
Miscellaneous

Anna Soliguer-Guix

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7462-5957>

asoliguer@uoc.edu

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Submitted

March 29th, 2024

Approved

November 18th, 2024

© 2025

Communication & Society

ISSN 0214-0039

E ISSN 2386-7876

www.communication-society.com

2025 – Vol. 38(1)

pp. 232-246

How to cite this article:

Soliguer-Guix, A. (2025). Analysis of press discourse on tourismphobia in Barcelona: perspectives, trends, and narratives within the communication framework, *Communication & Society*, 38(1), 232-246.

<https://doi.org/10.15581/003.38.1.017>

Analysis of press discourse on tourismphobia in Barcelona: perspectives, trends, and narratives within the communication framework

Abstract

This article provides an examination of how the Spanish press covers the phenomenon known as tourismphobia in Barcelona, highlighting the importance of the media treatment of tourismphobia in a context marked by the unease generated by touristification. The first objective was to understand the social reaction to Barcelona's tourism model, expressed through the debate on tourismphobia in the written press, which reflected the social importance of this activity; secondly, to analyse how the discourse on tourismphobia is socially constructed through identifying and analysis of narratives. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative methodology including bibliometric, discursive and narrative analysis was employed, using news items from six newspapers on tourismphobia in Barcelona. The results indicated the ideological use of narratives by the media. The conclusions of the study revealed that tourismphobia was instrumentalized according to particular positionings linked to power relations. This study constitutes a valuable contribution to the understanding of press attitudes towards tourismphobia in the psychosocial construction of local community attitudes.

Keywords

Tourismphobia, Barcelona, communication, media, press, newspapers, overtourism.

1. Introduction

The surge in tourism in the capital of Catalonia has resulted in the rise of tourismphobia, significant as a social and media phenomenon that has ignited vigorous debate within the media, serving as a primary conduit for its dissemination. This academic article aims to delve into this phenomenon, focusing on the analysis of tourismphobia for a comprehensive understanding of its dynamics within the city. Specifically, it will examine the construction and evolution of discourse in print media regarding tourismphobia between 2008 and 2019, elucidating the main perspectives, trends, and narratives present in media coverage.

To accomplish this objective, two specific aims have been delineated. Firstly, a thorough discourse analysis of print media representations of tourismphobia in Barcelona during the specified timeframe will be conducted. Secondly, the article seeks to identify and elucidate the primary perspectives, trends, and narratives surrounding tourismphobia as portrayed by the media. These objectives will be pursued through a bibliometric analysis of published news and a content analysis aimed at discerning predominant discourses. Additionally, codes and categorizations will be developed to classify the narratives according to the typology proposed by Mantecón and Velasco (2020). A central aspect of this research is the examination of the media's role in shaping discourse about tourismphobia in Barcelona. It aims to investigate how the media contribute to agenda-setting, and influence public opinion, all of which are pivotal in shaping the city's tourist image (Gartner, 1994; Palou, 2006).

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Tourismphobia as a social phenomenon*

Tourismphobia, or the rejection of tourism, emerges as an expression of the fight for urban rights (Harvey, 2013) in rebel cities (Charnock *et al.*, 2021). This phenomenon illustrates not only the complexity of tourism dynamics but also the need to address local concerns in urban tourism planning and management. Overtourism is considered one of the driving factors of tourismphobia (Dodds & Butler, 2019) with the proliferation of social movements in several tourist cities (Colomb & Novy, 2017). Residents have lost their quality of life and demand regulations to diminish the impact of the sphere of hospitality and leisure (Seraphin *et al.*, 2020). In addition to negatively impacting residents, the phenomenon of overtourism also significantly affects workers employed in the tourism sector (Walmsley *et al.*, 2022).

Tourismphobia has been the subject of study in the field of communication and tourism (Pasquinelli & Trunfio, 2020). Originally debated among Catalan geographers and tourism planners, its adoption and media dissemination generated persistent ideological debate (González & Antón, 2008; Donarie, 2008; Delgado, 2008).

The discomfort caused by tourism has been investigated in various dimensions, especially in relation to its negative impacts and the rise of mass urban tourism (Sommer & Helbrecht, 2017). Several studies have highlighted residents' concerns in this regard (Bruttomesso, 2018; Milano, 2018; Verissimo *et al.*, 2020). The World Tourism Organization has also conducted studies on residents' perceptions (UNWTO, 2018). According to Zerva *et al.* (2019), a clear difference was found between the 'tourismphobic' views of residents and the 'tourismphobic' perspectives of DMOs, although some of the gaps in perceptions were beginning to narrow.

Tourismphobia has gained new relevance in current debates, although the discomfort associated with tourism is not a recent phenomenon. It has been addressed from various perspectives, including the negative attitudes of tourists (Bruckner & Finkelkraut, 1979) and criticisms of organised tourism (Jacobsen, 2000). Tourism is recognised as a significant agent of change that transforms urban spaces, generating profound impacts on economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Peeters *et al.*, 2018). These changes provoke tensions between local communities and the tourism industry, as well as challenges in preserving cultural identity and

ensuring long-term sustainability, thus reflecting a broader debate on urban governance and the future of contemporary cities (Smith *et al.*, 2019).

2.2. *Tourismphobia as a media phenomenon*

The press and other media not only reflect but also influence the public perception of tourism and tourismphobia (Álvarez Sousa, 2021). This phenomenon not only illustrates the dynamics of the social construction of public issues but also highlights the importance of narratives in shaping public opinion (McCombs, 2002) and in defining tourism-related policies. The discourse of power, through the press and other media, seeks to disseminate messages that favour particular interests and oppose others (Araya, 2021). The construction of narratives is precisely the instrument with which it aims to control public opinion and achieve broad institutional power (Castells, 2009). However, this process generates debate and alternative views that, in the form of counter-narratives, assume a character of re-legitimation of certain criminalised discourses that highlight the existence of discontent within society (Blanco *et al.*, 2019).

