

## CHAPTER 3

# Mapping Barcelona's Cultural Event Landscape: Geographies and Typologies

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### Introduction

In this chapter, we analyse the relationship between public spaces and cultural events, as part of research for the FESTSPACE project funded by HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) and as a response to the eventification of Barcelona, a process that has also been happening in many other European cities in recent years. In light of the massive changes that have affected the sector, and the renegotiations of the field of events due to Covid-19, it is necessary to critically observe the use of physical space by events and the consequences generated by that use, both positive and negative.

Barcelona, like many other cities around the globe, has experienced what Richards (2007) and Jakob (2012) have described as the festivalisation and eventification of the city. Barcelona has a long history of large-scale pulsar events (Richards 2015a), the most important arguably being the Summer Olympics of 1992, when the city emerged as an international tourist destination. Increasingly, international visitors appeared in the city streets

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at local celebrations in public places and at global pulsar events such as the Mobile World Congress or Primavera Sound. While large-scale pulsar events can move from location to location to different urban centres around the globe, the city of Barcelona, similar to other Mediterranean cities, has a unique feeling and way of life all its own, with a cultural agenda of iterative events that maintain social structures and promote social cohesion (Richards 2015). Barcelona has a full calendar of local celebrations, not just popular events and cultural events originating from the liturgical calendar, but traditional celebrations that have arrived with immigrant communities, arising from the fact that, during recent years, global immigration has transformed the city into a multicultural and socially diverse metropolis with multiple communities that share time and space, living together.

The growth of the city has led to an overuse of Barcelona's limited public space, not only by Barcelona citizens themselves but also by mass tourists, most explicitly illustrated in the case of Parc Guell where the once public park was enclosed to protect it from the influx of tourists (Arias-Sans and Russo 2016).

With the aim of observing the way public spaces are occupied by planned cultural events, this chapter analyses the landscape of cultural events in Barcelona. This comprehensive analysis, which we call the landscape of Barcelona's events, was generated by combining a cultural database of events in Barcelona, consisting of 349 cultural events, with their geographical references, allowing us to map the distribution of events in the city. The resulting information about cultural events and their spatial dimensions allows us to see the concentration and centralisation of cultural events in the city and to analyse the interactions between public resources and citizens within the urban environment.

In this chapter we first define diverse categories of cultural events which will allow us to see differences and similarities between them. We then illustrate the concentration, distribution and cartographies of cultural events and event spaces. Finally, this chapter develops an understanding of the distribution of cultural events in the city with insightful results which allow us to pose questions about the distribution of the public resources of time and space. By observing and analysing the concentration of cultural events and resources in the city, we provide potentially useful knowledge that could guide future decision-making processes.

## Contextual Framework

When Richards and Palmer (2010) introduced the concept of 'eventful cities', not only had Covid-19 not happened yet, neither had the full effects of overtourism been felt in Barcelona. The Western world, or at least those in the most comfortable centre of it, were in the full throes of late stage capitalism. The eventful city accurately described what was going on in 2010 as the

network society had enabled the rapid global movement of people, wealth, and information (Castells 2010). Historically, the notion of eventful cities describes the way that many cities, Barcelona included (Colombo 2017; Richards and Palmer 2010; Richards 2015a), were using events – both large-scale industry events and popular culture events – as an expedient resource to generate capital, development and regeneration. The overall result of this can be to produce an effect of ‘festivalisation,’ which can be understood as a specific mechanism to manage and organise the coalition between urban space and social activities as well as a way to entertain residents and tourists (Karpińska-Krakiwicz 2009). In contrast, Richards (2007) defines ‘festivalisation’ mainly in terms of policies of mega-events, linking festivals to economic growth and investment attraction. Along the same lines, Häussermann and Siebel (1993) had earlier identified ‘festivalisation’ as a process of supporting urban policies through the staging of mega-events. Hitters (2007) also considered that ‘festivalisation’ implies the continuous staging of festivals and a permanent event presence in the city.

The eventful cities paradigm has often been used to describe cities that were, at least in part, trying to reproduce the so-called Barcelona Model (Monclús 2003). Authors such as Scarnato (2016) and Degen and Garcia (2012) pointed out how Barcelona's success in combining cultural strategies with urban redevelopment were tied to the city's unique political, economic and social characteristics as it emerged after Franco's dictatorship. The Barcelona Model was built mainly on large-scale, centrally planned, top-down industry events that included not just the Olympics of 1992, which cleaned up the beaches and opened up the city to a wave of international tourism, but likewise yearly and current events such as the Mobile World Congress, staged in the city since 2006. Although the effects of these strategies are contested, especially from a social point of view, this model has at least generated positive effects in the field of urban and economic development. Barcelona's events also extend well beyond this model. The city has a rich and diverse calendar of popular and traditional cultural events that take place city-wide and in local neighbourhoods, often planned and organised in a highly localised and bottom-up manner.

