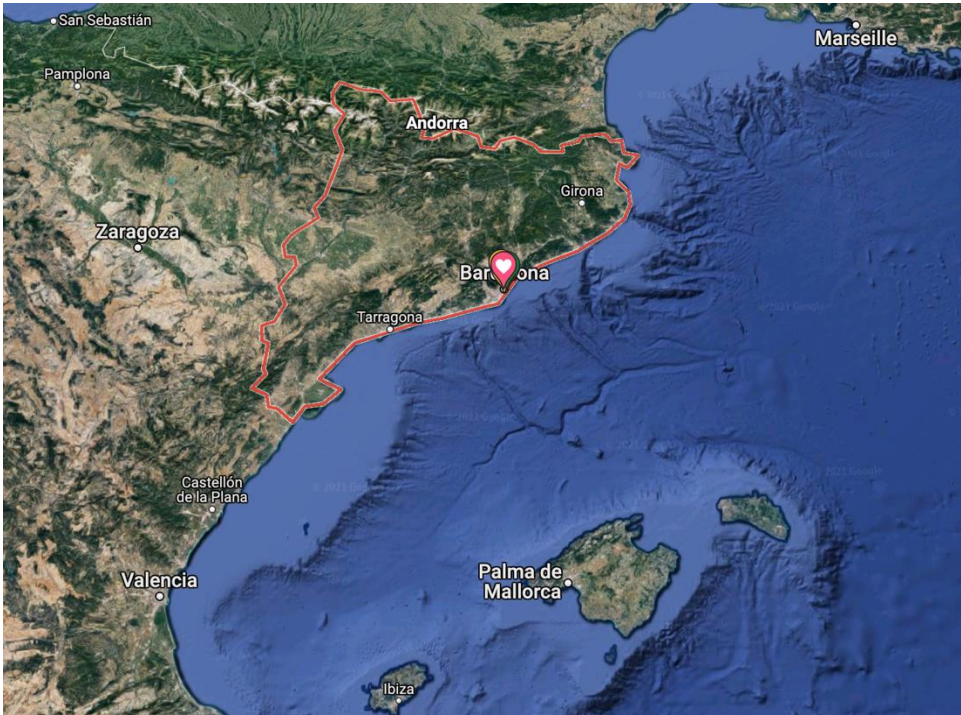
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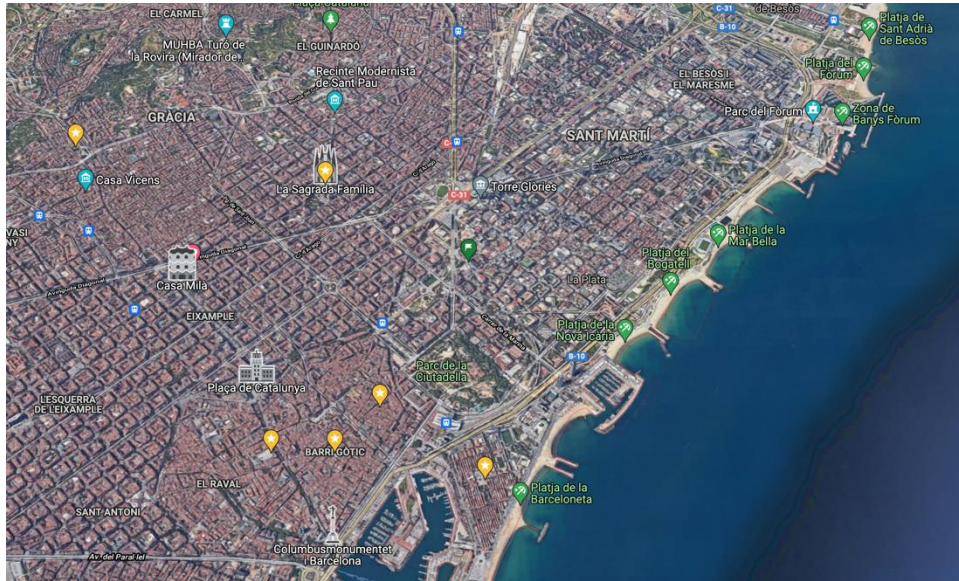
Map of Catalonia

The map of Catalonia is retrieved by me using Google Maps.



Map of Barcelona

The map of Barcelona is retrieved by me using Google Maps.



A Note on Images

The author has taken all images in this thesis. Traditional copyright rules protect the author's photographs. None of the images used in this thesis are of the interlocutors.

INTRODUCTION

Aleix was recognisable on his black jeans rolled up at the bottom showing his heavy leather boots, the jacket over the Antifa sweater, a grey sixpence covering his bald head, and the styled side beards forming a triangular shape on each side of his face. I sign him hello from afar and walk over the road, as he speaks with a friend leaving Mai Moriem, a left-wing clothing store full of Catalan Independencia and Antifa-stuff in Vila de Gràcia. T-shirts shown over four rows in each window are portraying images and symbols from different social movements: Antifaschistische Aktion, Independència, Squatter. One of them found lying in the windowsill; a T-shirt showing a burning garbage bin with the text; BCN *Posa't guapa*, meaning Barcelona get beautiful. Pointing out this shirt, Aleix says that Barcelona is famous for burning trash bins during protests and we started to walk. Noticing that Aleix was a bit on guard when people passed us, he explains to me the reason. “Since I dress as skinhead and my clothes show that I am Antifa, I can be a target for violence.” Therefore, does Aleix learn Mai Tai and Kickboxing in his spare time –to be able to protect himself. Aleix goes on to tell me that he has friends in jail for defending themselves “against violent fascists and that the police always take the attackers (fascists) side, since they (police) are fascists themselves.” Unfairly from his point of view, “people from Antifa get long jail sentences for defending themselves, and some get treated like terrorists.” So, as people walk by us, they are objects for his thorough eyes. By scanning them, he notices all kinds of clues that he uses to categorise them—some of the labels he used while we were together was right-wing, neo-Nazi, and fascist.

Research Inquiries

Entering the field, I had a plan that involved connecting with people in the tech-field through a co-working space in the Sant Marti district. I was interested in mass mobilisation's

technological innovations and the use of digital marketing strategies in relations to the production and commodification of social movements. An interest that came from working in the digital field as a marketing executive. Before the Spanish State shut it down, and persecuted the people behind the app for terrorism, I researched the Tsunami Democràtic (TD) platform. An innovative technology that, as journalist Clarke Pérez writes in Wired UK, adding to their use of traditional social media platforms such as Twitter and the encrypted chat service Telegram also created an application (app), working as a "block-chain" organising tool", (meaning it encrypted data and shared it among its users) that promised innovative ways of evading police detection and coordinating actions" (Clarke, 2019).

However, as Pérez, writes, in October 2019 the Audiencia Nacional ordered the Civil Guard to close it down because of investigations into "terrorism" after TD sent 25,000 people to protest at El Prat airport in Barcelona where they caused disruptions and cancellations hundreds of flights, as well as clashed with the police (Pérez, 2019). When I arrived in Barcelona after a six-month delay, not only had the app-technology been removed, but the pandemic had also closed most co-working spaces through extensive periods of lockdown to curb the contagion, introducing large-scale home working as the new norm, making my initial plan not feasible. This meant a shift of focus to how social movements produce and reproduce power relations in public spaces, through acts such as those Aleix told me about, mass mobilisations in the city-centre containing burning trash cans and the consciously dressing in opposition to the State with Antifa-clothes, as one of several diverse ways people choses to differentiate between themselves, other movements, and ideologies, even while they walked the streets.

In the context of the political and judicial struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat I bring into picture the protest practices of the social movement wanting independence in Barcelona, with a particular focus on how they use the streets to organise protests. Throughout my fieldwork, the sites that attracted most of the protests were in the city centre at places like: Barri Gòtic de Barcelona (–an inner-city neighbourhood), the space outside of the Cathedral of Barcelona and Plaça de Sant Jaume which is the square where the Catalan Generalitat headquarters are facing the City Council. The square in the middle of the buildings is a space that contains events of protagonist and antagonistic character, regarding Catalan governmental practises. The city centre's public spaces traditionally get used to show opposition, through defiant rituals and symbolic acts such as burning flags and pictures, demonstrations,

protests, and other mass mobilisations. I aim to explore such dynamics and practices in the context of the political and judicial struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat. The elements above hold in it two levels different of analysis and exposition and I have therefore formulated two research inquiries:

- The first level is – *El carrer* (the streets): How are the streets as public space used to organise mass mobilisation and collective action?
- The second level is political: What incidence does the street have in the political struggle the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat maintain?

Within the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat a shift has occurred from the political to the juridical arena. Especially tense was the period after the Catalan Independence Referendum on October 1, 2017, which the central government of Spain deemed unconstitutional and illegal, in advance (Anderson, 2017:59). Despite of the Spanish State and Guardia Civil's efforts to disrupt the referendum 2.3 million Catalans voted, with more than 90% of the votes being pro-independence. During the voting more than 800 people were injured in clashes between police and independentists. Catalan Generalitat formally declared their independence on October 27 in 2017. Immediately after, was the Catalan political leaders involved charged and taken to Madrid for trial (Anderson, 2017:60). This time was politically and socially dramatic for the inhabitants of the region and has influenced the attitudes and feelings of some people towards the Spanish State, the Catalan Government and towards the city itself.

The conflict is ongoing, both legally and through protest practices, as people on both sides of the struggle are trying to mediate their political perspectives and political identity. Episodes such as the former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont's escape from Barcelona to Brussels to avoid punishment from the Spanish State after 2017 have become one of several examples of the Spanish State prosecuting antagonistic political actors. In groups that support Catalan independence, opinions on the incarceration of the Catalan political actors are numerous. On the side of Catalan pro-independence, some view the imprisonments as punishments for their

“beliefs.” On the other hand, according to Narotzky, the Spanish State focuses on evidence that the Catalan representatives have committed unlawful acts according to their constitution (2019:49). Avoiding incarcerations because of political beliefs was one of the elements of creating the app TD, and why it was created as a tool to organise anonymously, collective actions in the urban spaces of Barcelona. Catalans that want independence have used public spaces as a form of freedom of expression to oppose political submission from the Spanish State and to fight back against neoliberal effects on everyday life, such as the increasing housing prices because of neighbourhood gentrification and touristification, processes in which the Catalan Generalitat has a formative role. By attending to public spaces in the contexts of the struggle presented above, the thesis explores the themes through an anthropological lens on the streets, aiming to gain further insights into the inquiries, using anthropological tools and intellectual resources.

Intellectual Resources

The main perspectives answering the inquiries above take on specific anthropological concepts to analyse how urban public spaces get used during collective actions by people living in an urban environment. Collective action creates events that are not removed from everyday life but are a part of it, even though they have extraordinary qualities because they create a rupture with the mundane and holds a potential for change. Therefore, I find the axis of “event-everyday” suitable for analysing struggles that are acted out in public spaces. In addition to using event and the everyday as analytical tools, “forms of resistance” is critically added to elaborate the analysis. Aiming to show how public space facilitates mass mobilisations, the thesis will look at the streets as having a distinct and dynamic role in the political struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat. With a special focus on protest practices, I will look at the learned and embodied experiences gained or affected through the Catalan pro-independence movement. Timothy Jenkins explains how learned and embodied sequences of behaviours get transmitted through practices and become dispositions and habits. According to him, practices are constructed, adapted, and improvised in the making and remaking of everyday lived life. Moreover, since the everyday is enacted through behavioural sequences and are constructed through bodily habits, they are spatial and temporal (Jenkins, 1994:439).

Adding to the spatiotemporal, “bodily habits” and “body politics” explains how political and social control influence people’s bodily experiences. The latter of the two is termed by Schepher Hughes (1987) and Vaczi and Watson use this concept in their research, which show that through a historical perspective the Catalan pro-independence movement applies their bodies in public spaces for distinct political purposes (2021:607). When I refer to protest practises, I refer to forms of resistance and behavioural sequences that are applied through lending the body its habits and practises to events of mass mobilisation. I aim to merge this focus on protest practises with two other texts, a combination that works as the skeleton of this thesis. The first article, written by Kallianos and Fumanti, and shows how public space is used to perform collective actions that creates a break with daily activities. According to them events of protest, revolt and uprising in Athens and Tottenham holds in them both familiar and unfamiliar, ordinary, and extraordinary elements that are formed by spatiotemporal modalities as well as their historical and local context. By attending to embodied experiences and the socio-spatial dynamics that shape them, this thesis aligns with the authors and further argues that these elements have a formative role in political practices (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021:3). Therefore, the intent here is to explore the use of public space and give further insights into how events are affected and thus impact the processes and dynamics of everyday life and events by exploring what incidence the streets as public space maintains between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat.

The analytical point of departure “the streets” importance in this analysis stems from Bruce Kapferer's perspective that space is not a dead background setting but is active in the making of events (2010:19). During fieldwork, the events attended were situated in specific urban public spaces. This has a connection to neoliberal processes and capitalism's commodification of space, bringing us to the following article, Henri Lefebvre, who sees the production of space to exists and happen in social relations, that transcends the immediate (Lefebvre, 1991:229), I take on Chris Heskeths analyses that draws on this concept. By applying the perspective, I aim to show how capitalistic accumulation relates to the creation and recreation of space through social movements. Through researching forms of resistance and everyday initiatives in the Mexican areas of Chiapas and Oaxaca, where indigenous social movements refuse capitalism’s “accumulation by dispossession”-a model, he argues that make the local social movements seek to defend place by engaging in collective actions. He shows that they also

produce spatial transformations and new forms of participation in politics (Hesketh, 2013:209). By drawing on Hesketh's ideas about social movements being defenders of place by the remaking of space, this thesis aims to explore how the pro-independence movement is not only questioning the State's legitimacy and political decisions but also how it questions democracy and citizenship while creating new power relations.

Coming together in public spaces has another role not fully covered by Hesketh's, which is the role of social interaction between participants during events (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021:14). They highlight how spontaneous forms of socialisation during events include helping each other by giving warnings and communication to secure safety, supporting each other, and cheering on specific actions. Protest practises and behaviours of resistance are explicit during events, though more hidden scripts of behaviour opposing the State authority include forms of resistance that are acted out through the everyday, which J. Scott refers to as "forms of resistance." Connecting this to the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat, some fallacies regarding the topic occur. S. Ortner newly criticized resistance studies for not living up to necessary anthropological standards. With the term "ethnographic refusal," she refers to the unsatisfying thickness and a failure of holism and density in such studies. Also, by questioning the category of "forms of resistance" by Scott, she draws attention to individuals' "intentions," saying that if there is not conscious resistance, the act cannot be one of resistance either (Ortner, 2021:175). The questioning of intention and the notion Ortner brings considering social movements' internal conflicts and contradictions is a relevant point of reflection (Ortner, 2021:179). Here, Ortner's perspective, brings forms of resistance into the theoretical mixture as a tool to criticise the thesis, its data, and its validity, which will be done in the closing chapter.

Structure

This thesis consists of an introduction and five chapters. In the introduction, I present research inquiries and the intellectual resources I will use to illuminate them. After this section in I offer a presentation of the field, my interlocutors, the methods I have used, as well as the challenges I faced in the field concerning COVID-19. In Chapter One, I present a brief historical context and present elements of the historical struggle that the Catalan pro-independence movement, that they draw on today. Furthermore, I refer to what I see as being conflicting historical narratives between two nationalities. The first chapter also contains a section on the

fascist government under Francisco Franco's rule, focusing on the oppression of Catalan culture. After that, a section called the Olympic shift, will show how Barcelona has been influenced and directed by urban planning and marketing strategies from the authorities. Chapter two begins with an introduction and moves on to social movements theory. Thereafter, a section on social movements in Barcelona. Next a section on global changes in the States perspective on collective action is discussed and I present some international tendencies in the face of current uprisings. In chapters three and four, I use ethnographic descriptions from my fieldwork to analyse and discuss the data. The discussion is elaborated by adding relevant research by other authors. These chapters explore how social movements use the street as a public space to mass mobilise and what incidence of collective action is in the struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat. Then in Chapter Five, I do a final discussion before concluding.

Entering the Field

Barcelona is known to be a melting pot of ethnical identities, Catalans, Castilians, global south immigrants, ex-pats, and tourists fill the streets. The city draws in people with its Mediterranean climate, city-beaches, atmospheric old city, and innovative industrial areas. Anthony Gaudi's stunning architecture and big music festivals are the perfect destination for tourists seeking enjoyment and leisure activities. The streets are usually full of life, with bustling cafes, bars, shops, and populous plazas. In 2020 the experience was somewhat of a contrast to this image. Friends and interlocutors talked about the city as "Ghost-Barcelona". Fewer tourists, closed markets, and bankrupt restaurant, and family-owned shops was the evidence of this. The fieldwork was subdued by periods of lockdown and measures such as social distancing, curfews, wearing masks in public and so on. This context affected access to the field and changed my starting point from tech- and digital oriented fieldwork to a focus on actual events in the streets of Barcelona, quite ironically during a time where the digital development and the use of digital tools, grew more than ever. Leading to everyday activities such as education, work and meetings being held over the internet instead of meeting in person, increasing the fragmented ways of life that already exist in the city.

Unable to carry out the plan of joining a coworking space to get insight into TD was not the only alteration experienced. Ending up living in to separate locations was another. First, living in Sant Martí, an industrial and working-class neighbourhood currently under renewal and

marketed as an innovate-tech area, located close to the beach. The flat materialised my impressions as it was a creative collective and photo studio on the top of an old industrial building. Devon, a middle-aged photographer from South America, was the house manager. After a decade in Barcelona, Devon was moving to home and spent his days meditating on the terrace every morning before packing his belongings into boxes, selling, and giving things away. The lack of job opportunities and health reasons made him long for his family. During the time in Sant Martí, my focus was contacting gatekeepers. Connecting to an ex-pat community with people from the USA, Latin America, England, Helsinki, Florida, Germany, France, and Sweden snowballed to include Spaniards and Catalans. The Marina Metro stop was right outside the building at Carrer de la Marina that went all the way down to Port Olympic Barcelona, separating the beaches of Platja de la Mar Bella and Platja de la Barceloneta, beaches that were used by numerous people as “covid free zones” meaning, as an escape from using medicinal masks and following social distancing rules, during the summer. While living in Sant Martí, Devon told stories about why Barcelona was a "bad" city to him. During meals, much of the discussion was on how Catalans were concerned with securing jobs and economic opportunities among themselves and how they paid foreign workers less than locals, one of the biggest frustrations Devon had concerning living in Barcelona. However, he emphasized that he loved the city, and that Catalans were initially kind to newcomers (at least if they got something out of it), but he warned me, that they were about the money and keeping it to themselves. Later, I find out that this is a common stereotype about Catalans, one they joke with themselves too, creating a distance between themselves and the typology by showing a sense of self-awareness about such an impression of their identity.

