

**UCLA**

**UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations**

**Title**

Hipsters and Drunks, Tourists and Locals: Calle Loiza as a Site of Ideological Contestation

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0f17k3xz>

**Author**

Castro Font, Sara Isabel

**Publication Date**

2021

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Hipsters and Drunks, Tourists and Locals:  
Calle Loíza as a Site of Ideological Contestation

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Science  
in Anthropology

by

Sara Isabel Castro Font

2021

© Copyright by

Sara Isabel Castro Font

2021

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Hipsters and Drunks, Tourists and Locals:  
Calle Loíza as a Site of Ideological Contestation

by

Sara Isabel Castro Font

Master of Science in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Paul V. Kroskrity, Co-Chair

Professor Erin Debenport, Co-Chair

While some people imagine Calle Loíza as “an exciting dynamic place to visit” filled with trendy restaurants and bars, others perceive it as a “headache” caused by “an unmeasured and unscrupulous development”. Calle Loíza is a distinct street in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in which different class, national, and linguistic identities converge and are contested. Given its complex social fabric, I address: How is Calle Loíza discursively constructed? What language ideologies underpin these constructions, and what subjectivities emerge? I use semiotic landscapes, or the interwoven discourses about a space, as a conceptual and methodological tool to follow the discourses that construe multiple interpretations of Calle Loíza. Drawing from linguistic anthropological theories and grounding my analysis in the current political economic framework, this study demonstrates how Calle Loíza is a site of ideological contestation in which differing notions of progress and sense of belonging converge.

The thesis of Sara Isabel Castro Font is approved.

Norma Mendoza-Denton

Erin Debenport, Committee Co-chair

Paul V. Kroskrity, Committee Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	
	a.	Community Background: Calle Loíza and Political Economy 3
II.	Methods	5
III.	Literature Review	
	a.	Linguistic and Semiotic Landscapes 7
	b.	Language Ideologies 15
	c.	Publics 17
IV.	Discussion	
	a.	Calle Loíza’s Aesthetics of Creativity 19
	b.	“Safe” Urban Spaces 29
	c.	Calle Loíza: A Site of Ideological Contestation 32
V.	Conclusion	41
VI.	References	44

## Introduction

“When people talk about tourism, they think big chain hotels...but I mean there’s real amazing experiences here at Calle Loíza”, expresses Lin Manuel - a renowned Puerto Rican playwright from New York - in a tourism video by Discover Puerto Rico webpage<sup>1</sup>. Calle Loíza is located in San Juan, Puerto Rico, near the beach and tourist zones of Condado and historic site of Old San Juan. It forms part of the *barrio* of Santurce, in which 49% of the residents live below the poverty level (US Census Bureau 2019). Recently, Calle Loíza has been experiencing a shift in its political economy and social scene due to urban revitalization projects that attract foreign investors and locals from the elite social class (Villanueva et al. 2019). Tourists and locals from other areas of San Juan are attracted to Calle Loíza’s “rap performances next to *bomba y plena*”, “art graffiti” and its “cool shops and restaurants and bars”. Some people highlight Calle Loíza’s “restaurant renaissance” and imagine it as “an exciting dynamic place to visit” filled with “so much culture”<sup>2</sup>. For some residents, however, Calle Loíza has “has turned into a headache” (Díaz 2017, par. 9). Residents suffer “an unmeasured and unscrupulous development”, and have had “enough of their [the crowds of tourists and other locals] game playing with our [neighbors’] health, dignity, and security!”<sup>3</sup>. As one person simply put it, “The barrio where I was born and raised until I got married, has turned into a plastic and polyester brothel of people from Guaynabo. Is this progress?”<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Discover Puerto Rico is a private, non-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) aimed to increase tourism on the island (Discover Puerto Rico, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> These comments are taken from online videos about Calle Loíza. See list of references for more information: Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “Explore Puerto Rico with Lin Manuel Miranda”.

<sup>3</sup> (A user’s comment on La Calle Loíza Inc. 2019). See list of references for more information.

<sup>4</sup> (A user’s comment on La Calle Loíza Inc. 2019). See list of references for more information.

How can Calle Loíza simultaneously be a “an exciting dynamic place to visit” and a “headache”? Given the complex social interpretations of Calle Loíza, I am drawn to the varying ideological constructions of the street, and the social implications these contrasting perceptions have. Gal (1998) express that “different ideologies construct alternate, even opposing realities; they create differing views arising from and often constituting different social positions and subjectivities within a single social formation” (320). These concerns lead me to address: How is Calle Loíza discursively constructed, and what subjectivities emerge from these constructions? What are the ideologies that underpin these constructions? How does the complex web of ideological constructions of Calle Loíza shapes and is shaped by the political economy that governs the semiotic landscape of the space?

Linguistic landscapes are defined as “linguistic objects that mark public space” (Ben-Rafael et al 2006, 7) and are concerned with language use and linguistic code choice in signs. Expanding on this concept, semiotic landscapes are the interwoven discourses about a space (Shohamy and Waksman 2009), and are concerned not only with language use in signs, but also with how language interacts with other semiotic phenomena (non-linguistic signs, e.g. built environment, people) to create meaning within a space. Considering the multiple ideological constructions of Calle Loíza, linguistic and semiotic landscapes serve as conceptual tools to follow discourses about Calle Loíza and to analyze how interpretations of this street become articulated in multiple ways. Throughout the study, I draw from ethnographic data, informal interviews, and online data from tourism websites and Facebook pages to answer my research questions and discuss how Calle Loíza is a site of ideological contestation.

Below, I provide a brief background on Calle Loíza and its political economy, followed by a discussion of methods. Then, I engage with the literature on linguistic landscapes, language



ideologies, publics, and political economy. These concepts, found in linguistic anthropology and related disciplines, enable us to attend to the ways in which language use, or processes of meaning making, are linked to broader social, political, and economic processes. Following the literature review on these topics, I discuss Calle Loíza's branding as a tourist site and its interpretations as a site of economic progress, followed by a discussion about the interpretations of Calle Loíza as a site of degeneration, and the semiotic ideologies that underlie both views. Finally, I end with future implications for studies of semiotic landscapes, with hopes of setting the stage for broadening the scope of what studies in this area can bring forth.

*Community Background: Political Economy and Calle Loíza*

In addition to engaging with scholarship in linguistic and semiotic landscapes, I situate this study within scholarship on neoliberalism and political economy. Neoliberalism is understood here as constituted by profit-oriented economic policies that foster state deregulation and privatization of public services, and as an ideological framework that values individual entrepreneurialism, free market logics, and cultural difference as sources of profit (Harvey 2005; Dávila 2012; Ganti 2014). Although widely used and loosely defined, the concept of neoliberalism allows anthropologists to follow the discourses that characterize the current political economic framework (Ganti 2014). For this reason, I do not use neoliberalism as a universal context nor as a marker of a time period, but as an analytical frame to trace such discourses and attend to how neoliberal values and subjectivities are articulated in, and engage with, Calle Loíza's semiotic and linguistic landscape. As such, this study contributes to conversations of the ideological dimensions of neoliberalism and to subjectivities that emerge from notions of efficiency, competition, entrepreneurialism, and individual autonomy.

Calle Loíza is a street in the *barrio Machuchal*, within the district of Santurce, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Santurce is a working-class urban area, as 49% of its population lives below the poverty level (US Census Bureau, 2016). Since the early 1900's Santurce has been marked by ruptures of economic development projects that have continuously displaced and brought forth different waves of populations across time. As such, Santurce is a heterogeneous neighborhood with mainly Afro descendant Puerto Ricans, mixed Afro and white Hispanic Puerto Ricans, white Hispanic Puerto Ricans, as well as immigrants from the neighboring Caribbean islands.

Over the last two decades, Santurce has been impacted by local (neoliberal) policies<sup>5</sup> that (1) provide tax exemptions for foreign (mainly U.S. American) investors and (2) foster urban revitalization projects that focus on turning low-income residential areas into tourist zones. These policies have lured hundreds of Americans and (mostly) American and foreign companies to the island in search of new profit opportunities (Villanueva et al. 2018, 1424). While these policies situate working-class families under the risk of displacement, they benefit American capitalists and companies, as well as locals from the upper elite class (Arbasetti 2019; Dieppa 2019). Increasingly in the past decades, the tourism industry has been heavily intersecting with urban revitalization projects.

Within this context, developers have relied especially on cultural strategies to reconfigure Santurce as San Juan's Arts district, for both local and tourist consumption. Not bounded to the context of Santurce, cultural strategies for urban redevelopment and tourism have been widely studied (Zukin 1998; Tegtmeyer 2015; Gladstone and Préau 2008; Gotham 2007; Thomas 2009).

---

<sup>5</sup> Act 212-2002 for the Revitalization of Urban Centers provides a 100% tax exemption on interest paid to financial institutions that loaned money for urban center revitalization projects, along with tax credits. Act 20-2012 for Export Services in Puerto Rico provides 90% tax exemption on real and personal property taxes, no federal taxes, 60% municipal tax exemption, and 3% fixed income tax rate for foreign companies wanting to export services from the island. Act 22-2012 for the Individual Investors act, provides individuals with the benefits of 100% tax exemptions on dividend income, interest received while a resident and on long term capital gains, and no federal taxes on income earned in Puerto Rico (Villanueva et al., 2019, 1424).

However, particular to Santurce and specific to Calle Loíza, is how some long-time local residents converge with non-resident locals from San Juan as well as tourists, investors, and emerging local artists. The intertwining of subjects who dwell, consume, and visit the area generate multiple interpretations of the street. Thus, rather than focusing on how cultural strategies are used for urban development and tourism, as it has been widely studied, this study focuses on the multiple ideological dimensions of the street, and how they become articulated in its linguistic and semiotic landscape.

### Methods

Throughout this study, I discuss: How is Calle Loíza interpreted in multiple ways? How do these interpretations become articulated in Calle Loíza's linguistic and semiotic landscape? What kinds of ideologies underlie these interpretations? How do these varying interpretations bring forth different groups and subjectivities? In what ways do these interpretations relate to the current political economic framework?

Whereas semiotic landscape studies foreground space as their object of study, I take Calle Loíza - not as a space - but as a site, given its complex social fabric. A site is an object of joint attention, for making interpretations and construals, which implies a plurality of gazes and viewpoints relative to actors' backgrounds and lines of sight upon the object (Gal and Irvine 2019). In order to study Calle Loíza as a site of ideological work, I use linguistic and semiotic landscapes as both conceptual and methodological tools to analyze how the different interpretations of this site are informed and produced.