Both types of events involve planned occurrences at a given place and time (Getz 2007) and they compete for the limited public resources of time and space. The city's cultural event calendar therefore includes not only international pulsar or iterative events (Richards 2015a), but also the community-produced events, such as celebrations of ritualistic fire, described by Colombo, Altuna and Oliver-Grasiot (2021). These popular celebrations go beyond the promotional impact or commercial effects, and help to shape the social and cultural fabric of the city.

To compare the advantages and disadvantages of how events are distributed in and across urban public spaces, we need to consider cultural events in Barcelona beyond proposals such as the ones developed already by Getz (2007), Peranson (2009) or Wynn (2016) among others. Consequently, in our analysis

we have classified each event into different categories to be able to better understand the relationship between the events and the different spaces and areas of the city, and their socio-cultural and demographic characteristics.

As cities competed on the international stage by marketing their unique histories, places and identities, a number of problems arose. Not only can a popular traditional event be taken from its original context of participation to become a spectacle (Debord 1994; Gotham 2005), but there has been an observable pattern of uneven distribution of benefits gained from mega-events. Ziakas (2014) and consequently Smith, Ritchie and Chien (2019) proposed a new framework for citizens' attitudes towards these mega-events, to understand the personal price that the average city dweller pays for large-scale events and what they get in return. It is important to ask, especially when trading the shared resources of time and space in an urban environment, who benefits and who loses, in terms of the usability, quality and accessibility of urban spaces. Smith (2017) and other scholars have attempted to uncover the long-term effects of short-term takeovers of public spaces as event venues. Lefebvre (1991) provided a phenomenological understanding of the co-production of the urban environment and various urban scholars such as Jacobs (1961) and Lynch (1960) argued that urban space can determine how we view the world. Beyond urban space, we must consider public space, and the main schools of thought concerning the public realm. Arendt's approach (1958) leaned toward the physical with a focus mostly on the political, and likewise Young (1990) advocated universally inclusive spaces that incorporate interaction of diverse citizenry to achieve a democratic ideal of the kind proposed by Arendt. Meanwhile, a dramaturgical school of thought has been more concerned with the performative aspects of the public realm and the processes that create it, and Sennett (1970) argued that spaces such as public squares and parks that allow for unplanned and unmanaged encounters are integral to a healthy urban environment. Inclusive public spaces that allow for unstructured encounters can be restricted by the festivalisation of the city, especially with mega-events, such as the Olympics, which require public resources. For example, Smith (2013) looked at the limitations on use access to Greenwich Park during the 2012 Olympics in London, when a popular park was 'borrowed' for the equestrian venue. These events restricted public access to what is perceived as a shared common good, consequently exposing a tension inherent in the eventful cities paradigm. According to Lefebvre (1968), the urban environment is co-created and belongs to the people who inhabit it, but at times it can seem as though public space is being sold without acquiescence of those who use it, or transformed into a spectacle.

In every urban settlement, different types of cultural events compete for the same time and space. As with any limited resource, the growth of one can come at the cost of the others. Arias-Sans and Russo (2016) analysed the events leading up to the enclosure of Barcelona's Parc Güell in 2013, which was receiving 25,000 visitors a day (mostly tourists). They point out how in the years leading

up to the mass saturation, its role as a venue for neighbourhood popular culture events had progressively diminished. Faced with this scenario, Russo and Scarnatto (2018) attribute Barcelona en Comú's rise to power in 2015 as a reaction to the Barcelona Model and its dependence on the tourism growth machine. Wilson (2020) has done significant work to describe the effect that collaborative tourism platforms have had on the production of urban space in Barcelona. Faced with the centralisation of culture in specific districts of the city, the Barcelona City Council has, since 2016, promoted various measures and programs to decentralise and democratise culture to make cultural events and resources accessible to all residents of the city and to all neighbourhoods. An excellent example of this initiative is *La Mercè dels Barris*. *La Mercè* is one of the main cultural events in Barcelona and it is now being staged in different neighbourhoods of the city, and consequently has generated greater participation from different social and cultural groups. Since the 2016 edition, new peripheral locations have been used such as Parc de la Trinitat in Nou Barris and institutions like Palauet Albeniz or Fàbrica Fabra i Coats have also been involved.

The background to this study lies in the intersection of planned events and urban public space. We incorporate a phenomenological view that urban public space is more than a physical location but a result of an intersubjective reality that encompasses the social rhythms and collective patterns of movement within an inhabited space. The joint perception of that space, the social cognition and shared experience of an urban environment, is a public resource that is simultaneously tied and untied to the place and participants, creating and created by the urban environment.

