

Who Owns the Waterfront? Urban Transformation and Collective Struggles for the Urban Coastal Commons in Barcelona

Elisa Monckeberg  and Sílvia Gómez 

Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Correspondence: Elisa Monckeberg (elisa.monckeberg@autonoma.cat)

Submitted: 27 March 2026 **Accepted:** 27 August 2026 **Published:** 29 October 2026

Issue: This article is part of the issue “Empowerment and Blue Justice in Coastal Communities” edited by Salina Spiering (Nordland Research Institute), Elisabeth Morris-Webb (Nordland Research Institute), and Sílvia Gómez (Autonomous University of Barcelona), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/oas.i528>

Abstract

Barcelona has undergone continuous transformations along its waterfront since the 1992 Olympic Games, which marked the city’s symbolic “opening to the sea” by turning marginalized coastal areas into accessible public spaces. In recent decades, however, tensions have grown between tourism and urban-development-driven economic interests and citizens’ demands for equitable access and participation. Privatization, elite-oriented development, and touristification have deepened socio-spatial inequalities, particularly in long-standing neighborhoods such as Barceloneta, while climate change intensifies environmental vulnerability. Existing frameworks for coastal commons have largely focused on rural and fishing contexts, leaving highly urbanized shorelines shaped by tourism and mega-events analytically underaddressed. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and visual documentation of the 37th America’s Cup as a critical case study, this article proposes urban coastal commons as a new conceptual framework that integrates commons theory, blue justice, and degrowth. The analysis shows how the event accelerated coastal enclosures while simultaneously triggering citizen mobilizations through which residents claimed the shoreline as a shared socio-ecological environment. It also reveals a structural misalignment between institutional resilience strategies and the vulnerabilities experienced by long-term residents—a tension that emerges most visibly in moments of conflict.

Keywords

blue justice; coastal commons; degrowth; urban ecology; waterfront

1. Introduction

Coastal cities are increasingly at the forefront of intertwined environmental, economic, and social transformations. As climate change intensifies sea-level rise, extreme heat, and coastal erosion, urban

shorelines have become frontline spaces where environmental vulnerability intersects with tourism-driven development, real estate speculation, and infrastructure expansion. In many cities, waterfronts are simultaneously viewed as areas requiring protection and adaptation and as strategic assets for economic growth, attracting investment, mega-events, and tourism-oriented redevelopment (Jones, 2017; Rosendo et al., 2018). This dual condition makes coastal zones critical arenas in which questions of sustainability, justice, and access to space are negotiated amid ecological crisis.

Barcelona provides a paradigmatic case for examining these tensions. Since the urban restructuring associated with the 1992 Olympic Games, the city has pursued an intensive coastal development agenda, transforming its waterfront into a globally recognized urban model while generating mounting tensions over access, displacement, and governance. These transformations must be situated within a broader ecosocial crisis in which climate change, housing precarity, and speculative urban development reinforce one another across scales (Brand & Wissen, 2018; Klein, 2014; Sassen, 2015). Coastal zones have become strategic frontiers of accumulation, increasingly incorporated into blue economy agendas that promote tourism, infrastructure, and maritime industries as engines of growth. Although frequently presented as sustainable, these processes often redistribute environmental risks and economic benefits unevenly, intensifying socio-spatial inequalities and limiting local communities' capacity to influence decisions affecting coastal space (Barbesgaard, 2018; Bennett et al., 2021; Ounanian & Howells, 2024). Urban waterfronts therefore emerge as contested socio-ecological environments where capital accumulation, climate vulnerability, and struggles over access to the coast converge.

While waterfront redevelopment, blue economy strategies, and urban commons have each received substantial scholarly attention, these bodies of literature have rarely been brought into dialogue to analyze highly urbanized coastlines where tourism-led development, mega-events, and climate adaptation intersect. To address this gap, this article proposes a framework for understanding *urban coastal commons* as coastal environments that, beyond their legal status as public domain, are shaped by daily use, historical attachment, identity, and struggles over access, meaning, and control. Drawing on commons theory, blue justice, and degrowth (Bennett et al., 2021; Kallis, 2018; Ostrom, 1990), the analysis reads conflicts over Barcelona's waterfront not merely as urban planning disputes, but as struggles over the governance of a shared socio-ecological environment whose protection is inseparable from social justice and ecological resilience.

The article examines these processes through the case of Barceloneta, a historically working-class maritime neighborhood in Barcelona, and the transformations associated with the sailing competition Louis Vuitton 37th America's Cup (hereafter, the 37th America's Cup). Promoted institutionally as a catalyst for innovation, sustainability, and blue economy development, the event accelerated urban regeneration and enhanced Barcelona's global projection. Yet for many residents, the Cup intensified existing pressures linked to touristification, restricted access to public space, and speculative investment, sparking neighborhood mobilizations, most notably through the platform No a la Copa América, that defended the coast as a shared commons, experienced not only as public space but as part of everyday life, collective history, and a long-standing relationship with the sea.

The empirical analysis draws on fieldwork, interviews, and visual documentation to examine how residents experience these transformations not only as urban change, but also as processes affecting a shared socio-ecological environment embedded in memory and identity. It asks:

- How has the 37th America's Cup contributed to redefining Barcelona's waterfront in terms of access, governance, and control over coastal space?
- What tensions emerge between institutional and economic actors, on the one hand, and local communities, on the other, in the transformation of the urban coastline?
- What forms of resistance, reappropriation, and alternative imaginaries are articulated from below in response to these transformations?

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 develops the conceptual framework, situating urban coastal commons within debates on commons and commoning, blue justice, and degrowth. Section 3 presents the methodological approach. Sections 4, 5, and 6 constitute the empirical core, examining the socio-spatial transformations of Barceloneta, residents' practices of commoning in defense of the coast, and the multilevel governance of the waterfront, respectively. Section 7 discusses the findings in relation to the conceptual framework, and Section 8 draws conclusions.

2. Urban Coastal Commons: Conceptual Foundations

2.1. Waterfront Development and the Urban Coastal Commons

Contemporary coastal cities are sites of profound socio-spatial transformation. Waterfront redevelopment, tourism intensification, and event-led urbanism have reshaped urban shorelines across the Global North and South, converting formerly industrial or working-class coastal zones into strategic economic assets oriented toward real estate investment, leisure consumption, and global city branding (Jones, 2017; Marshall, 2004). These processes have generated a substantial body of scholarship on urban waterfronts, examining the political economy of coastal redevelopment (Degen & García, 2012; Harvey, 2003), the governance implications of port-city transformations (Verhoeven & Vanoutrive, 2012), the social consequences of touristification (Colomb & Novy, 2017), and the specific configurations of mega-event urbanism (Smith, 2012). More recently, scholars have extended these analyses to the Global South, documenting the uneven geographies of coastal urbanization in contexts such as Mumbai (Anand, 2023), Nigeria (Ajibade, 2017), and beyond (Hein, 2026).

Within this literature, however, a gap persists in theorizing urban coastal spaces as socio-ecological environments that are not merely privatized or commodified but actively produced, used, and defended as shared commons (Movik et al., 2023). The urban coastal commons framework, introduced above, addresses this gap by bringing together three theoretical traditions—commons and commoning, blue justice, and degrowth—to analyze coastal conflicts in highly urbanized settings.