Sites need not be spatially bounded, and analogously, linguistic and semiotic landscapes need not be perceived as materially nor spatially bounded. This view enables me to expand linguistic and semiotic landscapes onto digital spaces, so as not to overlook other social agents and

semiotic resources that contribute to the semiotic scenery in virtual ways (Shohamy and Waksman 2009). This conceptualization allowed me to trace, follow, and distinguish the discourses that render Calle Loíza into different categories.

Broadly, I take semiotic landscapes as an umbrella term for all displayed and interwoven discourses about a space (Shohamy and Waksman 2009), and linguistic landscapes as specific material depictions of language in space (Ben-Rafael et al 2009). Because Calle Loíza is simultaneously a tourist area, a cultural and gastronomic center, and a residential area, I analyzed data from different sources in order to trace the discourses that articulate these interpretations. Respectively, I analyzed data from (1) Discover Puerto Rico's tourism website and TripAdvisor reviews of Calle Loíza in order to analyze the strategies that brand Calle Loíza as a cultural and gastronomic center; (2) restaurants' Facebook pages and reviews for further insight on interpretations of Calle Loíza as a site of consumption; and (3) La Calle Loíza Inc. Facebook page, created for the neighborhood's residents, where they share news and events relating to the street. La Calle Loíza Inc. is a creative non-profit that produces web pages, videos, music and cultural events. I analyzed the three posts with the highest number of comments within the previous year to the present moment (2019-2020).

I also conducted a photographic and audiovisual documentation of Calle Loíza's linguistic landscape. To narrow down the selection, I focused on two relevant genre of texts along the stretch of the street: museum texts as part of a multidisciplinary street exhibit supported by La Calle Loíza Inc. (non-profit corporation) and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico; and handwritten signs pertaining to the #EnLaCalleLoízaViveGente movement that emerged as a response to Calle Loíza's current transformation.

To complement my data, I also draw from informal phone interviews with restaurant owners and community members from La Calle Loíza Inc. I consider the discourses as constituting Calle Loíza's linguistic landscape, and the photographs, videos, and language invoked about the street as its semiotic landscape. All the data was collected from March through September 2020, and the data gathered online date from January 2019 to March 2020. In what follows, I draw from these notes to engage in a discussion about neoliberal strategies for urban development and the semiotic ideologies that underlie Calle Loíza's semiotic landscape.

### Literature Review

How can contrasting perceptions of a single, shared space coexist? Given the multiple perceptions of Calle Loíza, I engage with literatures on linguistic and semiotic landscapes as they provide a way to think about the role of language in constructing space. Additionally, I am concerned not only with how multiple interpretations of a space coexist, but also in the logics that give rise to these multiple (and contrasting) interpretations. To this end, I engage with literature on language ideologies in order to understand the logics under people's interpretations of Calle Loíza. Lastly, I discuss the concept of publics (Warner 2000), as it allows me to understand how different subjectivities emerge and converge within Calle Loíza's semiotic landscape.

### *Linguistic and Semiotic Landscapes*

Linguistic landscape studies have been mostly carried out in predominantly multilingual contexts where language policies regulate the languages that are to be used over others. As such, linguistic landscapes, or visual representations of language in space (i.e. signs), are understood as an essential element that contributes to the creation of meaning of a space. Concerned with how linguistic codes are represented visually within space, linguistic landscape scholars analyze the ways in which these representations reproduce social norms, social structures, boundaries between

social groups, and even language ideologies. Scholarship in this area thus reveals how code choice in public signage reflects complex social relations in geographical areas. Broadly, researchers address: Who produces signs? Who are signs addressed to? Where are these signs located, and what does that mean? How does it tie to, or is reflective of, the wider social, cultural, and political context? As such, linguistic landscape scholars attend to processes of sign production, functions of signs, locations of signs, and language use in signs in order to bring forth understandings about authorship, addressivity, agency, and uptake. As interest in this scholarship has grown, so has the potential of this line of research to generate insights on a wider array of areas. Scholars have taken ethnographic approaches to analyze how both the production and uptake of linguistic landscapes reveal contrasting language ideologies, tensions between social groups, mobility and demographic changes in geographic areas, and political economic issues. Accordingly, this line of research has contributed to a wide variety of scholarship including language policy and planning (Landry and Bourhis 1997), sociolinguistics (Leeman and Modan 2009), and geography (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010; Gonçalves 2019; Baro 2020), tourism and political economy (Jaffe 2019; Kallen 2009); and most recently, language and the online media (Shohamy and Waksman 2009; Lyons 2019; Mitchell 2010; Jones 2010). An emergence of linguistic landscape scholars concerned mainly with issues of language and geographic space engendered a different, yet similar line of scholarship, namely, semiotic landscapes. Whereas linguistic landscapes foreground studies of language use in public signage, semiotic landscape studies foreground space, and the role of language (and other non-linguistic signs) in constructing space.

One of the earliest studies on linguistic landscapes (Landry and Bourhis 1997) define it as “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop

signs, and public signs on government buildings” (25). Linguistic landscapes were first theorized in terms of functions of signs: to communicate, to instruct, or to symbolically declare ownership through representation of language. Early linguistic landscape studies (LLS) were used to determine demographic and ethnolinguistic aspects of a space, and used quantitative approaches to map out language choice and produce inventories of urban multilingualism (Landry and Bourhis 1997; Blommaert and Maly 2014; 2019). For instance, Ben-Rafael, Elana Shohamy, Hason Amara and Trumper-Hecht (2006) understand linguistic landscapes as “objects that mark the public space” (7) and examine the patterns of the LL in three different ethno-cultural communities in Israel: Jewish communities, Palestinian-Israeli communities, and in East Jerusalem. Using a quantitative approach, their analysis shows how the visual representations of Hebrew, Arab, and English in the linguistic landscape of three geographical areas reflect the social relations of two minority groups in relation with a dominant group. In other words, Israeli Palestinians and Palestinians share a sense of belonging through linguistic and cultural cues; however, each share a different relationship with the dominant Jewish community. As such, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) demonstrate how people frame their environment through language and highlight the role of language in the symbolic practices that shape spaces.

Some scholars, however, have argued that quantitative approaches fail to grasp how linguistic landscapes are connected to larger social issues or patterns of social interaction (Blommaert and Maly 2014). Instead, an interest in ethnographic approaches emerged to disentangle the complex social dynamics and social fabric that underlie urban neighborhoods. For instance, Blommaert and Maly (2014) employ an ethnographic approach to the linguistic landscape of a neighborhood in Ghent, Belgium. Understanding public places as spaces that regulate social relations embedded with negotiations of power, Maly and Blommaert (2014) highlight both a spatial dimension of

linguistic landscapes, as they regulate social behaviors and relationships within space, and a semiotic scope, as linguistic landscapes imply a “communicative relationship between producers and addressees, in which normative and regulative messages are conveyed” (Blommaert & Maly 2014, 4). As such, these scholars show how linguistic landscapes index social relations, interests and practices within space, and how they regulate, to a degree, language use and social behavior, thereby forming symbolic boundaries between social groups. In a historical and ethnographic approach to Rabot, a main street in Ghent, Belgium, they show how changes in urban infrastructure reflect the demographic and historical migration patterns of the population that inhabits the street. Intrinsically, ethnographic approaches to linguistic landscapes provide researchers with the opportunity to conduct nuanced analysis of changes in historical patterns of migration and demographics, to observe how different social groups become organized and establish forms of belonging within their environment; and to observe how indexical patterns in constant change give meaning to the particular community. In line with this insight, an ethnographic approach to Calle Loíza’s linguistic landscape would further understandings of how the ongoing waves of strangers (tourists, locals, residents, entrepreneurs) create sense of belonging and make sense of the quickly changing urban environment.

Scholars have increasingly approached LLS from an array of interdisciplinary approaches, combining sociological and sociolinguistic theories, as well as semiotic and ethnographic approaches (Ben-Rafael 2009; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Blommaert and Maly 2014; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). Scholars have also used LL to understand how language ideologies are (re)produced within a space, and how these uncover social inequalities and controversial linguistic policies (Coupland 2012; Moriarty 2013; Hult 2013; Lanza and Woldemariam 2009). Coupland (2012) for instance, analyses the visual representations of Welsh and English in the linguistic



landscape of Wales. He categorizes the linguistic landscape according to five language ideological frames that: (1) hegemonize English over Welsh; (2) reflect a bilingual Welsh identity through equal representation of both languages; (3) views Welsh as the main source of Welsh identity, thereby reflecting a national resistance ideology; (4) exoticizes Welsh as a cultural strategy for tourism; and lastly, a language ideology that (5) challenges the idea of Welsh as the basis of Welsh identity, as it erases other minority groups in Wales. As such, his analysis reveals how linguistic landscapes are not necessarily reflective of the states' language ideologies and linguistic policies, but rather they reflect an array of languages ideologies distributed across space. In a similar vein, Hult (2013) disrupts the notion that language use in linguistic landscapes is directly aligned with the demographics of a population, and instead points to how transnational discourses influence linguistic choice in linguistic landscapes. By analyzing billboards and signs along the highways in San Antonio, Texas, Hult (2013) observes that almost all signs in the linguistic landscape are written in English, despite the fact that the population in Texas is both Hispanic and Anglophone. As such, Hult (2013) concludes that the linguistic landscape promotes the U.S. national ideology of "We Speak English Here". As shown by linguistic landscape scholars, the presence (and/or absence) of particular languages in space have significant political, social, and cultural implications. Moreover, they have shown how linguistic landscapes construct (or distort) notions and meanings of spaces and the people that inhabit them, as signs are dynamic and disorganized (produced, influenced, and interpreted by an array of social subjects), and constantly evolving.

Numerous scholars have become interested in not only attending to language use in signs, but also to noting how language interacts with other semiotic (non-linguistic) resources to construct space. For instance, Leeman and Modan (2009) argue that linguistic landscapes are not only material depictions of language in space, but also highly ideologically charged. By studying

linguistic landscapes from a political economic approach, they show how language use in signs interacts with other features of the built environment and combine to commodify Chinatown in Washington D.C. Given the close connection between linguistic landscapes and geographic space, Leeman and Modan (2009) call for an approach that grounds linguistic landscape analysis in a political economic framework in order to draw stronger connections with broader social processes.