The press frequently resorts to tourismphobia to validate or invalidate social actors based on their positioning regarding the growth tourism model. Several academic studies have concluded that the media treatment of this phenomenon responds to political instrumentalization between antagonistic positions (Huete & Mantecón, 2018). According to Sanmartín (2019), the neologism ‘tourismphobia’ suffers from an ideological bias created by neoliberal ideology. This phenomenon was evident after the symbolic attack on the Barcelona Tourist Bus by Arran, which became a trending topic on social media and the headline of many newspapers, used to generate a narrative of rejection against tourist protest movements (Pérez-García & García Abad, 2018).

Although tourismphobia has been seen as a journalism agenda-setting issue, it is a political and tourism planning issue that responds to the fear of the political class that the population will not accept tourism because the social exchange it offers residents does not provide them with benefits that compensate for the costs (Rasoolimanesh, *et al.*, 2015). The numerous news items referring to this phenomenon respond to the fact that tourism generates interest in the press to the extent that it incorporates elements of controversy (Wanta & Hu, 1993).

Framing in the media context is a central concept that directly affects our perception of information (Entman, 1993). This phenomenon goes beyond the mere presentation of images and words, as it involves the way in which they are presented, prioritising certain aspects while relegating others (Goffman, 1974). The literature on framing highlights its importance in shaping public perception and forming opinions. Newspapers have a determinative impact in this situation, given their capacity to decide which aspects of an issue are highlighted and which are overlooked (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In this sense, the media not only transmit information neutrally but also influence the interpretation of events and problems by the public (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015).

This approach facilitates a deeper comprehension of the media’s role in shaping narratives and attitudes about tourismphobia in Barcelona, especially in the context where the phenomenon mainly focused on attacks on anti-capitalist independents, while other social movements, such as unions and Kellys, distanced themselves from tourismphobia, at least in the press (González-Reverté & Soliguer-Guix, 2024).

In the treatment of tourismphobia in Barcelona, the media have used conflict frames to highlight disputes and oppositions related to the phenomenon. Human interest frames have also been used to personalise stories and evoke emotions in the audience, as has been the case with the treatment of anti-capitalist independents in their attacks on tourist assets (Habermas, 2010). Regarding the influence of the media on social movements in Barcelona, a framing strategy has been observed to defend the image of the city and the priorities of the tourism sector and growth model. In this way, the media can use frames that present social movements as disruptive or radical, seeking to minimize their claims and discredit them before public opinion.

2.3. Conceptual Framework: The Mantecón and Velasco Model based on Merton's Social Theory

The Social Theory of Merton, developed in 1938, describes five patterns of adaptation to social pressures: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Conformity involves accepting cultural goals and the institutional means to achieve them, while innovation is characterised by rejecting traditional means in favour of unconventional activities. Ritualists abandon the goals of success but maintain the institutional means, exhibiting mechanical behaviour. Those who retreat reject both the goals and the means, opting to isolate themselves from social expectations. Finally, rebels challenge established goals, seeking alternatives (Merton, 1938). This theory is useful for analysing attitudes towards tourism as a social phenomenon.

Today, Merton's framework can be applied to assess reactions to phenomena such as tourismphobia, where perceptions of tourism vary according to the relationships between individuals, communities, economic growth, and their social consequences. This connection to contemporary issues is precisely what Mantecón and Velasco (2020) achieved in their study of media narratives, creatively adapting Merton's theory and redefining each stage into new categories: legitimisation, innovative criticism, resignation, radical criticism, and subversive utopia.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the typology proposed by Mantecón and Velasco (2020), which adapts Merton's Social Theory (1938) to analyse attitudes towards tourism. Notably, Huete and Mantecón (2018) highlighted the limited interest in investigating how power dynamics influence public opinion and the challenges posed by politicisation in understanding anti-tourism sentiments.

Mantecón and Velasco classify discourses on tourismphobia into five types: legitimisation accepts without criticism the economic growth objectives associated with tourism, while innovative criticism raises concerns about tourism practices. Resignation acknowledges the connection between tourism and wealth but does so with indifference. Radical criticism directly confronts tourism, viewing it as an instrument of economic exploitation, while subversive utopia proposes actions to subvert the established social order, advocating for a tourism model prioritising social justice.

Furthermore, Mantecón and Velasco extend the concept of 'tourist carrying capacity', which traditionally focuses on the number of tourists a destination can accommodate before negative consequences arise, to encompass broader sociocultural implications and power dynamics that shape public discourse around tourism. Their analysis covers not only environmental and economic impacts but also local communities' perceptions, providing a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between tourism and society. In this context, according to Mantecón and Velasco (2020), tourismphobia is described as an expression primarily used by the media to stigmatise public expressions of rejection towards tourism or its effects.

3. Methodology

The methodology used to analyse the print media discourse on tourismphobia was qualitative and based on a rigorous collection of news items related to this phenomenon. To carry out this compilation, the FACTIVE platform was used as a data source, an aggregated press database offering extensive coverage of media in the Spanish state. The analysis period spanned from 2008 to 2019, during which tourismphobia emerged as a significant social and media interest, reflected in increased press coverage of this topic. News search was conducted using specific keywords, such as 'turismefobia' in Catalan or 'turismofobia' in Spanish, selecting all news containing these words in the title or body text. After news collection and filtering, a total of 2,742 articles were extracted from 82 newspapers, of which 328 focused on tourismphobia in Barcelona.