About two months into my fieldwork, a move to a smaller solo-flat with terrace overlooking the architect Antoni Gaudís`, Sagrada Família was organized through Devon's friend Giorgio from Italy. He had sold his hotel business before the pandemic, and bought an apartment on Menorca, leaving the flat for rent. My new space became a place to meet up, have dinners, or to sit and talk on the terrace. This area was distinctively different from the working-class Sant Martí district. An example of this was the amount of homeless people in that area, Devon used to donated items for the homeless to pawn as a way help them out. In comparison the streets by the Sagrada Família were polished. Brand new sidewalks framed the famous chapel and well-kept parks on both sides of the church created green openings in the otherwise dense city grid. It was

clear that this place had been more prioritised by city-planning because of its importance as a tourist attraction. While living here fewer visitors than normal came to the church, not only because of fewer tourists and restrictions but the church was also affected by a strike. I spoke to the strikers who told me that Sagrada Família was run as a business and that the conditions for the workers in the church were so bad that they needed a strike to demand a change, especially bad was the extra-long shifts, poor payments, and the feeling of exploitation. Something they strongly opposed and viewed as morally wrong, considering this applied to a church. Sagrada Família has status as a tourism magnet, which also coloured the streets around. Fast-food chains like Mc Donalds, Starbucks, Five Guys, and large grocery stores had pushed smaller family restaurants, vegan newcomers, and Tabacs into the branching streets. Lefebvre highlights that the chapel embodies a modernised heresy that distorts it into a symbolic space through a virtual erotification based on sexual pleasure and joy (1991:232). In connection to the marketing of Barcelona, as being a city perfect for leisure activities, the church strengthens the impression of a pleasure and joyfulness. Through architecture, Antoni Gaudí's church, as we will see later, embodies traits that are also portrayed as "Barcelonian-ness."

A Note on Interlocutors

Contemporary ethnography uses the classical principles Malinowski illustrates, with an emphasis on getting the insider view participation and observation is used to a group of people closely over time (O'Reilly, 2012:23). This entails a specific vulnerability regarding the people being studied, a vulnerability that comes from exposing their opinions, practices, and personal information. This can be overcome using various techniques relating to ethics. In relation to this I want to highlight my main ethical consideration, which has been to secure my interlocutors' anonymity. As the quote below suggests there is substantial fear concerning prosecution by the Spanish State. Persecution was a recurring theme during conversation highlighting anonymity as vital for the participants' security.

“The deep Spanish state puts people in jail, not for their actions, but their beliefs. Spain is the only European state with political prisoners. People who have not committed any crimes are suffering sentences of up to 13 years of prison just because they are Catalan

independentist leaders. For this reason, I would like to make my statement anonymous.”
(Guillem.)

The interlocutors presented under are based on fieldwork, but their personalities are created from mixed facts and stories put together to make them unrecognisable, ensuring that connecting the data to specific people will be extremely difficult. Alterations include age, sex, and names. I have constructed three main characters: Catarina (33), Guillem (42) and the couple Aleix (27) and Anna (29), based on my interlocutors that identified as being Catalan to ensure the richest possible description from the “inside” of the struggle being researched. Before we started our relationship all participants received the project description and signed a consent form which explained that the project is voluntary, and they can withdraw their consent at any time. Furthermore, the way ethnographic interviews are used in this thesis, is as a supplement to highlight observations gained from participating in collective actions in the streets.

Ethnographic Interviews

Ethnographic interviews are guided conversations during fieldwork executed as an ongoing process that develops ethical, trusted, and sensitive relationships, making the interviews collaborative, time-consuming, and reflexive (O’Reilly (2012:127). As Charles Briggs argues, the interview situation is a valuable source of data because interviews can gather mass data on selected topics in a short amount of time (Briggs, 1995:107). Gaining valuable data by using interviews reflexively means staying sensitive regarding communication norms and one's limits in understanding the other (Briggs, 1995:102). Interviews can also reflect on communication and improve questions and angles to explore the theme. At the same time, discovering that some of the questions did not provide the answers needed made reformulations and other angles necessary. There are multiple styles to ethnographic interviews, for example, collecting life stories or oral histories about a specific period, theme, or event (O’Reilly, 2012:128).

The experience I had was that conversations moved from histories to life stories organically because the interlocutors need to explain certain events by connecting the stories to their past, in the form of past relationships, experiences, childhood and kinship. Another issue

with ethnographic interviewing is concerning situational changes. Code-switching happens when conversations shift between languages or from the everyday to more formal conversation (Briggs, 1995:105). Discussing political opinions, protesting, technology's role, and the Catalan pro-independence movement, which can be heavy and emotional, code-switching became an excellent tool. Living up to O'Reilly's opinion that interviews should be relaxed, enjoyable, and not forced into a framework (O'Reilly, 2012:128), creating a flow in conversations, switching between lighter and heavier questions also included having off-topic conversations and allowing both parties to engage in humour and jokes to gain a sense of relief.

A Note on Language

A methodological disadvantage of interviewing are language barriers. Most of the people I met speak English, though I did come across a need for interpretation a few times. By using a friend to translate during interviews and translating questions on email into Catalan, these situations were manageable. Barcelona is an international city with much tourism, which most younger inhabitants have adapted to. Anna was the only one who wanted to speak Catalan and her boyfriend Aleix did the translation, but she became more confident and trusted me more, noticing how I understood more Catalan than I could speak, like with her relationship with English. Thus, she relaxed more, and eventually, she answered in English, while Aleix only helped translating some single words instead of whole conversations. During two weeks of intensive Spanish class, the first and second modules at beginner level was completed, when new restrictions came, and the school closed. This gave a better basis for understanding but was not enough to hold full conversations. I experienced a few times, that people did not want to engage in conversations with me in English. But overall, language has not been a significant challenge. The biggest challenge was brought on by the pandemic.

Participant Observation

I have explored the theme through fieldwork and have the following comments on my experience regarding issues of positioning and participant observation as a method. By positioning myself as a student with an interest in, and compassion for the Catalan independence struggle, my knowledge of the pro-independence movement and insight into technology, through digital work experience, helped me to gain the interlocutors' trust initially. Participant observation was used in demonstrations and protests and through time spent with interlocutors after work and on weekends. During events I was particular about my own safety because I was posing as one of the protesters. To secure my own safety I usually stood in the back, in the outskirts of the masses or by building walls. I documented mostly on the social movement side of things, but also took notes on State intimidation tactics; –like overhead helicopters and drones, display of weapons, police strategies, such as waiting and observing or chasing people to spread them. Episodes such as arrests, police beatings, chemical agents were not observed by me, but stories of such actions by the State was shared in the community. Experiencing these events affected me both emotionally, and physically. Being in a state of “alarm” for hours at a time while writing notes during participation in highly tense situations was exhausting. Also, it took a while to get the adrenalin levels back to a state of normality. Afterwards I usually needed time alone to reflect and relax.

As O'Reilly takes up ethnographies are made on a covert-overt continuum (O'Reilly, 2012: 65). In this case the continuum was overt regarding interlocutors and covert during protests and demonstrations. Furthermore, getting insights into personal information during a protest was not an option, mainly because of the situational aspect of being in a state of action, not reflection. In that regard I argue that the covertness has insignificant effect on the thesis' ethical considerations of anonymity or issues of consent. The participant observation took place at various spots, from my apartment to their homes, the streets, outdoor restaurants, bars, hangouts in parks, plazas, going for walks, social events, demonstrations, and protests. Since the method of participant observations requires closeness over time with people in different situations to gain thick descriptions, dealing with rules of social distancing and lockdowns was demotivating at times. Frustrations about not gaining a satisfying amount of closeness contributed to a sense of personal loss and longing after finding key details from being routinely part of a group of people.

In started out taking traditional fieldnotes on paper, but as time passed, I came across situations that did not agree with a book and a pen and I switched to taking notes on my cell phone. This turned to be an effective method to gather as much information and detail as possible, particularly during protests. The data collection grew by often changing between field notes, photos, recordings, video clips and ethnographic interviews. All the information was securely stored on my password-protected mobile phone and computer. My cell phone became my digital audio recorder, camera, notepad, and a window into the online organising side of the pro-independence movement. Digital information and conversations over email, online chats by using Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and Messenger were great sources used to talk and follow up the relations. I rely more on face-to-face interviews than I would have in a pre-pandemic field with closer contact and more time spent with the interlocutors. The material's most significant limitations stem from not being able to fully apply myself through participant observation in daily activities. Therefore, not having satisfactory thick descriptions, which I discuss later about Sherry Ortner's criticism of resistance studies.

COVID-19

Everyday life in Barcelona was affected by among other things, the practice of social distancing. This, combined with other safety measures which created difficulties in meeting up with people. My gatekeepers and interlocutors prioritised and wanted to protect their close contacts, as well as abide to the rules and be good citizens, something that led to fewer meetings and several cancellations. Furthermore, the pandemic created new ways of working, socialising, getting an education, attending social gatherings, and organising meetups, where these spheres transformed into online activities, making access to groups and organisations more difficult. Joining online events without sufficient Catalan language skills was also unsatisfying. Fieldwork can be a lonely experience, and when a new round of lockdown was enforced late October 2020, all restaurants, gyms, and social venues were closed, and curfews were reinforced by the patrolling police. I resided by myself at this time and had limited access to socialisation. Loneliness became a felt reality, but I balanced my alone time with long walks in the city-streets reflecting over my work and the impressions gained during fieldwork. Despite interlocutors' cautiousness, cancellations, and postponements we got to spend time together on a regular basis,

so I got information, experienced both well-organized demonstrations, joined protests and did a few semi-structured interviews.

Using the internet became a way to follow up on connections. Through online conversations I was in touch with my interlocutors and acquired additional information if I needed it. This was a way of working that I found useful, though the negative aspect of online interactions was the lack of closeness to my informants. Nuances that can be picked up during face-to-face relationships are not clear over the internet, something that influences how information is received and constructed. An extra dimension to this in my case, were the focus on social movements and collective actions. Since it was harder to gain access to organisers, and most of their activities were moved online and performed in Catalan my focus shifted to the use of public space and events.

Furthermore, by looking at cases of resistance during a pandemic, I became observant to forms of resistance to the pandemic itself. Meals and meetings in restaurants were often used to avoid or get relief from the obligatory outdoor use of medicinal masks which were extremely uncomfortable when it was hot and humid, such as visits to the beach was. New bodily and social constraints like the heightened focus on hygiene routines such with hand sanitising and medical mask became symbolic and affirming to the liminal phase of being in a pandemic, as well as symbolising the uncertainties people experienced surrounding the dangers of the health crisis and the consequences of the disease. Governmental measures were continually adapted, applied, re-adapted, and re-applied, thus affecting not only the routines of everyday life but also the willingness and motivation to partake in events of protest, because of the potential health risk involved. Personal thoughts and worries about contagion, was another strain on my fieldwork, especially while joining thousands of people during demonstration in the narrow streets Barrio Gothic. During demonstrations I used a mask, took calculated risks regarding closeness to people and followed the local measures to the best of my ability. Even if an event was not over, I always went home before the curfew.

CHAPTER ONE

“If We All Pull It Will Fall”

On the road towards the statue of Christopher Columbus sales tables were selling a wide selection of pro-independence products, including small round badges with political symbols on them, diverse Catalan flags and pro-independence t-shirts. By the Columbøus monument, the Assamblea Nacional de Catalunya (ANC) had supplied an up-scaled image of the King for a symbolic burning ceremony. Two men and one woman from the ANC helped with the burning, starting off with a short speech before all three of them used their lighters to set fire to the King’s image. The picture went up in flames accompanied by cheering from the participants. As the image burns from below, his face eventually turns into ashes that fly around suspended in the air. Like snowflakes, they glide with grace down to the ground. Then, an older gentleman in a yellow t-shirt with a crown barred by a red circle starts playing a familiar tune on his guitar. Bodies smoothly swing from side to side, people hold hands over each other's shoulders, their mouths are covered by the medicinal masks due to COVID-19, so their smiles can only be guised from how they stretch their eyes. The volume of the singing increases when the chorus begins, and more people join in:

– Si estirem tots ella caurà

I molt de temps no pot durar

Segur que tomba, tomba, tomba

Ben corcada deu ser ja

(If we all pull it will fall

And it cannot last much longer

Will surely tumble, tumble, tumble

It must already be well-rotten)

– Si jo l'estiro fort per aquí

I tu l'estires fort per allà

Segur que tomba, tomba, tomba

I ens podrem alliberar

(If I pull strongly from here
´will surely tumble, tumble, tumble
And we will be able to free ourselves)

L'Estaca (The Stake) by Lluís Llach (1968).

Written in Catalan, by Lluís Llach in 1968, L'Estaca condenses as much of the opposition to nowadays State oppression against people as it did under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, the regime which it was written against. Back then, because it was a protest song, it was devised to avoid the strict censorship. Llach overcame this by using an analogy of being tied to a stake, thus hiding the underlying theme of liberty. Llach was forced to flee Spain because of persecution and his return after the death of Franco in 1976, was to a crowd of thousands at a concert in Barcelona. Since then, the song has been adopted by other countries' freedom movements, translated, and adapted into their languages such as the gatherings organised by the Polish Solidarnosc at the turn of the 1990s by Jacek Kaczmarski (Belov, 2019) And recently translated from Polish to Belarussian by demonstrators in recent events of mass resistance taking place in Belarus (2020-2021) against Alexander Lukashenko's re-election (Gómez, 2020). In the Catalan case, the pro-independence movement has adopted the song as a hymn for independence and usually sings L'Estaca at the end of their demonstrations. The theme of the song can be said to sum up the very idea of collective bottom-up movements, – if we the people pull together, we can be free. Free from oppression which is symbolised by being tied to a stake. The song's history and message resonate with the goals of those who seek an independent Catalonia.

The link between Catalan pro-independence and local culture has been a key element in maintaining the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat, as Balibrea points out, a Catalan identity was incorporated through attempts to reinstate the language that Francoism suppressed. The reinstatement and strengthening of the Catalan identity and culture depended a long time after post-Franco on public subsidies that favoured cultural producers that complied with those in power (Balibrea, 2017:148). Later, the role of culture has taken place in the forefront, through the formation and transformation of the Barcelona citizen, starting out with a focus on creating cultural events so that the local citizens could enrich themselves, in the aim of becoming better people and part of a better society. A strategy that turned the citizen into an

asset for the Barcelona brand resulting in a cultural construction of Barcelona and a tourist image (Balibrea, 2017:156). Barcelona's image was successful through mapping out urban space and citizenship, and by using millions to improve and build new city infrastructures. The Summer Olympic in 1992 showed this image to the global world. Giving Barcelona status a modern, European, cosmopolitan, and attractive Mediterranean city (Balibrea, 2017:158). After Franco, the return of identity was crucial in the formation of "Barcelonian-ness," elements that links to the relationship between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat, and affect how the streets as public space get used to organising the protest. The example above shows people from the pro-independence movement singing L'Estaca at the end of the demonstration. This song represents the oppression of Catalan culture in a new spatiotemporal context through the event, a form of protest practice that will be explored further in later chapters. First, history needs to be considered since it is essential to understand better what "the stake" is in the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat.

A Struggle of Historicity

The denial of Catalans having a historical claim as a nation and the oppression and assimilation of the Catalan people, especially by the Francoist regime, has created a gap between some Catalans and Spaniards. History is a central part of the struggle and initiating parts of the independence movement regarding resistance to the Spanish nationality. Benedict Anderson formulates that communities bigger than face-to-face contact get imagined, giving a perspective on nations, nationalism, and nation-ness as cultural artifacts that change over time while preserving their profound emotional legitimacy in a population (Anderson, 2016:4). However, seeing the nation as an imagined political community can abstract away from the issues of people's everyday realities and struggles. Wanting to take into regarding personal identity that may contrast a sense of belonging to a nation his arguments don not give the full picture. On the other hand, Andersons, recollection is advantageous to understand the origins of nationalism and how it became so important. By tracing the rise of nations to capitalism, Anderson connects the development to commodifying the art of printing (Anderson, 2016:37). The mass printing of specific texts in local languages romanticised local culture, and nationalism worldwide strengthened.

The theory of mass printing and commodifying romantic literature and its role in the creation of imaginary national communities aligns with R. Minder, as he argues that the Catalan national identity stems from the romantic period of the *Renaixença* (Romanticism). In 1832 Bonaventura Carles Aribau wrote and published in Catalan *Oda a la Pàtria* (Ode to the Homeland). It soon became an essential piece of Catalan literature. His romantic defence of Catalan traditions, language, and emotions inspired a new generation of patriotic writings that drew upon medieval Catalonian legends, including the idea that Catalonia was a nation in medieval times as a formal part of the Crown of Aragon. The discovery of historical facts helped solidify the Catalan identity with it. In this way, the romanticism era made way for new nationalist politicians who wanted greater autonomy for Catalonia. Furthermore, as Minder points to, the industrial revolution brought other capitalistic developments to the mix, and Barcelona rapidly became an advanced industrial city and numerous people immigrated to the city from other parts of Spain (Minder, 2017:30). Still, it was the important pieces of literature that helped to uphold feelings of Catalonia as a nation as an imagined community sharing experiences of oppression and exploitation. Moreover, the writings have upheld the Catalan language, and for some wanting Catalan Independence, the language is an essential source of distinction.