2.2. The Commons and Commoning

The commons tradition, associated most prominently with Ostrom's (1990) work on collective resource management, has undergone significant theoretical development in recent decades. Rather than treating the commons as a fixed resource with defined rules, scholars such as Harvey (2012) and De Angelis (2017) have shifted attention to commoning as a social process: the ongoing collective labor through which shared environments are produced, defended, and reproduced. From this perspective, commons is less a fixed resource than a relationship: The waterfront becomes a commons not by virtue of its legal status but

through the routine practices, claims, and forms of governance that constitute it as a shared socio-ecological environment. This processual understanding is crucial for analyzing urban coastal conflicts, where the legal designation of space as “public” does not preclude its enclosure for private use, nor does the absence of formal common-pool governance preclude commoning practices among those who inhabit and use the shore. This shift from commons as noun to commoning as verb follows Linebaugh’s (2010) dictum that “there is no commons without commoning.”

Enclosure, in turn, is not reducible to formal privatization: Hodgkinson (2012) describes it as the broader *modus operandi* of neoliberal urbanism, identifying new outlets for capital accumulation, controlling space according to exchange rather than use value, and foreclosing forms of sociability alternative to commodified social reproduction.

In the urban context, commoning takes multiple forms: collective acts of care and maintenance, mobilization against dispossession, the transmission of intergenerational knowledge about shared environments, and routine practices of use that assert non-commodified relationships with space (Gómez & Garrido, 2026). The urban coastal commons, as proposed here, is constituted through precisely these practices, and it is also what is threatened when waterfront development reorganizes coastal space around capital accumulation rather than collective use. This dynamic has a documented precedent in Barcelona: Castro-Coma and Martí-Costa (2016) trace three decades of enclosure in the adjacent Port Vell, later mobilized against by the platforms discussed in Section 5.

2.3. Blue Justice

Blue justice refers to the equitable distribution of benefits, burdens, and decision-making authority in ocean and coastal spaces (Bennett et al., 2021). Drawing on environmental justice frameworks and extended to maritime and coastal contexts, blue justice encompasses four analytically distinct dimensions: distributive justice (who benefits and who bears costs from coastal development and use); procedural justice (who participates in coastal governance decisions and under what conditions); recognition justice (whose knowledge, identity, and relationship to the sea is acknowledged in governance); and restorative justice (how historical harms and exclusions are addressed; Blythe et al., 2023; Movik, 2024). While much of the blue justice literature has focused on small-scale fisheries, rural coastal communities, and global ocean governance (Jentoft et al., 2017), its application to highly urbanized shorelines shaped by tourism, real estate speculation, and mega-events remains underdeveloped. The Barceloneta case offers an opportunity to examine how these dimensions operate in such a context.

2.4. Degrowth

Degrowth offers a diagnostic analytical lens for reading coastal conflicts as expressions of a broader tension between the imperative of economic growth and the social and ecological limits of continuous expansion (Kallis, 2018). Rather than a prescriptive program, degrowth is understood here as an analytical lens for identifying the structural contradictions embedded in growth-oriented governance: the assumption that more tourism, more investment, and more infrastructure automatically produce well-being for all coastal communities. Fletcher et al. (2019) have applied degrowth perspectives specifically to tourism, arguing that sustainable coastal governance requires a reorientation toward limits, redistribution, and collective care

rather than continuous expansion (see also Perkins, 2019). Applied to urban coastal commons, degrowth reframes residents' critiques of mega-events and tourism saturation beyond NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard)—a label long criticized for reducing legitimate opposition to selfish or irrational resistance while obscuring its structural, place-based roots (Burningham, 2000; Devine-Wright, 2009; Wolsink, 1994). In Barceloneta, these critiques are neither episodic nor centered on private interest: They are voiced collectively, sustained across decades of mobilization, and framed in terms of limits to growth rather than individual property or amenity.

The choice of degrowth here, rather than adjacent frameworks such as post-growth tourism planning (Hall, 2009) or overtourism (Milano et al., 2019), is also grounded in the “No a la Copa América” platform's (a resistance movement against the sporting event) own demands. While the No a la Copa América manifesto does not use the term degrowth, it calls for withdrawing planned port and airport expansions, guaranteeing no future edition of the Cup, and a moratorium on evictions, demanding a halt and reversal of growth rather than merely redistributing it (No a la Copa América, 2024).

2.5. *Bringing the Framework Together*

Each of the three analytical lenses developed above addresses a distinct dimension of urban coastal conflict, and it is their combination, rather than a single perspective, that constitutes the explanatory contribution of the urban coastal commons framework.

Commons and commoning illuminate the social process: the sustained practices of collective use and care through which coastal environments are maintained as shared resources, as well as the counter-processes of enclosure that privatize them. This lens does not account for the structural driver that makes enclosure a recurrent and systematic feature of urban development, nor the distributional outcomes it generates for particular groups.

Blue justice provides the vocabulary for those outcomes. Its four dimensions—distributive, procedural, recognition, and restorative justice—allow the analysis to specify who bears the costs of coastal development, whose knowledge and identity are recognized in governance, and whose claims are structurally excluded. Yet blue justice, as a diagnostic lens, tends to describe the configuration of injustice rather than explain the economic logic that reproduces it.

Degrowth provides such an explanation. It identifies the imperative of continuous economic growth as a structural condition under which enclosure and injustice are not merely possible but systematically reproduced. From this perspective, degrowth reframes residents' demands to place limits on growth as more than local grievances, positioning them instead as a broader critique of the growth-oriented governance model itself. Crucially, degrowth also provides a normative horizon that complements the justice vocabulary of blue justice—not only identifying what is wrong with current arrangements, but gesturing toward an alternative organized around limits, redistribution, and collective care.

Taken together, these three perspectives form an analytical framework rather than a mere accumulation of ideas. The imperative of growth (which challenges limits—that is, the perspective of degrowth) drives the enclosure of shared coastal environments (thereby calling into question commons/commoning), which

results in unequal distributions of access, benefits, and risks (undermining blue justice). This injustice, in turn, is resisted through commoning practices (commons) that articulate a politics of limits (degrowth) and advance claims to recognition, participation, and redistribution (blue justice).

The urban coastal commons framework is therefore not merely a synthesis of three bodies of literature; rather, it enables urban coastal conflicts to be examined simultaneously in terms of their structural causes, social dynamics, and distributional consequences, dimensions that, when considered separately, each theoretical tradition can illuminate only partially.

In doing so, this article also advances the urban coastal commons framework as a contribution in its own right, capturing the distinctive condition of city shorelines as spaces simultaneously shaped by metropolitan political economies and experienced as socio-ecological commons, a combination that neither scholarship on commons governance in cities nor frameworks of blue justice or urban political economy has fully theorized in isolation (see Figure 1).

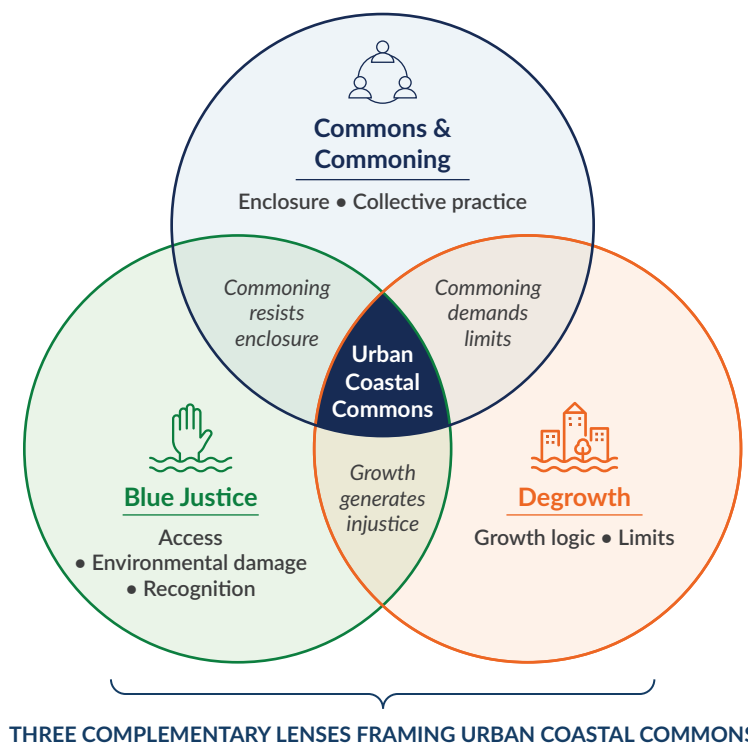


Figure 1. The urban coastal commons framework: convergence of commons/commoning, blue justice, and degrowth.