To make comparisons between different media outlets, six newspapers were selected (*Ara*, *Crónica Global*, *El País*, *El Periódico*, *Expansión* and *La Vanguardia*) representing diversity in terms of territorial scope (national, regional, and local) and editorial focus (generalist and

specialised in economy). Furthermore, news items were organised and classified according to various indicators such as media coverage, geography, article length, and main themes addressed. The collected information was presented in a structured manner in descriptive tables, allowing for a detailed analysis of observed patterns in media coverage of tourismphobia within the timeframe analyzed in the Spanish press. This methodological approach provided a solid basis for understanding the evolution and trends in media discourse on this social phenomenon.

During the data collection process, several significant challenges were faced, such as news duplication between print and online editions, and duplication within editorial groups in regional newspapers. Additionally, it is noteworthy that notwithstanding the extensive nature of the FACTIVA database, it does not cover all existing editorial groups, limiting the search to newspapers with national scope such as *La Razón*. FACTIVA also provided in the information some press agencies that were included in the newspaper listing.

To address the analysis of news related to tourismphobia, a coding tree structured in five main blocks was employed, covering a wide range of themes related to this social phenomenon which were broken down into 32 codes and 20 subcodes related to the social perception of tourism and tourismphobia. The code tree was constructed by grouping codes into distinct blocks. Block 1 encompassed urban conflicts and manifestations of inequalities stemming from tourism, including gentrification, tourist saturation, labor insecurity, gender disparities, housing issues, urban commercialization, decline of traditional commerce, resident population loss, rising living costs, and tourist monoculture. Block 2 focused on the perception of overtourism, environmental repercussions, nuisances, crowd management, mobility challenges, tourist visibility, and resident health concerns. Block 3 comprised proposals and actions, including initiatives to address tourism-induced inequalities and gender issues, as well as suggestions for tourism management models like limitation, deconcentration, regulation, and diversification. Block 4 revolved around citizen protests and direct resistance actions. Lastly, block 5 delved into ideological facets, such as partisan manipulation of tourismphobia and the adverse effects of using the term on destination image. This coding tree provided a comprehensive analytical structure to understand and interpret the material covered in news regarding tourismphobia in the print media. These codes guided the analysis of news content, allowing the identification of underlying narratives. Pilot tests were conducted to verify the accuracy of the coding process before applying it to the entire dataset. Once the news was coded, categories were created to group them according to recurrent themes and patterns identified. This facilitated the identification of the main narratives and their classification according to the typology proposed by Mantecón and Velasco (2020). Through this analysis process, a detailed insight into how the discourse on tourismphobia and tourism in Barcelona is socially constructed from news published in the print media was obtained. This information was essential to understanding the various viewpoints, debates, and concerns related to this social phenomenon, thus contributing to enriching knowledge on the subject.

4. Results

4.1. Metric analysis of tourismphobia in Barcelona (2008-2019)

The metric analysis of news regarding tourismphobia in the Spanish press between 2008 and 2019 provides insight into how this phenomenon has been addressed by the media. Concerning the emergence of the topic, the first reports on tourismphobia appeared in 2008 in Catalan media such as *La Vanguardia* and *El Periódico*. Subsequently, the matter gained broader attention across the Spanish press at large, particularly following incidents related to tourism in Barcelona. Regarding the geographical distribution of the news, the investigation extended to media outlets across Spain, revealing that Barcelona was the focal point of tourismphobia coverage, with 42.5% of the news dedicated to the city. Other tourist destinations, such as the Balearic Islands, also addressed the topic, albeit to a lesser extent. With respect to the relationship with

tourism activity, a negative correlation was observed between the number of tourist spots in a region and the quantity of news about tourismphobia, except in the case of Catalonia, where the correlation was positive. This suggests that regions with more tourist pressure may have less media coverage of tourismphobia.

4.1.1. Barcelona

The role of Barcelona is pivotal, as the city has become a reference point in the debate on tourismphobia, both in Catalonia and Spain. The change of government in the city in 2015 bolstered the debate on this issue, and its media relevance influenced the extension of the debate to other tourist regions. The metric analysis of news about tourismphobia revealed Barcelona's significance as a focus of interest in this debate and how media outlets contributed to disseminating and amplifying this phenomenon throughout Spain. Regarding news published about tourismphobia between 2008 and 2019, the selection of newspapers was primarily based on the volume of news published about tourismphobia during this period, with priority given to outlets such as *Ara*, *Crónica Global*, *El País*, *El Periódico*, *Expansión* and *La Vanguardia*. Publication trends indicated a significant increase in the number of news articles on tourismphobia starting in 2016, reaching a peak in 2017. From 2018 to 2019, the number of news articles decreased, but with a shift towards longer articles with a more analytical and debate-oriented approach. The length of the news articles mostly ranged from medium to long, indicating considerable press interest in addressing the topic of tourismphobia in a detailed and thorough manner. A fundamental aspect was the geographical interest, as initially focused on Barcelona, news about tourismphobia expanded over time to other regions of Spain, although Barcelona remained a prominent focus of interest. Regarding main themes, overtourism was the primary theme associated with tourismphobia, followed by governance and tourism management issues. However, some media outlets highlighted ideological aspects or the use of the term 'tourismphobia'. Finally, concerning the vision of the tourism model, a division was observed between more conservative media, supportive of the current tourism model, and others more critical, adopting a more contrary position to this model. Overall, this analysis suggests that tourismphobia gained importance as a current topic and a subject of public debate in the Spanish press during the studied period, with a trend towards broader and deeper coverage of this phenomenon and its impacts on society and the economy.