Historically, before it spread to the whole of nowadays Spain, Castilian (the original name for Spanish) was only spoken in the Kingdom of Castille. It then coexisted or substituted the languages of other kingdoms and territories that would later become part of the Crown of Castille. The Catalan language, on the other hand, developed in the different counties that would end up conforming the County of Barcelona (nowadays Catalonia) which together with the Kingdom of Aragon (with its own language, that is almost gone now) made up the Crown of Aragon. Later in time, Catalan substituted the languages spoken in the newer kingdoms of Valencia and Majorca, which were settled by Catalan speakers of the expanded County of Barcelona, and therefore Catalan, also known as Valencian in Valencia (Catalan is their official language too). As Connor argues, though the language has an essential meaning for how Catalans self-identify as a group, how they interpret past, present, and future (Connor, 1994: 4). Furthermore, it affects their interpretation of history. Catalan independentists (especially those of nowadays Catalonia) will refer to the historical and constant loss and regain of their own political institutions going back to the unification of the Crowns of Castille and Aragon under the

same sovereigns in 1479. This is especially true regarding the final union of 1713, after the War of Succession, in which all the laws in Spain's territories were made equal under the image of those that ruled in the Crown of Castille. This union was contested but never received a bigger backing until the advent of the dictatorship of Francisco Franco that fully began after he won the Spanish Civil War in 1939.

Going back in time to another important development, the founding of the Provincial Councils in Spain under the Constitution of Cádiz (the Political Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy) in March 1812 confirmed the monarchy's direction towards uniformity and centralisation, and it was a shift towards the subordination of collective bodies. Then, during the year of 1833 Spain became permanently divided into provinces with its own government representatives and political leadership as a tool of centralization, this segmented the previous historical territories into minor units. This process went in another direction leading Barcelona to get a leading role during the industrial revolution and moving liberal Spain towards the political left, further decentralising the State. The Provincial Councils of Catalonia become a strategic scene for politics and though the Spanish State recognised Catalonia's distinctness by uniting the four Provincial Councils in a Commonwealth, setting a precedent for the Government of Catalonia today (www.gencat.cat), the tug of war between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat had just begun. The industrial revolution gave Catalonia more money, but since then the taxes have gone to the Spanish State and projects that Catalans have not agreed with. The redistribution of money is a discussed topic today as well. An example of economic conflict between the two parties is *Setmana Trágica*, (Tragic Week).

Spain had required troops from Catalonia to join its colonial army in Morocco, since buying people out of Spanish military service was expensive, the dissatisfaction with the request led to heavy protesting, killed civilians and police brutality in Barcelona, 1909. Four years after 1912, the "bill of Mancomunidades" (for creating an organ giving more Catalan self-governance) passed through parliament, initially rejected. Protesting occurred again in October 1913, where 60 000 Catalans, giving Catalans hope for more future autonomy (Harris,2014:195). In September 1923, the General of Catalonia, Miguel Primo de Rivera, led a military coup imposing military rule in Spain and closed the Mancomunidades in 1925 (Harris,2014:197). The political struggle arises again after the fall of Primo de Rivera (1931-1939) when *Estatut de*

Núria, a new statute of autonomy passed in 1932, making Catalonia an autonomous State within the Spanish State until 1936 and the Spanish Civil War. The Francoist army defeated the Republican forces (including the Catalan forces, newly created and named the Federated State of Catalonia). Franco's victory led 200,000 Catalans to flee, and others were sent to concentration camps or imprisoned (Harris, 2014: 213). After the second world war, during the 60s- 70s, Catalans faced strict State induced censorship, cases of police brutality and other forms of cultural oppression. In the later Francoist era, the opposition to the regime gained momentum. One establishment, *Assemblea de Catalunya*, was formed in the Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona, a communist-inspired working-class movement that opposed Franco by uniting civil organisations, trade unions, and political parties that favoured Catalonia's self-determination and democratic freedom (Harris, 2014: 239). Today, the ANC has adopted *Assemblea de Catalunya* as a name and has taken the role of being one of the most prominent organisations opting towards Catalan independence

Moving Past Dictatorship

During the early years of Franco's dictatorship, Spain perpetuated an ideology of a singular territory with one race, one history, one culture, one language, thus, making all elements other than Castilian, so typically Catalan, or Basque or Galego and so on, illegal. Among other acts of language oppression, the administration returned to the use of only Castilian (including the education system). Catalan books got burned in public, monuments and statues destroyed, and street signs changed from Catalan to Castilian. Harris also takes up how everyday life this period was affected by social control and repression networks where neighbours spied on neighbours forcing Catalan culture to exist in the underground (Harris, 2014: 215). When Franco died on November 20 of 1975, Spain entered The Transition Period. Two days after the dictator's death, Juan Carlos de Borbón, a direct descent of the Bourbon-line (French royalty that unified all the Hispanic territories at the image of the laws of Castille in 1713), became King. One of his first actions where gave amnesty to approximately 15,000 political prisoners, paving the way for changes and democracy (Harris, 2014: 239). Today some people connect the experiences of oppression and assimilation during the Franco regime to a specific form of Spanish nationalism.

These historical events have also, for some Catalans, maintained a gap between historical narratives.

After Franco died, Spain and Barcelona made up for the lost time in a neoliberal sense and quickly integrated into Europe and the process of globalization. According to Balibrea, from 1979 and onwards the transition from dictatorship to democracy contributed to an ideological and political transformation in which the industrial city of Barcelona, then led by a socialist government, went into a period of real-estate developments. Later, massive investments in infrastructures connected to the Barcelona Summer Olympics increased real estate speculation in the city, creating new challenges, as we will get into later (Balibrea, 2017:16). The post-Franco period combined the economic restructuring with the inhabitants' rights to the city. Critical voices to the developments have referred to the post-Franco transformation as an end of progressive urban life and as a new way to oppress democratic voices to gain global capital (Balibrea, 2017: 02). This thesis argues that the neoliberal processes and brand-building strategies implemented by the local governmental institutions are involved in creating and recreating a specific relationship to history and public spaces. The neoliberal transformation, Balibrea references was implemented through Catalan institutions and is apparent in the case of the Barcelona Summer Olympics.

The Olympic Shift

The post-Franco period created a new paradigm and the Olympic games in 1992 was a part of this shift. Balibrea has researched how Barcelona's institutions have been pioneers in applying the relationship between the social, economic, and cultural elements to develop the city in a certain way; by implementing new specific cultural policies, transforming it into an entrepreneurial and creative city. Local authorities have according to her intended to influence the population's perception of themselves and their contributions as to create a functioning and prosperous city. This is done by influencing its inhabitants through cultural transformations and a focus on political and economic logic (Balibrea, 2017:02). Minder substantiates Catalans' strong feelings for the city of Barcelona when he writes that strengthened ties to the city, claiming that Barcelona is full of people committed to improving their city without wanting Catalan

independence (Minder, 2017: 154). The connection to the city of Barcelona and not Catalonia the region comes to a manipulated image of the local citizen mixed with a focus on voluntarism, according to Balibrea. The shift also affects social movements; from Francoism left-wing movements, and a numerous number of individuals came together in new social movements aiming for a "change for the better" (2017:17).

These strategies from the local government have led to personal investments through events of collective actions. If one take politics out of the picture, Balibrea interprets events of collective actions as the controlling and converting, in. the creation of Barcelona as an entrepreneurial neoliberal subject. In this case, the subject is capitalising on being in opposition, maintaining Catalans as being in opposition (Balibrea, 2017:17). Following this, the historical positioning of Catalans in opposition gets stimulated by capitalistic interests and neoliberal processes such as the Olympics. The cultural event in 1992, contributed to a systematic re-definition on an institutional level, where re-identifying the city and its public spaces through architecture and urban planning, included political, social, and economic discourses. This has given Barcelona a distinct cultural capital regarding "a way of life" and involves the production of the everyday (Balibrea, 2017: 03) The Olympics became formative for a specific "Barcelonian-ness" with an image stemming from intentional branding, which has pulled on culture and local people to maintain, distribute, and produce a particular economy and commodities. The cultural capital also has links to the city's historical image of Barcelona, and its role as the capital of Catalonia as a nation without a State (Balibrea, 2017:18), thus, creating further contention, through the process which has contributed to mass tourism and gentrification of local neighbourhoods. Simas, Oliveira, and Cano-Hila argue that cultural, historical, and entertainment events have given Barcelona the branding as an attractive and dynamic summer destination (2021:118). The Barcelonian-ness and image of Barcelona as a vibrant summer destination, resembles much of the image I held in mind while entering the field.

Tourism boomed after the Olympics and caught speed from 2010 to 2016 a time when 9,065,650 tourists visited the city. In 2017 alone, 24 million euros was collected in tax on tourist establishments, making the industry very profitable. Simultaneously as tourism gave economic gain, conflicts occurred due to the increasing costs of living (Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila, 2021:118). The branding combined with history, a focus on voluntarism through politics also

links with activism and the issue of independence. Making them interconnected on both levels of my inquiries, in the streets and in the struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat. An example that shows such connections on an individual basis is how in the early 2000s Ada Colau was a far-left activist (Catalan politician representing Barcelona en Comú, Mayor of Barcelona since 13 June 2015). She led an association protesting mass tourism and the commodification of the Gothic quarter and evictions. After winning the election, Colau declared to freeze all construction of hotels (Minder, 2017:165). Then in an interview from 2016, she said that she was never pro-independence nor pro-nationalism; she instead wanted to transcend borders and would not prioritize independence over social issues such as inequality. Nevertheless, she took part in the 2016 Diada and rejected Madrid's denial of Catalans' right to vote on their future (Minder, 2017:167). I argue that the blurred boundaries in the case of Catalan pro-independence is maintained by the issues Balibrea and Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila highlights, and that the elements brought on by the Olympic shift, can be seen in how the local social movements use the streets.

CHAPTER TWO

Social Movements and Catalan Pro-Independence

Social Movement Theory

The essence of social movement theory, is as Max Weber summarised seen as dynamic influences that dissolve or shake pre-established modes of behaviour, stimulating (sometimes rapid) changes (Giddens, 1982:87). Adding to this a Weberian understanding of States, acknowledges their power in the “monopoly of legitim use of force” (Lewellen, 2003: 127). Social movements can be said to disrupt the current and pre-established modes of behaviour, through what Lewellen explain as reconceptualisation of power (understood as the ability to affect the actions and decisions of others) to create a sense of control and autonomy (Lewellen, 2003:115). The definition here, is therefore that social movements are dynamic influences that

seek to change pre-established modes of action and stimulate change. Their counterpart, the State, has a monopoly on violence, therefore are subgroups created to reconceptualize power and regain a sense of autonomy and control.

Collective actions in the context of social movements, has according to A. Giddens, two major theoretical differences (studies usually research one or the other), either rebel or revolutionary movements. Rebellions are usually seen as uprisings without a goal to overthrow nor reform existing government and its institutions. Revolutions on the other hand, do. The social and identity movements we see today seek social transformation as we see today came about with the ideas of equality, democracy, and universal rights, ideas that have been applied systematically by movements aiming for political and social innovations (Giddens, 1982:88). Studies of these types of movements originate, as Ståle Knudsen (2018) highlights from the 1960's. These studies analysed social movements as transformative, looked at powers of resistance within marginal groups, social movements potentials for trying out innovative ideas, and their ability to usher change, as well as being defenders of place (Knudsen, 2018: 506). Since then, a change of focus has occurred from "new social movements" to connecting collective actions to other fields, such as capitalism and changing ideologies. In this thesis a focus on class-based struggles and the neoliberal forces in a capitalist environment will be used.

Colin Barker (2013) argues the importance of connecting social movement to class dimensions by highlighting the benefits of applying historical materialism to look at "emergent properties" that are independent of social movements and exist above the individuals who compose them. Moreover, the focus lets researchers look to the movements' inner workings, such as their inner sets of rules, patterns of responsibilities and division of labour (Barker et al., 2013: 47). Bringing into the picture modes of production, the role of family, neighbourhoods, and colleagues in the making and remaking can be beneficial since it removes the impression of social movements as irrational or emotional outbursts, but as rational forms of politics affected by capitalistic influences (Barker et. al 2013:83). Also, class creates subgroups where individuals share everyday struggles. C. Tilly sees social movements to first occur in such subgroups. And States that collective action that exist within "multiple sovereignty" can only occur when a government does not have complete control over its subjects (Giddens, 1982:89). In the case of the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat we see how the historical narratives creates a split

in national identity, as well as the political decentralization through autonomous regions of power creates an opportunity for subgroups of national identity to thrive within the country. I find the notion of “multiple sovereignty” to be another way of understanding the creation of separate spheres of power, going back to Lewellen and why reconceptualisation of power.

The ability to reconceptualise power takes on the creation of local and non-threatening systems which are maintained without governmental involvement. Such local power constellations survive through the creation of separate communities that give people status, make decisions, perform rituals and ceremonies (Lewellen, 2003:118). The survival element in this is relevant due to struggles along broad historical lines of political contention. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly have provided a meta-theory to explain historical political contention giving a framework for understanding broad change processes brought on by social movements. The authors state that social movements, revolutions, and similar phenomena grow out of roots in less visible episodes of institutional contention (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2004:09). Their main theory applies to broad change processes, and could be applied to understand the theme historically, though, since I aim to explore the streets and the everyday, the model is not relevant to the thesis, but their perspective on the creation of political identities in the household is.

Their theory about identity formation in the household is constructed out of empirical correlations between routine social life – detached and embedded identities with contentious episodes. Showing that routine-contentious and embedded-detached distinctions are logically independent, and that the embeddedness in households supplies the basis of identities, operating in routine social life, rather than in the sphere of politics. The households' formative role in the formation of political identities is influenced when authorities engage family members through military services or processes that affect family relationships, such as urban renewal projects, thus making the relationship with authorities contentious (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2004:135). Anthropology rarely use static models and this thesis is not an exception to the rule. What is interesting with the theory is using it to interpret how interlocutors view the role of households in the formation of their own political identities. Since McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, states that political identity and membership in social movements influence several aspects of social life and citizenship (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly:136). As the next section will show, social movements in Barcelona react to cases of inequality, neoliberal developments such as real-

estate development, urban planning, and local marketing strategies. By arguing that collective actions are formed by the resistance to disruptions on households and everyday routines, social movements despite of their overt or political claims, seek to regain autonomy and control by challenging the State and reconceptualise power relations.

Social Movements in Barcelona

The political evolution in Catalonia has developed from socialist to neoliberal, bringing with it, a base of grassroots movements. By distancing from class-based politics, the alterations also occurred within movements, from being left-wing and connected to anti-Francoism to being movements that wanted a change for the better (Balibrea, 2017:17). Which can be hard to uncover since social movements can be overtly political and clear in their claims. Starting in the 1980s, new urban social movements appeared in Barcelona. Significant to this development, was the evolution of the squatter movement and the creation of Centros Sociales Okupas (Squatters' Social Centers); a centre that offered individuals an alternative infrastructure by squatting houses in search of shelter and for the provision of services. Furthermore, a traditional worker movement in Spain called Coop57 reappeared during the years 2005–2009. And as a reaction to the ongoing economic global crisis that set off in 2007 and 2008, a new movement, the 15M movement emerged in 2011, requesting decent and affordable housing. This movement, also known as the one of the *indignats* (in Catalan meaning Indignant), was born from people occupying public plazas all over Spain. During an occupation of Plaça Catalunya participants without previous experience became mobilised and social unrest influenced the public opinion. Local neighbourhoods started to come together and create communities for more control over housing prices to get more autonomy. This strengthening organisation that where assembly-based, like the left-wing pro-Catalan independence organization Coordinadora d'Unitat Popular (Coordinator of People's Unity, CUP), that later entered the governmental institutions, and is now critical actors in both the autonomous (read regional) and municipal (local) governments.

The Catalan pro-independence movement was rebooted in 2010, after a court ruling from the Spanish Constitutional Court rejected the proposed amendment of the *Estatut* (Statute of

Autonomy for Catalonia granted in The Transition to all the different Spanish former “regions”) and its 14 articles, which were aimed at changing the financial, judiciary and territorial rights of Catalonia in the direction of more autonomy. The proposal was redeemed unconstitutional by the Spanish court, to reactionary actions from Catalans which evolved into a struggle of nationality. Harris refers to the Catalan slogans used in the protest; “*Som una nació. Nosaltres decidim*” (“We are a nation. We decide”) when more than one million people demonstrated in the streets of Barcelona two weeks after the rejection (Harris, 2014: 242). The court ruling can be seen as a turning point. After this, small local ballots for independence occurred in Catalan towns. this was not well received by the Spanish State, and the polls experienced episodes where neo-Fascist counterdemonstrations were bussed in to oppose the elections and allowed access to the events by the police. Despite of this, voting's kept on and the events took on a festive character. In 2011, around 500 municipalities had unofficially voted in favour of Catalan independence and optimism for more autonomy in Catalonia grew, which according to Harris new pro-independence organisations took on the annual Diada as to show force (Harris, 2014: 278).

The ANC was formed in 2012 and took the name from the *Assemblea de Catalunya*, an organisation that had resisted Franco’s dictatorship, thus honouring the historical alliance of Catalan democrats (Harris, 2014: 278). ANC is one of the two main organisations for Catalan independence, the other is *Òmnium Cultural (OC)* (Minder, 2017: 5). As Minder highlights these organisations are grassroot citizen initiatives. But critiques have been made connecting the movement to the Catalan bourgeoisie and accusations of economical motivation behind them. As Minder points out there are relations between OC’s and ANC’s members-with the Catalan administration that may question their legitimacy as a grassroots movement. For example, the former leader of ANC Carme Forcadell who contributed to make the Diada has shifted between street activism and political office several times, she also became president of the Catalan Parliament in 2015. OC has had leaders connected to politics like Muriel Casals, whom was its president and went into Catalonia's autonomous parliament in 2015 (Minder, 2017: 13). Critical voices have highlighted that it is problematic that separatist politicians use grassroot organisations to gain political power (Minder, 2017: 7). The first Diada organised by ANC, in 2012, called *Marxa cap a la independència* (March Towards Independence) named after the first post-Franco-freedom march (Minder, 2017: 2). The turnout is disagreed upon, organisers claim two million people joined, the police 1.5 million, and the Spanish government counted 600,000

people (Minder, 2017: 4). During this demo, banners with the sentence “*Catalunya, nou estat d'Europa*” (Catalonia, a new State of Europe) was used. Showing peoples upset about State authorised budget cuts and the high degree of unemployment in the region, aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008 (Minder, 2017: 3). As the Catalan pro-independence gained momentum, it demanded political leadership.