3. Methods: Data Collection and Analysis

This article uses qualitative–interpretive urban ethnography conducted in Barceloneta and Barcelona’s waterfront between May and October 2024, during the period surrounding the 37th America’s Cup. Urban ethnography, as understood here, differs from traditional anthropological ethnography in its focus on the socio-spatial dynamics of the city as an object of analysis: Rather than studying a bounded community over an extended period, it attends to the ways in which urban processes of redevelopment (governance,

displacement, mobilization) are experienced, negotiated, and contested in specific spatial configurations (Delgado, 2007; Durán Segura, 2011).

The empirical material includes 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews drawn from a broader research project comprising 30 interviews on the Barceloneta neighborhood and its relationship with the sea. Participants were selected through a purposive sampling strategy informed by a stakeholder analysis (Reed, 2008): Actors were identified iteratively through the interviews themselves and snowball sampling, progressively incorporating those with capacity to influence or be affected by the coastal urban processes under study, and ensuring diversity across four categories—long-term residents, short-term residents, institutional actors, and representatives of sea-related initiatives and community organizations (see Table 1). The 15 interviews included in this article most directly address waterfront transformation, the 37th America's Cup, and residents' relationships with the coastal environment. The interviews are cited anonymously, with the interview number and actor type indicated, to preserve confidentiality.

Table 1. Interviewee profiles ($N = 15$).

Interview N°	Actor category	Role/affiliation	Residence/institutional role
1	Long-term resident/ Sea-related initiative	Community activist and member of anti-America's Cup citizens' platform	Long-term resident (>20 years)
2	Long-term resident/ Sea-related initiative	Co-founder of sea-centered community initiative	Long-term resident (>15 years)
3	Long-term resident	Barceloneta neighbor	Long-term resident (>30 years)
4	Long-term resident/Community leader	Residents' association representative	Long-term resident (>25 years)
5	Institutional actor	Technical official, urban development agency	Institutional
6	Sea-related initiative	Community development plan coordinator	Institutional/community
7	Short/medium-term resident	Barceloneta neighbor	Short-term resident (3–5 years)
8	Short-term resident/Activist	Neighborhood activist and Barceloneta neighbor	Short-term resident (<5 years)
9	Institutional actor	Technical official, port authority	Institutional
10	Long-term resident/ Sea-related initiative	Coordinator of sea-related community space	Long-term resident (>20 years)
11	Long-term resident	Barceloneta neighbor	Long-term resident (>20 years)
12	Long-term resident	Barceloneta neighbor	Long-term resident (>10 years)
13	Short-term resident	Worker in sea-related local business	Short-term resident (<5 years)
14	Long-term resident/ Sea-related initiative	Leader of community sea initiative	Long-term resident (>15 years)
15	Short-term resident	Barceloneta neighbor	Short-term resident (<5 years)

Photographs were produced as part of the ethnographic process and are treated as evidence documenting spatial practices, infrastructures, and collective action, integrated into the analysis alongside interviews, fieldnotes, and media materials.

The analysis followed an iterative, abductive process. Coding was conducted at two interrelated levels. First, we identified thematic axes such as urban transformation, access to the coastline, governance, housing precarity, blue economy narratives, climate vulnerability, and collective mobilization. Second, attention focused on forms of narration and positionality: how interviewees framed the sea, articulated belonging, and positioned themselves in relation to tourism, institutional planning, and environmental change.

From these interactions, the analysis revealed broader tensions structuring the commoning process itself: public coastal commons versus commodified waterfront development, growth-oriented blue economy narratives versus situated practices of care, and top-down governance versus locally grounded knowledge.

4. Barceloneta Under Pressure

Barceloneta has long occupied an ambivalent position within Barcelona's urban imaginary: historically a working-class maritime neighborhood yet increasingly reframed as a strategic asset within a tourism-oriented development model (Degen & García, 2012). Residents consistently identify the 1992 Olympic Games as a decisive turning point. As one resident recalled, "We weren't very happy with the Olympics, because it was a letdown. They told us it would open Barcelona up to the sea...but they destroyed our entire local culinary scene" (Interview N° 4, Barceloneta Neighbor and Community Leader). While the city's opening to the sea was celebrated as a symbol of modernity, for many long-term inhabitants it marked the beginning of a shift from lived maritime space to a commodified waterfront (see Figure 2).

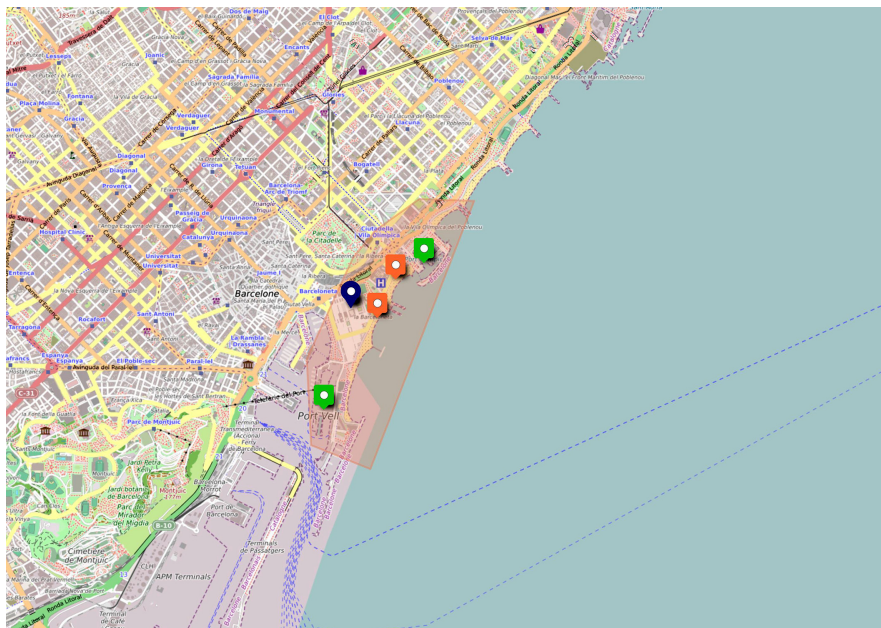


Figure 2. Map of the Barceloneta waterfront. Orange points indicate the Barceloneta and Somorrostro beach areas; green points indicate Port Vell and Port Olímpic; the blue point indicates the Barceloneta neighborhood. Source: Authors' own elaboration using uMap (© OpenStreetMap contributors).