4.1.2. Chronology

In the chronological view of relevant events related to tourismphobia in the print media between 2008 and 2019, the progression of the debate on this topic is highlighted, shifting from local impacts to tourism management issues, and ultimately to political considerations. In the years 2007-2008, the first articles and debates on tourismphobia emerged, with Quim Monzó in *La Vanguardia*, Manuel Delgado in *El País*, and José Antonio Donaire in *Metrópoli Abierta*. The phenomenon of tourismphobia is linked to Doxey's theory on the four stages of the relationship between tourists and residents: euphoria, apathy, irritation, and antagonism. Between 2009 and 2011, concern grew about the negative consequences of tourism in Barcelona and other popular tourist destinations. Experts and studies, such as the Barcelona Tourism Strategic Plan, highlighted the need for a review of the tourism model. In the years 2013-2014, an increase in news related to tourismphobia was observed, with criticisms of the accelerated transformation of cities into tourist destinations. Neighbourhood associations expressed concern about the displacement of residents and the decline of commercial fabric. By the late 2010s, news reflected a politicisation of the debate on tourismphobia, with incidents such as attacks by Arran on the Barcelona Tourist Bus. Studies emerged regarding the relationship between tourismphobia, class struggle, and local political dynamics (Mansilla, 2019). News about tourismphobia evolved from initial concerns about local tourism consequences to considerations about tourism

management and political implications. This evolution reflected the complexity of the phenomenon and the various dimensions in which the public debate on this topic manifested.

Year	Key Events
2007-2008	First debates on tourismphobia. Linked to Doxey's stages (euphoria, apathy, irritation, antagonism).
2009-2011	Concerns over tourism's negative impact on Barcelona. Calls for revising the tourism model (Barcelona Strategic Plan).
2013-2014	Increased news on tourismphobia. Criticism of city transformations and displacement of residents.
2017	Politicisation of the debate (Arran attacks Barcelona Tourist Bus). Linked to class struggles and local politics.
2018-2019	Debate shifts to tourism management and political considerations. Public opinion highlights the complexity of the issue.

Source: Own elaboration.

4.1.3. Media Treatment

The relevance of references to Barcelona in the metrics on tourismphobia news justifies the analysis as a case study of this city, which will be further explained through the analysis of thematic content (Table 1).

Table 1. Total number of news published on tourism referencing Barcelona (2008-2019).

Territorial scope of the news coverage	News	Percentage of the total number of news
Barcelona	1157	42,5
Other places	1482	54,4
Unidentified	85	3,1
Total	2724	100,0

Source: Own elaboration.

The thematic analysis of news coverage on tourismphobia in selected newspapers reveals the emergence of shared communicative patterns in the thematic treatment of information. Newspapers primarily highlight anti-tourism protests and the growing concern of residents about tourism as an urban issue. This relationship between citizen concern about tourism and the abundance of news about tourismphobia reflects a propositional and critical interest in Barcelona's tourism model. The discourse of the printed press introduces a critical component on tourism that was less evident before. A second significant aspect is the political use of tourismphobia, with some newspapers associating it with power struggles or the independence process. This, along with the ideological particularities of each newspaper and its relationship with the tourism sector, contributes to differences in the approach taken in covering the topic (Table 2).

**Analysis of press discourse on tourismphobia in Barcelona:
perspectives, trends, and narratives within the communication framework**

Table 2. Comparison of the main topics covered in news on tourismphobia by newspaper and period.

Block	<i>Ara</i>	<i>Crónica Global</i>	<i>El País</i>	<i>El Periódico</i>	<i>Expansión</i>	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
Block 1	18,29 (3)	5,85 (5)	25,10 (3)	24,37 (3)	10,33 (4)	13,91 (4) *
Block 2	29,20 (2)	31,87 (2)	26,62 (1)	32,57 (1)	26,09 (2)	29,58 (1)
Block 3	30,09 (1)	21,93 (3)	25,48 (2)	28,25 (2)	42,93 (1)	18,98 (3)
Block 4	7,37 (5)	7,31 (4)	8,75 (5)	5,69 (5)	7,61 (5)	9,49 (5)
Block 5	15,04 (4)	33,04 (1)	14,07 (4)	9,11 (4)	13,04 (3)	28,04 (2)
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Block 1 Urban conflict and manifestation of inequalities generated by tourism. Block 2 Perception of tourist excess (overtourism). Block 3. Proposals and actions. Block 4. Citizen protest. Block 5. Ideological aspects. *The numbers between parentheses indicate the order of importance of the block, according to the number of news published in each newspaper. The shaded areas indicate which newspaper has published the most news about a specific block.

Source: Own elaboration.

The comparison of the main themes in the news about tourismphobia across various newspapers was approached through each thematic block, including urban conflict, the perception of overtourism, proposed actions, and citizen protest, presented with their relative percentage in each newspaper, offering a detailed overview of their coverage. The thematic analysis revealed a common concern for the social impacts of tourism and proposed actions to address them. Additionally, the political use of tourismphobia was highlighted in many of the analyzed newspapers reflecting its relevance as a topic of political and social debate. The thematic analysis provided a comprehensive view of the main themes and positions in the coverage of tourismphobia by newspapers. This understanding was essential for comprehending the diverse perspectives and narratives that influence the public perception of this phenomenon (Table 3).

Table 3. Media coverage of tourismphobia in Barcelona (2008-2019).