Expanding on the notion and approach to linguistic landscapes, several scholars have become interested in semiotic landscapes, encompassing “all displayed and interwoven discourses’ – what is seen, what is heard, what is spoken, what is thought” about a space (Shohamy and Waksman 2009, 313). While linguistic landscapes foregrounds visual or material depictions of language in space (Ben-Rafael 2009; Coulmas 2009), semiotic landscapes foreground space as the central object of study, emphasizing the role that language plays in the construction of space (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010; Blommaert and Maly 2019). By taking space as an object of study instead of the signs themselves, this approach provides scholars with methodological and conceptual flexibility to analyze not just language use in signs and social subjects that form part of the landscape, but to analyse the array of material signs and abstract qualities that combine to produce meaning of a space, and perhaps even rethink the notion of space itself as a fixed, monolithic entity. Giolla Chríost (2020), for instance, employs archival research on the representations of the linguistic item “mind the gap” across different objects in space, in order to analyze the London Underground not as a transportation system, but as a discrete social space – with its various indexical meanings – constituted by visual forms of language. While Giolla Chríost (2020) focuses on the ideological dimensions of space, Baro (2020) employs a political economic approach to studying Marshalltown’s semiotic landscape, a city in Johannesburg, South Africa, that is currently undergoing revitalization efforts. Drawing from signs of heritage, language use in media texts and

interviews with urban developers, Baro (2020) studies the discourses produced by signs of heritage and memory found in the district, and how people interact with these discourses. In sum, he shows how some signs on the neighborhood are used to index a particular history of the city as part of current urban revitalization trends.

Whereas some scholars have used political economic approaches (Baro 2020; Lee and Modan 2009; Jaffe 2019) and others have attended to ideological dimensions of space (Giolla Chríost 2020; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010), fewer have studied these as interconnected processes. Combining these two traditions, I use linguistic and semiotic landscapes as conceptual and methodological tools to understand the ideological and political economic dimensions of Calle Loíza, and how they inform each other. As such, I align this study with Shohamy and Waksman's (2009) notion of semiotic landscapes as interwoven discourses about space, as it allows me to follow and track the discourses that construct Calle Loíza in multiple ways. Moreover, recent studies employing digital ethnographic methods have blurred the distinctions between online digital spaces and offline realms, and highlight the important role digital media plays in everyday life and articulates new dimensions of sensoriality spatiality, and temporality. As such, a line of thinking has come to understand online digital spaces and offline realms as interwoven, in mutual engagement (Ardèvol and Gómez-Cruz 2012). As discussed above, social subjects play an essential role in the dynamic process of shaping linguistic and semiotic landscapes. Given that people engage with spaces not only by being physically present, but also through online digital spaces, I align this study with recent calls to expand linguistic landscapes analysis to online spaces (Blommaert and Maly 2019; Shohamy and Waksman 2009). Thus, I eschew from fixed distinctions between online digital spaces and offline realms and view them as interwoven and mutually constitutive (Ardèvol and Gómez-Cruz 2012). Aligning with Shohamy and Waksman's

(2009) notion of semiotic landscapes as interwoven discourses, and viewing digital online and offline realms as mutually constitutive allows me not just to follow the discourses that highlight the multiplicity of Calle Loíza, but also to follow these discourses across different spaces, thereby focusing on the ideological dimensions of the street. These approaches enable a study of Calle Loíza's semiotic landscape along both its online digital and physical dimensions, contributing to recent efforts to include online digital spaces in linguistic landscapes studies (Blommaert and Maly 2019).

Following the importance of subjects and identity in the dynamic formation of linguistic landscapes, a compelling line of scholarship has emerged that combines semiotic and phenomenological approaches to engage with topics of embodiment, tempo and affect. By analyzing social interactions and talk about tattoos in a tattoo shop in South Africa, Peck and Stroud (2020) extend linguistic landscapes to “skinscapes” and show how linguistic landscapes can also be understood as mobile discourses carried by bodies, thus contributing to topics surrounding identity and materiality. In another vein, Niedt (2020) calls for semiotic approaches that highlight abstract qualities of spaces. By attending to the affective and temporal dimensions of an Italian-American festival in South Philadelphia, in which the Hispanic population is growing, Niedt (2020) discusses how these two dimensions of space influence the residents' construction of identity. Following this interest in bodies and in abstract qualities of space, this study takes a discursive and semiotic approach to analyze how the multiple discursive constructions of the street highlight particular qualities of the space, which in turn get projected onto the bodies that traverse this space.

Many linguistic landscape studies analyze code choice or describe language use in multilingual urban contexts. Instead of analyzing code choice in public signage, however, I take a discursive

and semiotic approach to linguistic landscapes. In Puerto Rico, both English and Spanish are co-official languages and there are no major policies regarding language usage in signs. Spanish is the predominant language used on the island, and only 21.1% of the population claims to speak English (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). Although English use in Puerto Rico has been socially, culturally, and politically charged within social interactions, increased circular migration to and from the United States in recent years (Duany 2002; 2000) has diversified each language's indexical meanings (Mazak 2012; Rosado 2012). Although an analysis of code choice in signs and their complex meanings could be generative, it goes beyond the scope of this research and could be explored in future studies as more data is gathered from interviews and social interactions. Instead, I am concerned with the political economic and ideological dimensions of the street, and by taking on a discursive and semiotic approach I attend to ideologies that underlie the multiple discursive constructions of Calle Loíza and how they engender different subjectivities.

### *Language Ideologies*

The emplacement of linguistic signs are always already metadiscursive, ideological acts (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). I draw from the large body of work in linguistic anthropology on language ideologies (Gal and Irvine 2019; Kroskrity 2000; Schiefflin, Woolard & Kroskrity 1998) and semiotics (Gal and Irvine 2019; Keane 2003) in order to understand the ideologies that underlie and shape Calle Loíza's semiotic and linguistic landscape. Silverstein (1979) brings attention to the ways in which people's language use are coarticulated with beliefs about how language should be used within a context. He defines linguistic ideologies as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (193). For instance, the belief that one nation speaks one language is a nationalist language ideology that justifies the usage of one language over another within a political space, creating a

homogenized notion of a nation. In further elaboration, Irvine (1989) highlights the importance of the political economic and cultural dimensions of language use and defines language ideologies as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (255). Pointing to the social and material consequences of language use, this view allows researchers to think further about how language use is charged with cultural, social, and political interests across different contexts, and can be used to establish particular social relationships. Thus, in thinking about how messages are linked to wider sociocultural processes, a language ideological approach provides ways to analyze how Calle Loíza’s linguistic and semiotic landscape is shaped by a wider political economic framework. As such, the concept of ideology enables anthropologists to “relate the microculture of communicative action to the political economic considerations of power and social inequality...and to connect discourse with lived experiences” (Woolard 1998, 27).

Language ideologies thus bridge the micro sociocultural world to the wider political economic forces, as they emphasize speakers’ ideas about language and discourse, and how these articulate with the wider sociocultural context (Kroskrity 2000). In line with this research, my study attends to how notions of progress under the current political economy become articulated in Calle Loíza’s semiotic landscape. Nonetheless, as pointed out above, linguistic and semiotic landscapes are dynamic, complex, and disorganized; thus Calle Loíza’s discursive construction as a site of progress is not to be met without any contestation. Recent lines of inquiry of language ideologies emphasize “the social positioning, partiality, and contestability of practical and discursive ideologies, as well as the way they reflexively (re)shape linguistic and social structures” (Gal & Woolard 2001, 130). As such, my study not only attends to discourses that construct Calle Loíza as a site of progress, but also to the discourses that challenge or contest this idea.

Beyond language, however, language ideologies are closely tied to “semiotic properties that provide insights into the workings of ideologies more generally” (Gal 2005, 24). Expanding on this concept, Keane (2003) uses semiotic ideologies to refer to the ideologies that mediate and rationalize representational economies, or “the dynamic interconnections among different modes at play within a particular historical and social formation” (410). Following this notion of representational economies, I will not only look at how linguistic signs form part of making meaning in public space, but also to how other visual, material objects (artworks, built environment, bodies, objects) combine in ways that portray different meanings of Calle Loíza. Thus, the notions of semiotic and language ideologies allows me to analyze both the ideological and political economic dimensions of the street.

### *Publics*

Publics is another conceptual tool that allows to think about how different subjectivities are invoked within a semiotic landscape, and furthers understandings of the relationships between language, political economy, and ideology. Works on publics are concerned with how different images of linguistic phenomena gain social legitimacy and political influence, and the role of linguistic ideology and practices in the making of political authority. Publics relies on the imagination of groups or subjectivities, which occurs through “the possibility of decontextualization and strategic recontextualization of linguistic voices and genres to create images of continuity and discontinuity with times, places, and people not present in the immediate interaction” (Gal and Woolard 1995, 135). Expanding on the idea of imagined communities, Warner (2002) suggests that publics are large, imagined, social groupings produced through linguistic representations, and form an essential part of the social landscape and in creating the social world. They “come into being only in relation to texts and their circulation” and exist by

being addressed and independently from state institutions (Warner 2002, 50). The formation of publics concerns the formation of groups, and using the literature on publics helps to understand how groups of strangers can come to see themselves as belonging to a particular neighborhood, nation, or non-dominant culture, as in Calle Loíza.

A number of scholars have contributed to the study of language ideologies and political economy (Irvine 1989; Heller 2010; Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012). Studies on language ideologies and political economy have blurred the distinctions between the symbolic and the material, and more broadly “have advanced conversations about formations of nationalism, processes of modernity, and inequalities of gender, class, race, and ethnicity” (Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012, 357). They have highlighted how late capitalism commodifies languages in various ways, and how ways of speaking not only gain economic value, but also how specific uses of language gain value (Heller 2010; Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012). Especially in contexts of tourism, Heller (2010) states that ideologies of language identity and culture have contributed to the commodification of authenticity. According to this author, the work that needs to be done under this political economy should focus more on ways that forms of empire are being legitimized and how new subjectivities are being constructed, and tourism is one of the key contexts under which to address these questions. In light of this, the political economy of Calle Loíza and the use of language in its linguistic landscape contributes to conversations about what is valued in the current political economy.

In order to think more broadly about how linguistic and semiotic landscapes shape or are shaped by the political economy, this study aims to understand the processes that inform multiple (and contesting) ideological interpretations of Calle Loíza. With this approach, this study hopes to contribute to ongoing conversations on semiotic landscapes, language, and political economy.



## Discussion

### *Calle Loíza's Aesthetics of Creativity*

“If you’re staying at a hotel on the beach, you can walk out the door and really walk the streets of Puerto Rico, walk the street of Calle Loíza”, says Lin Manuel Miranda (a renowned Puerto Rican playwright) on a video posted by Discover Puerto Rico. Strolling down the street, attention easily turns to the crowded restaurants and coffee shops, perhaps overhearing people’s conversations over coffee or beer, and music playing in each locale. These vibrant spaces interact with the abandoned structures beside them, covered by colorful walls decorated with graffiti and urban art (see figure 1).