Residents describe Barceloneta as a marginalized and undesirable part of the city, a status that has clearly changed, though not without cost. As a lifelong resident remarks:

The biggest change was that they opened the city up to the sea. If we go back further, people didn't want to come here; they were afraid of us, they thought we were like bandits. And then the situation changed, obviously because people started coming here; they came after this change. (Interview N° 3, Barceloneta Neighbor)

This is also reaffirmed by an activist and neighborhood resident, who says:

In the 80s and 90s, when heroin was wreaking havoc in working-class neighborhoods like Barceloneta, well, nobody wanted to go there: "Ugh, you're from the lower-class neighborhood, you're from Barceloneta." But then with the Olympics....Well, it's as if they realized, "Oh, but yes, it's a beach neighborhood, right by the sea," and it turned into a little gem, a real estate goldmine. (Interview N° 8, Barceloneta Neighbor and Activist)

Barceloneta's current condition cannot be understood in isolation from the broader political and economic trajectory that shaped it. The transition from Francoism and Spain's integration into the European Community in 1986 opened a period of rapid urban modernization, of which the 1992 Olympics were the pivotal expression. This model has since been critically reassessed for the inequalities it generated (Degen & García, 2012; Magrinyà et al., 2014; Vasconcelos de Lima, 2015). These dynamics intensified after Spain's economic crisis of 2008, which accelerated real estate speculation and the erosion of affordable housing in neighborhoods like Barceloneta (Franquesa, 2010; Sanz-Pérez et al., 2025).

Extensive research has documented how tourism has become a central driver of urban restructuring in Barcelona, reshaping coastal neighborhoods through rising rents, housing precarity, and the displacement of long-term residents (Anguelovski et al., 2019; Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2021; Colomb & Novy, 2017). Coastal spaces are not only physical environments but also symbolic arenas where meanings, memories, and modes of belonging are contested (Carbonell, 2010), which explains why residents respond to touristification not only in pragmatic terms but also as a loss of identity and the erosion of a distinctive way of life.

As one resident expressed: "For an Amazonian Indigenous person, when a tree is cut down that is what happens to me with the sea" (Interview N° 1, Barceloneta Neighbor and Activist). This is not merely an expression of attachment, but an epistemological claim: The sea is a constitutive element of a way of life that cannot be reduced to access or aesthetics.

Real estate speculation and displacement further define coastal restructuring. According to a demographic study, Barceloneta registered the highest levels of gentrification in Spain between 2011 and 2021, driven by rising property values and tourism-oriented investment (Sanz-Pérez et al., 2025). Rising rents and the proliferation of short-term rentals increasingly constrain younger generations and long-standing families from remaining, as proximity to the sea intensifies both desirability and commodification.

Another resident captured the contradiction succinctly: "These neighborhoods that feel like small towns are like gems....Tourists appreciate that, but when they get overcrowded, the place can't handle it"

(Interview N° 2, Barceloneta Neighbor and Community Leader). The problem, as repeatedly articulated, is not the presence of visitors per se, but scale, volume, and structural prioritization of external consumption over local life. Yet across these divergent positions, a common concern persists: the cumulative saturation of space and resources. Beaches are increasingly framed as overexposed infrastructures under constant external demand.

One resident described the fear that “they want to turn this neighborhood into Miami Beach and drive people out of here” (Interview N° 3, Barceloneta Neighbor), expressing the perception that rising costs and speculative pressures were part of a deliberate reconfiguration of the neighborhood’s social composition.

Beyond housing and crowding, residents link touristification to environmental stress and infrastructural strain. Overcrowding, cruise tourism, and event-related influxes are associated with pollution, waste accumulation, and intensified heat exposure.

It is against this backdrop of accumulated pressures that a different logic of attachment to the coastline becomes legible, one rooted not in ownership or planning rights, but in collective use, memory, and care.

5. The Coast as a Commons

Two interrelated processes define how residents claim the coast as a commons: everyday practices of collective care and organized resistance to enclosure. Responsibility for the shoreline is understood as collective in addition to institutional protection. Acts of cleaning, maintenance, or informal stewardship are described as shared obligations among those who use and inhabit the beach. As one interviewee recalls, a spontaneous moment of collective action unfolded when several people began removing trash from the water:

On the beach we grabbed a bag and started picking trash out of the water. And because we started, other people continued. For about half an hour, everyone collected garbage from the sea. But it was impossible to finish with all that trash... (Interview N° 1, Barceloneta Neighbor and Activist)

Collective resistance to waterfront transformation in Barceloneta did not begin with the 37th America’s Cup. From its 18th-century origins (Tatjer, 1973) to more recent mobilizations against speculative redevelopment (Alari Pahissa, 2014), the neighborhood has repeatedly confronted elite-oriented development perceived as threatening its social fabric and coastal commons. As one activist reflected, “It doesn’t matter what we call ourselves; what matters is taking action and standing up for our neighborhood” (Interview N° 8, Barceloneta Neighbor and Activist). As another long-term resident put it: “People of my generation, those of us who are still in the neighborhood, say that we don’t just live here; we resist here” (Interview N° 11, Barceloneta Neighbor). This is a sentiment that spans successive platforms, from *Defensem el Port Vell* to *Barceloneta Diu Prou* to *No a la Copa América*.

In 2012, activists denounced the enclosure of public space and the conversion of the port into an exclusive infrastructure for luxury yachts, warning of rising housing prices and the erosion of maritime culture (“Manifest de la Plataforma Defensem el Port Vell,” 2012). As Espeche (2013) observes, such mobilizations challenged technocratic narratives of modernization by foregrounding local knowledge and ordinary uses of the port.

In both cases, the defense of space is inseparable from the defense of “maritimity” as a lived relation to the sea (Péron & Rieucou, 1996; Interview N° 2, Barceloneta Neighbor; see Figures 3–5).



Figure 3. Public assembly of the No a la Copa América platform in Barcelona, 1 June 2024. Such meetings functioned as spaces of collective deliberation and political articulation.



Figure 4. “No a la Copa América” banners displayed on residential balconies in Barceloneta, 16 August 2024, and an installation in the Gracia neighborhood.



Figure 5. Residents forming a human chain on Somorrostro beach during a protest against the 37th America's Cup, Barcelona, 7 September 2024.

As a longtime neighbor points out, opinions are not uniform:

I, for one, saw a lot of commotion; I saw the protests and everything...but of course, opinions are divided; some people think it's beneficial, but it's true that nothing very concrete has come of it either. And then, of course, there were evictions of elderly people from their apartments, but that was happening before, too. (Interview N° 10, Barceloneta Neighbor)

For many residents, opposition extended far beyond the regatta itself: Interviewees framed the 37th America's Cup as a condensation of broader structural tensions—privatization of public space, speculative real estate dynamics, ecological degradation, and the prioritization of private capital over collective needs. One participant described it as “a for-profit competition...involving the use of public funds to subsidize private companies” (Interview N° 1, Barceloneta Neighbor and Activist), emphasizing the perceived asymmetry between public investment and private gain. Another warned that “the city is changing; they're going to close off areas that you can currently access” (Interview N° 7, Barceloneta Neighbor), highlighting how temporary closures and security arrangements were experienced as a suspension of daily rights.

These concerns had a concrete institutional correlate. Between 22 August and 27 October 2024—the duration of the America's Cup—the Ajuntament de Barcelona (City Council) required residents and workers to obtain official permits to access the neighborhood by car, issuing nearly 11,000 accreditations (Sanz Guerrero, 2024). Along the waterfront, temporary spectator structures were installed and accessible only

through paid tickets, effectively reorganizing publicly owned coastal space around private consumption for the duration of the event.

These narratives articulate a moral and affective attachment to the shoreline. When residents state that “it really hurts us to see beaches being lost or overrun by things that don’t interest us” (Interview N° 4, Barceloneta Neighbor and Community Leader), the language of pain signals more than inconvenience; it expresses a sense of dispossession. What is being defended is not merely physical access, but also the continuity of relational practices: artisanal fishing, informal sociability, intergenerational knowledge of the sea, and the right to inhabit coastal space without being subordinated to spectacular events or luxury consumption.