## Methodology and Data

The first task was to create a database about Barcelona's cultural events. The municipal government has a prominent role in supporting and disseminating cultural events, and cultural activities are coordinated by the Barcelona Institute of Culture (ICUB) which organises, supports or promotes several types of cultural events. In a complementary way, the department concerned with Social Rights, Global Justice, Feminisms and LGBTQI+ from the City Council also collaborates with the promotion, and in some cases with the organisation, of cultural events. Our database has been constructed from those cultural events which have a link with Barcelona City Council as it either organises or supports them or because they are recognised and identified by ICUB or other City Council areas such as the Department of Social Rights. Our cultural events database focuses on events held in 2019 with the aim of showing the city's distribution then, which may be affected by a possible change after a pandemic. Most of the collected data has been provided directly by the City Council,

supplemented with data collected by researchers from official events dissemination portals and reports, or by contacting stakeholders.

The database consists of two groups of variables. First, descriptive variables: number of attendees; edition; frequency; season of the year; content; and the name of the organiser, among others. Second, geographic variables: the main location, neighbourhood, district, and address where the event takes place. This second group of variables has been generated with geographic information systems and facilitates the visual understanding of the distribution, and consequently the concentration, of cultural events in Barcelona. The total number of cultural events identified in our database is 340, all of which have a clear link with cultural activities, showing or promoting cultural products, representing local or newcomers' traditions, or involving community celebrations.

The quantitative event data, provided by the database, combined with data from geographical information systems, shines a light on the distribution of cultural events throughout the city by observing event distribution by typologies and districts. Geolocation has been carried out only for the events of the year 2019, identifying 2,268 different cultural events locations. Since there are events which happen in more than one space, a classification of spaces as 'main' and 'secondary' has been developed. The guidelines for identifying main spaces were made according to the following criteria: (1) the space with more activities within the event; (2) the space where the inaugural ceremony takes place (or the closing, if there is no inauguration); (3) the symbolic space as where *pregóns*, or opening speeches happen; and (4) the most important event space featured in the programme (as the first in the list of spaces) or in the festival poster. Some of the events, however, could not be identified by their main space, either because they take place in a shared way throughout the city or because they are networked, that is, in different equal locations, such as museums or civic centres. Therefore, based on the type of space used and its distribution, events have been organised into three categories that will be retrieved for mapping. These are 'general', 'massive or city' and 'networked'.

- General: designates the majority of events, those whose spaces and / or distribution do not have specific characteristics that designate them as city or network.
- Massive or city: events that have the character of a city, which are celebrations on a city scale but are concentrated in certain areas. These events are: Barcelona Carnival, Christmas cycle, La Mercè festivities, Santa Eulàlia festivities, St. John's Night, Saint George, Innocent Saints and Easter.
- Networked: events in which it is not possible to allocate a main space, but are all at the same level. These events are: Barcelona Cultural district, Barcelona Gallery Weekend, Transit Literature Festival, Album Week, Light Bcn, Barcelona screen, SYMPHONIC, Roofs in Culture, All Saints and Young Gallery Weekend.

When possible, specific locations such as squares, civic or cultural centres, museums, cinemas, etc. have been used. In cases where the location is in one street, a specific point on that street has been identified to geo-locate the space.

### **Barcelona Cultural Events Landscape: Events Typologies and Distribution**

The landscape of cultural events in Barcelona is built through the combination of the citizens' social and cultural actions with the geographical elements involved. Characteristics of the event are as relevant as the space, as the symbiosis of both aspects draws and delimits this constantly changing landscape. It is understood that public space is all space which is open and accessible to citizens. In this sense there are different types of spaces, such as outdoor public spaces, like squares, streets, parks or beaches, while indoor public spaces are public buildings opened to the public such as libraries or museums. The latter tend to have restricted areas and greater limits upon use. With the understanding that different cultural events coexist in Barcelona, sharing space and time, and that the link between events and space depends on the typology, we present the analysis of both: characteristics of the events by typology and their distribution around the city.

#### *Understanding Barcelona's Cultural Events by Typologies*

Barcelona has a mature event calendar, filled with many types of events, from large-scale urban development events such as the Olympics (1992) to the more traditional, neighbourhood based events. Observing all cultural events developed over a year in the city, we found that events could be grouped by different variables, such as the cultural sector they relate to, the way in which they are developed, or even who is involved (actors or communities) in organising them or participating in them. Based on these parameters we identify three main cultural events typologies in Barcelona: cultural industry events; traditional and popular culture events; and cultural diversity events.

According to the data obtained based on 340 events staged in 2019, the majority of cultural events are cultural industry events (66%), followed by traditional and popular culture events (27%) and culture diversity events (6%).