Figure 1. Calle Loíza's colorful environment (photo taken by this author, 2020).

As described on the official tourism webpage, “what began as a beautification of old and abandoned buildings has turned Santurce into Puerto Rico’s own version of the Wynwood Arts District in Miami” (Discover Puerto Rico, n.d.). Santurce is imagined as the “artistic heartbeat” of

Puerto Rico. In turn, Calle Loíza is fractally recursed as the center of Santurce. Filed under points of interest, Discover Puerto Rico presents Calle Loíza as:

“an emblematic area in the heart of Santurce. The neighborhood is a creative and musical space, rich in culture and history. It is no accident that many great artists like Ismael Rivera grew up in these streets! In recent years, Calle Loíza has become a trendy spot where new businesses are flourishing, making it a popular place for people to hang out. The area is filled with local restaurants, bars, and boutiques”<sup>6</sup>.

What is it about Calle Loíza that makes it creative and musical? Lin Manuel further says that on the street, you’ll see “rap performances happening next to *bomba y plena* which is one of our oldest musical art forms”, and PJ Sin Suela (a Puerto Rican rapper) reiterates Calle Loíza’s musicality by emphasizing that “there’s typical music from hip hop to *bomba y plena*, there’s places that are playing jazz, there’s places that are playing reggaetón, you can find whatever you like” (Discover Puerto Rico, n.d.). Instead of the usual “tropicalization” (Thompson 2006) of the Caribbean, or the strategic branding of the region as a tropical paradise (Feldman 2011), there is a focus here on reorganizing working-class urban areas as artistic and cultural attractions. Indeed, “Puerto Rico itself is, in fact, a huge museum” (Discover Puerto Rico, n.d.). Strolling further down the street, particular images on buildings solicit your gaze (See figures 2 and 3).

---

<sup>6</sup> See list of references for more information: Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “Calle Loíza”.



Figure 2. “Puerto Rico is a museum”. (photo taken by this author, 2020).

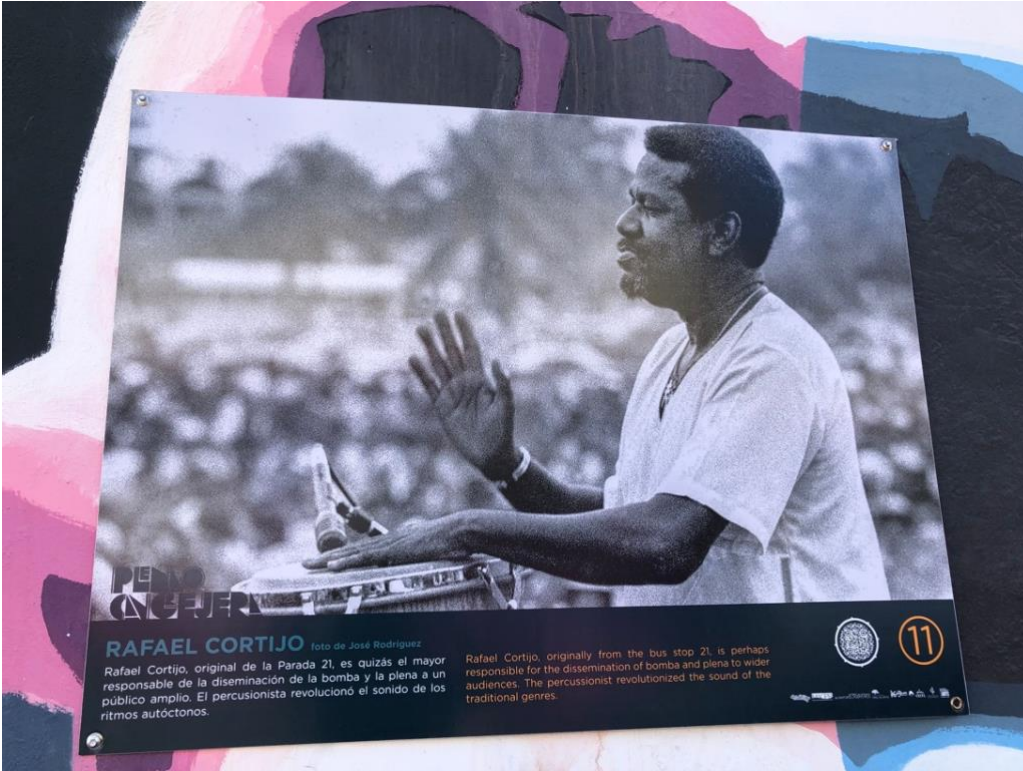


Figure 3. Rafael Cortijo, *plenero*. (photo taken by this author, 2020).

Looking closer, you can appreciate the images of musicians playing *plena* (Afro- Puerto Rican musical genre) as well as their corresponding descriptions. These museum texts are part of a multidisciplinary street exhibition that includes the texts, images, online website, and a podcast created by La Calle Loíza Inc.<sup>7</sup> in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art of Puerto Rico. Each text contains photos of musicians, their biographies, and elaborated descriptions of their musical contributions to *plena*, and they also have a bar code that automatically leads you to their online website called *Plena Cangrejera* (Santurcean *plena*). This project, the *Plena Cangrejera* website explains, is a “tribute to the sound of *plena*, traditional music of San Mateo de Cangrejos” (Santurce). As scholars have pointed out, the increasing inclusion of culture and arts serve as anchors in neoliberal urban development policies to reshape spaces, as they depend on symbolic economies of spectacle, consumerism, heritage, branding, and place-based industries, such as tourism (Zukin 1998; Dávila 2012; Tegtmeier 2015).

The *Plena Cangrejera* texts are also animated by *pleneros* and local guides who lead crowds in occasional Calle Loíza *recorridos* (tours); they are photographic events as they always have the potential of being photographed by any passerby (Azoulay 2010); they are reproduced on online digital spaces; they cite musicians’ words taken from podcasts linked to the project’s website; and thus have infinite possibilities for continuous circulation, expanding Calle Loíza’s publics. In a way, *plena* is decontextualized from the musical performances across Santurce, and recontextualized (Ochs 1992) into a street exhibition in Calle Loíza. Informative as they are, the *Plena Cangrejera* museum texts thus render intangible culture legible for wider publics, repackaging Calle Loíza’s identity and history for visual and cultural attraction.

---

<sup>7</sup> La Calle Loíza Inc. describes itself as a non-profit creative company dedicated to produce cultural content and events.

Forming part of the linguistic landscape and playing an important role in (re)shaping interpretations of Calle Loíza, publics “come into being only in relation to texts and their circulation” and exist by being addressed and independently from state institutions (Warner 2002, 50). In this sense, anyone who comes into range in Calle Loíza forms part of the public imagined by the texts (Warner 2002). By coming into relation with *the* public of Calle Loíza, the museum texts simultaneously interweave various publics. The last museum text tells a story of Calle Loíza’s transformation:

“It was 2015 and the barrio was already going through drastic changes, many neighbors were displaced due to the rising prices, but many investors arrived because the prices weren’t that high at all. There was an impressive revitalization of small local businesses, good for the economy, but that don’t necessarily include the people that for decades already inhabited that space. Us, who live on this street, wanted to create that space of which we could all be a part of”<sup>8</sup>.

While *los vecinos* (neighbors) or *los del barrio* (those from the neighborhood) are the primordial publics invoked in most of the texts, the publics of *locales* (locals), *inversionistas* (investors), and *visitantes* (visitors) are also invoked on the last text’s online version. In one of their podcasts, Roberto Cipreni states: “We formalized an instrument to fight for social justice. I want to emphasize that. There’s people who don’t understand that, that this was a group we started for a struggle for social justice<sup>9</sup>.” Cipreni’s discourse invokes a counterpublic of a “we”, as in, the *pleneros*, or those from *el barrio* who share the experience of growing up in Santurce. By citing his words, this museum text brings Cipreni’s pre-existing “we” into circulation and interaction with the other publics invoked on the texts: investors, visitors, and locals from outside *el barrio*.

---

<sup>8</sup> See references for more information: Plena Cangrejera. n.d. “La Junta.

<sup>9</sup> See References for more information: Tito Matos, 2020.

Since publics are imagined sovereign entities, *Plena Cangrejera's* project to render *los del barrio* and *los vecinos* visible could also be understood as a medium to (paradoxically) negotiate some degree of sovereignty and authorship over the street and the histories that shape that space.

The museum texts form part of the interdiscursive web that makes up Calle Loíza's semiotic landscape, aligning with discourses that reorganize Calle Loíza as a creative and musical space, such as with Discover Puerto Rico's (n.d.) description of the street:

“Calle Loíza is one of San Juan's most artistic, visually enticing and stimulating streets. With its local vibe, authentic restaurants, and all types of music in every corner, discovering Puerto Rico and its vibrant soul has never been more exhilarating.”

Discourses emphasizing Calle Loíza's creativity, artistic and cultural dimensions presuppose publics that seek such or similar qualities. Accordingly, TripAdvisor also highlight Calle Loíza's creative and artistic dimensions by describing the street as a “bona fide art scene in the neighborhood of Santurce, and with it, a vibrant area renewal” (TripAdvisor, n.d.). Most reviewers on TripAdvisor summarize Calle Loíza as an “upcoming area”, “vibrant”, “hipster street” and filled with “hip and cool places to eat and hang out”. One reviewer left a comment saying it's “the best place to come visit and enjoy its mural and art scene” (comment on TripAdvisor n.d.).

The tourism industry relies heavily on the production and consumption of a social experience (Urry 2003). The Foundation for Puerto Rico, a highly influential think-tank that has lobbied for Santurce's revitalization and encourages legislations that foster a visiting economy, views “tourism as a basis of economic development, and seeks to move beyond traditional forms of tourism – hotel and beach attractions – to include medical, cultural, culinary, and educational tourism” (Villanueva et al. 2018, 1425). Lin Manuel echoes this view of tourism: “a lot of people

when they think about tourism they think big chain hotels a resort like the *piña colada* and that's it but I mean there's real amazing experiences to be out here in Calle Loíza and you can go out every night" (Discover Puerto Rico, n.d.). Thus, diverting away from a seemingly "traditional" tropical touristic experience in Puerto Rico, Calle Loíza offers a chance at a "real" experience. In a broader sense, whereas the *piña colada* or big-chain hotels may index tropicality and leisure (Thompson 2006), the consumption of Calle Loíza's creativity, and its artistic and cultural dimension seems to index authenticity, as it is a "real" experience. As has been shown, current developments tend to appeal to local authenticity to provide alternatives for consumption different than the standardized experiences (Dávila 2012). In a similar vein, a reviewer on TripAdvisor noted that Calle Loíza is

"The best in Santurce! Calle Loiza is the place where you feel at home in Santurce Puerto Rico. An authentic Puerto Rican community, with the best urban beach in the world, the finest Puertorican restaurants with authentic cuisine". (comment on TripAdvisor, n.d.).