The marginalization of artisanal fishing illustrates this erosion concretely. The Cofradía de Pescadores de Barcelona (Fishers’ Guild) currently registers only two vessels practicing *artes menores* (small-scale artisanal fishing), down from dozens in previous decades (Carbonell, 2020; Cofradía de Pescadores de Barcelona, 2024), signaling a broader coastal enclosure in which the sea becomes a backdrop for tourism and elite maritime sport rather than a living environment.

This is reflected in the dispositions of those still working the sea. As one community sea initiative leader noted: “The regulation is very strict, and they are fine with it, because they have come to realize that the goal is not to fish more, but to fish better” (Interview N° 14, Leader of Community Sea Initiative).

Rather than rejecting visitors per se, these claims express—in practice—the politics of limits theorized above: The coast, residents insist, cannot sustain indefinite expansion without eroding the relational and ecological conditions that give it meaning. The platform No a la Copa América was organized within a broader coalition: The demonstration of 6 July 2024, under the slogan “Prou! Posem límits al turisme” (Enough! Let’s set limits on tourism; Figure 6), was jointly convened by over 140 organizations, including the Assemblea de Barris pel

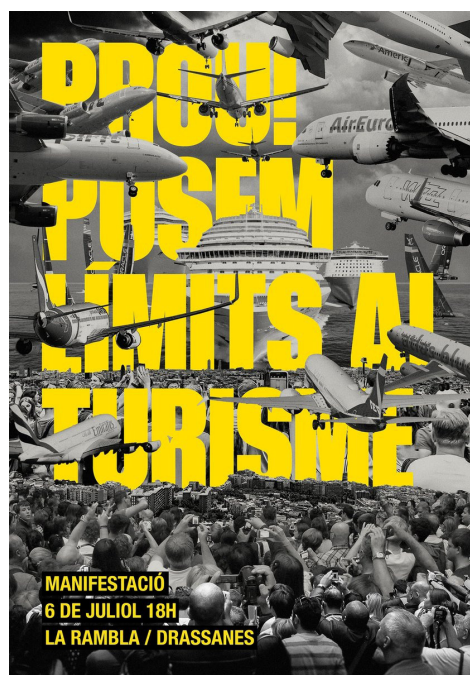


Figure 6. No a la Copa América (2024). “Prou! Posem límits al turisme” (Poster), Barcelona.

Decreixement Turístic (Assembly of Neighborhoods for Tourist Degrowth), with protesters chanting “Decrecimiento ya” (Degrowth now; Aladern, 2024).

Mobilization also intersects with housing precarity and demographic change. As one interviewee noted, “Now, with the America’s Cup, there are people who move here for two years and then leave...with much greater purchasing power than the people who have lived here their whole lives” (Interview N° 2, Barceloneta Neighbor and Community Leader). The event was thus perceived as intensifying ongoing processes of displacement and socio-spatial restructuring. Yet this mobilization is unevenly distributed: Territorial attachment and collective memory vary across generations and residential trajectories, reflecting the neighborhood’s ongoing demographic transformation.

A neighborhood social program worker explained that their work aimed to “engage the community to develop strategies...always with a critical perspective that seeks to challenge the system at its core” (Interview N° 6, Barceloneta Social Worker), suggesting that resistance cannot be limited to episodic mobilization but must address deeper dynamics of tourism monoculture, housing speculation, and ecosocial vulnerability. Similar ideas appear in residents’ reflections on consumption and the local economy. As one long-term neighbor noted:

Consumption is also a political act, and if you consume mindfully, you’re also supporting the local economy and the local narrative; in other words, you have power through your consumption. Eating paella from a paella specialist isn’t the same as eating fish that’s in season. (Interview N° 2, Barceloneta Neighbor and Community Leader)

Rather than proposing abstract alternatives, these accounts express a situated degrowth sensibility—not as a political program but as an embedded disposition toward care, limits, and defending a way of life rooted in the neighborhood. The following section shows how these mobilizations shaped, and were shaped by, the multilevel institutional architecture of Barcelona’s waterfront.

6. Governing the Waterfront

As Hubbard (2019) argues in his analysis of struggles over the “coastal commons,” beaches and waterfronts are often characterized by forms of legal pluralism in which multiple authorities and regulatory systems coexist, allowing public spaces to be formally protected while simultaneously being subjected to privatization, securitization, or exceptional uses.

This perspective is particularly relevant in Barcelona, where the waterfront is structured through a multilevel institutional framework spanning the Spanish State, the Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government), the Ajuntament de Barcelona (City Council), and an autonomous Port Authority, each holding distinct planning and regulatory powers (Barragán Muñoz, 2014; Generalitat de Catalunya, 2020; Ministerio de la Presidencia, Justicia y Relaciones con las Cortes, 1988, 2011; OECD, 2014; Verhoeven & Vanoutrive, 2012; see Figure 7).

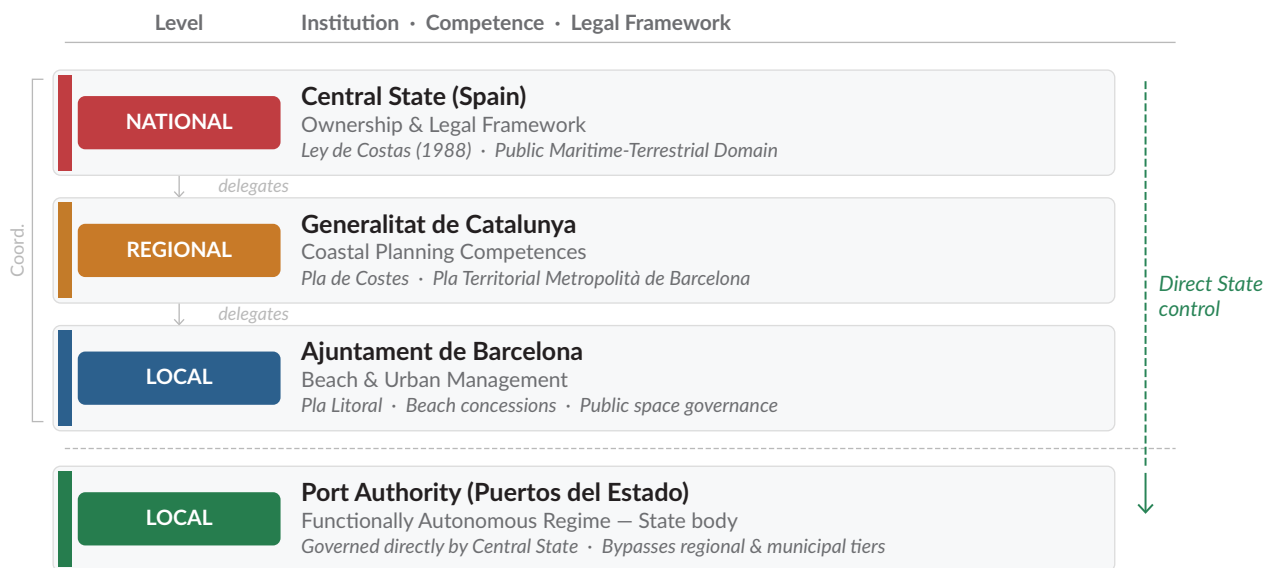


Figure 7. Multilevel governance configuration of Barcelona's coastal and maritime space. The model distinguishes between (a) the Central State (Spanish Government), (b) regional coastal planning competences (Generalitat de Catalunya—Catalan Government), (c) municipal urban and beach management functions (Ajuntament de Barcelona—City Council), and (d) the Port Authority's functionally autonomous regime.

In this context, mega-events such as the 37th America's Cup serve as moments when these overlapping layers of governance become especially visible, enabling temporary reconfigurations of access, circulation, and permitted uses along the shoreline. Areas legally defined as public domain may become partially restricted, reprogrammed, or symbolically reoriented toward external audiences, reinforcing residents' perception that decisions about the coast are made beyond the sphere of ordinary community life. Rather than a neutral public space, the waterfront emerges as a contested institutional terrain where competing claims over the coastal commons are negotiated.