'*Cultural industry events*' (also identified as festivals) are those festivities with a strong link to the commercialisation and industrialisation of culture, from festivals and fairs to diverse cultural corporate events. These events have a strong link with the so-called 'cultural industries' which share creation, production and distribution of goods and services that are cultural in nature and usually protected by intellectual property. As stressed by Throsby (2008), these industries are generally involved with certain creativity in their processes, are

concerned with the creation of symbolic meanings, and have an expressive value. In this typology we included industrial or commercial festivals from performing arts, audio-visual, visual arts, literature, or music, among others. The main characteristic of this typology is the type of physical space used, as most cultural industry events in Barcelona are held in an indoor space, 74% according to our data. Indoor spaces are not homogeneous and include different formats as civic centres, theatres, cinemas, libraries, museums and some emblematic buildings, but also diverse private or public properties.

The cultural industry sector has been on the rise in Barcelona over the last decade. As in other European cities, there is an increasing interest in the production and consumption of activities related to cultural industries. According to the ICUB data on cultural festivals, in 2010, 146 festivals were identified while in 2019 there were about 214. The increase in cultural industry festivals has been accompanied by the rise of attendees, which in 2019 was almost three million while ten years before it was close to a million and a half. These events are generally organised by private institutions with strong coordination and supported by the City Council (through the ICUB). In this typology we include events with international recognition such as Mutek, Sónar or Primavera Sound, local consolidated events as the Festival Internacional de Jazz de Barcelona (which celebrated its 51st edition in 2019), and other festivals with less recognition and shorter trajectories. According to our data, 30% of the events have occurred between one and five times.

For '*traditional and popular culture events*' (identified as popular culture) we understand those social and community undertakings related to traditional or popular activities, strongly linked to locality. In Barcelona, after Franco's dictatorship, a wish to re-establish those events arose from the administration but also from citizens who wanted to reclaim the streets, expressing and reconstructing Catalan symbols and identity. The first democratic City Council (in the late 1970s) consolidated celebrations of popular culture in Barcelona as a response to different citizens' demands (Contreras 1978–1979). From that period on, traditional and popular culture activities in Barcelona constructed, reinterpreted and strengthened an annual calendar of festivities and rites strongly linked to Catalan and Barcelona culture and identity. Currently, popular celebrations attract more than 8 million people every year, and are linked to 117,000 people who belong to 500 groups and associations which work all year long to ensure that the Barcelona festive calendar is developed appropriately (Duran 2016).

Within popular culture events we include those events consolidated from the 1970s until now, created by this cooperation between social organisations, citizens and the municipal administration. With these peculiarities we identify two different groups of events: the ones arising out of the traditional Catalan and Barcelona cultural calendar, and the *festes majors*. The first group consists of the annual celebrations marked mainly by the liturgical calendar and are generally organised or coordinated by the City Council (ICUB) in collabora-



tion with neighbourhood associations or local communities. Carnival, Sant Joan Night (June 23rd) or Christmas are some examples of this first type.

The *festa major* is a neighbourhood celebration which combines different events: traditional rites such as *Correfoc* (a traditional fireworks event, performed by citizens dressed as devils, where participants run through firelit streets during the main celebrations of the towns and cities in Catalonia), music concerts and popular events related to sports, culture or gastronomy. Each *festa major* corresponds to the celebration of the patron saint of each neighbourhood and of the city itself; a *festa major* is celebrated in each neighbourhood of Barcelona during different times of the year and with different uses of space and time. Although each *festa major* is different from the other, they are organised almost entirely bottom-up by neighbourhood organisations and some of them stand out for their colourful street decorations. The Festa Major de Gràcia and the Festa Major de Sants are the most emblematic examples of the second group. In addition, there is a *festa major* for the city itself, known as La Mercè. This is held all around the city, with an extended programme including different performances and activities, from traditional culture to cultural industries' initiatives among others.

'Cultural diversity events' (identified as cultural diversity) we consider as those activities linked to diverse communities in Barcelona that arrived with new citizens coming from other cultural, political and economic backgrounds. During the recent decades Barcelona has drastically changed its social structure. In 2019 Barcelona achieved its highest registered population since 1991, becoming a more diverse and international city: in 2010, 17% of the citizenry were immigrants compared to 20% in 2019. This evolution generated a transformation of the city's social and cultural life and its landscape. Celebrations with origins from these communities are represented in the city cultural calendar, although they are still isolated in many cases.

These celebrations are mostly related to political or religious issues originating from the immigrants' country of origin. Usually these events are organised bottom-up and initiated by communities or associations created by a foreign population in Barcelona, such as the Catalan Federation of Pakistani Associations or the Federation of Ecuadorian Associations in Catalonia. Those events generally take place in public open-air spaces and mostly consist of festive events with food, music, dances, etc. Observing our data we identify that the most represented community with the highest number of events in this typology are from Latin American communities (63%). Nevertheless some examples of these events also might include Pakistan Independence Day, Ecuador National Day, Chinese New Year and Eid al-Adha (Festival of the Sacrifice).