Artur Mas, the Catalan President from the Liberal party *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) took on a significant role. He first appealed to Madrid after the 2012 *Diada* for fiscal negotiations, met rejection on all points by the then Spanish President, Mariano Rajoy. At the end of September 2012, Artur Mas said that "the Parliament of Catalonia confirms the need for the people of Catalonia to be able to freely and democratically determine their collective future and urges the government to hold a referendum during the following legislature" (Harris, 2014: 280). Since then, a path towards a freedom referendum created. During the next local election, Mas ran with the promise of a referendum. The *Partit Popular de Catalunya* (PPC) (the regional branch of the Spanish Conservative *Partido Popular* (SCPP), People's Party (PP) and the Liberals *Ciutadans* (LC) (the regional branch of the Spanish *Ciudadanos*, meaning Citizens, and created precisely in Catalonia against Catalan separatism) were against, but *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) (the union of Catalanist Liberals and Conservatives), *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (Catalanist Social-Democrats in their majority, ERC), *Iniciativa per Catalunya – Els Verds* (the former Communists in alliance with the Greens, ICV), and CUP were in favour. In the election CUP won over young voters with an anti-system discourse, and Mas' party-coalition, CiU, lost 12 seats. Still all parties in favour of the referendum gained a total of seats, and Artur Mas remained president of the *Generalitat* (Harris, 2014: 281). At this time, PP was in government in Spain and responded to the notion of a freedom referendum as an unconstitutional and illegal act.

At the next *Diada*, organised by the ANC in 2013, 1.6 million people joined together in a human chain of 480 kilometres between Catalonia's northern and southern border (Harris, 2014: 283). This year the CiU, ICV, and the ERC requested a non-binding consultation on Catalan independence, but Madrid again dismissed the request. The next *Diada* in 2014 which also marked the 300th anniversary of the Siege of Barcelona from in the War of Succession (1701 - 1713 /1715). 1.8 million people took part, forming a massive V for “vote” and “victory” along the Diagonal in Barcelona (Harris, 2014: 285). The annual celebration and engagement were

maintained, and in 2017 the Catalan independence referendum was held, with votes pro-independence winning the election. On the election day, reports of police brutality and human damages was all over the world. After counting the votes, the Catalan Generalitat declared Catalonia as a sovereign State, which was met with a strong judicial response by the Spanish State, incarcerating all political leaders involved in the referendum.

As Vaczi and Watson confirms, the post-referendum demonstrations and street-fights occurred because of the Constitutional Court decided to imprison Catalan pro-independence politicians (2021:602). The Spanish Supreme Court sentenced six members of the Catalan government, included the speaker of the Catalan Parliament, and two influential social activists to imprisonment, which among other events led to violent clashes between protesters and the Spanish Police known as the Battle of Urquinaona. Five days in a row, the massive protests took place at Urquinaona Square (Cabrera, 2019). Police reported over 500,000 people congregated in the city to join the battle, numerous of them from elsewhere in Catalonia. During the Battle about 800 garbage cans were set on fire, 107 police cars damaged, the Sagrada Familia was blocked to visitors and those who gathered in the streets shouted: “*El carrers sempre seran nostres!*” (“The streets will always be ours!”) (Burgen and Jones, 2019).

Changing Views on Social Movements

Until now the focus has been on local history and context, but in a globally connected world, international currents with their own neoliberal agendas have an impact both States and populations. Therefore, this section will address the international context of collective actions as a form of resistance, from a critical perspective on States' handling of the crises that leads to uprisings. COVID-19, with its health and economic consequences, hit a Spain that barely had recovered from the 2008 economic crash. On top of this, other global challenges are increasing, such as geopolitical tensions between Europe and other continents, growing protectionism, trade disputes, the return of populism, and widening socio-economic divides throughout western societies. In OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), “Report to Ministers 2020” it is uttered a concern about the general public's growing scepticism regarding

politicians and leaders' capabilities to handle current issues. As the report argues, people are increasingly questioning citizenship, the social contract, governing institutions, global and local economical markets. Furthermore, social media and digital developments has increased the unrest and levels of anxiety in some populations.

The OECD report goes on to critique State policymakers for their inability to deliver on domestic and global challenges. Despite of a general global economic growth, the international community has been unable to sustain a healthy recovery after 2008. Instead, imbalances and instabilities are accumulating, and fiscal inequalities is maintained (OECD, 2020:36). Not only have States shown themselves to be inadequate in dealing with the financial crisis. They are shifting regarding their perspectives on human rights, such as the right to public assembly, especially true within the context of the pandemic, where health concerns are the political priority. According to Amnesty, governments all over the world are increasingly viewing collective actions as a threat to the established order, considering them as unpredictable because they can expose eventual abuse by States to a global audience through social- and mass media (Amnesty, 2017: 23). International challenges are linked to local ones, through pop culture and the economic markets. Mixed with the various challenges that global neoliberalism brings. Furthermore, since the world is intricately connected, international ties are also shown in the streets, highlighting different movements global ties to each other and their sympathy.

When it comes to the Catalan pro-independence movement it has had ties to and has been compared with the independence movement in Hong Kong. Journalist S. Lau writes in the South China Morning Post that on the streets of Barcelona in 2018, flags of the Bauhinia, symbolising Hong Kong's independence movement was seen during demonstrations. In response to this gesture, protesters in Hong Kong organised a sit-in in a financial district, to show solidarity with the claims for Catalan independence from Spain (Lau, 2018). Independence movements link with other separatist social movements. They share not only objects of symbolism but also protest practices that applies to other causes. In 2020 identity movements like the Black Lives Matter Movement (BML) in the United States, grew to be a global phenomenon, where public spaces get used to organise mass mobilisations of a distinctive character, and getting a high degree of media attention. Also, through social media new individuals are being mobilised into political action through both identity and independence movements. I suggest that using public space to

understand the dynamics these forms of political actions can provide new insights into how, events can develop into mass mobilisations where performances such as attacks on public buildings and battles between people and the police must be seen as formed by the individuals' earlier experiences as well as the use of repertoires available to their identities (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2004:139). Repertoires those technological developments make it easier for people to obtain and attach to certain identities.

Going back to the States changed perspective regarding the human right to assembly, the new ways of them handling such struggles connect to new surveillance technologies and the use of the judicial system. Amnesty International takes up how applying the judicial system to target and delegitimise opposition by handling collective resistance with means of mass surveillance, resulting in new dangers for participants in practises of collective actions. In some cases, judicial reprisals, and labels such as criminals or terrorists get used on individuals the State views as a threat to traditional values or national security (Amnesty International 2017:5). Furthermore, the tendency towards criminalisation of socio-political involvement has been opposed by populations. For example, in early 2021, “Kill the Bill”-protests occurred in the UK, with demonstrations in cities such as London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol. The changes brought on by the bill gave among other things, the police the right to impose a start and finish time on demonstrations, set noise limits and apply such rules even if it acted out by one person. The bill also makes it a crime when someone fails to follow restrictions, they "ought to have known about" and it includes making it an offense to be "intentionally or recklessly causing a public nuisance." (Casciani, 2021). Spain can be said to follow in the lines of the same development.

The jailing of Pablo Hasél in February 2021, is one example of judicial persecution. The Catalan rapper was incarcerated after being found guilty of insulting the Spanish monarchy, the police and was guilty of glorifying terrorism through expressing support for the now-disbanded terrorist groups ETA, through songs and writing tweets (Matjašič, 2021). In reaction to the Spanish State judicial persecution of Pablo Hasél several protests occurred in Barcelona in support of his right to freedom of speech and in support to the Catalan perspective in art. When opinions, expressions and art can be met with imprisonment, such episodes become eerily reminiscent of the Franco-regime. The Spain State has moved over the last decade towards (re-

)tightening the populations rights to free speech, freedom of assemble and expression, as Matjašič highlights, has been a significant backsliding on civil rights and democratic standards in Spain. He also highlights how Spanish institutions have treated street protests and other forms of resistance, not as an expression of a guaranteed right under international and European Union law, but as a threat to the society. Developments in Spain took a turn after the financial crisis, and collective actions through uprisings and protest led to the Spanish government and PP to implement the Citizen Security Law (known among the people as the gag-law) in 2015.

The legislation restricts the rights of peaceful assemblies by establishing a complex bureaucratic application process to be able to protests legally. It also entails fines for those who do not notify the authorities of collective actions in advance. According to Matjašič, the law lets the State retribute if a protest results in "serious disturbances of public safety" and participants can be obliged to pay between 600 to 30,000 euros. The law also makes it illegal to take or share photos of the police. After it was implemented, the Spanish authorities has also shut down hundreds of websites and the law has contributed to censorship of music, writing as well as self-censorship by journalists (Matjašič, 2021). The developments that are mentioned in this section can be counterproductive, since as McAdam, Tilly and Tully points out, historically State induced oppression tends to create the reification of resistance in the oppressed communities. Furthermore, the responses to the State interference and judicial expansion can lead to a hardening within social movements, as well as make them shift to riskier tactics. Challenges with collective action being met by the States with the additional means of power such as increased surveillance, may contribute to unmotivating effects on the organising and mobilising side of the issue, but if general means of suppression is inflicted onto people by States, it can also lead moderate individuals into extremism (2004:69). Thus, in this perspective States can be seen as co-creators of the potential risks they are aiming to avoid.

CHAPTER THREE

The Streets are Where it Happens

Where It Happens

October brought new COVID-19 measures. The authorities handled these with fines to those who did not follow them, according to *Ajuntament de Barcelona's* website, non-compliance regarding face masks were fined with 100 euros and consumption of alcoholic drinks in public spaces gives fines between 500- and 3,000 euros, (<https://www.barcelona.cat/covid19/>). Stories regarding people getting fined frequently got shared in my circle of friends and interlocutors. There was also a growing number of people in the service industry getting frustrated; as Anna said about the new covid-measures, “it always affects the poorest the most.” My online research led to the discovery of a protest of the new measures. What started as a peaceful protest with around 1500 people at Plaça de Jaume evolved into vandalism in the city-center and resulted in the looting of a Decathlon and a Footlocker in the Gothic Quarter. Kallianos and Fumanti argue that by using public space and its materiality a process happens that co-shape the production of collective action and individuals' subjectivities. Furthermore, they argue that radical activities, such as arson and looting are co-shaped by everyday experiences of public space and entail eventful potentialities. The potentialities manifest when a rupture with the existing social and spatial constellations and power relations happens. Moreover, such actions reflect a unique way of articulating as well as performing political (Kallianos & Fumanti 2021:03).

As an alternative way of performing politics, radical events, challenging power relations and co-shaping individuals' subjectivity through collective action in public space. This happens because of the events connected to and ruptures with the everyday. As we will see, individuals perform in specific ways that violate the norms of normal use of public space this evening. Upon our arrival at Jaume I Metro Station, an explosion sound went off. We cross the street and see a man, that calmly set a garbage bin on fire. This makes me think about the t-shirt from my visit at Mai Moriem with Aleix and how he told me that the burning garbage cans has become a symbol of the struggle between the Spanish State and Catalans, as well as a symbol of people in Barcelona's engagement in collective actions. By the bin, a group of men in dark clothes with covered faces were barricading the road using big flowerpots and fences. We stand parallel to them at Carrer de Ramon Mas (The road facing the streets that lead to Plaça de Sant Jaume,

where the Catalan government's building is facing the City Council). Here, groups of people (some noticeably young) watch the protest. Some of the spectators' drink beer, dance while listening to music on a portable speaker, and film each other at the protest with their smartphones. Discussing youth's role in pro-independence movement with Guillem, he tells me that he pays attention to the younger people involved in the ANC where he is a member. According to him, young Barcelonans have grown up in the middle of the struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan. Generalitat and has gotten used to events of protest and demonstrations. "It is just so common for them, which makes it interesting to see how they will contribute to the movement down the line." Also, Aleix talked about youth at protests. He believed that some of the youngest there did not have their own political opinion outside their families' views on the Catalan pro-independence movement, and that participating on a protest was more about being "where it happens," which he connects to social media.

Sharing from events on social media was also done by the police. By following their live-time reports on Twitter, we read about the burning, before we smell the smoke from the Christmas lights, that was destroyed by some of the protesters at Urquinaona. *—Libertat!* (freedom) resounded between the people on each side of the road, the spectators, and the protester. Since this was a revolt opposing the new covid rules, this was not meant as "freedom from the Spanish State," per se. It is the Catalan Generalitat responsibility to reinforce covid-measures in the region and to control that the rules are followed through, the police force Mossos de'Squadra (the Spanish police force under the Catalan Generalitat's authority). The screams became louder as the police stopped their vans in the middle of the road went out of their vehicles. The officers were wearing protective equipment such as bulletproof vests, shields, helmets, and carried firearms showing their position as practitioners of legitim force. Protected by their armour, they also symbolise that they are protected by the Spanish State, the Catalan Generalitat and is on the right side of the law. Since Barcelona has experienced numerous episodes of police brutality, individuals are aware that clashes with the police can have severe consequences in the form of incarceration and harm to the body. To escape bodily and judicial harm the revolt took on the form of a cat and mouse game. Where the "mice" (participants in the protest) made pranks when the "cats" (police) were gone, and when the cats returned, the mice ran and hid.

A woman with two friends passed by us on Ramon Mas as she threw firecrackers at the police. Three loud bangs followed, and they ran away around the corner of the building where we stood. Police officers re-entered their vehicles and drove fast around the same corner. Minutes after, the same woman strolled down the sidewalk with her middle finger pointed at the police. Acts like this was repetitive and seemed to be part of the protest practises. As J. Jeffrey brings into the picture violent performances that involve risk-taking is traditionally associated with male rites of passage and the creation of masculine political identities (2005:416). Contrasting the view on masculine political identities by the example above, I wish to argue that Barcelona with their strong feminist movements and a history of female activism, is instead celebrated and encouraged. Talking with Aleix, he was proud to tell me about his family's involvement in feminist initiatives during the Franco regime. Aleix great grandmother was a member in the *Mujeres Libertarias* (Free Women) a female anarchist organization operating in Spain from 1936 to 1939. This shows that he has a historical and familial attachment which substantiates his own political identity. Aleix also shares how stories of her inspired him to be Antifa, to fight against fascism and to self-identify as a male feminist. Also, Anna identifies with the feminist movement, though she is against an independent Catalonia because she cannot see how independence can resolve more pressing issues, like gender inequalities, poverty, and immigration.

Starting out as a demonstration the event developed into a riot making the situation extraordinary, thus creating a rupture with the ordinary. Passers-by and workers were disturbed by the commotion. This was evident as a young child started crying from the loud explosion sounds. She and her parents and siblings were worried and frightened as they hurried along Ramon Mas, as fast as possible. Another example of disruptions with the ordinary, was the aspect of fear that arise when the police got out of their vehicles and entered the streets. Then, people reacted by lifting their hands high above their heads, to clearly show they were not involved in the protest, a practise that was not observed relative to the activists. Performances and protest practices aimed exclusively at the police, has been shaped by the knowledge and memory of previous episodes of police brutality. Another break with everyday life was the scene at Urquinaona, with scorched smell and smoke from piles of burning Christmas lights, as well as police barriers set up to stop traffic, the street resembled a scene from a dystopian movie.

Furthermore, the metro stations became closed, affecting the populations mobility, right before the curfew. We discovered first that the Metro station at Urquinaona was closed. We walked to the next Metro at Passeig de Gràcia, discovering it was also closed. There we talked to the metro security officers that guarded the subway and explained to us that all the inner-city metro stations were out of order due to the riot.

At first sight, the event seemed to be initiated exclusively from an economic sector severely affected by State health measures which is correct, but the measures (national and regional) have affected more than the well-being of Catalanian commerce and workers. The pandemic has enhanced previous and existing struggles, thus stirring up feelings and memories regarding the police symbolising the State and feelings towards independence. Thus, arguing that disentangling ethnic nationalists' forms of protest from corona measures cannot be done since businesses, jobs, social and cultural activities are at the very heart of the reproduction of Catalan ethnic nationalism. Collective actions and dynamics as seen in this event, can be interpreted in the light of Kallianos and Fumanti as “criticism against the injustice and authoritarianism ingrained in everyday life” (2021:7). Thus, criticising the Catalan Generalitat handling the high number of COVID-19 infections to relieve the pressure on healthcare by inducing measures led others (especially in the service industry) into a situation of poverty, unemployment, and bankruptcy. The accumulation of injustices with high fines as punishment can be interpreted as an extension of unfair authoritarianism, as a significant amount of people lost their jobs, paying such fines would be even more challenging. Kallianos and Fumanti, see violent outcomes such as arson and looting as connect to spatiotemporal political dynamics (2021:11). In this sense, the event can be viewed as an attempt to regain control. By using public space to enhance the new struggles an entire industry. An industry connected to the main source of income since the regional economy has been made dependent on tourism, through governing institutions' commitment to branding Barcelona. Through mobilising and participating in collective actions in public space, these dimensions questioned and challenged the management of the pandemic.

The Capacity of Mobilising People



The pictures show attendees in the street demonstration during La Diada with a poster from the event.

On September 11th I woke up to Antoni Gaudí's architectural masterpiece, the Sagrada Família draped in red and yellow stripes. The Catalan flag named the Senyera was there to symbolise the annual celebration of La Diada, Catalonia's national day. The ANC usually organises the Diada. In 2020, they had to meet safety requirements in conjunction with the ongoing pandemic. This was resolved by dispersing crowds throughout various locations, with distinct programs to support different causes. The demonstration I went to at Aragón Street between Passeig de Gràcia and Pau Claris, used the public space in front of the General Social Security Treasury as a statement, not only about Catalan independence but also, better pensions and social services. Walking to the event, the Senyera was everywhere. On cakes at the bakery, on buildings, terraces, and on people's bodies; in the form of facemasks, pins, T-shirts. Some people wore the flag itself as a cloak on the back, like Catalan superheroes. Entering the closed-off Aragón Street, a group of young men guided people into a tent. On a table laid several lists for their signing campaign, to get Catalan political leaders out of prison. After the 2017 freedom referendum, incidences of collective actions have been connected to the treatment of the imprisoned leaders, as mentioned before. Although, by doing a signing campaign the ANC takes a new route. The Diada became an opportunity to gain provable support through signatures, so that they could handle the case, following procedures in the judicial arena instead of battling it out in the streets.