Institutional actors are simultaneously attentive to climate pressures on the coastline, as one interviewee notes:

The first very clear effect of rising sea levels is that beaches are losing ground....The problem in Barcelona is that these beaches are very small because they are artificial, so there is a loss of open spaces and recreational areas for both neighborhood residents and all visitors to the city. These are losses on the environmental, social, and economic fronts. (Interview N° 5, City Council Representative)

Recent policies, including the Pla Litoral and the redevelopment of Port Olímpic, continue this trajectory: Climate adaptation is formally integrated into planning, even as it coexists with large-scale investments oriented toward tourism, sport, and urban competitiveness (see Figure 8).

Field observations conducted during the preparation and celebration of the 37th America's Cup illustrate how these policies materialize spatially. Temporary architectural installations (see Figure 9), new shading structures, restricted access zones, security perimeters, and event signage reshaped everyday circulation along the waterfront. Branded infrastructure and high-visibility hospitality spaces reinforced the sense that the shoreline was temporarily reorganized around global spectatorship.



Figure 8. Port Olímpic redevelopment with a new focus on openness to the public, 6 July 2024.



Figure 9. Temporary infrastructures and controlled access points installed along Barcelona's waterfront during the 37th America's Cup, 7 September 2024.

This governance paradigm makes visible a structural disconnect: While environmental pressures (sea-level rise, coastal erosion, extreme heat) and social pressures such as housing precarity, displacement, and the erosion of working-class coastal life are mutually reinforcing, institutional frameworks address them as separate domains. Climate adaptation is managed through technical instruments, while social vulnerability remains largely absent from formal coastal governance. Crucially, this disconnection also erodes the urban coastal commons: The collective practices, relational knowledge, and shared uses of the shoreline that communities have historically sustained constitute a form of adaptive capacity that neither technical adaptation nor market-led development can replace.

Mega-events fit coherently within this strategic logic. As one municipal representative explained: "The America's Cup is like an accelerator of all that (urban regeneration), like giving it a shot of adrenaline to make things happen, but the idea has always been to leave a better waterfront than the one that was there before" (Interview N° 5, City Council Representative). This pattern aligns with broader analyses of event-led urbanism, where mega-events are deployed to unlock capital, expedite infrastructure, and reinforce global positioning (Harvey, 1989; Hu et al., 2025; Smith, 2012).

Synchronizing public space improvements with high-profile events contributes to what may be described as the spectacularization of the coastline. The waterfront becomes a stage where innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness are simultaneously displayed (Debord, 1967; Usher, 2025). As one resident questioned, “Why do you pose like that when everything already looks great, just so the photo comes out perfect?” (Interview N° 7, Barceloneta Neighbor). This comment captures a perception that aesthetic upgrading is driven by global visibility rather than everyday need.

7. Discussion: Beyond Growth-Oriented Coastal Development

Barcelona’s waterfront illustrates how contemporary conflicts over urban shorelines cannot be understood simply as disputes over land use or event management, and why the urban coastal commons framework is analytically productive for interpreting them. The 37th America’s Cup is not an anomaly but an intensification of longer-term enclosure dynamics that have shaped the waterfront since the 1992 Olympics. This article offers a conceptual framework that connects urban shoreline governance to questions of justice, commoning, and the politics of limits.

The tensions identified in Barceloneta reveal a divergence between two rationalities of coastal governance. Institutional planning frames the shoreline as a strategic asset requiring optimization and integration into global maritime economy circuits, made concrete during the America’s Cup through a vehicle accreditation system that reorganized neighborhood access around the event’s operational needs. Long-term residents, in contrast, articulate the coast as a lived environment embedded in daily practices, memory, and relational ties to the sea. The commoning lens is reflected here not because it resolves this contest, but because it names it, revealing the asymmetry between institutional rationalities that treat coastal space as an optimizable asset and residents’ practices that continuously produce and sustain it as a shared socio-ecological environment.

Blue justice sharpens the analysis by highlighting how coastal governance produces unequal distributions of access, benefits, and risk (Bennett et al., 2021; Blythe et al., 2023; Movik, 2024). Applied to the America’s Cup, each dimension reveals a distinct axis of inequity: Distributively, financial benefits accrued primarily to private operators and investors while costs (restricted access, displacement, overcrowding) were borne by long-term residents; procedurally, affected communities had no formal channel for participation, prompting the No a la Copa América platform to organize outside institutional frameworks; and in terms of recognition, the maritime heritage of Barceloneta was absent from an event governance logic framed exclusively through global competitiveness. Restorative justice, the framework’s fourth dimension, concerns how historical harms experienced by coastal communities are acknowledged and redressed, and is less immediately visible in the mobilizations examined here. Nevertheless, it remains latent in residents’ demands to restore Barceloneta’s maritime character and safeguard the cultural heritage of artisanal fishing as irreplaceable community assets.

Interpreting neighborhood mobilizations as practices of commoning further clarifies these conflicts. In Barceloneta, this social process took multiple forms: At the collective level, the human chain on Somorrostro beach constituted a direct assertion that the waterfront belongs to those who inhabit it; at the institutional level, the No a la Copa América platform contributed to shaping the political conditions under which Barcelona ultimately declined to host future editions of the Cup; and at the quotidian level, acts of collective care like cleaning plastic from the water and choosing to consume local fish constitute the ongoing social labor through which commons are reproduced. These day-to-day acts express broader claims about

how coastal space should be governed, by whom, and on what terms. The Barceloneta case shows that urban coastal commoning does not operate through a single register. The layering of care, mobilization, and institutional pressure gives it durability. This has implications for commons scholarship: Collective action in dense urban contexts cannot be reduced to moments of visible resistance, but must be understood as a continuous and multi-scalar social practice.

Residents' critiques consistently identified the structural contradictions of mega-event urbanism: public resources absorbed to subsidize private gain, with civic and environmental costs borne by local communities. Barcelona's decision not to host future editions of the Cup can be read in the same register: not as a principled degrowth commitment, but as a moment in which the costs of growth-oriented event urbanism became politically untenable, a politics of limits arrived at through conflict rather than consensus. This distinction matters theoretically. Degrowth scholarship has often located limit-politics in deliberate institutional design or cultural transformation. This case suggests that limits can also emerge from below, not as a planned transition but as the accumulated effect of communities defending what they have always used and produced. The political is not always where we expect to find it.

Crucially, the case reveals a specific form of misalignment between adaptation and development in Barcelona: Institutional resilience strategies, nature-based coastal defenses, desalination infrastructure, and heat resilience planning are embedded within the same growth-oriented governance framework they are meant to correct. They are designed alongside luxury waterfront developments and event infrastructure rather than in response to the housing precarity and displacement experienced by long-term residents. Residents, meanwhile, experience vulnerability not as an abstract climate risk but as a compound condition: overcrowding and heat stress on a beach that has become inaccessible in peak season, housing precarity in a neighborhood subject to speculative pressure, and the erosion of the relational practices (fishing, informal sociability, intergenerational use of the sea) that constitute their adaptive capacity and, in this sense, the urban coastal commons itself. These layered experiences suggest that adaptation without redistribution and without protecting collectively governed coastal spaces may reproduce rather than address the structural conditions that make coastal communities vulnerable to both environmental and social risk. In this sense, coastline governance becomes a political field in which decisions about protection, investment, and land use are inseparable from questions of justice. The Barceloneta case contributes a grounded account of how that political field is contested not through formal deliberation, but through sustained, layered, and often informal practices by which communities assert that the coast belongs to those who have always lived from and with it.