Such interpretations of Calle Loíza do not circulate only among visitors outside the island, however. As I waited for breakfast at Café D'Luna in Calle Loíza once, a man enthusiastically told me that he had come all the way from Mayagüez (west coast of the island) to visit Calle Loíza. When I asked what brought him to that street particularly, he said he liked how it has changed, as it has become safer, more colorful and artistic; he also wanted to explore its new restaurants. The emphasis on Calle Loíza's creative and artistic qualities presupposes publics that seek to embody those qualities: "the qualities of things consumed enter into certain qualities of subjectivity...As embodied subjectivity they mediate future possibilities" (Keane 2003, 218). Why is creativity, however, the major quality highlighted about Calle Loíza? Why not, say, its history as a neighborhood in which immigrants from the neighboring islands converge with residents?

The condition of uncertainty characterizes the current historical neoliberal framework, due to its changing employment rates, financial crisis, and increasing privatization of essential services. Consequently, subjects are increasingly required to be flexible and capable of imagining and realizing futures that exceed constraints. This kind of ‘neoliberal agency’ (Wilf 2015) brings forth the value of creativity and uniqueness as a result of a need to fashion futurities in ambiguous and uncertain situations (Wilf 2011). Calle Loíza is often described on the tourism websites as a *flourishing* site, undergoing *renewal*, suggesting that it has exceeded some degree of limitations. As such, Calle Loíza has been interpreted by some as a creative site, signified by its vibrant, artistic, and musical qualities that index revitalization and uniqueness. Within this particular historical moment, subjectivity is characterized by a semiotic ideology in which the subject’s interiority, or authenticity, is preceded by material manifestation (rather than assumed to exist prior to its materialization) (Wilf 2011). Thus, the subject embraces the materiality of semiotic forms in order to ‘discover’, articulate, and simultaneously create his or her interiority (Wilf 2011; 2013; 2015). Hence, by bearing the valued, desirable qualities of creativity under the neoliberal framework, Calle Loíza becomes a possibility in which subjects are able to materialize their own creative agency, self-expression, and uniqueness, by consuming and forming part of Calle Loíza’s semiotic landscape.

One way people can consume such semiotic qualities in Calle Loíza is through the consumption of food. Calle Loíza is considered a gastronomic site, offering creative and diverse culinary products. As stated on the Discover Puerto Rico webpage:

“Over the last few years this former Dominican neighborhood has undergone a process of transformation into one of the top gastronomic destinations of San Juan. What makes it stand out is its sheer diversity and abundance of cuisines and styles of restaurant, spanning



form classic Puerto Rican comida criolla to an authentic Mexican taqueria to Korean BBQ to creative mac and cheese and much more<sup>10</sup>.”

As noted above, Calle Loíza’s quality of creativity is not only limited to the street’s generation of artists and musicians, but also becomes articulated in its culinary scene with its “sheer diversity and abundance of cuisines and styles of restaurant”. Restaurants thus form part of the street’s aesthetics of creativity. If you walk down from the western part of the street, one of the restaurants that easily comes into view is Sabrina’s Brunch and Bistro bar. Its walls are decorated with murals of tropical plants and flowers, painted by a Puerto Rican artist who goes by the name 2blene. Inspired by Audrey Hepburn film, the name “Sabrina” appears in a pink neon sign, accompanying these pink tropical flowers that decorate the chic restaurant. With these aesthetics and colorful mural indexing tropicality, Sabrina informs the discursive construction of Calle Loíza as an “artsy” and “vibrant” space. Known for its live music performances and for staying open past midnight on *Jueves de Sabrina* (Sabrina’s Thursdays), Sabrina’s Brunch and Bistro bar is mainly reviewed on Facebook as stylish, chic, and romantic, and customers highlight its atmosphere, originality, hip and creative cuisine that “mixes the tropical with the classy”. Embodying creativity and originality, Sabrina seems to offer authentic, non-standard experiences of consumption.

A few steps further down the street, a restaurant with a swing in between two murals of the Puerto Rican and Dominican flags stands out. Ana’s Café is a restaurant that sells typical Puerto Rican *comida criolla* (local food). Throughout the restaurant’s Facebook page, they post mostly photos and videos of employees and customers dining, swinging between the flags, or celebrating a birthday or a small event in their space. Ana’s Café posts about small, intimate celebrations (whether it be a birthday, or celebrating tourists’ visit to their restaurant), thereby portraying the

---

<sup>10</sup> See list of references for more information: Discover Puerto Rico, n.d. “Where to eat in Calle Loíza”.

space as amusing, interactive, and festive, prioritizing a cultural experience over a gastronomic experience. Given the display of the Puerto Rican and Dominican flags, it could be said that Ana's Café presupposes publics that seek local, cultural experiences. This restaurant thus forms part of a visual thematic coherence that informs notions of Calle Loíza as an authentic Puerto Rican community, as described further above. On the other hand, the Si No Corro Me Pisa Italian restaurant prioritizes a gastronomic experience and specializes on Italian food and artisanal pizzas. As stated on their Facebook webpage: "from the start to the end its all an artisan gastronomic experience". Customers highlight the restaurant's authentic pizza combinations and use of local fresh products, and more generally highlight it as stylish, creative, hip, romantic, and chic. Throughout their Facebook page, they mostly promote their dishes, such as the pizza Loíza (topped with sweet plantains) and pizza Calle Loíza (topped with pork and plantains), both containing typical Puerto Rican foods. This restaurant thus offers a distinctive culinary experience through their unique dishes. As seen until now, each restaurant toggles between creating a sense of distinction to stand out between its surrounding environment, while simultaneously creating a sense of belonging. Sabrina's Brunch and Bistro bar has its distinctive vibe that mixes the "tropical with the classy" offering a creative, non-standard experience in Calle Loíza, Ana's Café offers cultural experiences, and Si No Corro Me Pisa offers mainly a gastronomic experience. While these three restaurants make use of semiotic resources to make each space distinctive, they all engage with local Puerto Rican dishes thereby maintaining a sense of coherence within Calle Loíza, contributing to a sense of belonging with a wider group. Similarly, Areyto offers "local and international dishes with a creative twist", as stated on their Facebook page, thus embodying qualities of creativity. Celebrating its creative cuisine, their customers' reviews revolve around the notions of innovative and ingenious food and drinks and "*comida del más allá*" (food from

beyond), which constitute a “unique experience” in a “modern and fun environment with a first-class service”. The restaurant itself promotes the place as “the best experience of Calle Loíza” and that “creates moments that last a lifetime!”. Calle Loíza’s foregrounding of creativity reinforces the fact that brand discourses tend highlight social qualities rather than material ones to animate the brand as a social being in its own right (Manning 2010).

In this way, by exceeding the constraints of standardized experiences and offering, instead, distinctive experiences for consumption, these restaurants form part of the creative aesthetics of the street, contributing to the branding of Calle Loíza as a successful revitalized site and cultural and gastronomic zone of San Juan.

#### *“Safe” Urban Spaces*

In a somewhat different vein, however, another dimension customers highlight throughout the restaurant reviews are notions safety and familiarity. A number of them highlight experiences in which “they [restaurant employees] made us feel like family!” and felt it is a “very safely” and “welcoming ambience”. Most reviewers of Anas Café, particularly, noted that the place is “all love”, “treats customers as part of the family”, and is regarded a “familial place”. One user left a review saying: “First time here in Puerto Rico and stumble upon this place and LOVED IT. Great customer service and we felt like a part of the family. Definitely would recommend this place” (comment on Ana’s Café Facebook Page). This view aligns with one of the comments from TripAdvisor above: “Calle Loíza is the place where you feel at home in Santurce Puerto Rico”.

Urban redevelopment projects focus on visual attractions (restaurants, museums, art), and as such entail an aesthetic demand for visual coherence, to be institutionalized in coherent consumption spaces (coffee shops, bars, murals) that constitute urban lifestyles (Zukin 1998). As scholarship has shown, Disney World’s consumption regime is a creation of a safe, clean, public

space where strangers can feel a sense of familiarity with each other; this accomplishment inspired urban redevelopment projects to “Disneyfy” urban spaces by sponsoring festivals and selling the experience of pleasure in spaces that are aesthetically coherent (by branding and themed entertainment) and physically controlled (Zukin 1997, 832). This sense of safety and familiarity is essential for tourist sites (Thompson 2006). Whereas Calle Loíza was once a “dangerous” place, it is now being rendered visually coherent for outside (i.e. non-resident) consumers through the standardization of consumption spaces such as the emerging upscale restaurants bearing desirable creative qualities and experiences for consumption.

In sum, the museum texts, Discover Puerto Rico’s website, restaurant Facebook pages and reviews all entextualize Calle Loíza’s history and singularity as an object of creativity (Wilf 2011). Moreover, these processes of singularization of objects of creativity are accomplished by constructing such objects as having an indexical iconic relation to individuals, both bearing qualities of creativity (Wilf 2013). Accordingly, the discourses describing Calle Loíza as creative and artistic also highlight the fact that those who inhabit the space embody similar qualities: “[Calle Loíza has] always been very musical and many artists lived around here and still do so it is a mixed neighborhood with commerce and residents” (Discover Puerto Rico, n.d.). Thus, “it is no accident that many great artists like Ismael Rivera grew in these streets!” (Discover Puerto Rico, n.d.). Calle Loíza and the social personae linked to the street, including artists, hipsters, and musicians, are therefore recognized as bearers of creativity, thereby acquiring their value. These discourses can be seen as interlinked and forming part of a speech chain that enregisters (Agha 2003) Calle Loíza as a socially recognized form of urban development, indexed by the presence of art, music, food, and hipsters (as they were mentioned throughout the reviews). The enregisterment of Calle Loíza as a legally recognized cultural and gastronomic zone of San Juan

(LexJuris Puerto Rico, 2018) further highlights its singularity and uniqueness within Santurce. Thus, Calle Loíza's creative, artistic, and safety dimensions are used as strategies for urban branding and development. Its interpretation as a revitalized area is summed up as:

“Great, very pedestrian-friendly neighborhood full of gastropub offerings! Steps to the beach and full of locally-owned restaurants, cafes, bars, vintage shops, and a variety of other stores, the vibrant Calle Loiza neighborhood is San Juan's hottest hipster zone, with some of the most innovative pubs and restaurants in the city. A must visit area, before the ongoing gentrification destroys its local flair.” (Ivette L., March 19, 2017, comment on TripAdvisor).