Behind the tent, people were gathered around a stage which were under the observation of police officers and representatives from the press. Inside a fenced area in the middle of the street, green spots were spray-painted on the asphalt in ca. two-meter intervals. Dots that marked

where participants could stand and still follow social distancing rules. The lack of dots on the road made people gather outside the fence, politely trying to uphold social distancing there though households, friends and families sat close together in groups. The ANC had organised speeches which were held in Catalan, the crowd paid attention and reciprocated with applause, shouting, and clapping. For the occasion, blue t-shirts were made as well as posters with the text; “11S 2020 *el deure de construir un futur millor el dret a ser independents*”. In English, the message reads; “11S 2020 to build a better future and the right to be independent”. The text combines independence with “a change for the better” which is an element of what Balibrea addresses as, the evolution of Catalan politics into a neoliberal direction (Balibrea, 2017: 17) I argue that the ANC align their direction with the governmental institutions. Despite of Guillem telling me that the ANC is a strictly one goal movement with the goal being independence, they use the vocabulary stemming from the marketing of Barcelona as an innovative and creative city and challenge social services by retaking the space outside the building.

In other words, the Diada had characters of both political and neoliberal influences. Being at exactly this location was more than merely a celebration of the Catalan national identity. The event was a combination of these elements. The involvement of people of all ages, elderly, adults, children and even pets gave the event intergenerational importance, which can contribute to a stronger feeling of being one community. While talking to Guillem afterwards, about the experiences at the Diada, he highlighted how skilled the ANC was in their ability to mobilise people of all ages and that since, “our only goal is to achieve the independence of Catalonia our main strength is the capacity of mobilising people in order to achieve the objective.” When I asked him about the impact of the pandemic on their movement, he answered that the pandemic had brought on some difficulties on the ANC’s capacity to mobilise, but that nevertheless they “managed to organise the biggest demonstration in Europe on September 11th, while keeping all safety measures. “We in the ANC consider this a considerable success.” The ability to mobilise across generations is also holds an historical element, some Catalan elderlies have negative memories of the Franco-regime, and the stories they tell are of oppression and assimilation, which also fuels the dichotomy between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat through family and friendship bonds.

By referencing previous Diada's, Guillem redirects to his initial point of mobilising and says that "we prefer to put millions of people out in the streets to reinforce our claims," highlighting the word millions. The capacity of the ANC to mobilise is something Guillem is proud of, and it connects to historical events of mass mobilisation and riots against the Spanish State. In the recent years modern technology assist in this work, especially during the pandemic. Guillem tells me that "the digital has an even stronger role because of the pandemic, since the restrictions have forced us to seek new ways of social organisation. It has become clear that the internet and social media now, has a key role in the matter of independence." Since the ANC's activities in the streets became reduced, they plan to use innovative actions that can lead them to their goal. Guillem is extremely optimistic about the movement's position, regardless of the difficulties they face and lets me know why. "You know, the Spanish State is weaker because of its actions and policies. It has a weaker democracy. Too much power is in the hands of judges, and there is a weaker legal protection of the citizens, this combined with huge debt and overwhelming corruption will make them crumble." By using an analogy, he tries to make the situation clearer; "it is like a building with weak foundations, at the risk of falling at any time." This analogy resembles the song by Lluís Llach, "if we all pull, it (the Spanish State) will fall" showing the relevance of the song as the official hymn for Catalan Independence and showing how the Catalan pro-independence movement view the potential of change. If they only persevere, the Spanish State will crumble in the end.

Guillem explains how the ANC plan to influence their cause further, he is especially interested in actions that can take power away from the State by weaken its economy. Guillem thinks this is the same method that the Spanish State does to them and follow up with a focus on non-violent actions. "You know, there is no need for violence, which we (the ANC) are totally against." Being a grassroots and anti-violent movement, Guillem stresses that their actions are a matter of morals. "It is just a matter of doing the right actions and policies." One strategy Guillem prefers to use, with financial consequences for the Spanish State, is to influence people to stop contracting services such as electricity, gas, telephone, and internet from big Spanish companies and instead use Catalan companies. He says that "this makes our own economy grow, and it helps our language because local companies offer their services in Catalan, not only in Spanish." He strengthens this argument by saying, "keeping our language and culture is vital to maintaining a national feeling." Which also (in addition to mobilising people) is a critical

element of the process towards independence, according to Guillem. Although, the pandemic affected the Diada, the ANC managed to organise it by gathering people in several minor policy-focused events. Also, the unexpected context of the pandemic has given the ANC a more precise digital direction and an opportunity to change their tactics, and to promote non-violent, financial actions to reconceptualise and take back power. Steering the economy in a certain direction by selecting Catalan services the movement, moves their strategies to other fields than the streets, though it is highlighted that collective actions are a potent show of their ability to mobilise. Therefore, the argument here is that the streets maintain the struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat, and influence the political direction, also in alignment with neoliberalism and the idea of a “change for the better.”

“Catalunya no t'è rei!”



The pictures show people burning the image of King Felipe, and a group posing for the press.

As the historical chapter shows, Catalans' relationship with the Spanish royal family is complex and contested since the County of Barcelona and the Kingdom of Aragon made up the Crown of Aragon. Though the Crowns of Castille and Aragon became one under the same sovereigns in 1479, more contemporary issues stemming from the transfer of power to the Bourbon-descendants have kept this distinction alive. In connection with the King's visit to

Barcelona during New Economic Week Innovation Awards 2020, two protests were organised through a collaboration of several organizations and identity movements. The first was on a Thursday evening at Plaça de Jaume, outside the political government buildings in Barcelona's Gothic Quarter. On the square between Casa de la Ciutat (The Barcelona City Hall) and Palau de la Generalitat, where the Catalan Government is seated, blue lights decorated the buildings and lighted up the Plaça. An elderly man approaches us with a poster that says; “*Catalunya no t'è rei!*” (“Catalonia has no king!”). The design was black and white, with the image of the Kings' face upside down at the left and the depiction of a lighter in the low-right corner combined with the text; “*encén aqui*” which means burn here, along with an arrow explaining where to light the paper on fire. In the lower-left corner, the website: <https://encartellem.cat/>, was written. This is a website where anyone can download the anti-King posters. The man started talk to me in Catalan, I smiled with my eyes over the facemask, trying to answer, but he soon realised that I was not from Barcelona. He bowed his head, saying “*gràcies*” (thank you), and hurried on, handing out the rest of his posters to the attendants and placing anti-royalty stickers on the surrounding building walls and light poles.

When the burning of the images portraying the King started, individuals put their posters one by one, on the fire. The man standing next to me, kindly wanted to lend me his lighter, so we walked together, lighting the paper up and placing our posters on the fire. The fire grew as more people did the same, and blitz from press cameras lit up the scene. A group of participants posed willingly before the press letting them get the shots they wanted. The representatives from the media started to act frantic, wanting pictures of every little detail, running away, coming back, pressing into the ring, out again, all in the hope to capture sensational images. The press situation created another burning circle away from the media circus, then the burning multiplied into two fires, and after a while three fires. A strong smell of burnt paper fills the air.

Talking to Aleix about the relationship between Catalans and the Spanish royal family he is strict when he says that; “the King has no place here in Catalonia!” He was eager to talk about the connection the royal family has to Francoism and the oppression of Catalan culture and language. Aleix also stressed how currently the King's father had been under investigation for money laundering, before he said with disgust that; “the former King has hunted and killed wild

elephants in Africa!” Being a vegan, this was especially important for Aleix, who kept on telling stories of the previous King, also being unfaithful to the queen. Aleix's stories portrait the bad moral and ethical judgments by the former King, which is then related to an interpretation of the misuse of aristocratic and feudal privileges. In this way the King and royal family is portrayed as unsympathetic and unattached to their people during challenging times. As seen with conversation to Guillem moral has a key role in the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan pro-independence movement. Doing the right thing, is also wanting a change for the better. We leave the protest when the fires ebb out, on the Metro I read about the event in the local online newspaper who estimated, between 100 and 150 attendees this evening, this seemed to me as a correct count. Because of the low attendance that evening, I underestimated the next day's demonstration.

Surveilling Resistance



The pictures show an antifascist flag and colour bombed police vans and the police vans facing a crowd of Catalan pro-independence protesters.

The day after the protest by the Palau de la Generalitat, I expected a small intimate event, but this was not the case. While walking into the street, hundreds were already standing by the thick steel-framed fences that was set up to separate the protest from the street where King Felipe VI and the Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was attending the New Economic Week Innovation Awards (Deutsche Welle, 09.10.2020). In response to their attendance, the ANC had organised a “human chain event,” this Friday morning, where people held each other's hands in a line, running from the train station and down the street, towards the statue of Christopher Columbus near the La Rambla (Barcelona’s famous tourist street). The use of hands and the togetherness of

bodies has become a symbol of the pro-independence movement and is often used as a form of protest that aims to anchor bodily practises in a common objective of solidarity (Vaczi, 2021:608). During the event people stood by the fence facing Mossos d' Escuadra parked vans', which created an extra barrier between the King and his protesting subjects. The fence and police-vehicles, became symbolic of the Spanish States authority and hierarchal structures, connecting to the monopoly on forms of overt and covert force.

The Estació de França (1929) also known as Barcelona-Término is in the in the El Born neighbourhood, and was built to connect Barcelona to France, serving as a reminder of the historical Bourbon takeover of power in Spain and Catalonia. Rhythmic sounds came from the circulating helicopter and drone surveillance were permanent reminders of State power and turned into a summing beat, accompanying the escalating chanting; “*Barcelona anti fascista!*” (“Barcelona is anti-fascist”), showing ties between the pro-independence movement, history, and memories of the fascist Franco-government. The anti-fascism movement Antifa is strong in Barcelona, and the city has a history of anarchist movements, to which protesters frequently show their homage. Aleix identifies with Antifa and is aware of the tension between anarchist ideologies and the goal of creating a sovereign State. Tough, as Mark Bray explains understanding Antifa, just seeing it as an anti-fascist movement, is not enough. The most important feature, however, is that Antifa fights against fascism and fascist tendencies. Originally Fascists were a charismatic movement, one that was unified by a faith stemming from the myth of the nation. For example, Mussolini said “that to this myth (of nation) (...) we subordinate all the rest” (2017:3). The focus on nationalism by fascist, shows an inherent paradox, when people wanting Catalan nation also to self-identify with Antifa, that is against forms of nationalism. Historically, was fascism as a form of political behaviour marked by obsessive ideas of victimhood and humiliation, acting as nationalist cults that collaborates with elites and abandoned democratic values. They pursued their goals with acts of violence, internal cleansing, and external expansion (Bray, 2017:4) Resistance to fascism and fascist acts, also means for some seen fighting the extension of colonialism, which the Christoffer Columbus Statue is a symbolic monument for.

Aleix says asked me once; “you know that Columbus is seen as a big Spanish hero, right? But he’s colonisation of America led to the genocide of indigenous people. What a hero, ha?”

His ironical tone and statement show that Aleix combines Antifa with anti-colonialism and a resistance to the historical Spanish and fascistic expansion, which is materialised and attached to the Columbus monument. According to him, Neo-Nazis use the statue to protest the left and promote their far-right opinions. The two sides both use public space to fight their wars of symbolic interpretation. Going back to the issue of surveillance and its relation to resistance, Jeffrey highlights how wars of symbolic interpretation is mediated through the media. In other words, media and protesters are advantaging by portraying each other and themselves in certain ways. Social movements are fighting their battles through the mass media and at the same time this is being taken advantage of by the State and the police, who can use and manipulate images to insert narratives that frame protesters as dangerous criminals or terrorists (Jeffery, 2005: 416). These tactics are known by people and used to oppose the State in numerous ways. While having this in mind I argue that there is a co-dependent relationship between social movements, the press and the State, media is often used to stage a narrative intentionally and to gain more attention to a cause, sometimes to the detriment of their participants. Suddenly during the event, a substantial number of media workers marked with “press” came rushing out of the ally to the left of us. Behind them came a large crowd of distinctly black-clad protesters. Their black clothing and black symbolics triggered my curiosity. As the new attendee's merge with the crowd to excited cheers and an exalted applause I ask Aleix about who the protesters in black clothes are, and he tells me that it is a more radical movement than Antifa, that actively uses violence and is called Black Bloc. The violent tactics is something Aleix distances himself from.

Black Bloc is not a social movement according to Jeffrey, but a militant activists' practice, that often utilise forms of performative violence to seek out media attention (Jeffrey, 2005: 414). The group has a stated intention to fight back against State violence with using urban acts of violence. At the same time, they also critique capitalism and neoliberal exploitation. A snippet from the Black Bloc manual highlights that; “some would call this self-defence of the capitalist-State (...) he (the State) exploits you and exterminate without ever being satisfied, the only thing he can receive from you is your violence without any justification” (The Black Bloc Manual). Furthermore, the doctrines in the manual show how to act against the police and provoke disturbances in the street, including how to make and use a Molotov cocktail, as well as tips about "disabling" law officials (Araluce, 2019). The manual also includes dress codes, with a focus on black clothes and covered faces, to avoid recognition by the authorities while doing

violent acts. Jeffrey stresses that performative violence, is a form of meaningful interaction, through which actors construct their social reality based on the available cultural patterns (Jeffrey, 2005:415) Adding to the use of violence, Jeffrey takes up how protesters use symbolic resources to transform the social environment. Such practises also include the dramatization and communication of their social ideas and values. In that regard types of protest practises can be viewed as a mode of communication. Performative violence can therefore be seen as communicative acts of resistance, that seek social transformation by staging symbolic confrontations (Jeffrey, 2005:415). The Catalan pro-independence movement (and the ANC) has marketed itself as being a peaceful non-violent movement but as the people from the Black Bloc entered the protest they were met by applause and cheering, showing that they have support from the non-violent fraction of the Catalan pro-independence movement.

The Black Bloc as a set of tactics often include destruction of private property, usually banks, storefronts, and engagement in ritualised confrontation with police having an aggressive, and confrontational attitude, but it also includes clothes, they use black pants and jumpers, black masks to cover their faces and combat boots (Jeffrey, 2005:420). Clothes that also Aleix wore. According to him, the main difference between the Black Bloc and Antifa was according to the violent aspect. As Bray explains, Antifa uses protest practises such as the occupying of sites, interrupting far-right rallies and singing over speeches as preferred tactics (Bray, 2017:5). The examples show that it exists distinctions within the Black Bloc and Antifa. Furthermore, within the Antifa movement, these distinctions are sometimes visible in the flags used. For example, usually as in the protest that day, the Antifa flags are red and black. Though the feminist fraction uses the same design but in purple. Aleix and Anna align their opinions under the Antifa umbrella, though Anna is most prominently identified with the feminist branch, and she does not seek Catalan independence. Despite of separate fractions they are all a part of overcoming their common enemy, fascists, and capitalism. On the side of the Spanish State, their fascist history cannot be denied, only mediated through the current democratic channels.

Going back to the event, a festive character was prominent. Several elements were reminiscent of it being a carnival or a cultural event such as a football match or concert was present. For example, colour bombs (like the ones used in the Indian Holi festival) were shot at the police and sales tables with various commercial Catalan pro-independence items such as clothing, pins, flags, face masks with flags and so on, was sold. Showing that such events also

create opportunities to capitalise on the contentions between the Spanish Monarchy and the Catalan pro-independence movement. The mixture of the festive with the more serious elements such as burning Euro's and the king's portrait, takes a certain amount of attention away from the fact that we are under constant surveillance by police, drones, and helicopters. Reports that the military had snipers on the rooftops was a rumour but could not be confirmed from official sources. Still the event and the opposition to the King was seen as a security risk and a threat to the Spanish State. At one point a small group of counter-protesters in support of the King got chased by the Catalan protesters, who took their Spanish flag from them and burned it. As the police moved forward to aid them, the situation escalated and bigger group of protesters (a significant amount from the Black Bloc) marched towards the police chanting; "*Catalonia anti fascista.*" After the episode was handled by the police the crowd was dispersed, and we walked down to the Columbus Statue where a massive image of King Felipe was set up, surrounded by people forming a circle. As people were clapping, and saluting the burn, an older gentleman with grey hair and a guitar played L'Estaca. People started to sing while the image of King Felipe's face turned into ash.



The pictures show a political flyer and the burning of Euros and anti-royal stickers. The picture below shows sales tables displaying Catalan pro-independence products and symbolism.



Hysterically Historical

I met Catarina through gatekeepers in the international ex-pat community where she preferred to hang out and escape the intensity of identity politics connected with the pro-independence movement. We talked several times about the theme, even though she did not like to talk about it at all. By interpreting Catarina's perspective on the independence movement, as her making sense of the consequences it has had on her life, in terms of the everyday experiences, we see another more hidden side to the struggle. Catarina (age 33) is a single mom to Flor (age 4), she would like to bring her daughter and move to Madrid or outside of Spain, but because of her visitation arrangements with the child's father it was impossible, so for now, Barcelona's international scene made it bearable for her to stay. Catarina is born outside of Catalonia in Burgos, and at age one, she came to Barcelona with her parents. It is interesting how

she goes back and forth on her ethnonational feelings. She says things like, “I am Catalan, I feel Catalan even though I do not like to feel politics!” I ask what she means by that, and Carmen says, “I will not feel into being Catalan, since I am not very into this whole movement. As I have told you before, this has contaminated and polluted everything in my life. Now I prefer knowing. Feeling is too deep. I like to think, and not feel Catalan but I do think that I am Catalan, if you know what I mean?”

Getting deeper into this, Catarina tells me that she has turned off her emotions connected to the theme, because to her the issues and struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat has become unreasonable. Moreover, she explains how she expects politics and official administration to be rational, and not play into emotions, pointing out that, “leaders can pollute our days with these feelings, and it is a form of control.” The emotions and the irrational side to politics regarding the pro-independence movement is the reason Catarina is less interested in identifying herself as Catalan. While eating ice-cream by the Sagrada Família Catarina says, she does not want to be portrayed as a Catalanist. I ask her what she means by “catalanist” and she tells me. “It is to be overly fond of Catalan culture, because it is so amazing, like come on, it's not! maybe I am like this because I was born outside of Catalonia, or because I have lived with people that are not politically linked with any movement. But really, I do not need a national identity, or a deep national belonging.” Catarina identifies more with expats and international travelers. Her everyday struggles, especially regarding conversations with other Catalans, make life more challenging. Especially since she disagrees with the movement. Her reflecting over her past and not being shaped into a political identity in her family household, is a way Catarina views her own position as a radical outsider of the identity politics. “Every day I get increasingly radical about this. But not like a Spanish nationalist, which is the same stuff. For me being radical is losing all indulgence of local culture and embracing a global culture instead.” Her perspectives align with the intentional neoliberal marketing Balibrea takes up, and through this Barcelona has attracted not only tourists and investors, but also international professionals that exist in subgroups outside of the political struggle. Another thing about Catarina's perspective is that she has taken in a lot of rhetoric on, from a perspective outside of Catalonia. This has given her a sense of shame over collective actions. She tells me that “whenever I go outside of Catalonia, I feel ashamed because I can understand you as a foreigner and understand

other Spaniards outside of Catalonia. They are like me, also tired of it all. So, I feel sorry for them.”