8. Conclusions

Significantly, Barcelona has since confirmed that it will not host the next edition of the America's Cup, ruling out public financing for a future regatta. While municipal authorities cited strategic priorities and budgetary considerations rather than civic opposition, the episode illustrates how mega-events become sites of dispute capable of reshaping political horizons. Even if grassroots mobilization cannot be directly credited with the outcome, the public controversy contributed to questioning the desirability and sustainability of elite-oriented waterfront strategies.

The 37th America's Cup accelerated pre-existing tensions over access, governance, and the future of Barcelona's coastal space—tensions rooted in neoliberal urbanization and ecosocial crisis rather than in the event itself (Harvey, 1989; Hu et al., 2025; Smith, 2012). As the Barceloneta case shows, these conflicts reflect deeper structural questions over who controls coastal space and on whose terms.

By conceptualizing the shoreline as an urban coastal commons, this article extends debates on the commons and blue justice beyond rural or marine resource contexts to highly urbanized coastlines. This conceptual move carries a methodological implication: Urban coastal commons cannot be studied only at moments of spectacular conflict, but through the slower processes of commoning and enclosure that precede and outlast them, a point the Barceloneta case illustrates across multiple scales and temporalities.

The analysis also shows that coastal governance in contemporary cities operates through layered institutional arrangements (Hubbard, 2019) in which planning authorities, port administrations, private investment, and event-led strategies overlap. The key finding is not simply that these layers coexist, but that they produce a systematic misalignment that cannot be resolved from within the same growth-oriented framework that generates it. Addressing the vulnerabilities experienced by long-term coastal residents requires not technical adjustments but governance transformations that place distribution, participation, and recognition at their center.

Finally, the mobilizations observed in Barceloneta point toward something beyond resistance: a situated practice of commoning through which residents not only contest enclosure but actively produce an alternative vision of coastal governance. This vision—grounded in limits, care, and collective stewardship—has emerged through conflict rather than institutional design, and this is analytically significant. It suggests a broader implication: Transitions toward more just coastal governance may not begin with policy reform, but with making visible and recognizing the forms of collective action and stewardship that communities are already producing. This is where institutional actors and researchers alike have a role to play. This is not to discount municipal sustainability efforts: Educational programs and participatory planning reflect genuine institutional concern, but they remain narrow in scope and unable to address the structural tensions between access, use, and growth-oriented development. The challenge is to build governance frameworks that recognize and protect what communities already produce from below.

The conflicts documented in Barceloneta are not unique to Barcelona. From tourist-saturated Mediterranean shorelines to rapidly urbanizing coastal cities in the Global South, the same structural tension between coastlines as assets and coastlines as commons is being played out in different registers. The urban coastal commons framework offers a conceptual tool for reading these conflicts together, without erasing their specificity. The challenge is not only how to protect the coast, but how to decide collectively what the coast is for and who has the right to shape its future.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the residents of Barceloneta who are participating in this research, to whom we dedicate this work.

Funding

This work was supported by BECA CHILE ANID from the National Agency for Research and Development, Chile, Grant 72240299, Elisa Monckeberg. Publication of this article in open access was made possible through the institutional membership agreement between Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Cogitatio Press.

Conflict of Interests

In this article, editorial decisions were undertaken by Salina Spiering (Nordland Research Institute) and Elisabeth Morris-Webb (Nordland Research Institute).

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are not publicly available due to confidentiality restrictions, as they consist of interview transcripts and ethnographic field notes collected under informed consent agreements that preclude sharing. Data may be available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request and subject to ethical approval.

LLMs Disclosure

Claude (Anthropic) and ChatGPT (OpenAI) assisted with translation, language revision of selected passages, figure design and revision of the reference format.

References

- Ajibade, I. (2017). Can a future city enhance urban resilience and sustainability? A political ecology analysis of Eko Atlantic City, Nigeria. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 26, 85–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2017.09.029>
- Aladern, M. (2024, July 6). Barcelona se suma a la ola de protestas contra la masificación turística: “Decrecimiento ya.” *ElNacional.cat*. https://www.elnacional.cat/es/sociedad/barcelona-se-suma-ola-oleada-protestas-contramasificacion-turistica-decrecimiento-ya_1248311_102.html
- Alari Pahissa, E. (2014). El barrio no se vende: las barriografías de la Barceloneta como herramienta de resistencia vecinal frente al extractivismo urbano. *Ecología Política*, 48, 36–41.
- Anand, N. (2023). Anthroposea: Planning future ecologies in Mumbai’s wetscapes. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 41(4), 683–706. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758231183439>
- Anguelovski, I., Connolly, J. J., Garcia-Lamarca, M., Cole, H., & Pearsall, H. (2019). New scholarly pathways on green gentrification: What does the urban “green turn” mean and where is it going? *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(6), 1064–1086. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518803799>
- Barbesgaard, M. (2018). Blue growth: Savior or ocean grabbing? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(1), 130–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1377186>
- Barragán Muñoz, J. M. (2014). Política y gestión integradas de áreas litorales en España y Europa. *Revista de Gestión Pública*, 3(2), 297–332.
- Bennett, N. J., Blythe, J., White, C. S., & Campero, C. (2021). Blue growth and blue justice: Ten risks and solutions for the ocean economy. *Marine Policy*, 125, Article 104387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104387>
- Blythe, J. L., Gill, D. A., Claudet, J., & Bennett, N. J. (2023). Blue justice: A review of emerging scholarship and resistance movements. *Cambridge Prisms: Coastal Futures*, 1, Article e7. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cft.2023.4>
- Brand, U., & Wissen, M. (2018). *The limits to capitalist nature*. Rowman & Littlefield.

- Burningham, K. (2000). Using the language of NIMBY: A topic for research, not an activity for researchers. *Local Environment*, 5(1), 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135498300113264>
- Carbonell, E. (2010). La patrimonialización de un paisaje marítimo: De la arena de la playa a la arena política. *PASOS*, 8(4), 568–581. https://www.pasosonline.org/es/component/sobipro/429-la_patrimonializacin_de_un_paisaje_martimo_de_la_arena_de_la_playa_a_la_arena_poltica?Itemid=0
- Carbonell, E. (2020). Entre redes, patrimonio y turismo: mutaciones de la pesca artesanal en la costa norte de Barcelona (Cataluña). *Estudios Atacameños*, 65, 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.22199/issn.0718-1043-2020-0024>
- Castro-Coma, M., & Martí-Costa, M. (2016). Comunes urbanos: de la gestión colectiva al derecho a la ciudad. *EURE*, 42(125), 131–153. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0250-71612016000100006>
- Cocola-Gant, A., & Gago, A. (2021). Airbnb, buy-to-let investment and tourism-driven displacement: A case study in Lisbon. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 53(7), 1671–1688. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X19869012>
- Cofradía de Pescadores de Barcelona. (2024). *Embarcaciones*. <https://www.cpbarna.com/es/embarcacions>
- Colomb, C., & Novy, J. (Eds.). (2017). *Protest and resistance in the tourist city*. Routledge.
- De Angelis, M. (2017). *Omnia sunt communia*. Zed Books.
- Debord, G. (1967). *La société du spectacle*. Buchet-Chastel.
- Degen, M., & García, M. (2012). The transformation of the ‘Barcelona Model’: An analysis of culture, urban regeneration and governance. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36(5), 1022–1038. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01152.x>
- Delgado, M. (2007). *Sociedades movilizadas. Pasos hacia una antropología de las calles*. Anagrama.
- Devine-Wright, P. (2009). Rethinking NIMBYism: The role of place attachment and place identity in explaining place-protective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 19(6), 426–441. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1004>
- Durán Segura, L. A. (2011). Miradas urbanas sobre el espacio público: el flâneur, la deriva y la etnografía de lo urbano. *Reflexiones*, 90(2), 137–144.
- Espeche, H. (2013). Assemblée Portuària Veïnal (APV): El movimiento vecinal construye sus alternativas. *Revista Bibliogràfica de Geografia y Ciencias Sociales*, XVIII, 742–798. <https://www.ub.edu/geocrit/b3w-1049/b3w-1049-19.htm>
- Fletcher, R., Murray Mas, I., Blanco-Romero, A., & Blázquez-Salom, M. (2019). Tourism and degrowth: An emerging agenda for research and praxis. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(12), 1745–1763. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1679822>
- Franquesa, J. (2010). *Sa Calatrava, mon amour: Etnografia d'un barri atrapat en la geografia del capital*. Documenta Balear.
- Generalitat de Catalunya. (2020). *Pla de ports de Catalunya. Horitzó 2030*. https://territori.gencat.cat/ca/01_departament/estrategia/plans-sectorials/pla-ports-catalunya-2030
- Gómez, S., & Garrido, A. (2026). From commons to commoning as resistance efforts to blue injustice: A sociohistorical and ethnographical approach. *People and Nature*, 8(4), 835–853. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.70242>
- Hall, C. M. (2009). Degrowing tourism: Décroissance, sustainable consumption and steady-state tourism. *Anatolia*, 20(1), 46–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2009.10518894>
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The urban experience*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The new imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities*. Verso.