Newspaper	Main Focus	Aspects Covered
<i>Ara</i>	Proposals and actions for tourism management, attention to overtourism	Political debate, overtourism, nuisances and inappropriate tourist behavior, labor precariousness in the tourism sector, need for regulation and, changes in the tourism management model.
<i>Crónica Global</i>	Politicization of tourismphobia, emphasis on negative effects for the tourism sector	Politicisation of tourismphobia, overtourism as a factor of tourismphobia among residents, social and economic inequalities associated with tourism and urban rights.
<i>El País</i>	Balanced distribution of thematic blocks related to tourismphobia	Labor issues in the tourism sector, consequences of Spanish labor reforms, less attention to the politicisation of tourismphobia, protests and, actions against tourism.
<i>El Periódico</i>	Tourism pressure on residents and tourist neighbourhoods, tourism management proposals	Housing problems, urban carrying capacity, tourist-related nuisances, governance solutions, recognition of the municipal government's role in reforming the tourism model.
<i>Expansión</i>	Tourism management proposals, political use of tourismphobia	Tourism model reform, political use of tourismphobia, protests and actions against tourism, possible international repercussions on the city's tourist image.
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	The political debate surrounding tourismphobia, concern about negative images and, tourist problems	Political debate, tourist discomfort and inappropriate behavior, urban carrying capacity issues, housing problems, cost of living increases. Tourism regulation solutions.

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3 shows the main issues addressed by each newspaper in relation to media coverage. However, this does not imply that other topics, which are considered primary in the different newspapers, are absent from their coverage. Although all newspapers address the same topics, they do so with different intensities and approaches, which could give the impression that a particular newspaper does not cover certain aspects. This variability in coverage can be considered a limitation of the study, as it may affect the perception of the relevance of certain topics in the media discourse and their interpretation in the results.

4.1.4 Positioning

The interpretation of each newspaper's positioning regarding tourismphobia was classified into four main categories. Firstly, there was the category of "Favourable with a Continuation Attitude," which encompassed newspapers maintaining a favourable stance towards the existing tourism model, without the need for significant changes. This approach was predominant in some newspapers, such as *La Vanguardia* and *Expansión*. Secondly, the category of "Favourable with a Revision Attitude" was identified, in which newspapers also supported tourism but acknowledged the need for adjustments to benefit a wide range of population and territory. This group was less numerous compared to those favourable with a continuation attitude. Thirdly, the "Critical" category stood out, encompassing newspapers with critical views of the current tourism model, such as *El País*, *Ara*, and *El Periódico*. These media outlets proposed significant changes or even a complete transformation of the model and represented a considerable proportion of the analyzed news. Finally, the "Neutral" category was included, comprising news that did not express a clear position or did not pass value judgments on the current tourism model. This group was less frequent compared to the other categories and reflected a more neutral position in the debate on tourismphobia.

Tourismphobia has become a crucial discursive element for addressing the validity of the current tourism model and for raising the need for renewal and transformation in this area. Beyond expressing an aversion to tourism, tourismphobia has also been used to express demands and perspectives for shifting in the management and perception of tourism. Additionally, discourse surrounding tourismphobia can significantly influence the defence or delegitimization of certain political positions, particularly regarding the management and regulation of the tourism sector. Although most newspapers expressed the need to continue with the urban development model based on tourism, there was also a significant presence of critical positions calling for deeper changes in the current tourism model. Each newspaper presented a different positioning pattern, from defending the current model to more critical and reformist views.

Table 4. Media Positioning on tourismphobia of each newspaper.

Positioning	A	%	B	%	C	%	Ch	%	D	%	E	%	Total News	Total %
Favourable with a continuist attitude	8	18.60	31	60.78	11	23.40	11	18.33	31	93.94	52	55.32	144	43.90
Favourable with a revisionist attitude	14	32.56	7	13.73	6	12.77	8	13.33	1	3.03	20	21.28	56	17.07
Critical	15	34.88	5	9.80	30	63.83	31	51.67	0	0	10	10.64	91	27.74
Neutral	6	13.95	8	15.69	0	-	10	16.67	1	3.03	12	12.77	37	11.28
Total	43	100	51	100	47	100	60	100	33	100	94	100	328	100

A=*Ara*. B=*Crónica Global*. C=*El País*. CH=*El Periódico*. D=*Expansión*. E=*La Vanguardia*.

Source: Own elaboration.

The table provides context to understand the three main narratives identified in the examination of tourismphobia in the Spanish press. These narratives address the overall valuation of tourism's role as an economic engine and the adverse effects of overtourism, including tourist congestion and gentrification. Furthermore, solution proposals are presented to address these adverse impacts, including sector regulation and sustainable practices. The politicisation of tourismphobia is also highlighted, used to legitimize or delegitimize social and political actors. These narratives reflect the diversity of perspectives and interests in the debate on tourismphobia in the Spanish press, illustrating how issues related to tourism and its impacts are discussed and contextualized.

4.1.5. Actors

As the politicisation of tourismphobia is a recurring theme, all social actors, from tourism entrepreneurs to social movements and neighbourhood associations, are present in media narratives. However, the representation of these social actors varies significantly across different media outlets. Specifically, tourism entrepreneurs have a prominent presence, while social movements and neighbourhood associations are underrepresented or even silenced in certain media. This inequality in representation may limit the critical capacity of journalistic discourse, reinforcing the perception that the critical perspective on tourism may be inadequately represented. The evolution of discourse surrounding tourismphobia in the Spanish press is influenced by the representation of social actors and their adherence to various types of discourse. This highlights the importance of diversity in actors and perspectives in the public debate on tourism and its impacts.

Table 5. Prominent social actors in the news coverage of tourismphobia, by newspaper.

Newspaper	TEL	(%)	SM	(%)	PPG	(%)	AE	(%)	AE	%	Total agents	TN	Ratio*
A	32	30,47	12	11,42	46	43,81	13	12,38	2	1,9	105	43	244,1
B	57	61,29	9	9,67	22	23,65	2	2,15	3	3,22	93	51	182,3
C	61	42	13	8,96	49	33,79	14	9,65	8	5,51	145	47	308,5
CH	15	25	10	16,67	15	25	8	13,33	12	20	60	60	100
D	128	78,04	2	1,21	31	18,9	1	0,6	2	1,21	164	33	496,9
E	42	41,17	8	7,84	42	41,17	4	3,92	6	5,88	102	94	108,5
F	335	50,07	54	8,07	205	30,64	42	6,27	33	4,93	669	328	203,9

TN- Total news published (2008-2019). TEL- Tourist Entrepreneurs and Lobbies. SM- Social Movements and Neighbourhood Associations. PPG- Parties and Political Groups. AE- Academics and Experts. *Agents per every 100-news published. A=*Ara*. B=*Crónica Global*. C=*El País*. CH=*El Periódico*. D=*Expansión*. E=*La Vanguardia*.