In summary, these classifications give us insight into identifying cultural events typologies, observing different aspects of cultural events in the city of Barcelona, understanding certain differentiations, from content to form and context. These events characteristics do not just differentiate events from one

another, they also significantly determine the use of the space and likewise focus on the ways they are programmed, organised, and additionally by and for whom they are developed. These elements are relevant to consider when it comes to the analysis of events distribution and space used in the city: as the characteristics of an event with a strong link to the social fabric, being bottom-up created, are different to those of a commercial music festival resulting from a format imported from another European country.

### **Barcelona's Cultural Events: Distribution by Districts**

The analysis of cultural events distribution in the city of Barcelona is a new exercise never completed before but it is necessary in order to understand the impact of cultural events, their distribution and their use of urban space. The city of Barcelona, according to 2019 data, is home to more than 1.6 million inhabitants and has 10 districts divided into 73 neighbourhoods. This is a complex context for public space management and utilisation of space. The analysis of cultural events from a spatial-geographical perspective provides an overarching view of the uses of spaces by these events.

Based on ICUB information, a database of cultural events has been constructed which presents variables such as main location or space used, giving us the possibility to map events in the city by district. The first results indicate a strong pattern of centralisation even though there are cultural events throughout the city's districts, including peripheral areas.

This map shows that of the 340 events in 2019, 322 main locations have been identified, although the majority of locations are secondary ones. It is also interesting to note that mass or networked events use many spaces in the city yet districts such as Sant Martí primarily host networked events or operate as secondary spaces whereas central districts primarily host events in their main spaces.

As Figure 3.2 shows, on a scale from one to five, the district with the highest concentration of cultural events is clearly Ciutat Vella, and those with fewer events are Les Corts and Sarrià-Sant Gervasi. This could be due to the geographically central location of Ciutat Vella, where consequently more activities take place, while those places which have fewer events are more peripheral.

Related to Ciutat Vella, it is also interesting to observe some demographic specifics. For example, although the number of residents is not high (only 6.4% of Barcelona's citizens live here), it is one of the districts with a high population density and also the district with the largest proportion of immigrants (49%). Additionally, it is the district with the second most tourist accommodation (21% of the total), and has the largest number of cultural facilities (91 out of 340) such as museums, galleries, cinemas and libraries. Most of the cultural events celebrated in the centre are cultural industry events. Les