Although Calle Loíza's singularity is well-established, as it is “San Juan's hottest hipster zone” and a “must visit area” as described above, however, it is also compared to other urban areas that have undergone similar revitalization efforts (such as Wynwood, Miami). According to Nakassis (2012), brands are classifications that “reckon the sameness of and difference between commodities and their associated accoutrement” (627). Moving between sameness (as a successful revitalized area) and difference (distinct from other instances), Calle Loíza is thus a citation of economic progress: “the general form for citation simply requires that some act be construable as a reiteration of some other act” (Nakassis 2012, 627). The comment seems to capture this paradox, as it recognizes the street's uniqueness (“local flair”) that is under risk of disappearing under the standardized process of urban revitalization, “A must visit area, before the ongoing gentrification destroys its local flair”. From being “a former Dominican neighborhood”, Calle Loíza has been revitalized through beautification of abandoned buildings and emergence of restaurants (Discover Puerto Rico). With an emphasis on creative dimensions, interpretations of Calle Loíza as a successful revitalized area are thus underlain by a neoliberal ideology that renders it an object of

creativity, bearing the ability to realize futures that exceed constraints. As such, Calle Loíza is a citation of the standardized idea of successful urban revitalization projects, indexed by qualities of creativity.

*Calle Loíza: A Site of Ideological Contestation*

On another hand, La Calle Loíza's Facebook page users don't necessarily highlight the street's creativity and lively dimensions as markers of economic development. Instead, for instance, a user comments:

“brothels, bars, ‘liquor stores’, ‘loan sharking’, drugs on sale, gambling machines, financial speculation, unscrupulous sales like these ones are economic and financial development.

Is this good?” (comment on La Calle Loíza Inc, 2019).

Similarly, another user highlights: “only 3 or 4 profit from the money, and the community is covered in trash, filled with drunks peeing everything, violent and dangerous, with annoying noises until any hour, and now we add an ingredient of light pollution” (comment on La Calle Loíza Inc. 2019). Calle Loíza's branding as a successful revitalized area involves an erasure of alternative interpretations. Previous scholarship has shown that tourism has been used to mask urban crises and create an image that serves to envision a better future for a city, but when oriented primarily to maximize profit, it exacerbates the living conditions of residents (Tegtemeyer 2015; Baver 2012). Gesturing towards worsening living conditions, a number of comments in La Calle Loíza's Facebook page challenge the notion of the street as a successful revitalized area:

“the neighbors are clearly suffering the consequences of an unmeasured and unscrupulous growth. It's not the same three bars in a zone, than the twenty and counting that are right now, it's as if 20 people moved to a house with one room. Enough of playing with our health, dignity and safety!” (comment on La Calle Loíza Inc. 2019).

While emerging restaurants and bars index economic progress for some, others emphasize they increase tensions: “incidents continue to increase since Emoji [a club] opened”; similarly, others highlight the need to close them down: “they should take out Rumors and Barrio [both bar-clubs]”. While some reviewers feel safe and at home at Calle Loíza, others note that “the neighboring character [of the street] is getting lost” and see it as becoming dangerous and violent. Particularly, some users invoke the publics of traditional residents, and highlight the feeling of danger that increases as different publics are drawn into the area:

“Already starting with the frontal attack against the community of Calle Loíza. Could it be part of the plan to displace the traditional residents of the street? They don’t want community. That’s what’s happening. What they pretend is a Disn[e]y of *mala muerte*<sup>11</sup>, with a lot, a lot of alcohol. A lot of noise until late at night and a lot of, but a lot of alcohol. They are some UNDESIRABLES, some HATERS of the poor. A disgrace for the country. Damn money!” (comment on La Calle Loíza Inc.).

Contrary to how restaurant reviewers highlight a sense of belonging and safety in restaurants, which requires a visual thematic coherence according to Zukin (1998), this comment points to the obstruction of the longer-standing meaning of Calle Loíza as a residential site. The presence of new publics coming into the street disrupts the coherence and stable meaning of the street as a community and residential area: “Could it be part of the plan to displace the traditional residents of the street?”. For this particular user, this disruption of the street’s coherence and meaning as a residential site, then is translated into “noise” and “a lot of, but a lot of alcohol”.

---

<sup>11</sup> *Mala muerte* is a local expression usually used to describe places that seem deteriorated and are associated with high crime rates.



Figure 4. “A lot, a lot of alcohol” (photo taken by this author, 2020)

Most users comment on the decreasing quality of life for Calle Loíza’s neighbors and residents, and point to the lack of cooperation between new business owners and the community. As one user succinctly commented: “what is happening in Calle Loíza is looting disguised as economic development” (comment on La Calle Loíza Inc, 2019). Evidently, subjects’ different degrees of accessibility to or immersion within different frameworks of knowledge, coupled with their positioning in the political economic structure, generate multiple, contrasting perceptions of Calle Loíza. Contrary to how restaurant reviewers and tourist webpages highlight the street’s vibrancy and creative qualities, the users on La Calle Loíza Facebook page highlight the presence of alcohol, drunks, danger, noise, and marginalization of the poor. Each of these interpretations is informed by partial frameworks of knowledge and experiences, and one could say that discursive constructions of Calle Loíza involve identity work. With each articulation, subjects situate themselves within a particular group that shares similar frameworks of knowledge, or particular



experiences. In this sense, discursive constructions of Calle Loíza could also be understood as ways of aligning the self with a particular notion, thereby creating sense of belonging with a wider group. Those who highlight the street's safety and authenticity can be said to create a degree of a sense of belonging with the locals (if they're tourists), and those who highlight the street's creativity can be seen as creating a sense of belonging to the street's futurity, or progress (if they're non-resident locals). On the other hand, articulations of Calle Loíza as a site of degeneration can be understood as a way of disassociating oneself from the new publics on the street, and therefore invoke alternative experience of Calle Loíza to create (or maintain) a sense of belonging with the residential community. As such, semiotic landscapes are governed by a complex, dynamic social fabric that generates not just multiple, contrasting discourses about space, but also complex subjectivities.

Thus, by highlighting characteristics of categories of people, events, qualities, and actions, these discourses “typify” (Gal and Irvine 2019) Calle Loíza either as a successful central urban area, or a marginalized site. Essential to such interpretations of Calle Loíza is how figures, or certain types of people, become associated with the differing meanings of the street. Goffman's (1979) notion of figure refers to an imagined being who is invoked in conversation, someone “who belongs to the world that is spoken about, not the world in which the speaking occurs” (19). Expanding on this notion, Agha (2003) introduces the term “characterological figure,” meaning social personae or imagined types of people associated with a semiotic display (e.g. speech).

On the one hand, the figure of the hipster is invoked throughout discourses that highlight Calle Loíza as a successful central urban area. For instance, as shown in a comment above, Calle Loíza is referred to as “San Juan's hottest hipster zone”. On TripAdvisor, other users commented that “this street is pretty hipster and artsy”, and that it's full of “straight out hipster minimarts”

(comments on TripAdvisor, n.d.). Similar to the yuppies (young professionals) characteristic of moving into urban spaces (Zukin 1998), in this context, hipsters can be described as young adults with a set of particular tastes and patterns of consumption, pertaining to the creative class, and who share an appreciation for mobility and discovering new modes of being.

On the other hand, however, it is not the figure of the hipster that is invoked in other discourses, but there seems to be a working of the figure of the drunk. Several users on the Calle Loíza Facebook page highlight that the street is filled with “drunks who pee on everything”, or with those who “consume drugs as if nothing” and stay up late “drinking and doing drugs” (comments on La Calle Loíza Inc, 2019). Both figures are closely associated to particular consumption patterns and practices, and according to some discourses, the “drunks” are presumed to be those who the emerging bars and restaurants are attracting to the street, leading to increased violent tensions among groups.

Noting these figures provides a way to not only talk about the groups that are imagined to inhabit this street, but also to think about how qualities of social personae become projected onto an entire space. One could say that, for instance, figures are signs that orient publics to either align with, or disassociate themselves from, their perceived qualities of the street through their consumption practices. As such, those drawn to Calle Loíza for its artistic qualities may attempt to align their self - to some degree - with the idea of a hipster, by consuming in particular places and engaging in creative activities. Along other lines, some may invoke the figure of the drunk to disassociate their selves from roles as consumers of the street, and to embody a critical stance against the notion of the street as a site of progress. To clarify, this is not to say that figures and people’s interpretations and consumption patterns on the street are mutually deterministic, but rather I use the concept of figures to point to how people can use discourses in ways that serve

their own interests in their crafting of the self and sense of belonging. It also points to how bodies combine to give meanings and value to space, bringing forth the essential role that bodies play in the shaping of semiotic landscapes.

Drawing from all the data gathered, the typification of Calle Loíza as a central successful urban site is organized by discourses that highlight: the figures of the hipster, the publics of the artists, the tourists, the locals and residents; the Calle Loíza Culinary Festival and Historic Tour events; creative, innovative, artsy, and vibrant qualities; and discovery, exploration, and walking. On another hand, the typification of Calle Loíza as a marginalized site is organized by discourses about: the figure of the drunk; events marked by illegality; dangerous, filthy, and noisy qualities; and callings to fight for and protect Calle Loíza.

These distinctions are assembled along the axes of differentiation of progress/degeneration. For instance, the sight of the numerous restaurants and bars opening up in Calle Loíza are taken as a sign of progress along one axis; and the sight of the clear lack of maintenance of the street is taken as a sign of degeneration along the other. The axes of differentiation are anchored by summarizing characterizations of Calle Loíza as a lively/deadly space: vibrant and creative qualities vs. unattractive qualities; safety vs. danger; cultural festivals vs. fatal shooting; and restaurant openings vs. the need to close them down. Sign relations are thus apprehended as part of a schema of contrast (i.e. progress/degeneration) that is indexed to characterize a scene (Gal and Irvine 2019, 124). In Calle Loíza's case, the instrumentalization of art and culture on the street's semiotic landscape (e.g. art murals, *Plena Cangrejera* museum texts, restaurants selling cultural experiences, hipsters) rhematize progress under the neoliberal political economic framework. Along the other axis, signs of lack of maintenance of the street (e.g. abandoned buildings, holes on the street, tilted and broken light posts, drunks) rhematize degeneration.

The dialogue between these different modes of signification, or representational economy (Keane 2003), are underlain by semiotic ideologies about how people handle and value material objects. On the one hand, Calle Loíza's interpretation as a successful site of revitalization is underlain by the (neoliberal) semiotic ideology of creativity discussed above, in which the material indexes of urban development (e.g. art murals, artists) are taken up as articulating the street's orientation towards progress, thereby deserving the descriptor as "flourishing" and "urban renewal". On the other hand, interpretations of Calle Loíza as a site of degeneration could be linked to a referential ideology.