Source: Own elaboration.

The discourse on tourism in the written press reveals a sophisticated understanding of tourismphobia and its interaction with social dynamics. Several noteworthy aspects emerge in this context. Firstly, there is the ideological and political instrumentalization. The press goes beyond mere reporting on tourismphobia; instead, it engages at a deeper level to influence public opinion and political debates. This instrumentalization aims not only to inform but also to shape readers' perceptions, particularly regarding the tourism growth model.

Secondly, there's the debate on the tourism model. From the collected news, a fervent debate arises concerning the revision of the current tourism model. This debate not only identifies inherent problems with tourism but also promotes solutions and alternatives to address them. There's an emphasis on the need to equitably distribute the benefits and costs of tourism and foster more active citizen participation in related decision-making.

The third aspect relates to politicisation and power struggles. Incidents like the attacks on the Barcelona Tourist Bus become points of political controversy, where various actors seek to capitalize on them according to their interests. This illustrates not only subtle political and social tensions but also the deep interconnection between tourism and public affairs. Furthermore, it's essential to highlight that this analysis goes beyond mere description of facts; it involves deep reflection on discursive construction and narrative formation through different journalistic publications. This underscores the importance of the written press as an active agent in shaping public perceptions and opinions on the phenomenon of tourism and tourismphobia.

Finally, the methodology also includes a structured approach to identify narratives and categorize them according to a defined taxonomy. This systematic approach has provided a detailed and nuanced understanding of the discourse on tourismphobia in the written press, emphasizing the importance of critical analysis in the field of communication.

The response to the first objective reveals that the analysis of the discourse in the written press on tourismphobia in Barcelona between 2008 and 2019 follows a complex evolution. There's an increase in media coverage, highlighting tensions between residents and tourists. However, there's a lack of depth in exploring underlying causes and potential solutions. The media narrative tends to polarize, portraying residents as victims or antagonists of tourism. This polarization can amplify social conflicts. For a more comprehensive and constructive understanding, coverage addressing both local concerns and global tourism dynamics is crucial.

This article has addressed the overarching objective of exploring trends and changes in media coverage of tourismphobia over time and across various media outlets, seeking to elucidate the nuanced dimensions of media influence on shaping discourse surrounding tourismphobia and tourism in Barcelona.

The analysis of how the media shapes dialogue concerning tourismphobia as well as tourism in Barcelona reveals its substantial influence in shaping public perception and the city's social dynamics. Both traditional and digital media platforms serve as channels for diverse perspectives and concerns, influencing public opinion and policy formulation on these issues (Orgad, 2012).

5. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of media coverage on tourismphobia highlights its evolving perception and treatment across different outlets and over time. There is a noticeable increase in attention towards tourismphobia, reflecting escalating conflicts between locals and mass tourism. Traditional and digital media play distinct roles, sparking debates on tourism sustainability and cultural preservation. However, media coverage sometimes fails to fully reflect local concerns or negative impacts on Barcelona. Critical perspectives offer valuable insights despite not being framed within the discourse of tourismphobia.

Furthermore, the media have a pivotal impact on shaping Barcelona's perception as a premier tourist hub and on influencing public attitudes towards tourism. Examining media's role underscores the need for critical evaluation to deepen understanding of social and cultural phenomena and foster constructive dialogue.

An analysis of discourse in print media reveals diverse perspectives. While some advocate for maintaining the tourist growth model, others voice concerns over issues like attacks on independence movements and gentrification. Yet, issues such as demographic changes and displacement of the native population often receive inadequate attention in media coverage. Additionally, discourse in print media tends to overlook tourismphobia as a pervasive phenomenon, focusing instead on global impacts and technical solutions. This necessitates a more holistic approach in media coverage to comprehensively address tourism-related issues.

Regarding practical implications, media communication strategies significantly influence policies on tourism and urban development, especially for actors not represented in dominant discourse trends.

The conclusions can be summarised in five main aspects. The first is the relevance of tourismphobia, as media attention on this phenomenon reflects the impact of tourism on cities and how it can affect residents, influencing public perception and tourism policies adopted. The second concerns the variety of media narratives that vary depending on the medium and its ideological orientation, reflecting the preferences of readers and advertisers. Thirdly, the politicization of the tourismphobic phenomenon by parties and interest groups can influence public perception and political decisions. Fourthly, the superficiality of coverage. Despite the diversity of perspectives, there is a trend towards superficial coverage that does not address underlying causes and potential solutions. Finally, the underrepresentation of critical voices against tourism, which is essential for fostering deeper debate and more comprehensive coverage to properly address the challenges of tourism. In summary, deeper debate and more comprehensive coverage are essential to properly address the challenges of tourism and promote more sustainable urban development (Pirillo & Mundet, 2021).

The combination of the frame of reference and priming (Scheufele, 2000) in print media (Phi, 2020) has exerted a substantial influence on the public perception of tourismphobia in Barcelona (Gretzel, 2019), reinforcing narratives favourable to tourism and the capitalist growth model, while minimizing concerns of critical social movements (Goodwin, 2019). This ideological use of the media has contributed to polarising the debate and perpetuating established interests against community and progressive interests (Hofstede, 1980). The examination of frame of reference remains paramount. Delving into the influence of social media platforms, defined by their algorithms and user-generated content, on framing, suggests a promising avenue for further research in advancing the study of tourismphobia and associated tourism-related issues (Wilson *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, the frame of reference functions as a filter that shapes our perception of reality. The media possesses the capability to shape public sentiment, influence political determinations, and establish societal conventions (Morales-Pérez *et al.*, 2022), especially in relation to the lack of sustainable management in tourist destinations.