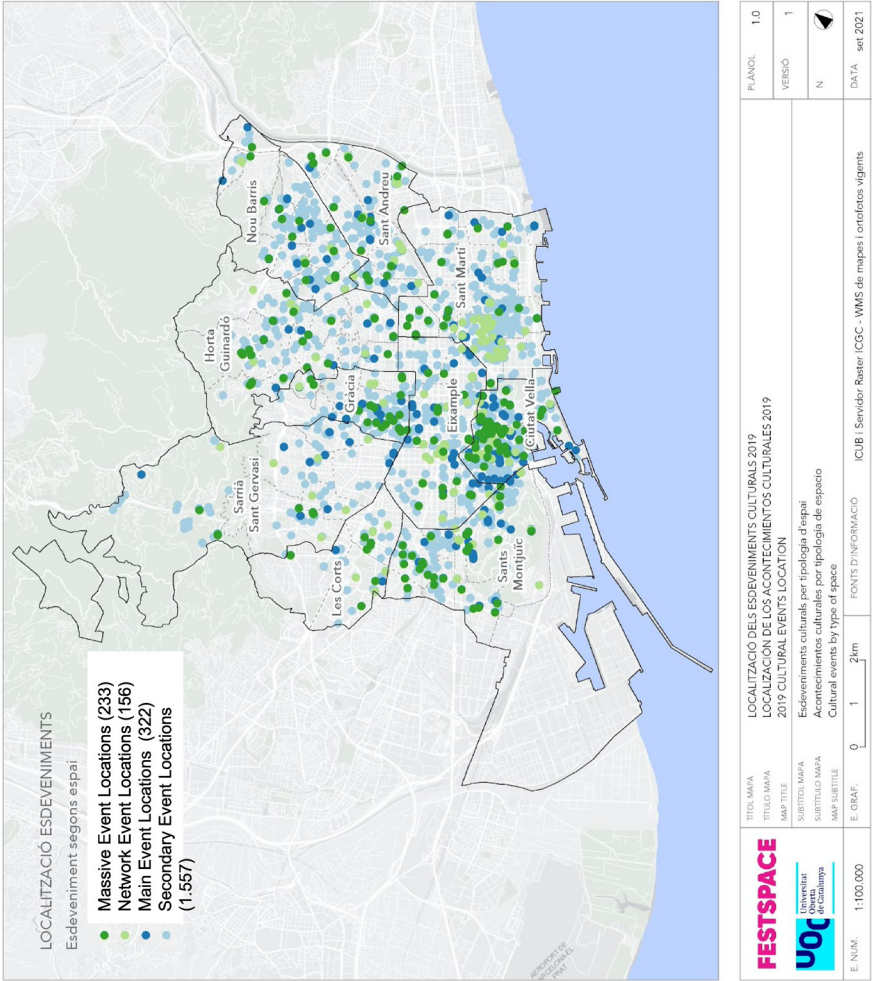
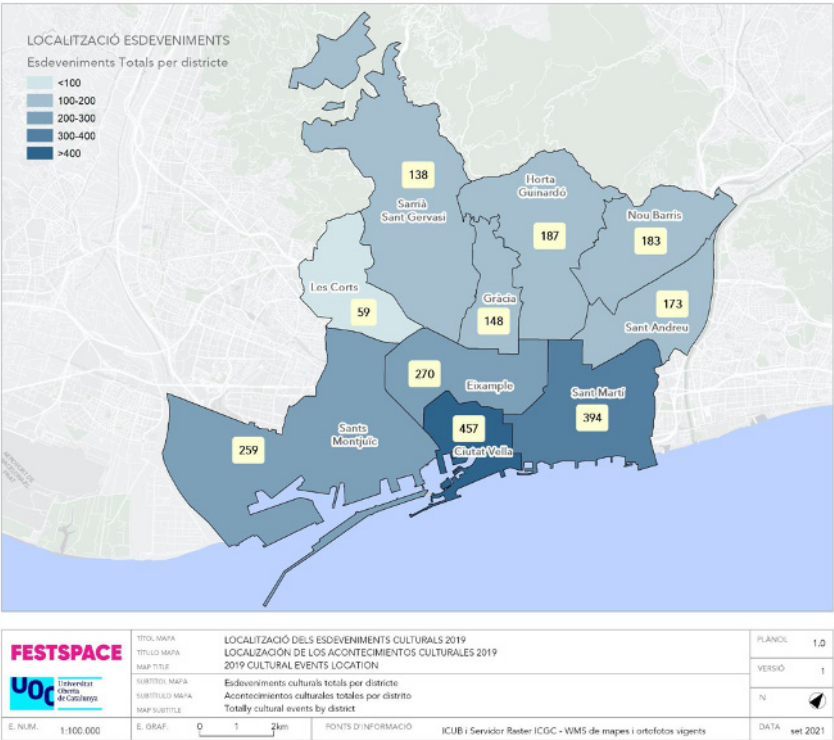


Figure 3.1: Cultural events locations in Barcelona by massive, network, principal and secondary locations. Source: the authors.



**Figure 3.2:** Cultural Events in Barcelona by District. Source: produced by the authors.

Corts and Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, socio-demographically, however, are the least populated districts, since only 5% of Barcelona residents live in Les Corts and not much more than 9% in Sarrià-Sant Gervasi. Even so both districts have significant tourist accommodation capacities and a small number of cultural facilities (14 in Les Corts and 22 in Sarrià-Sant Gervasi). Nevertheless, the cultural events held in those districts are mostly cultural industry and popular culture events.

What caught our attention are those districts hosting between 259 and 394 events which can be grouped into three sets: Sants-Montjuïc, Eixample and Sant Martí; Sant Andreu, Nou Barris and Horta-Guinardó; and finally Gràcia, Sarrià-Sant Gervasi and Les Corts. This map could be read as a concentric circle of concentration or of events intensification from the centre to the periphery. Nevertheless, there are exceptions with Sants-Montjuïc and Nou Barris as they are mostly peripheral and not illustrative of this intensification. Explanations can be found in dimensions such as venues, district social fabric or events typology, since Sants-Montjuïc houses a recurring event space (Poble Espan-

yol), and Nou Barris is one of the districts where there are more bottom-up associative institutions linked to popular culture.

Regarding Sants-Montjuïc, in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics, it is the district with the third largest population (11.2%), and the immigrant population is high compared to the city average (22.3%). Additionally, it stands out for being a district with important museum facilities, such as the Ethnological and World Cultures Museum, the National Museum of Art of Catalonia and large facilities dedicated to fairs such as Fira de Barcelona or Poble Espanyol. The majority of events held in this district are cultural industry festivals. Nou Barris, together with Sant Martí, are districts with notable differences in population and cultural equipment related to the rest of the city. In Nou Barris the presence of cultural facilities is much lower than the city average (having just 14 facilities) and the population represents just 10.4% of the total. Nevertheless, there is a clear presence of cultural events, mostly related to popular culture not determined by the availability of municipal infrastructure (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e).