- Hein, J. (2026). Towards an urban political ecology of coastal land reclamation. *Geo: Geography and Environment*, 13(1), Article e70080. <https://doi.org/10.1002/geo2.70080>
- Hodkinson, S. (2012). The new urban enclosures. *City*, 16(5), 500–518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2012.709403>
- Hu, X., Ling, J., Lin, S., & Lin, R. (2025). The impact of sports mega-events on urban haze: The perspective of government environmental attention. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-025-07103-5>
- Hubbard, P. (2019). Legal pluralism at the beach: Public access, land use and the struggle for the ‘coastal commons.’ *Area*, 52(2), 420–428. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12594>
- Jentoft, S., Chuenpagdee, R., Barragán-Paladines, M. J., & Franz, N. (2017). *The small-scale fisheries guidelines: Global implementation*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-55074-9>
- Jones, A. L. (2017). Regenerating urban waterfronts—Creating better futures—From commercial and leisure market places to cultural quarters and innovation districts. *Planning Practice & Research*, 32(3), 333–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2016.1222146>
- Kallis, G. (2018). *Degrowth*. Agenda Publishing.
- Klein, N. (2014). *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate*. Simon & Schuster.
- Linebaugh, P. (2010, January 8). Some principles of the commons. *CounterPunch*. <https://www.counterpunch.org/2010/01/08/some-principles-of-the-commons>
- Magrinyà, F., Martí-Costa, M., Mérida, J., & García, Á. (2014). *Hàbitat urbà*. Icaria.
- Manifest de la Plataforma Defensem el Port Vell. (2012, May 28). *Plataforma Defensem el Port Vell*. <https://defensemportvell.wordpress.com/2012/05/28/manifest-de-la-plataforma-defensem-el-port-vell-versio-beta>
- Marshall, R. (Ed.). (2004). *Waterfront in post-industrial cities*. Routledge.
- Milano, C., Cheer, J. M., & Novelli, M. (Eds.). (2019). *Overtourism: Excesses, discontents and measures in travel and tourism*. CABI. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781786399823.0000>
- Ministerio de la Presidencia, Justicia y Relaciones con las Cortes. (1988). Ley 22/1988, de 28 de julio, de Costas. Gobierno de España. <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1988-18762>
- Ministerio de la Presidencia, Justicia y Relaciones con las Cortes. (2011). *Real Decreto Legislativo 2/2011, de 5 de septiembre, por el que se aprueba el Texto Refundido de la Ley de Puertos del Estado y de la Marina Mercante* [No. 253]. Gobierno de España. <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/rdlg/2011/09/05/2/con>
- Movik, S. (2024). Contested coastal commons and blue spatial justice: Enclosures, rescaling, and resistance in Northern Norway. *International Journal of the Commons*, 18(1), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1240>
- Movik, S., Adam, H. N., & Alankar, A. (2023). Claiming space: Contested coastal commons in Mumbai. *Geoforum*, 144, Article 103805. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103805>
- No a la Copa América. [@NoCopaAmerica]. (2024). Els barris de Barcelona diem no a la Copa América [Post]. X. <https://x.com/NoCopaAmerica>
- OECD. (2014). *The competitiveness of global port-cities*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264205277-en>
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ounanian, K., & Howells, M. (2024). Deconstructing and resisting coastal displacement: A research agenda. *Progress in Human Geography*, 48(5), 636–654. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03091325241240581>
- Perkins, P. E. (2019). Climate justice, commons, and degrowth. *Ecological Economics*, 160, 183–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2019.02.005>
- Péron, F., & Rieucou, J. (Eds.). (1996). *La maritimité aujourd'hui*. L'Harmattan.

- Reed, M. S. (2008). Stakeholder participation for environmental management: A literature review. *Biological Conservation*, 141(10), 2417–2431. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2008.07.014>
- Rosendo, S., Celliers, L., & Mechisso, M. (2018). Doing more with the same: A reality-check on the ability of local government to implement integrated coastal management for climate change adaptation. *Marine Policy*, 87, 29–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.10.001>
- Sanz Guerrero, V. (2024, June 10). Cortes de tráfico, aparcamientos disuasorios y acreditaciones para entrar en la Barceloneta: los principales cambios de movilidad durante la Copa America. *Ara*. https://es.ara.cat/sociedad/barcelona/cortes-trafico-aparcamientos-disuasorios-acreditaciones-entrar-barceloneta-principales-cambios-movilidad-durante-copa-america_1_5057270.html
- Sanz-Pérez, C., López-Gay, A., & Valente, R. (2025). How gentrification has redefined Spanish cities: Expansion of the process in the decade from 2011 to 2021. *Perspectives Demografiques*, 40, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.46710/ced.pd.eng.40>
- Sassen, S. (2015). *Expulsions*. Harvard University Press.
- Smith, A. (2012). *Events and urban regeneration*. Routledge.
- Tatjer, M. (1973). *La Barceloneta*. Los libros de la Frontera.
- Usher, M. (2025). Waterfront as accumulation strategy: Urban greening, real estate making, and the assetization of water. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 115(8), 1843–1866. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2025.2517738>
- Vasconcelos de Lima, E. L. (2015). The fallacies of strategic urban planning: Urban marketing, Barcelona model, and mega-events. *Boletim Goiano de Geografia*, 35(2), 217–235.
- Verhoeven, P., & Vanoutrive, T. (2012). A quantitative analysis of European port governance. *Maritime Economics & Logistics*, 14, 178–203. <https://doi.org/10.1057/mel.2012.6>
- Wolsink, M. (1994). Entanglement of interests and motives: Assumptions behind the NIMBY-theory on facility siting. *Urban Studies*, 31(6), 851–866. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420989420080711>

About the Authors



Elisa Monckeberg is a social researcher specializing in the intersection of city, sea, and ecosocial crisis. She is completing her PhD in social and cultural anthropology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where she explores urban coastal territories, care practices, and climate adaptation from an applied anthropological perspective.



Sílvia Gómez is a marine social anthropologist and full professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). With over 20 years of experience in marine governance, small-scale fisheries, and coastal communities across Europe, the Arctic, and Latin America, she coordinates the Sea Peoples Lab at UAB.