Catarina's position against Catalan independence has made her experience a specific form of social censorship, like what Catalans experienced during Franco. “In the beginning I tried to reason with people, when everything started with the independence it was so overwhelming. Everybody was talking and feeling, and to those who did not agree, a silence was forced.” Seeing herself as a minority within Catalonia and within her social network, gives her this impression that; “the majority in favour of independence make you feel censored. It is not a direct sensor, but it works the same way, because you do not want to be rude to people around you, you cannot say your opinion.” Her opposition gets more clear when she compares the movement to being in a sect. “I think like this, because the independence movement is extremely strong, it's like being in a sect. It is the same for me, when you believe in things, like a religion, or a nation it is all the same and extremely hard to change. And they, the Catalanists will never change!”

I ask her what the Spanish State could do, and she answers, “there is nothing Spain can do because Spain is looked at, as lesser here, and they are looked at as being bad. Even if they do good things, then it is because they are trying to mislead Catalans into their traps.” Reanalysing the Catalanist perspective, Catarina concludes that all the people involved are biased: “You can always find arguments in your favour of what you want. Everybody is biased, I am biased.” She also sees Catalans as a part of a contemporary trend. “I see the victimhood role as something modern,” again feelings of shame come up in her. “Now they (Catalans) cannot even consider changing or even face the reality, that all of this movement and all of these processes has come to nothing. They are treated like stupid children and laughed at. But no one sees that, and they keep on provoking the same. It is desperation for me. And now I feel foreigner here, more comfortable with you for instance, than with my common folk.” Because of the negative impacts the struggle has had on Catarina's everyday life she carries a great deal of sadness as shown when she talks about broken homes. “This has been breaking people's families. And when it does it is a taboo thing, and you cannot talk about it. This kind of censorship is so sad.” One of the reasons for the breakup between Catarina and her husband was disagreements over the issue of independence, and the difficulties it brought with it. Catarina also tells how the freedom referendum made her afraid that a new civil war would break out. “You know, this has affected

all of my relationships, with friends, family, well even my daughter's friends. I get upset. Everybody is talking about the same stuff all the time, even when you talk to your group and people you agree with it is too much. You know during the time of the referendum it was historical moments all the time, one historical moment and then another historical moment and another. But really, we were hysterical, not historical.”

BCN War Zone



The picture shows the start of the Buenos Aires protest by Cathedral de Barcelona.

Casa Buenos Aires, was sold to the stock company London Private Company (Canizares, 2020) which led to the eviction of the Villa on October 28th. On the 31st of October, a demonstration was organised by people and groups gathered in support of the occupants. Occupants, that had fought to preserve the mansion as a housing alternative to homeless people and as a resource to the community and neighbours in Vallvidrera (a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Barcelona). The eviction of the occupants of the modernistic mansion, combined with Barcelona's other incidents of mass evictions at the time (during a pandemic), fuelled the significant protest in the city centre. The protest started at the symbolic public space by Cathedral de Barcelona, a gothic church devoted to Barcelona's tortured Saint Eulalia. The first patron of Barcelona tells a story about a virgin girl who gets tortured because she refused to give

up her beliefs as a Christian. This story that can be interpreted as a symbol on how Catalans refuse to give up on their political beliefs. Several thousand people were already gathered here, so we positioned us in the back, standing on top of a bench with an unobstructed view of the event. A new group of protesters entered the square from the left, carrying a massive banner with Casa Buenos Aires written on it, their reception was one of celebration. The group placed themselves in front of the church and the famous steps of the church became their stage. A speech was orated in Catalan, after that firework lid up the space on each side of the church to more sharing and clapping. The easy-going and friendly atmosphere was suddenly disturbed by people quickly dispersing. We get signalled to move away fast, so we jumped down from the bench and joined the others running away, then something exploded on the ground. Gasping sounds and silence followed then an applause followed.

We start to walk through the streets of Barrio Gothic. Participants are clapping, singing, and chanting. Surrounding people are cheering us on from their windows and balconies. The shops in the area are closed, and protective metal grills has been pulled down to cover and protect their entrances. Some protesters use the metal grills to hit on making sounds to the beat of the chanting slogans. As we walk through the streets a group of 5-6 people branches of and starts spraying graffiti on windows and walls. They are operating on both sides of the crowd and has covered themselves, to hide their identity with more than the medicinal masks. At some point I have my phone up to take notes and one of them tells me to put my phone away. I clearly showed him that how I placed my phone back into my pocket. After this, a person from the press comes into a quarrel with the graffiti group for taking their picture, the episode showed their fear of images, that could be used by police and intelligence agencies, who scrutinizing press photos. A verbal and physical conflict between them occurs and the press-official seemed annoyed about the incident (as if he were entitled to take their picture), not considering that the graffiti artists need to protect themselves from getting recognised and prosecuted for vandalization. The message the group sprayed with red paint on the window of on a local bank was “*Especuladores fuera del barrio*” (Speculators out of the neighbourhood), showing their resistance to neoliberal forces, real estate, and the banking industry, to highlight the negative impacts these forces have on life in the city.



The pictures show graffiti sprayed on the window of a real-estate business and a poster used to organise the Buenos Aires protest.

The Buenos Aires demonstration stops at a square, working as a bottleneck, making people confused about where to go next. Four loud bangs go off, before the press run towards the front of the protest, flashing blitz light from taking images of the people holding the Casa Buenos Aires banner. Minutes later, we experience a bit of panic, as everyone starts running and expecting an explosion, but it was a false alarm. Standing at a construction site by the Novísim building of the City Hall, people without any directions, start tearing down fences, and throwing stones at the building. As the situation escalated, so did feelings of social responsibility. Me and group of people tried to hide out by placing us in-between some black parasols belonging to a closed restaurant. We helped each other to find space and to stay hidden while people were throwing stones at the building and explosion sounds went off. People were at high alert at this point but also conversing and helping others by letting them know where the police stood. This caring can be explained by, Kallianos & Fumanti argument, that acts of radical politics do question existing normative forms of socialisation, and that through the production of public spaces through collective action they also let new socialites emerge (2021: 04). People sharing information with each other, and warning others of potential dangers was a form of sociality that

appeared during protesting, the helpfulness and consideration to others, also strengthened a community feeling in me.

From my hideout we could see a fire burning from the place outside the Novissm building, people gathered around to watch it, and the violent performances that was acted out. These actions were also observed by the police force that was present. At that time, we wondered why they did not interfere. Though, after a while, more police showed up. People started to take different roads away from the scene, and as we start to walk police officers act. We are pushed into a narrow street. Suddenly, the officers from the Mossos d'Esquadra run straight at us. With helmets, shields and batons raised over their heads they were an intimidating sight, so we started running as fast as possible, to escape the heavily armed police force to avoid being victims of police brutality. Running as fast as I could, the taste of iron appeared in my mouth. We get chased down a narrow street which opens at a square, here the crowd gets dispersed. As we walk back up the street, the same happens again. The police chase us back into the square, this time we are met with a typical Barcelonan phenomenon, a street vendor, asking if we want; “*cerveza, beer?*” After dismissing the vendor, we take a seat on the edge of a fountain to regain our breath. From there we see more police forces marching past us and into the Gothic Quarter like a military force. The poster used by organisers, on social media had the following text: *+800 desnonaments a BCN des del 17 de septembre, del 2020. 25/10/20 toc de queda covid19. 28/10/20 dessallot jament de la casa Buenos Aires. 29/10/20 desnonament de familia amb 3 menors a nou barris. BCN zona de guerra. Manifestacio 31 octubre 2020.* This translates to; +800 evictions in BCN since September 17, 2020. 10/25/20 curfew covid19. 10/28/20 eviction of the Buenos Aires house. 10/29/20 family eviction with 3 minors in nine neighbourhoods. BCN war zone. Demonstration October 31, 2020. The next section takes a closer look at how gentrification has affected the population in Barcelona.

Class Struggle and Gentrification in Barcelona

Following the section above, adding a perspective on class to the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat, can help to explore how the resistance that arises in

the everyday. As Barker mentions it is when people are prevented to meet their own needs and goals, conflict arises and people come together to disrupt the existing patterns, and potentially be able to reconstruct social relations (Barker et. al, 2013: 47), or as mentioned above, shake the pre-established modes of behaviour. In the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat, the pro-independence movement has successfully created alternative spheres of power, both online, within local social networks and in neighbourhoods. As McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly tell, individuals are getting politicised and political identities are continuously defined and redefined in relations to others and through interactions of claim-making and performing politics. When individuals come together to perform a mutual public claim, they pair up their identities, and through an asserted collective identity they act, petition, propose, demand, command, attack and use other means claiming assets under the opposing parts control (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2004:137). As seen with the Buenos Aires protest, housing is a source of resistance and opposition in Barcelona which causes people to combine their political identities to shake the pre-established social unjustness connected to housing.

Through cases of gentrification, conflicts in neighbourhoods have led to more than protests. As Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila points out, reactions from people living in areas that are gentrified have been portrayed as tourismophobic by the Spanish media, which according to the researchers is not a correct depiction of the situation. As an example, the first step in the gentrification of Poblenou was to remove the industrial identity existing there in favour of privatization. After the Olympics, when the Catalan strategic planning took a new direction, the marketing of Barcelona as a business mecca and venue for mega-events resulted in false premise that Barcelona was; –a luxury item available for a small elite (Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila, 2021:118). The city became a consumer object created by a "system of signs" which in Barcelona's case was happiness, satisfaction, and wealth with a focusing on urbanization, hotels, and fast food; the image of a "city of spectacle" was created. After 2008 Airbnb made it more profitable to share living spaces and to rent out, replacing traditional homes with tourist-oriented rental apartments leading to an increase in the cost of living, which has driven away low-income households and has changed the city's economic and social character (Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila, 2021:119). By catering to the economic elites and attracting mass tourism, working-class families cannot afford to reside in certain neighbourhoods.

Relevant to this, is people's relationship with public space. By investing in tourist culture and hiding social problems through the "Civic Standard Plan," institutions have followed a neo-conservative route, excluding lower classes. Other means to increase the attractiveness of Barcelona has been implemented by the Municipality against public consumption of alcohol, begging and prostitution, which has, among other things, led to the setting up of public places in favour of more camera surveillance (Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila, 2021:119). Kallianos & Fumanti refer to public space as "embodying the potential for eventual change" taking into consideration the contested character of public space, and how it is never free from a potential disorder (Kallianos & Fumanti 2021:02). Studies on gentrification in the Poblenou neighbourhood, besides Sant Martí shows that traditional establishments, such as small convenience stores, are being replaced by middle-class chains and tourists (Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila, 2012:126). In addition, the area has become popular for new businesses. The Catalan Generalitat, has acknowledged problems that stems from these developments, but has not resolved the issue. Instead has the debate about tourist-phobia increased the complexity, thus removing the focus from the case and creating confusion (Simas, Oliveira and Cano-Hila, 2021:128). Meeting these struggles, by using strategic political plans such as the "Civic Standard Plan," the government chose to enforce additional control over public space and what they see as deviant behaviors with increased surveillance, the same strategy which is used by States internationally. Going back to the streets of Barcelona, the next chapter explores these struggles further.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

Despite of the pandemic, demonstrations still occurred in Barcelona, the fall of 2020. The Diada-, the Spanish Kings visit Covid-riots, and the Buenos Aires march has shed light on the relationship between people, the Catalan Generalitat, and the Spanish State. The protest related to Villa Buenos Aires' eviction shed light on issues directly caused by neo-liberal developments and the marketing of Barcelona as an innovative city contributing to gentrification; –turning affordable housing into a scarce commodity and exhausting neighbourhoods. Taking politics out

of the picture, the role of social movements in Barcelona is the creation of subgroups that reconceptualise power relations and challenge neoliberal exploitation in the production of space. A greater understanding of the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat gives politics a vital role in how people use their bodies to act out forms of resistance through collective action. Expressions of resistance, such as mass mobilisation, flags, symbols, clothes, and acts of violence, are connected to the use of public space to reconceptualise power and question democracy by contesting who has the right to produce space. Collective action's role in maintaining the political struggles between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat connects to the pro-independence movement tries to deliberately lead power away from the Spanish State, at the same time, serving as a critique and collective commentary on the Spanish democracy. Events of collective actions in public space reproduce and create new spheres of power and autonomy. Below, we will explore such forms of resistance further, starting with the defence of the streets.

Defending the Streets of Barcelona

Territory, historically is a source of conflict and urban public spaces has been where collective actions of different struggles manifest, bringing what Barker mentions as forms of local cultures of resistance based on individual and collective experiences and socio-economic conditions (Barker et al., 2013:49). De Balanzó and Rodríguez-Planas show in their Barcelonan case study of crisis and reorganization in urban dynamics and fast-responding social networks in Barcelona have significant importance in the city's cycles of stability and crisis. And that solid cross-scale linkages exist between local neighbourhoods, institutional networks, and within local social movements, which together work as key actors in urban dynamics and changes (Balanzó and Rodríguez-Planas, 2018:01). People in Barcelona oppose neoliberal-induced class struggles by working together and applying themselves through collective action. Like Heskeths point out, at the same time, they also problematise their rights to take part in the production of space (2013:212), drawing on the right to assembly and encouraged by local governmental institutions who capitalise on portraying its citizens as being in opposition.

Capitalism is dependent on creating new objective social definitions of time and space to gain profit, a process that is not free from contradiction and contentions. When space and spatial relations get altered, it affects the character of places, creating opportunities for some while dispossessing others (Hesketh, 2013:211), such as what has happened regarding the gentrification brought on by tourism in Poublenou and the Sant Martí district. As Hesketh argues, the reproduction of relations and location is the space where confrontation gets created, which connects to class struggle regarding who has the right to participate in the production of space (2013:212). The maintenance of the conflict in Catalonia regarding class struggles is complicated further by having authority on two parallel hierarchical levels. The relationship between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat points out and hides capitalist social relations by focusing on the struggle of conflicting nationalism. Defending public places in Barcelona operate with resistance towards both levels and draws on local culture through being a creative city. As Balibrea argues, creative cities gain control of cultural policies and economies by governing citizens and shifting regional and national parameters. For local cultural policies and politicians, rather than cultivating a national image and supplying access to culture to their citizens, prioritising incorporating local populations into forms of governance that are more attuned to strengthen the creative economy (Balibrea 2017:23). Public space then symbolizes and embodies the potential for eventual change, both politically and socially.

As Hesketh highlights, indigenous movements increasingly see the State as illegitimate since the spatial project it pursues threatens their means of survival (2013:218), something that does not directly apply to Barcelona. The Catalan pro-independence movement does not define itself through labels as indigenous or ethnic, and the Spanish State has limited control because Catalonia is an autonomous region. However, the movement protects the local language and culture in opposition to the Spanish State through the collective actions that apply themselves to space production. Something that has become strengthened by neoliberal programs used by the Catalan Generalitat, which aim to do what Hesketh calls, integrating (the region) into global production networks. And therefore, seeing a clashing of spatial projects that are antithetical to one another (2013:218). The clash of antithetical projects comes to the forefront by contrasting the conversations with Guillem and Catarina. Guillem expresses the importance of directing the economy towards Catalan companies, which will strengthen both the economy and the language and weaken Spain. Catarina looks to the international environment and interprets Catalan

nationalism as politically and emotionally confusing. Both carry a narrative adopted by the local authorities that aim for Catalan independence and a more robust international foothold. However, Catarina experiences the Spanish project too, which leads to feelings of shame regarding Catalans being irrational while entwined with the international community. What they do not articulate is how this is linked. Balibrea, connects the ways of life, cultural values, attitudes, responsibilities, and rights historically reveals an invitation for citizens to exercise them in diverse ways even by opposing, means that are consistently profitable from the local government point of view (Balibrea 2017:24).

Gentrification and tourism have made the everyday more expensive, contributing to the displacing of families. Resembling Hesketh's findings, social movements in Barcelona have also been communities that link neighbourhoods across scales. Through participation in social movements and events of collective action in public space, the historical symbols of the city are re-defined. Hesketh describes this as a systematic destruction of a State's historical patrimony (Hesketh 2013:128). The Buenos Aires protest was a bid against the Catalan Generalitat attempt to cleanse a space claimed as public by its occupants to please foreign investors. The eviction highlighted the unsympathetic side to authorities and a disregard for the villa's significant role in specific (poor, low-income) communities. Aleix told me that in addition to housing people, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires also had creative gatherings where he previously had been invited to speak on issues regarding veganism. During the protest, a key site of authority becomes vandalised. By targeting symbols of State power, public space became forcefully reclaimed, questioning who has the right to the city.

Hesketh sees that a historical defence of place and protracted struggle against exploitations provides collective forms of social organisation resisting capitalism (2013:229). The Antifa movement is an overt form of resistance against capitalism, while the Catalan pro-independence movement is more about gaining democratic control of their community. The latter has proven to be able to deny the Spanish State right to exploit the region's capital and oppress its culture further, which is a political tool, where the aims of a Catalan republic become the end. The movement's connection in Barcelona comes from their ability to draw on resistance and collective action traditions that have developed over centuries of struggle. Social movements in Barcelona have sought to defend their rights by creating a differential form of space. I argue

that in Barcelona, Hesketh's arguments show how the diverse social movements make counter-spaces that let people retake control of their own lives. And that the politicisation of space is an act towards having the right to control and shape individual lives in a capitalistic context. In that regard collective action is a profoundly democratic issue, and through the remaking of space by social movements democracy as also remade (Hesketh, 2013:230). Politically, I argue that through collective action through the Catalan pro-independence movement internal and external groups, such as the different social movements in Barcelona, the Basque and the Hong Kong freedom movements creates a sense of commonality between people, that is linked to the suffering by similar experiences, something that strengthening bonds of solidarity outside of the political sphere.