Figures 3.3a–3.3c show how these events locations are distributed by cultural events typologies, from cultural diversity events, popular culture events to cultural industry events (identified in figure 3.3 as festivals). Illustrating the events centralisation tendency, it is clear that this centrality differs according to the typology. In the case of cultural industry events, these are clearly centralised, while those of traditional and popular culture are more widely distributed throughout the city.

It can also be seen that those traditional and popular culture events have significant representation in districts where the other typologies are not so much represented, such as in Nou Barris and Sant Andreu.

Recalling that the database of cultural events originates from those events the ICUB is aware of – or has direct participation in one way or another within its public spaces – it is worth noting that the distribution of cultural diversity events is *also* centralised. (Some non-central districts such as Horta Guinardo, Nou Barris, Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc are also represented). Yet in one of the districts with the largest immigrant population in Barcelona, the Eixample, there is no clear representation of cultural diversity events.

In summary, contextual data such as socio-demographic information (density and population profile), tourist accommodation data, as well as cultural facilities information, gives us a clear picture of the distribution of cultural events in the city. This articulation helps us understand the relationship that the concentration of cultural events may have to conflicts, or even disputes, between long-term residents, tourists and recent immigrants. It also highlights the Barcelona scenario, a city where the use of spaces is a shared good where everyday use by all citizens is a given within a context of different uses of public spaces, whether for cultural, commercial or tourist purposes. These factors underline the need to make further in-depth analysis drawing on the event typologies and



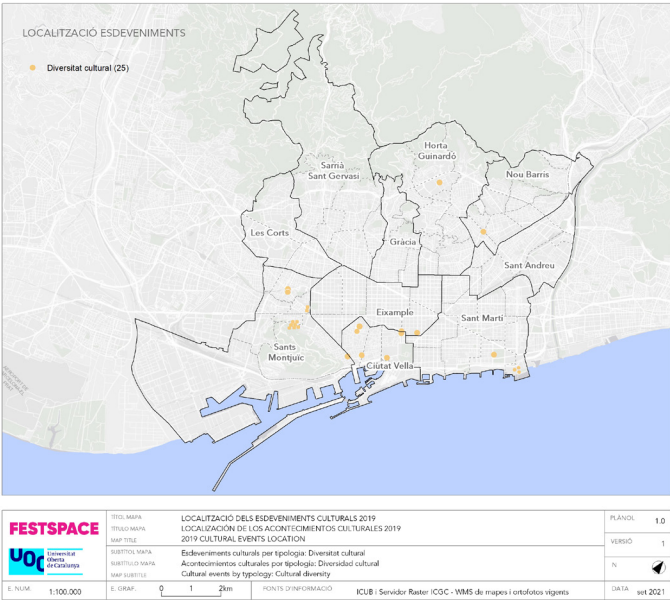


Figure 3.3a: Cultural events distribution by event typology and district (cultural diversity events). Source: the authors.

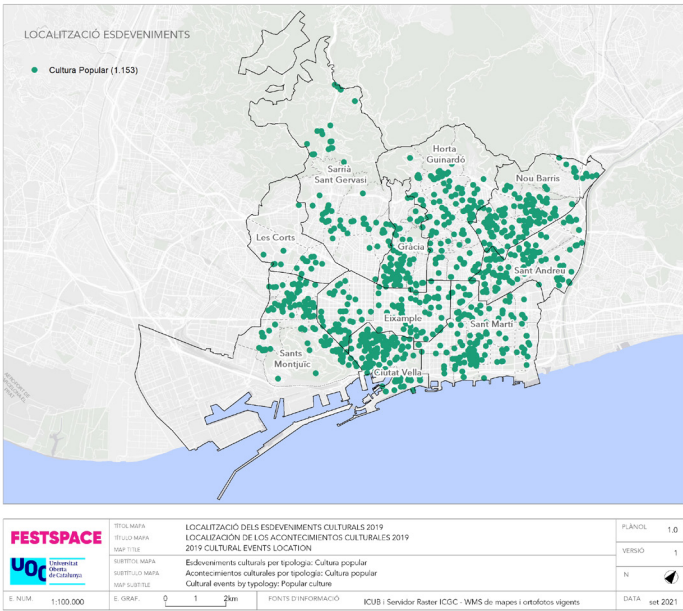
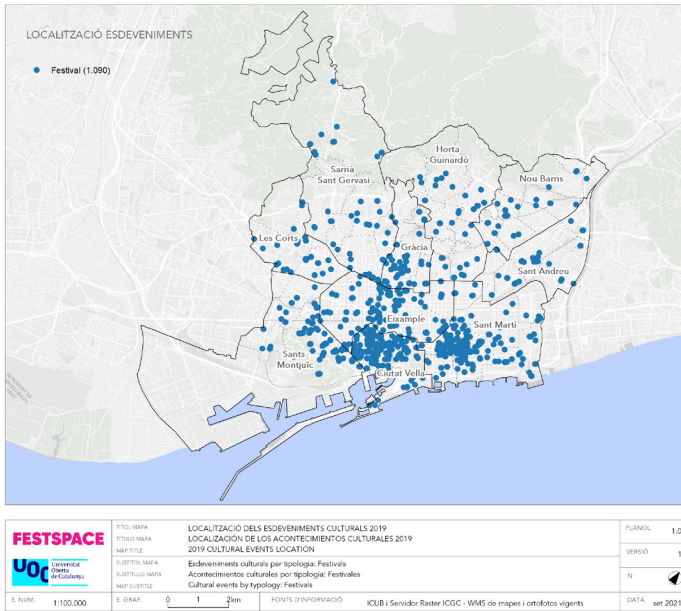