The referential function of language was theorized by Jakobson (1960), who discusses six functions of language use: referential (oriented towards context); emotive (expresses the speaker's attitudes about topic of conversation); conative (imperative orientation towards addressee); phatic (messages aiming to prolong communication); metalingual (messages about language); and poetic (attention to form of message). Jakobson highlights that the referentialist function has become a dominant way of thinking what language is and does; that is, the dominant notion is that language exists to name things "out there in the world". Linguistic anthropologists have expanded on this insight to explain situations where language is used as a vehicle to stating truths and meanings that are stable across different contexts. For instance, Jane Hill (2008) makes use of the referential language ideology to talk about personalism, the idea that meanings of words are stable and determined by speaker's intentions. In this approach, she discusses how personalism underlies argumentative points surrounding racist discourse. In another vein, Carr (2010) studies how American addiction treatment centers measure their patients' progress by their ability to express their emotional states accurately, thus relying on the idea that a person's inner state exists prior to its linguistic articulation, rather than existing through linguistic articulation and interaction itself.

In other words, addiction treatments rely on the idea that language exists to articulate pre-existing phenomena, in this case, phenomena that lie within the human subject, such as truth, guilt, and shame.

Along similar lines, I suggest that discourses that view Calle Loíza as a site of degeneration are linked to a dimension of a referential ideology, because they point back to Calle Loíza's pre-existing (and ongoing - to an extent) condition as primarily a residential area, before the urban political economic policies impacted its semiotic landscape. From this view, Calle Loíza's meaning or interpretation as primarily residential area had remained stable throughout time, but this stability is currently disrupted by emerging restaurants and new groups of subjects traversing the street. Accordingly, discourses aligned with this view highlight and construe material signs such as trash, bars, lack of maintenance, and alcohol, as disrupting the street's long-standing condition as a residential area, thereby indexing degeneration.

In this context, a referentialist language ideology orients people to notice qualities that highlights the street's pre-existing condition and stable meaning as a residential area, in turn disrupting the branding of Calle Loíza as a cultural and gastronomic zone. For instance, on top of El Barrio Social Bar, an apartment balcony has the sign that reads "for respect, dignity, conviviality, justice, and peace, people live here" (see figure 5), thus obstructing the view of Calle Loíza as a site of consumption. Similarly, a mural painted on former public school known as La Goyco, reads: "People live here in Calle Loíza" (see figure 6). Addressing a visiting public (i.e. non-residents) and reminding it that people live there, these signs point back to Calle Loíza's pre-existing condition as a residential area.



Figure 5. “For respect, dignity, justice, and peace...” (photo taken by author, 2020)



Figure 6. *En la Calle Loíza vive gente*. People live here. (photo taken by this author, 2020).

As such, the signs on the street’s linguistic landscape that read “People Live in Calle Loíza” disrupt the visual thematic coherence of the street that indexes its progress: “the materiality of

signification...gives rise to and transforms modalities of action and subjectivity” (Keane 2003, 413). The signs of “En la Calle Loíza vive gente” are thus undergirded by a referential language ideology, as they point to Calle Loíza as a residential area.

Calle Loíza is thus a site of ideological contestation in which an array of subjects and subjectivities come together in a single, shared space. Interpretations of Calle Loíza as a site of progress are contested by views of the street as a site of degeneration; and pre-existing, stable meanings of Calle Loíza as primarily a residential area are disrupted by emerging meanings of the street as a popular site of consumption. These views, in turn, engender figures that index these meanings accordingly: hipsters (progress) and drunks (degeneration). As such, different publics (tourists, locals, residents) come together in Calle Loíza and in its interwoven online digital spaces to produce meanings through talk about perceived qualities and imaginary authorities embodied in the materiality of the street. Different ideologies construct alternate, even opposing realities (Gal 1998), and studying the ideologies that underlie multiple interpretations of Calle Loíza can lead to understandings of how people may view the same object or phenomena (e.g. an abandoned building, the opening of a bar) as an index of progress, and others, as an index of degeneration.

### Conclusion

Six years ago, I was walking from Ocean Park beach back to my car with a friend, when a White U.S. American man, seemingly in his thirties, approached us. Walking beside us with his bike, he asked us if we spoke English and if we were locals from San Juan. In a friendly manner, we responded “yes, why? Where are you from?”. I was actually thinking: *What brings someone from the U.S., to a small island like Puerto Rico?* He wanted recommendations for restaurants to eat nearby the beach, anywhere he could easily access by bike. Our first response was to visit any restaurant in Calle Loíza, as it was walking distance from the beach.

At that time, Calle Loíza was already becoming popular for its emerging trendy places for consumption, ranging from coffee shops, restaurants with vegan and vegetarian options, some with creative cuisine fusing different types of food. Santurce had already been a target of urban revitalization efforts, the impacts of which have been most salient in Calle Loíza. So naturally, Calle Loíza was the first place we thought about recommending. Much to my surprise, he was already well acquainted with the street as he had been living in Puerto Rico for two months. Curious to know more, I asked what brought him here, to which he responded he was about to open a Latin American-Asian fusion restaurant on that street. I thought, *of all places, why Puerto Rico?*

Fast forward to 2021, Puerto Rico has seen a quick rise in foreign investors moving to the island to open restaurants and small businesses as a result of the policies that provide tax incentives and new profit opportunities for American and foreign companies. In 2018 the U.S. Congress proclaimed 98% of Puerto Rico's land an "opportunity zone", which are low-income areas designated to be used for urban revitalization and development programs. As shown by numerous scholars, neoliberal policies tend to increase social inequality and differentiation while benefitting the upper-class (Ganti 2014, Dávila 2012; Harvey 2005). As the tourism industry and urban revitalization efforts continue to be facilitated and increase, then what implications do these policies hold at an island-wide level? The same way that I ask how is Calle Loíza simultaneously a site of progress and a site of degeneration, I wonder: is Puerto Rico a paradisiac Caribbean island, or a site of a worsening socioeconomic crisis? To use local expressions, is Puerto Rico the *isla del encanto* (island of enchantment), or the *isla del espanto* (island of terror)? As the island's economy increasingly relies on the tourism industry, spaces will



shift in response to these needs. In my future research on the topic, I would ask, what ideologies underlie such political economic policies and what are their material consequences?

Calle Loíza is a site of ideological contestation that is reflected in its semiotic landscape. The view of semiotic landscapes used in this study as the sets of discourses about a space (Shohamy and Waksman 2009), coupled with an analysis grounded in a political economic framework allowed me to trace the discourses that characterize Calle Loíza in multiple ways and attend to the semiotic ideologies that underlie its multiple interpretations. Semiotic landscapes thus offer a compelling way to study spaces as sites of ideological work and provide a way to understand how some material signs in space embody the multiple discourses that characterize or build social spaces. Such an approach would bridge the gap between the material and ideological worlds (Keane 2003; 2018) and speak to the “necessitating elaboration of the role of materiality and specificity in semiosis” (Chmielewska 2010, 276).

Originally, I intended to conduct ethnographic fieldwork (coupled with online digital analysis) in Calle Loíza for this study, but it was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, I turned to solely online digital spaces. Future ethnographic fieldwork could provide me with the opportunity to meet and speak with restaurant owners, employees, customers, and residents about their perceptions of the street and its transformation in the recent years, and how they have been affected by its changing social scene. It would provide more insight on further connections between people’s interpretations of the street and their positionality in the wider political economic structure. Thus, in my future ethnographic research I would further investigate questions about how material signs are taken up as shaping a space’s meanings, as well as issues surrounding subjectivity and group formation. Semiotic landscapes are a promising area for future research concerned with the material consequences of language in urban spaces.

## References

- Agha, Asif. 2003. "The social life of cultural value." *Language & communication* 23,(3-4): 231-273.
- Ana's Café. n.d. "Reviews". Accessed July 2020. [https://www.facebook.com/Anas-Café-Restaurant-578071052291537/reviews/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/Anas-Café-Restaurant-578071052291537/reviews/?ref=page_internal)
- Arbasetti, J. C. (2019, March 8). Puerto Rico with a Big "Menu" for Opportunity Zones. Retrieved from <http://periodismoinvestigativo.com/2019/03/puerto-rico-with-a-big-menu-for-opportunity-zones/>.
- Ardèvol, E., and Gómez-Cruz, E. 2012. Digital ethnography and media practices. Digital ethnography and media practices." *The international encyclopedia of media studies*: 498-518.
- Areyto. N.d. "Reviews". Accessed July 2020. [https://www.facebook.com/areytofoodtruck/reviews/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/areytofoodtruck/reviews/?ref=page_internal)
- Azoulay, A. 2010. What is a Photograph? What is Photography? *Philosophy of Photography*, 1(1)9-13.
- Baro, Gilles. 2020. "The semiotics of Heritage and Regeneration: Post-Apartheid Urban Development in Johannesburg". In *Reterritorializing Linguistic Landscapes: Questioning Boundaries and Opening Spaces*, edited by David Malinowski and Stefania Tufi, 216-235. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Baver, Sherrie. "Environmental struggles in paradise: Puerto Rican cases, Caribbean lessons." *Caribbean Studies* (2012): 15-35.

- Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy, Muhammad Hasan Amara, and Nira Trumper-Hecht. 2006. "Linguistic landscape as symbolic construction of the public space: The case of Israel." *International journal of multilingualism* 3(1): 7-30.
- Ben-Rafael, Eliezer. 2009. "A sociological approach to the study of linguistic landscapes." In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter, 40-54. New York: Routledge.
- Blommaert, Jan, and Ico Maly. 2014. "Ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis and social change." *Language and superdiversity*, 191-211.
- Blommaert, Jan, and Ico Maly. 2019. "Invisible lines in the online-offline linguistic landscape." *Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies*, 223.
- Carr, E. Summerson. 2010. *Scripting addiction: The politics of therapeutic talk and American sobriety*. Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Chmielewska, Ella. 2010. "Semiosis Takes place or radical uses of quaint theories". In *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, and Space*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow. A&C Black.
- Chríost Giolla, Darmait Mac. 2020. "Mind the Gap": Social Space in Linguistic Landscape Studies. In *Reterritorializing Linguistic Landscapes: Questioning Boundaries and Opening Spaces*, edited by David Malinowski and Stefania Tufi, 77-94. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Coulmas, Florian. 2009. "Linguistic Landscaping and the Seed of the Public Sphere". In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Shohamy and Durk Gorter, 13-24. New York: Routledge.
- Coupland, Nicholas. 2012. "Bilingualism on display: The framing of Welsh and English in

- Welsh public spaces.” *Language in Society*, 41(1): 1-27.
- David Gladstone, and Jolie Préau. 2008. Gentrification in tourist cities: Evidence from New Orleans before and after Hurricane Katrina, *Housing Policy Debate*, 19:1, 137-175, DOI:10.1080/10511482.2008.9521629
- Dávila, Arlene M. 2012. *Culture works: Space, value, and mobility across the neoliberal Americas*. NYU Press.
- Díaz, C.M. 2017. August 31. En la calle Loíza vive gente. Primera Hora. Retrieved from <http://www.primerahora.com/noticias/gobiernopolitica/nota/enlacalleloizavivegente1243303/>.
- Dieppa, Isabel S. July 27 2019. Vibrant Neigborhood or Tourist Magnet? Puerto Rico shows hidden cost of urban renewal. Accessed July 2019. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/travel/2019/07/26/vibrant-neighborhood-or-tourist-magnet-puerto-rico-shows-hidden-cost-of-urban-renewal.html>
- Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “A Street Art Tour of Santurce”. Accessed November, 2019. <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com/article/street-art-tour-santurce>
- Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “Calle Loíza”. Accessed November 2019. <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com/profile/calle-loiza/8741>
- Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “Explore Puerto Rico with Lin Manuel Miranda”. Accessed November, 2019. <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com/lin-manuel-miranda>
- Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “Exploring the Santurce Neighborhood”. Accessed November, 2019. <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com/article/exploring-santurce-neighborhood>
- Discover Puerto Rico. n.d. “Where to Eat in Calle Loíza”. Accessed

- November, 2019. <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com/article/where-to-eat-calle-loiza>
- Duany, J. 2000. "Nation on the move: The construction of cultural identities in Puerto Rico and the diaspora". *American Ethnologist*, 27(1), 5-30.
- Duany, J. 2002a. "Mobile Livelihoods: The sociocultural practices of circular migrants between Puerto Rico and the United states." *International Migration review*, 36(2), 355-388.
- Feldman, J. P. 2011. Producing and Consuming "Unspoilt" Tobago: Paradise Discourse and Cultural Tourism in the Caribbean. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 16(1), 41-66.
- Gal, Susan. 1998. "Multiplicity and Contention Among Language Ideologies: A Commentary". In *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, edited by Bambi Schieffelin, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, 317-330 New York, USA: Oxford University Press.
- Gal, Susan and Kathryn Woolard. 1995. "Constructing languages and publics (special issue)." *Pragmatics* 5(2).
- Gal, Susan, and Judith T. Irvine. 2019. *Signs of difference: Language and ideology in social life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gal, Susan. 2005. Language Ideologies Compared: Metaphors and Circulations of Public and Private. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15:23-37.
- Ganti, Tejaswini. 2014. "Neoliberalism." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43: 89-104.
- Goffman, Erving. 1979. Footing. *Semiotica*, 25: 1-29.
- Gonçalves, Kelly. 2019. "The Semiotic Paradox of Street Art: Gentrification and Commodification of Bushwick, Brooklyn." In *Making Sense of People And Place in Linguistic Landscapes*, edited by Amiena Peck, Christopher Stroud, and Quentin Williams, 141-158. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

- Gotham, K. F. 2007. (Re) branding the big easy: tourism rebuilding in post-Katrina New Orleans. *Urban Affairs Review*, 42(6), 823-850.
- Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Heller, M. (2010). The commodification of language. *Annual review of Anthropology*, 39, 101-114.
- Hill, Jane H. 2008. *The everyday language of white racism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hult, Francis M. 2014. "Drive-thru linguistic landscaping: Constructing a linguistically dominant place in a bilingual space." *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 18(5): 507-523.
- Irvine, Judith T. 1989. When Talk isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy. *American Ethnologist*, 16(2), 248–267. doi: 10.1525/ae.1989.16.2.02a00040.
- Jaffe, Alexandra. 2019. "Poeticizing the economy: The Corsican language in a nexus of pride and profit." *Multilingua*, 38(1): 9-27.
- Jakobson, Roman. 1960. "4.2 Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics". *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*(2014): 234.
- Jaworski, Adam and Crispin Thurlow. (Eds.). 2010. *Semiotic landscapes: Language, image, space*. A&C Black.
- Jones, Rodney H. 2010. "Cyberspace and Physical space: Attention Structures in Computer Mediated Communication." In *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, and Space*. Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow, eds. 151-167. London: A&C Black.
- Kallen, Jeffrey. 2009. "Tourism and representation in the Irish linguistic Landscape." In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter, 270-284. New York: Routledge.

- Keane, Webb. 2003. "Semiotics and the social analysis of material things." *Language & Communication* 23(3-4): 409-425.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. (ed.) 2000. *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.
- La Calle Loíza Inc. 2019. "Instalación de billboard gigante a la altura de la Jefferson". Facebook, October 27, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/lacalleloiza/posts/3214588968583471>.
- Landry, Rodrigue, and Richard Y. Bourhis. 1997. "Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study." *Journal of language and social psychology* 16(1): 23-49.
- Lanza, E. and Hirut Woldemariam. 2009. "Language Ideology and Linguistic Landscape: Language Policy and Globalization in a Regional Capital of Ethiopia". In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*. Shohamy and Durk Gorter, eds. 189-203. New York: Routledge.
- Leeman, Jennifer, and Gabriella Modan. 2009. "Commodified language in Chinatown: A contextualized approach to linguistic landscapes." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 13(3): 332-362.
- LexJuris Puerto Rico. 2018. "Ley Núm. 275 del año 2018". Accessed August 2020. <https://www.lexjuris.com/lexlex/Leyes2018/lexl2018275.htm>
- Lyons, Kate. 2019. "Let's get phygital: Seeing through the 'filtered' landscapes of Instagram." *Linguistic Landscape*, 5(2): 179-197.
- Manning, Paul. 2012. *Semiotics of drink and drinking*. A&C Black.
- Mazak, C. M. 2012. "My cousin talks bad like you: Relationships between language and identity in a rural Puerto Rican community". *Journal of language, identity, and education*, 11(1), 35-51.

- Mitchell, Thomas D. 2010. “‘A Latino Community Takes Hold’: Reproducing Semiotic Landscapes in Media discourse.” In *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, and Space*. Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow, eds. 168-186. London: A&C Black.
- Moriarty, Máiréad. 2014. “Contesting language ideologies in the linguistic landscape of an Irish tourist town.” *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 18(5): 464-477.
- Nakassis, Constantine V. 2012. “Brand, citationality, performativity.” *American Anthropologist* 114(4): 624-638.
- Niedt, Greg. 2020. “Tempo and affect in the Linguistic Landscape.” *Linguistic Landscape* 6(1): 80-103.
- Ochs, Eleanor. 1992. “14 Indexing gender.” *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon* 11(11): 335.
- Peck, Amiena, and Christopher Stroud. 2015. “Skinscapes.” *Linguistic Landscape* 1(1-2): 133-151.
- Plena Cangrejera. n.d. Accessed June, 2020. <https://plenacangrejera.com>
- Plena Cangrejera. n.d. “La Junta”. Accessed June, 2020. <http://plenacangrejera.com/la-junta/>.
- Rosado, B.L.D. 2012. Language and identity: The study of a possible ongoing change in attitudes towards American English and Puerto Rican Spanish in Puerto Rico. University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras.
- Sabrina’s Brunch and Bistro Bar. N.d. “Reviews”. Accessed July 2020. [https://www.facebook.com/sabrinabistro/reviews/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/sabrinabistro/reviews/?ref=page_internal)
- Schieffelin, Bambi, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity (eds.) 1998. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shankar, Shalini and Jillian R. Cavanaugh. 2012. Language and Materiality in Global



- Capitalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41:355-69.
- Shohamy Elana and Shoshi Waksman. 2009. "Linguistic Landscape as an Ecological Arena: Modalities, Meanings, Negotiations, Education." In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter, 313–331. New York: Routledge.
- Si no corro me pisa. N.d. "Reviews". Accessed July 2020.  
[https://www.facebook.com/sinocorromezpiza/reviews/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/sinocorromezpiza/reviews/?ref=page_internal)
- Silverstein, M. (1979). Language structure and linguistic ideology. *The elements: A parasession on linguistic units and levels*, 193-247.
- Tegtmeyer, Lina L. 2016. "Tourism aesthetics in ruinscapes: Bargaining cultural and monetary values of Detroit's negative image." *Tourist Studies* 16(4): 462-477.
- Tito Matos. 2020. *Plena Cangrejera*. Plena Cangrejera: Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo. Produced by La Maquina Insular. January 31, 2020. *Spotify*. Podcast. 33:19.  
<http://plenacangrejera.com/pleneros-de-la-23-abajo/>
- Thomas, L. L. 2009. "Roots Run Deep Here": The Construction of Black New Orleans in Post-Katrina Tourism Narratives. *American Quarterly*, 61(3), 749-768.
- Thompson, Krista A. 2006. *An eye for the tropics*. Duke University Press.
- TripAdvisor. [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g147320-d11740712-Reviews-Calle\\_Loiza-San\\_Juan\\_Puerto\\_Rico.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g147320-d11740712-Reviews-Calle_Loiza-San_Juan_Puerto_Rico.html)
- Urry, J. 2003. The 'consumption' of tourism. *The consumption reader*, 117-121.
- U.S. Census Bureau 2016.  
<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2019.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=puerto%20rico&t=Income%20and%20Poverty&g=0600000US7212779693&tid=ACSST5Y2019.S1701&hidePreview=true>.

Villanueva, Joaquín, Martín Cobián, and Félix Rodríguez. 2018. "San Juan, the Fragile City: Finance capital, class, and the making of Puerto Rico's economic crisis." *Antipode*, 50(5): 1415-1437.

Warner, Michael. 2002. "Publics and counterpublics." *Public culture*. 14(1) 49-90.

Wilf, Eitan. 2011. "Sincerity versus self-expression: modern creative agency and the materiality of semiotic forms." *Cultural Anthropology* 26(3): 462-484.

Wilf, Eitan. 2014a. "Semiotic dimensions of creativity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43(1): 397-412

Wilf, Eitan. 2015b. "The 'cool' organization man: incorporating uncertainty from jazz music into the business world." In *Modes of uncertainty: anthropological cases*, edited by Limor Samimian-Darash and Paul Rabinow, 29-45. University of Chicago Press.

Zukin, Sharon. 1998. "Urban lifestyles: diversity and standardisation in spaces of consumption." *Urban studies* 35(5-6): 825-839.