The Street and The Body

This thesis suggests that political performances through mass mobilisations is significant in the maintenance of the political struggle between the Catalan Generalitat, the Spanish State. Kallianos & Fumanti show that using public space in other ways than its existing function is an act that challenges the police, the State and authoritarian structures, because of the transformative ways in which public spaces are used, imagined, and organised (Kallianos & Fumanti, 2021:6). By using "body politics" termed by Schepher Hughes and Lock (1987) as a concept of bodily experience under influence of political and social control, Vaczi and Watson highlights how Catalans have showed strength through the deployment of their bodies for political purposes. They consider Catalan body politics from a historical perspective, which shows how the body politics in the pro-independence movement have developed. According to them, since 2011 the streets have been a space for the bodily displaying of the pro-independence movement, and collective action has become a symbol among Catalans of solidarity and endurance, which also is strengthened by historical disagreements and the political importance of maintaining Catalan language, art, music, dance, and architecture (2021:607). How people use their bodies during protest is both similar and different from everyday life. By looking at which bodily practises Catalans connect to their sense of national identity, we can separate between them.

The mixture of body techniques and national identity can be connected to L'Estacia song that contributes to hugging and dancing bodies during the end of events. As Vaczi and Watson show, specific ideas combined with music and choreography creates a symbiosis of brotherhood, simplicity, harmony, community, and democracy (Vaczi and Watson, 2021:607). In other words, the emotions conjured by ideas of a free Catalonia, combined with music and dancing, a symbiosis that reinforces the Catalan national identity occur. Another example of body techniques was during the Kings protest. There, a continuation of the historic V-formation and "human chains" was applied by the pro-independence movement. The importance of holding hands is highly symbolic to their cause as it is a form of resistance displayed in public space that emphasise solidarity, as well as portraying the political left and class struggle. Protest practises such as these show resistance but also forms of solidarity among people. Although I did not experience it, Catalans have developed a special form of resistance, which draws on their tradition of building human towers. Informants talked proudly of *castells*. Aleix once invited me to join a workout with a friend of his. Unfortunately, because of covid, which also Vaczi and Watson take up touch was no longer seen as a strength, but as a source of disease, therefore the world of castells was paused, but waiting to resume their activities (2021:615). By looking at the role of the human towers, Vaczi and Watson highlights how body performances in Catalonia have developed out of the traditional *sardana* dance to become a ritual of geographical demarcation. Traditionally the sardana dance, stemming from the 1900-bourguoise, historically symbolised the upper-class and consisted of quantified steps that can be connected to a stereotype of Catalans being money-grabbers. A stereotype that Devon, my first proprietor, often talked and joked about, and a stereotype that Catarina laughed at, saying that it was good Catalans had at least had a sense of humour, because everyone thinks of them as being cheap and wanting their money for themselves.

Going back to the body, Vaczi and Watson see building human towers during demonstrations in relation to the Catalan pro-independence movement as being formative in the creation of a national character. Through a shifting in focus from the traditional Sardana dance for the benefit of using the human towers and the coming together of all types of bodies (young, old, child, man, female) they draw on issues of class struggle. In this manner, the political left in Barcelona has created a new social basis out of the pro-independence movement and an image of it, having a more prominent social base as well as a common struggle (Vaczi and Watson

2021:608). By taking on space and spatial relations with the creation of such a character they also have given new meaning to the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat, by infusing a new political subjectivity into a traditional activity. As Kallianos and Fumanti highlights, events form a political subjectivity that use alternative practices in public space as a way exercise citizenship, through the transformation of subjectivity and public space, existing memories gain new meaning while being able to oppose other and official narratives (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021: 14). To question the State's legitimacy, political praxis, efficacy, and desirability the body becomes representative of democracy and citizenship. Furthermore, it becomes an additional way to reconceptualising power relations.

The body itself becomes a canvas for the support of ideologies which is displayed not only by making human towers, but also through using how they cover their body as a statement. Wearing certain t-shirts, pins, and sub-cultural clothing styles like punk and hip-hop that people build on an image of resistance, opposition, and rebellion. While combining their bodies in the streets during events, people act out their dispositions. Because organisation of collective actions in the streets take on bodily practises and body techniques that have changed the ethnonationalist symbolism towards the political left, they draw on solidarity by the coming together of the bodies. Vaczi and Watson explain how the activity of building human towers is a form of low-cost sociality, especially attractive to young adults because of the thrill and risks that are involved. Moreover, the dangers of a tower-collapse, means that participation takes a degree of impulsiveness and risk-willingness, to explain this, they refer to what Catalan's call *rauxa* (madness) (2021:609). Suggesting this, I argue that the notion of *rauxa* might be spilling over on traditional forms of political practises, making especially the young open to take more risks regarding political action. In Barcelona protests has an impression of being more impulsive, and people more willing to take risks. During the Buenos Aires, when the police chased the crowd with armour and batons, participants still went back knowing the risks involved. As a point of reflection, a celebrated degree of *rauxa* might influence the younger generations to take more chances and behave "mad" by breaking norms of expected behaviour. We can see another clue regarding this with the example in an earlier chapter, where the woman who passes by, pulls explosives out of her bag and throughs it towards the police. She runs to get away from police but comes back proud, to be celebrated by her friends and the spectators, who shows her that

they appreciate the risk she took. Which takes us to the next argument, are collective actions a form of revenge?

Revening Public Space



The pictures show protesters in Black clothes burning the Spanish Flag during the Kings visit in Barcelona and participants in the Buenos Aires protest watching people act out forms of vandalism.

We have seen that public space is defended, a perspective that takes on a victim character as having to be someone in need of defence. To elaborate on this, I take on Kallianos & Fumanti term “revening” to explain how people themselves experience taking back control during acts of radical politics. Revening can be used to explain violent outcomes of reacting in public to “defend place and remake space;” reactions that show themselves through the politicisation of space. Comparing protests in Barcelona with Hesketh's' findings which shows how contesting State control, as well as attempts to draw local populations into official channels of political participation can backfire by contributing to autonomous forms of governance outside of the governing institutions, based on local communities (Heskeths in Barker et. al 210). Concerning Barcelona, the participation and encouragement of "citizen agency" in public affairs has been a central political concept in the production of Barcelona as an “innovative city” (Balibrea, 2017:18) thus, leading to disputes about the Catalan identity and being used as a defence against Spanish nationalism. This defence has led to direct and sometimes bloody confrontations. By drawing on the Francoist dictatorship, the Catalan identity defence is actualised through specific

channels of rivalry (also seen in sports between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid), this rivalry phenomenon between Catalonia and Spain is essential to the symbolic importance in the shaping the Catalan identity, according to Balibrea (2017: 09). Her argument shows that the struggle between the Catalan Generalitat and the Spanish State permeates culture, sports, politics, and formation of identity by creating a separation together with Hesketh's notion of social movements in Mexico, the tendency goes toward not recognising the State but engage in acts of violent dislodgement (Heskeths in Barker et. al :210).

As a way for Barcelonans and the Catalan Generalitat to counter the Spanish State's repetitive denial and rejection of a Catalan nation, history, and rights of social and self-government has been to create a broad political coalition towards independence and the coming together of people under the pro-independence movement. When events like the setting up off barricades and attacks on public buildings happens a form of "ingovernability" is created, according to Hesketh. By doing so the legitimacy of the State, the efficacy and desirability of a representative democracy and citizenship is called into question, simultaneously challenging capitalist relations and the right to produce space. The desire underneath the collective actions, seek to reinvent society and steer it towards a more socially just community, with new geographical power relations (Heskeths 2013:210). During the Diada and protesting the Kings visit organisers the use of, songs, human chains as "specific cultural practices" (before COVID-19, the use of castells) gets applied. And as Heskeths points out, applying such specific cultural practices is a way to reinvent society. To steer it towards a more socially just society and towards new geographical power relations (Heskeths 2013:210). H. Buffery argues that Catalans respond to cases of oppression and political and economic exclusion by the Spanish State (Buffery, 2018:7). This, combined with the point of revenging by Kallianos and Fumanti collective actions are reactions to episodes of exclusion, marginalization, gentrification, and displacement (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021: 11). Furthermore, in Barcelona urban planning has been a source of several difficulties for the population, which are not necessarily connected to the defense of the Catalan identity. A collective identity is that they tend to be overly focused on questions of anti-nationalism, that should consider the city's relationship with the global market (Balibrea, 2017: 04).

When people do not experience satisfying changes regarding their struggles, frustrations build up and public space becomes an outlet for such frustrations, thus facilitating forms of resistance such as "revenging." Explaining how revenging took place in the streets of Tottenham, an example taken from interviews in *The Guardian*; "we thought we'd just violate just like they violate us" and " we had the police under control" (Kallianos & Fumanti 2021:12). These quotes are like the Antifa cause and the use of Blac Bloc practises in Barcelona. A reason the contention between people in Catalonia and Madrid is so tense that revenging becomes necessary can be traced according to Balibrea, to a process that has set Barcelona up against Madrid. Through marketing the competition between the two cities is intensified, their relationship has hardened as well as contributing to an impression of opposing cultures, as well as affecting the political field. Marketing and rivalry are pushed forward by the same neoliberal forces that create the perceived everyday challenges people protest. Moreover, social movements have a role in organising demands for consumption such as fighting to gain the ability to consume a higher standard of living and gain more products. Therefore (unintentionally), social movements in Barcelona fall under the reproduction of the capitalist context in a cultural form. This includes a focus on preservation of language, dance, art, and literature (Balibrea, 2017: 14). Preserving knowledge in the struggle Catalan Generalitat and the Spanish State gets reduces into reactionary or revenging responses to each other in the streets. Also, the inconsistencies between the parties' perceptions, kames the struggle more challenging to solve while neoliberal context needs the struggle to expand.

However, as Kallianos and Fumanti, argue revenging has deep connections to the everyday. Experiences and cases of deprivation, poor housing, lack of social services are historical processes inscribed in economic, civic, and social transformations and applied through plans of urban regeneration, gentrification, and commodification of public spaces. Elements that link together with another issue regarding revenging which is "fear of retribution" (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021: 11). This fear is grounded in earlier experiences and encounters with the police and the governing institutions. For example, during the freedom referendum, almost 900 people were injured in clashes with the police, actions that later was condemned by the Catalan Generalitat (Dearden, 2017). By drawing on episodes of violence by the State, organisers motivate collective actions. For example, the poster used to mobilise in support of the Buenos Aires eviction used the term: "BCN War Zone". The marketing here, uses rhetoric that draws on

recent experiences as well as referencing war, symbolising both the battle of Urquinaona and the Spanish Civil War. As the poster shows, 800 people were evicted in a short amount of time, creating a dangerous situation for the people made homeless. Not only were they put in immediate danger by the virus, at the same time, the implementation of a curfew at 22, with reactionary punishment through high fines demanded of them, to have a home. Simultaneously authorities evicted occupied houses, which could have been an alternative to the families and children that could not afford to pay rent. The absurdity of making people homeless and demanding of them to stay inside after 22 combined with economic violence, contributed to the fires and the stone throwing during the event. In addition to referencing war, the poster used to organise the event, seemed to call for a state of “revenge,” and the desire of a more just society, which the extensive turnout showed, as did the degree of solidarity among the participants.

Forms of Solidarity

On both levels of inquiry, solidarity is an element reinforced through activities in public space. In numerous ways the streets symbolise solidarity. It also symbolises locality and connects to the attachments of nationality. Balibrea deems it necessary to look at how the relationship between the city and culture affects the political field. The local authorities' traditional role as social services managers has shifted to entrepreneurial and committed to economic growth, increasing their local power vis-à-vis the Spanish State (Balibrea, 2017: 04). Confrontations with the police, attacks on governmental buildings, and theatrical performances like the image burning in a public place were performed in spaces associated with inequality and injustice experienced in everyday life. But the public spaces also confirm, what Balibrea argues, a shift away from supplying social services and the parallel power structures is part of maintaining the struggle. Throwing stones and burning posters, doing graffiti are protest practises that highlight dissatisfaction with the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat, since both are part of issues regarding inequality and social feelings of unjustness. The acts are a symptom of deeper issues rooted in local knowledge and memory, that becomes remade in the everyday

between people who share knowledge with each other and show their support as well as solidarity.

Episodes of solidarity and care amongst participants during the protests was usual and a part of the community feeling that the events gave. Like the study by Kallianos and Fumanti, there was often a high degree of intergenerational support. Especially during the Diada and the anti-King protest older participants was part of the organisation, sold merchandise, handed out flyers and stickers, and helped the younger participants. Other forms of solidarity included warnings about the police's positioning or explosions going off, where and when to run, as we did in the streets of Barrio Gothic. Furthermore, the solidarity from spectators was usual, people watching the collective action contributed with ways to show they supported the cause by acts of celebration (like clapping, singing along, sheering, saying slogans etc.). Applying the body to a cause, creates ways of solidarity during events that connects to the struggle over public space and who is allowed to produce it, to the continuous everyday victimisation of people across generations (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021:12). Which, in Barcelona, is used as a political tool. According to Balibrea, local governments have applied a political focus and strategy that celebrates volunteerism to supply agency and unload their own responsibilities, that was previously attached to the Welfare State but is increasingly pushed onto the civil society and the markets (Balibrea 2017:21). As volunteerism takes on more responsibility it becomes part of the difficulty of resolving the issues and their way to combat it becomes taking the struggle into the streets.

Everyday forms of structural violence in local communities gets unmasked through protest and demonstrations. By highlighting elements such as the Kings feudal privilege, issues with housing, social services, pensions, and the imprisonments of politicians through organising collective actions. Kallianos and Fumanti, highlights that during such events local knowledge and memories gets re-coded, using existing schemas of behaviour they challenge the "normal." A form of de-normalisation that is interpreted as necessary for new knowledge to be produced to and create new policies (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021: 14). The Catalan Generalitat provides local power and the ties it has with the pro-independence movement, gives an impression of an increased potentiality of change. Events has a transformative potential. A potential it gets from the dialectic relationship between the event and the everyday, through the production of public

space. Therefore, by de-normalising the ordinary and contest politics and inequality, a break with the past and everyday happens disturbing as the ordinary and the order of dominance. These elements are formative, as solidarity among participants are included into shared localised memories of forms of caring and solidarity, narratives that contradict what is told through media (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021: 13). Balibrea, highlights that through discipline, the government in Barcelona has strategized to produce what is convenient for those governed by seducing them (Balibrea, 2017:19). The word "seducer" gives associations to underlying or hidden intentions. The strategies designed and implemented by the governing institutions facilitate stimulating neoliberal growth, though this gets hidden in rhetoric. Dissatisfaction in the population is seen as a disruptive element and as unproductive that can damage the agenda. Counter this; authorities use surveillance technology.

Technology and Public Anxiety

I gained knowledge about when and where protests occurred by talking to people and by following specific organizations and movements on the internet through social media. Twitter was a valuable channel and Instagram, Facebook groups, WhatsApp, and the encrypted messaging application Telegram. When an event was organised, organisations official channels shared digital material with specific designs, particular images, and colours. These were distributed to support the event through organisations and individuals, to spread the message quickly and to mobilise. During the protests, several people took pictures and videos of the event and of each other and shared the event with their social contacts while it was happening. Participants were posing in front of the press and in front of friends and others with whom they were. The State and authorities can observe press images and social media to map groups and people due to State security reasons. Kendzior looks at how a police State manifests itself on the internet and argues that while it gives citizens an ability to organize and interact, it does not remove pre-existing biases, fears, and suspicions. Also, the internet's architecture can breed paranoia, despite and because of its transparency (Kendzior, 2015:53). The paranoia became visible in meetings with people who joked that I was a spy from the Spanish State and through

conversations such as with Aleix and Guillem. They tell how people are incarcerated based on political opinions.

In the case of Pablo Hasél, he was imprisoned for his regime-critical rap texts, as mentioned above, this combined with how the TD app was removed, and the creators accused of terrorism, a State of fear was detected in my interlocutors, which several times took up that the Spanish State persecute people for their beliefs. Such actions by the State can contribute to increased paranoia in a population. As Kendzior highlights, there are concerns about the lack of online privacy, the mining of digital memory, and the internet used for State surveillance. Another concern is that the internet is controlled by monopolies of knowledge and information, such as Google, Facebook (Meta) (Kendzior, 2015:53) (powerful international corporations with their own agenda for growth and profit). Guillem was extremely specific about his anonymity, because of his role in the ANC and the political persecution against independentists. He uses what I suggest is an online term when he says that; “the deep Spanish State” puts people in jail not for their actions, but for their beliefs. This resembles the term “The Deep Web” which is a known cyber-space that serves as a black market to criminal networks. As Kendzior states, the internet reaffirms the police State's panopticon. Here she references the theory from Pierre Foucault to explain that the internet has a quality of “not knowing who, is watching nor why” only that one is under surveillance (Kendzior, 2015:64). The Spanish States' digital gaze complicates free expression, and people get more cautious to share as well as seeking out new "safe spaces". Several of the organisations used Telegram that has several layers of encryption more encrypted or as with TD, ensuring anonymity by blockchain technologies, as we move into Web 3. Innovative technology regarding the Catalan pro-independence movement, is used because of the Spanish State judicial persecution, as Kendzior argues, the internet extends the digital gaze reach, instead of freeing individuals from a fear of the State, and this now includes the digital, social, and physical spaces where people live (Kendzior, 2015:64).

Protest practices such as those promoted through the Black Bloc manual get shared globally on the internet. Furthermore, Jeffrey argues that activists also apply strategies to produce theatrical images for media consumption (2005:416). Spectacular images can motivate others to take risks to get the perfect image, it can also contribute to more participation in protests if it is perceived as "trendy", something Aleix, pointed out when he talked about that the

youngest would be where it happened. Though, this has inherent dangers of State retribution. The internet has given rise to twin anxieties according to Jeffrey: the suspicion that others are not who they say they are but are hidden agents, and an unease about the digital trail left behind. Both fears are rooted in a paranoia shaped by life in a police State, which becomes magnified by the internet's increased orientation toward the rote display of private life. The architecture of Web 2.0, with its imperative to catalogue and reveal everything, has made users fall into the panopticon and regret it later. Transparency becomes political powerlessness in a paranoid political culture (Kendzior, 2015: 2015:53). TD was an attempt to regain power digitally by ensuring anonymity through blockchain technology. The internet involves dangers and gives opportunities to seek out new ways of social organisation. During conversations with Guillem, it becomes clear that the internet and social media play an essential role. Guillem, use Finland as an example to be followed: "it is a country that has been occupied many times by Russia. They do not think whether there will be another occupation, but instead, they consider when it will happen. Anticipating this event, they have created a parallel government on the internet. It would be a promising idea to create a virtual Catalan government that can be ready to take over when the time comes."