Figure 3.3b: Cultural events distribution by event typology and district (popular culture events). Source: the authors.



**Figure 3.3c:** Cultural events distribution by event typology and district (festivals). Source: the authors.

spaces used here, as a street event organised by the neighbourhood social fabric is not the same as a commercial event in a public venue organised by private companies.

## Discussion and Conclusion

By trying to work out how public spaces are occupied by cultural events in Barcelona we have observed their distribution and identified cultural events typologies. We have taken into account a broader conception of cultural events that allows us to understand how Barcelona is not only an eventful city (Richards and Palmer 2010), but has also evolved into a 'festivalised' city, where space and time are resources that must be shared and negotiated, since currently festivals and cultural events constitute everyday urban life as a permanent setting (see Hitters 2007). As such, this study reveals three key reflections that may be considered by leaders and decision makers of cultural programming and urban planning.

First, the holistic understanding of the landscape of Barcelona cultural events shows how those events are distributed in terms of public space, how diverse this distribution is and how it can influence the residents' way of doing, living and coexisting in city public space. The intensity of events in the city's districts,

mainly those with a high concentration, such as Ciutat Vella or Sants-Monjuïc, suggests possible imbalances between the limited public resources of space and time. An outline that could facilitate dialogue between the social activities of both city residents and tourists could be useful to maintain a better balance.

Second, the link between the nature of each type of event and the use of space facilitates or hinders the relationships between those involved, either actively or passively. Cultural industry events are primarily held in limited access spaces, making it difficult for spontaneous encounters between residents. In contrast, popular culture events by their nature – and especially because they are collective events – are mainly held in squares and streets, and allow for numerous unplanned meetings which Sennett (1970) emphasises are an integral part of a healthy urban environment. Hence, Barcelona's cultural events typologies landscape could be a useful starting point, complementing ethnographic methodologies, for uncovering what effects cultural events are having on the residents of different districts of Barcelona. This could build on the frameworks Smith, Ritchie and Chien (2019) and Ziakas (2014) have developed for mega-events.

Thirdly, with regard to the declared objective of the City Council to create a participatory democracy and just distribution of public resources, the mapping of cultural events in Barcelona displays how public resources of space and time are distributed throughout the city. However, the mapping shows there is no equitable distribution between the districts because there is a concentration of events in the city centre and in the districts with a greater population and more cultural facilities, limiting those districts with less facilities and population.

The current pandemic context and the health measures decreed by the regional government have accelerated the process of decentralisation, forcing programmers to look for new spaces for events and to distribute these for the communities that had participated in them. This circumstance has placed new locations outside the city centre as cultural spaces. A new distribution of cultural events resulting from the pandemic has forced us to ask ourselves whether these new spaces will be maintained in the future and, consequently, whether geographical access to culture by the citizens of Barcelona will be widened. The pandemic has also made the citizens of Barcelona question how they want to live in their own city as well as what functions public spaces should serve. Classic questions from urban studies regarding the effects of tourism in the city have been topics of constant debate in Barcelona, a city reacting to intense flows of tourism and its needs. As this flow alters due to the pandemic, the recovery and reclaiming of streets and the main spots of the city by the citizens must be a key element in the programming of cultural events.

The staging of events in Barcelona has changed dramatically due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting 'new normality'. The trajectory of massification that had seemed unstoppable and headed for a precipice abruptly came to a halt due to unforeseen circumstances. Crowd capacities and expectations have been drastically reduced, and outdoor events have been prioritised. As the tourism industry begins to climb back from its sharp decline, it is important



to observe how and where these events are held. In the post-pandemic lull of 2021, when the citizens of Barcelona were able to move about the city freely, tourists were generally absent. The citizens of Barcelona reclaimed their public spaces, using them to celebrate, albeit in a muted manner, events and festivities amongst themselves. With the data that we have collected for 2019, there is scope for research to be done on how the use of public space has changed due to the restrictions imposed on tourism, and how it will change as the tourism industry begins to reawaken.

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