Despite all that has been said, with the arrival of progressive social movements to the Barcelona city council, this trend took a radical turn, to the point where former mayor Colau called for a change from tourists to refugees¹. The press failed to maintain the purity of Barcelona's tourist image, despite all its communication strategies. Even tourismphobia became a weapon (Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2019). But what came next was much worse, and over the years, Barcelona lost its quality tourist essence.

This article has shown the relevance of the media in shaping the public perception of tourist destinations and highlights the need for continuous collaboration between the main actors to maintain a positive and attractive image of Barcelona at a global level (Lozano-Monterrubio & Huertas, 2020). The complexity of this task cannot be underestimated, especially considering the shift in focus of activists from the streets to institutions and academia. The penetration of the “woke” ideology and its agendas has negatively affected the image of Barcelona, intensifying the “touristification” phenomenon. This process has triggered serious urban aesthetic problems in the city, characterized by an exponential increase in insecurity and incivism. These issues have affected both residents' quality of life and tourists' experiences, while also inciting criticism by pro-tourism social movements regarding the tourism model. These movements, comprising entrepreneurs who benefit from quality and cultural tourism,

¹ Manchón, M. & Pacheco, R. (2023, June, 13). El adiós de Colau: la activista que nunca supo ejercer de alcaldesa. *Metrópoli Abierta*. Retrieved from https://metropoliabierta.elespanol.com/informacion-municipal/20230617/el-adios-de-colau-la-activista-que-nunca-supio-ejercer-alcaldesa/772172858_o.html

have observed how the rise of low-cost tourism and the erosion of values have jeopardized their businesses.

References

- Álvarez Sousa, A. (2021). La percepción de los problemas del *overtourism* en Barcelona. *RECERCA, REVISTA DE PENSAMENT I ANÀLISI*, 26(1), 59-92.
<https://doi.org/10.6035/Recerca.2021.26.1.4>
- Araya López, A. (2021). A summer of phobias: media discourses on ‘radical’ acts of dissent against ‘mass tourism’ in Barcelona. *Open research Europe*, 1, 66.
<https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.13253.1>
- Ardèvol-Abreu, A. (2015). Framing theory in communication research in Spain. Origins, development and current situation. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, 423-450.
<https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2015-1053>
- Blanco-Romero, A., Blázquez-Salom, M., Morell, M., & Fletcher, R. (2019). Not tourism-phobia but urban-philia: understanding stakeholders’ perceptions of urban touristification. *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles*, 83. <https://doi.org/10.21138/bage.2834>
- Bruckner, P. & Finkelkraut, A. (1979). *Au coin de la rue, l’aventure*. Paris: Éditions du Soleil.
- Bruttomesso, E. (2018). Making sense of the square: Facing the touristification of public space through playful protest in Barcelona. *Tourist Studies*, 18(4), 467-485.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797618775219>
- Castells, M. (2009). *Comunicació i Poder*. Barcelona: UOC.
- Colomb, C. & Novy, J. (2017). *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*. New York: Routledge.
- Charnock, G., March, H., & Ribera-Fumaz, R. (2021). From smart to rebel city? Worlding, provincializing and the Barcelona Model. *Urban Studies*, 58(3), 581-600.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098019872119>
- Delgado, M. (2008). Turistofobia. *El País*. Retrieved from
https://elpais.com/diario/2008/07/12/catalunya/1215824840_850215.html
- Dodds, R. & Butler, R. (2019). The phenomena of overtourism: a review. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 5(4) 519-528. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-06-2019-0090>
- Donaire, J. A. (2008). La efervescencia de la “turismofobia”. *Barcelona Metròpolis. Revista de informació y pensament urbanos*, junio-septiembre. Retrieved from
<http://lameva.barcelona.cat/bcnmetropolis/arxiu/es/pagea6ea.html?id=23&ui=16>
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Gartner, W. C. (1994). Image Formation Process. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 2(2-3), 191-216. https://doi.org/10.1300/J073V02N02_12
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harvard University Press.
- González Reverté, F. & Antón Clavé, S. (2008) La naturaleza del turista. De la turismofobia a la construcción social del espacio turístico. In *A propósito del turismo. La construcción social del espacio turístico* (pp. 11-34). Barcelona: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.
- González-Reverté, F. & Soliguer-Guix, A. (2024). The social construction of anti-tourism protest in tourist cities: a case study of Barcelona. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 10(3), 842-859. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-09-2022-0211>
- Goodwin, H. (2019). Barcelona: crowding out the locals: a model for tourism management. In R. Dodds & R. Butler (Eds.), *Overtourism: Issues, Realities and Solutions* (pp. 125-138). Berlin/Boston (MA): De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110607369-009>
- Gretzel, U. (2019). Implications and results of overtourism including media’s role”. . In R. Dodds & R. Butler (Eds.), *Overtourism: Issues, Realities and Solutions* (pp. 62-75). Berlin/Boston (MA): De Gruyter.
- Habermas, J. (2010). *Teoría de la acción comunicativa*. Madrid: Trotta