Neoliberal Influences and National "Catalan-ness"

In addition to the marketed Barcelonian-ness, the Catalan identity and nationality, also gets shaped as a corporate asset. Balibrea highlights how current discourses link economic liberalism to the project of an independent Catalonia through traditional and conservative narratives that celebrate work and savings ethics. According to her, this is inseparable from the global Catalan subject and Catalan capitalism (Balibrea, 2017:255). Catalonia's subordination has historically corrupted the entrepreneurial nature of the Catalan to the Spanish state, an image of Catalan-ness that is compatible with that of Barcelona projected by the Olympic Games. The city's global vision transcends the political and economic ambition. The football club "Barça" has had a formative role in this development as Catalonia's critical local and international business partner. Through ideological discourses, sports ties with culture, politics, and economics connect with Catalan neoliberal nationalism and independentism (Balibrea,

2017:257). For the Spanish case, Balibrea sees the lack of a State structuring project to bring Spaniards together and direct them as a reason for the Spanish States' struggle with peripheral nationalisms (2017:259).

The Spanish State has also had conflicts with the Basque pro-independence movement, a separatist militant group that sought to the use of physical violence under the name ETA (Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna), meaning Basque Homeland and Liberty. As Müller-Plotnikow writes the ETA, used a more violent strategy than their Catalan peers in their quest for independence. Their militant tactics resulted in the killing of more than 800 individuals over a span of 50 years. In 2011, ETA declared a truce with Spain, (Müller-Plotnikow, 2017). ETA's peace agreement with Spain was temporary since the following year was the year the Catalan pro-independence movement became active, as it is today, with the ANC organising the mass mobilisation of Catalan during the celebration of the Diada. Leaving behind the Basque pro-independence movement and going back to Barcelona, the symbolic struggle is often shown by decorations such as using Catalan flags. Often these hang besides the Barcelona football flag. McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, state that it is important to consider looking at the individuals' earlier experiences and the repertoires that are available to their identities to explain political performances (2004:139). The repertoire used by protesters in Barcelona and Catalonia is influenced by historical resistance movements, and by Spain's lack of a national project, which also appears in conversations with my interlocutors.

Through the information gained through the conversations with Catarina, I argue that the lack of a Spanish project does not necessarily connect to Spanish nationalism. Instead, she relies on neoliberal ideas such as the importance of rationalism. Furthermore, her thoughts about being nationless or transcending borders connect her to the European Unions 'project which contributes to the fact that she prefers to be in international environments. The connection between a particular way of being Catalan – which in turn coincides with the ethics of the entrepreneur (Balibrea 2017:260). As my introduction shows I had the image of an entrepreneurial city with me entering the field, as I planned to join coworking and look at innovative forms of resistance through digital technologies. This image stems from what Balibrea refers to as neoliberal jargon, highlighting hard work and individualism with a higher goal: capital gain through competence (Balibrea, 2017:263). In 2009 the economic crisis led to Spaniards losing their jobs. Rhetoric

implied that the Spanish labour problem was the workers' excessive individualism and lack of commitment to the common cause of a neoliberal economy.

The implications above highlight certain qualities, such as having the right attitude and focusing on the positive, a voluntarist argument of liberalism to prioritise success on a subjective attitude. The opposite is morally defective and a form of "victimism" (Balibrea, 2017:266), this type of focus on attitude is reflected in the light of Guillem's focus on morality. Furthermore, Catarina talked about Catalans having an identity that praised victimhood, an opposite argument to Balibrea's. Her experiences have made her interpret Catalan nationalism as obsessive and emotional, with emotions affecting people to take on victimhood. Contrasting her opinion, Guillem talks about taking control through individual choices. And by using Catalan companies for services. Thus, it shows that he aligns with focusing on "the positive," also, he ascribes himself to a particular morality by highlighting how he and the ANC are focused on doing "the right thing." The Diada and the King's protest gave the impression of capitalizing on the conflict like a football match, with sales stalls with merchandise and symbolism reminiscent of logos sold. The link between Catalonia and football may provide some answers to the similarities. The Barcelona brand recycles the history of Francoist resistance and public engagement to the embodied local cultural trends. The Barcelona football club connects to the same opposition. Moreover, it connects to Spanish reactionary and authoritarian centralism and the Catalan aspirations of becoming a sovereign State.

According to Balibrea, the football teams' moral superiority materialises in the players, fans, and club governance forms. The ethical attitudes and cultural values associated with the club as a global brand produce a neoliberal subject of international appeal. The football club's success provides Catalans with a communal experience of fulfilment and fantasy, which is defiantly national and quietly neoliberal (Balibrea 2017:268). I argue that the connection between the football club and the Catalan pro-independence movement plays into their political subjectivity as a sense of "Catalan-ness" and that the neoliberal contexts become symbolically materialised by the sales tables in the streets. Kallianos and Fumanti highlight how political subjectivity provides alternative and inclusive sociality forms, working as an empowering force, strengthening the image of a common struggle (Kallianos and Fumanti, 2021: 14). Continuing this argument, the use of history and symbolism by organisers in Barcelona has become a part of

the city advertisements by the local government. The drawing on Catalan and Barcelonian identity and uniqueness, connecting to experiences of social unjustness. The pro-independence movement, by applying symbolism such as flags, anti-Francoism, and anti-fascism, into the mix, the solidarity is strengthened by being framed in opposition to Madrid. A framework for solidarity that hardens the struggle between the Catalan Generalitat and the Spanish State. “Catalan-ness” and “Barcelonian-ness” are not different in terms of neoliberal influence, although one is more connected to sports and region while the other is more specifically connected to the city and tourism. By working together in a symbiosis, the result is a strengthened Catalan national identity, where Barcelona is seen as being the capital in a country without a State.

CHAPTER FIVE

“El carrers sempre seran nostres”

Final Arguments

This thesis starts with ethnography where Aleix and I are on a trip in the Gràcia neighborhood in Barcelona, where we met up at the Mai Moriem store. In the window, we see how products refer to the symbolic aspects of collective action and social movements associated with the city. Burning trash bins and wearing certain clothes has become a symbol of street fighting and relates to the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat. This conflict took a turn for the worse after the freedom referendum voting in the benefit of a sovereign Catalan republic and declaring it as such, in 2017. This worsened the tensions and has led to several judicial persecutions of former political leaders, met with mass mobilisation and street fights between police and social movements in Barcelona. This period was especially difficult for the inhabitants. We see that Catarina was afraid of civil war and that the conflict was part of all parts of the everyday, which for her led to quarrels and breaks with family, friends, and her children's father. She also points out the social form of censorship that has arisen around

the topic. I met Catarina and other gatekeepers in the international (ex-pat) community in Barcelona. As I gained access to interlocutors, I deliberately focused my time on people who define themselves as Catalan to shed light on the struggle from an insider's perspective. Through conversations and ethnographic interviews, combined with participant observation during protests and demonstrations I have explored how the street in Barcelona gets used to organise mass mobilisation and collective action and how this maintains the judicial and political struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat. Doing so in 2020, COVID-19 has affected the thesis, creating issues and challenges that I will address in the next section.

Through participation in protests and demonstrations in public spaces in Barcelona city centre, I gained insight into how culture, art, and language has had a role in the struggle and the historical maintenance of Catalan national identity that stems from what I argue is a "struggle of Historicity". By this, I mean that two different historical narratives are perpetuated on personal and institutional levels, creating a ditch between the nationalities that is hard to bridge. The region's history draws on fights at the political level, which creates a base to build an identity on. The historical and political disagreements materialise through history as collective action and events of mass mobilisation in the streets. After Franco's death, Spain underwent several changes, the country became a democracy with autonomous regions, and a King from the French Bourbon-lineage became crowned. As Catalonia gained more autonomy and the neoliberal processes gained momentum, the city became, through the summer Olympics and through strategies for marketing, a way to be formative in a kind of "Barcelonian-ness." Which entails an image of the inhabitants who went on the historical narrative of Catalonia as a nation without a State.

The local governing institutions branded Barcelona in this manner to attract tourists and foreign investors. By linking this type of Barcelonian-ness as being in opposition, and by leaning on voluntarism to take over social services, the city became more inclined to neoliberal ideas of individualism and gaining profit. I argue that through social movements, people in Barcelona have used public space for mass mobilisation to shake up pre-established modes of behaviour induced by fighting neoliberalism hidden under a veil of nationalism which has led to street fights between people and the police, since nationalism draws on an emotional bond and the image of brotherhood. The Catalan pro-independence movement has benefited from both class

struggle and neoliberal processes because it has led more people to be on board with the goal of a separate nation, to create a change for the better. The annual celebration, La Diada, which is organised to celebrate Catalan culture, but more importantly, to show strength. My argument about how the Spanish State faces challenges of local nationalism, is by applying more force through surveillance, through the imprisonment of political leaders and regime critical voices. By applying judicial forms of persecution, measures also affect the populations' anxiety levels make them more paranoid. I also argue that the Spanish State is leading the way in a European context, where countries are changing in their view of social movements and changing how they handle episodes of social unrest. Another argument is that neoliberalism has a formative role in the international challenges in Spain and in the international community. However, instead of facing problems from this, they choose to apply the judicial system and increase the surveillance on populations.

When people experience challenges in everyday life that affect their household, they become politically activated. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people's everyday lives. The uprising I participated regarding resistance to pandemic measures was an outcome of the everyday life being negatively affected, which in turn triggered the underlying struggle inherent in the Catalan identity and nationalism. I argue that the national character cannot be taken out of the context, even if a protest is not overtly dedicated to Catalan independence. Building this argument is how the ANC and other actors have developed a significant capacity to mass mobilise, creating a distinct protest culture with distinct protest practices. Practices which are performed in public spaces and work as comments on citizenship, democracy, and the right to produce space. The ANC is also a flexible social movement with international contacts, and a high degree of internal competence, as well as supported from the political and economic Catalan elite. This may explain how, as a grassroots movement, they are increasingly focusing on specific political agendas and at the same time facilitating the "change for the better" strategy which align with the neoliberal strategies implemented by the Catalan Generalitat. The conflict with the royal house is rooted in historical disagreements but is given new meaning through rituals such as the burning of the King's image and mass mobilization events. I argue that this creates a connection between the past and the present using the streets for collective actions and disrupting normality, in their form of producing public space.

Since the struggle is embodied and active in the making of everyday life, it was vital for me to bring into the picture some negative aspects of the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat. Catarina tells about difficulties with the subject and how she prefers to affiliate with internationals to escape social censorship against for a separate Catalonia. Anna is also against her separate Catalan nation, but she and Aleix are involved in Antifa, which shows more internal disagreement in the movements and among Catalans. When it comes to neoliberal influence on the conflict, it leads to property speculation, high housing costs, lots of tourism, and gentrification. Local institutions have excluded lower classes through marketing and urban planning (such as the Civic Standard Plan). To maintain the image of Barcelona as an attractive city, the Catalan Generalitat has chosen to implement bans and increase monitoring of public space. I argue that people want to defend and revenge the streets as a public space through protest practices, the defence questions who has the right to produce space to protect the city from exploitation or oppression. By creating counter-spaces, people regain a form of control and autonomy. Politically, this can be linked globally with movements that have similar challenges, which strengthen ties of solidarity across scales and borders.

The way in which people use their bodies through specific forms of resistance in the street, they use space in a distinct manner. I argue that the body's performance and protest practises play an essential role in maintaining the oppositions to the Spanish State and a form of solidarity among the inhabitants, especially in those who identify as Catalans living in Barcelona. Through holding hands and building human towers, adding music, art, and literature, with the act of coming together, a symbiosis is created that reinforces the Catalan national identity. I also suggest that more radical actions, such as destroying, burning, tagging, or using Black Bloc tactics to violate the Spanish State is a way to communicate how the State violates the people. By defending space and revenging, such actions remake space and creates a way for people to take back control and autonomy. Ironically, I also argue that the social movements join the neoliberal project by demanding a better standard of living and demanding the opportunity to acquire more products. When it comes to technology, I argue that social media and the digital gaze of the State creates a form of anxiety in the population, which is shown in conversations with my interlocutors, who are wondering if I am a spy. The fear subsided when we talked about TD, and solutions to maintain anonymity. TD was an attempt to escape the digital gaze of the in the act of organising mass mobilising. The final argument is that both "Barcelonian-ness" and

"Catalan-ness" are two sides of the same coin, both forms are driven fourth by a neoliberal agenda that exploits local culture and citizens, as well as use historical and contemporary opposition as a brand building strategy.

Final Reflections

In this section I wish to highlight and reflect over potential flaws in this thesis. Regarding Ortner critic on resistance studies inability to prevail necessary anthropological standards. With the term "ethnographic refusal," she refers to a refusal of thickness and a failure of holism and density in resistance studies. Also, by questioning the category of "forms of resistance" by Scott, she draws into attention individuals' "intention", saying that if there is not present a conscious resistance, the act cannot be one of resistance (Ortner, 2021:175). The pandemic influenced opportunities to be close to others in several ways, which has contributed to a lack of thickness regarding hidden forms of resistance and internal differences within the Catalan pro-independence movement. I have balanced this by using others' research to substantiate my own. The questioning of intention will be a critical point of reflection in this thesis, along with the notion Ortner brings about considering social movements themselves and conflicted with internal contradictions (Ortner, 2021:179). Agree with Ortner's critique, that one should be able to pinpoint covert forms of resistance I have tried to balance the lack of thickness associated with hidden forms of resistance by focusing on overt protest practices and events in the streets.

Lack of ethnographic thickness when it comes to hidden forms of resistance, was not only about the pandemic, but also a challenge because of the lack of language skills since listening to online meetings and streamed events by Catalan organisations, was unsatisfying without proper understanding of the conversations. Because of this, I do not entail an essential aspect of studying social movements, namely looking at the internal conflicts within the organisations. I have received information about various movements from informants, which indicates that people involved in social movements such as Antifa and organisations and parties pro-independence, but I cannot make a broader analysis nor generalise on the internal conflicts and disagreements. Another point of this self-criticism is epistemological, regarding the scope and validity of the thesis and have through several rounds of reflection discovered that I have a

strong sympathy for the Catalan Pro-independence movement, which may have influenced my interpretation. My bias in this is about the "freedom aspect" and the right to express oneself through art and demonstrations. I have referred to concrete real events and tried my best to explore the struggle between the Spanish State and Catalan. Generalitat objectively.

Conclusion

“El carrers sempre seran nostres” means “the streets will always be ours,” a sentence that can be used to sum up and answer the research inquiries. By focusing on collective action in public place and how it is used to organise collective actions, I argue that the streets in Barcelona have a formative role in maintaining the political struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat maintain. People draw on historical and current disagreements and they are using the streets as public space to organise mass mobilisation and collective action in specific ways. Public spaces are filled with history and symbolism that gets inscribed with the conflict between the Spanish State and Catalan Generalitat, serving as a basis of disagreement and connecting earlier feelings of oppression and exploitation to current experiences. Taking away political opinions, the core of social movements in Barcelona is the attempt to break up previous behavioural patterns by creating a rupture with the established to make a change (for the better). The Spanish State meets the plea for change by using force against those who oppose them or participate in activities that the State interprets as destructive. In Spain, this concerns using the police to crack down on riots, control protests, and demonstrations, and monitor potential risk through technology, now also digitally, which can create a political paranoia. The Spanish State also puts people in prison for political opinions, which helps to intensify the criticism against them. Being affected by international currents the Spanish State views on mass mobilisation, moves toward increasing control, judicial persecution, and surveillance.

On the political level, I argue that the street's incidences in the political struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat are significant, and that governing institutions are involved in creating and re-creating the ongoing contention. The political influence maintains the struggle and facilitates the neoliberal processes that create problems brought on by gentrification, inequality, and social uncertainty. Public space is being exploited by neoliberal strategies,

leading to poorer living conditions for the people which affects the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan on a general basis. The struggle is maintained by market forces and cultural events, such as the Olympics and football matches, pushed forward by local governmental institutions, to contribute to the marketing Barcelona as an innovative, creative city, which has involved the creation of citizens who are in opposition. Focusing on volunteerism handing over much of the responsibility for social services to regular people and grassroots organisations has made it more difficult for the poor and lower classes, which links this to class struggle. By joining collective actions in the streets, people take back public space and question who has the right to produce it. By questioning the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat validity and problematising democracy and citizenship through using their bodies and different protest practices, groups protect and revenge their city. The bodily ways in which groups protect and revenge their city is formed as an attempt to reconceptualise power relations to take back a sense of autonomy and control in everyday life. At the same time, protest practises create new norms of socialisation that strengthen personal, local, and social bonds, which increases a feeling of community and Catalan national imagery. Therefore, it is argued here, that the streets have a significant role in the struggle between the Spanish State and the Catalan Generalitat through the process of producing space.

I have come to the following conclusions. The "struggle of Historicity" creates two opposing national narratives, contributing to disagreements that materialises as events of collective action in the streets. The summer Olympics and strategies for marketing and city planning have been formative in the creation of "Barcelonian-ness." An image that ratifies people as being permanently in opposition to Madrid and The Spanish State. Through social movements, people in Barcelona have used public space for mass mobilisation to shake up pre-established modes of behaviour because of challenging experiences in everyday life, which get people politically activated. The contesting national characters provides a formative context. Furthermore, the Spanish State has faced issues in Catalonia by applying more force through surveillance and judicial forms of persecution. Strong social networks in Barcelona have developed a significant capacity to mass mobilise. Furthermore, they have created a distinct protest culture with distinct protest practices that stimulate solidarity. Public space gets used to criticize citizenship and democracy, and collective action seeks to defend against neoliberal influences such as property speculation and gentrification by remaking space, including protest

practices that can be interpreted as revenging. By creating counter-spaces, people regain control and autonomy by disrupting normality and everyday life in the city and the streets.

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