- Harvey D. (2013). *Ciudades rebeldes. Del derecho a la ciudad a la revolución urbana*. Madrid: Akal.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*. Sage.
- Huete, R. & Mantecón, A. (2018). El auge de la turismofobia ¿hipótesis de investigación o ruido ideológico? *PASOS, Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 16(1), 9–19.
<http://doi.org/10.25145/J.PASOS.2018.16.001>
- Jacobsen, J. K. S., Iversen, N. M., & Hem, L. E. (2019). Hotspot crowding and over-tourism: Antecedents of destination attractiveness. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Elsevier, 76(C), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.02.011>
- Jones, M. D., McBeth, M. K., & Shanahan, E. A. (2014). Introducing the Narrative Policy Framework. In M. D. Jones, E. A. Shanahan, M. K. McBeth (Eds.), *The Science of Stories*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137485861_1
- Lozano-Monterrubio, N. & Huertas, A. (2020). The image of Barcelona in Online Travel Reviews during 2017 Catalan independence process. *Communication & Society*, 33(3), 33–49. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.33.3.33-49>
- Mansilla López, J. A. (2019). No es turismofobia, es lucha de clases. Políticas urbanas, malestar social y turismo en un barrio de Barcelona. *Revista Nodo*, 13(26), 42–60.
- Mantecón, A. & Velasco, M. (2020). Beyond tourismphobia: Conceptualizing a new framework to analyse attitudes towards tourism. In C. Ribeiro, A. Quintano, M. Simancas M. *et al.* (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on the Impacts, Challenges, and Policy Responses to Overtourism* (pp. 60–74). Hershey (PA): IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-2224-0.ch004>
- McCombs, M. E. & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>
- McCombs, M. (2002). The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion. In *Mass media economics 2002 conference*. London School of Economics. Retrieved from https://www.infoamerica.org/documentos_pdf/mccombs01.pdf
- Merton, R. K. (1938). Social Structure and Anomie. *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), 672–682. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2084686>
- Milano, C. (2018). *Overtourism*, malestar social y turismofobia. Un debate controvertido. *PASOS, Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 16(3), 551–564.
<https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2018.16.041>
- Morales-Pérez, S., Garay, L. & Wilson, J. (2022) Airbnb's contribution to socio-spatial inequalities and geographies of resistance in Barcelona. *Tourism Geographies*, 24(6–7), 978–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1795712>
- Orgad, S. (2012). *Media Representation and the Global Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Palou Rubio, S. (2006). La ciudad fingida. Representaciones y memorias de la Barcelona turística. *PASOS. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 4(1), 13–28.
<https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2006.04.002>
- Pasquinelli, C. & Trunfio, M. (2020). Overtouristified cities: an online news media narrative analysis. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(11), 1805–1824.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1760871>
- Pérez-García, A. & García-Abad, L. (2018). Turismofobia: presencia, impacto y percepción del concepto a través de los medios de comunicación impresos. *adComunica. Revista de Estrategias, Tendencias e Innovación en Comunicación*, 16, 201–2019.
<https://doi.org/10.6035/2174-0992.2018.16.11>
- Peeters, P., Gössling, S., Klijs, J., Milano, C., Novelli, M., Dijkmans, C., Eijelaar, E., Hartman, S., Heslinga, J., Isaac, R., Mitas, O., Moretti, S., Nawijn, J., Papp, B., & Postma, A. (2018). Research for TRAN Committee –Overtourism: impact and policy responses, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.
- Phi, G. (2020). Framing overtourism: a critical news media analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(17), 2093–2097. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1618249>

- Pirillo S. & Mundet LL. (2021). Tourism-phobia in Barcelona: dismantling discursive strategies and power games in the construction of a sustainable tourist city. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 19(1), 113-131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2020.1752224>
- Rasoolimanesh, S., Jaafar, M., Kock, Ned, F., & Ramayah, T. (2015). A revised framework of social exchange theory to investigate the factors influencing residents' perceptions. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, 335-345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.10.001>
- Sanmartín Sáez, J. (2019). Análisis del discurso, ideología y neologismos: 'turismofobia', 'turistización' y 'turistificación' en el punto de mira. *Círculo de lingüística aplicada a la comunicación*, 78, 63-90. <https://doi.org/10.5209/clac.64372>
- Scheufele, D. (2000). Agenda setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass Communication & Society*. 3(2-3), 297-316. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCSO323_07
- Seraphin, H., Gladkikh, T., & Vo Thanh, T. (2020). *Overtourism Causes, Implications and Solutions*. New York: Palgrave.
- Smith, M. K., Sziva, I. P., & Olt, G. (2019). Overtourism and resident resistance in Budapest. *Tourism Planning and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2019.1595705>
- Sommer, C. & Helbrecht, I. (2017). Seeing like a tourist city: how administrative constructions of conflictive urban tourism shape its future. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 3(2), 157-170.
- UNWTO (2018). *Overtourism? Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth Beyond Perceptions*. Madrid: UNWTO. <https://doi.org/10.14198/INTURI2021.22.1>
- Verissimo, M., Moraes, M., Breda, Z., Guizi, A., & Costa, C. (2020). Overtourism and tourismphobia: A systematic literature review. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 68(2), 156-169. <https://doi.org/10.37741/t.68.2.4>
- Walmsley, A., Koens, K., & Milano, C. (2022). Overtourism and employment outcomes for the tourism worker: impacts to labour markets. *Tourism Review*, 77(1) 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-07-2020-0343>
- Wanta, W. & Hu, Y. (1993). The Agenda-setting effects of international news coverage: an examination of differing news frames. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 5(3), 250-264. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/5.3.250>
- Wilson, J., Garay-Tamajón, L., & Morales-Pérez, S. (2022). Politicising platform-mediated tourism rentals in the digital sphere: Airbnb in Madrid and Barcelona. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(5), 1080-1101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1866585>
- Zerva, K., Palou, S., Blasco, D. & Donaire, J.A. (2019). Tourism-philia versus tourism-phobia: residents and destination management organization's publicly expressed tourism perceptions in Barcelona, *Tourism Geographies*, 21(2), 306-329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2018.1522510>