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Urban Tourism and Population Change: Gentrification in the Age of Mobilities

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Abstract
The pre-pandemic unbridled growth of tourism has triggered a significant debate regarding the future of cities; several authors suggest that neighbourhood change produced by tourism should be conceived as a form of gentrification. Yet research on population shifts – a fundamental dimension of gentrification – in such neighbourhoods is scarce. Our exploration of the *Gòtic* area in Barcelona, using quantitative and qualitative techniques, reveals a process of population restructuring characterised by a decrease of long-term residents and inhabited dwellings, and the arrival of young and transnational gentrifiers that are increasingly mobile and form a transient population. We then use some insights from the mobilities literature to make sense of these results. In the gentrification of the Gòtic, the attractiveness of the area for visitors and for a wider palette of transnational dwellers feed one another, resulting in an uneven negotiation whereby more wealthy and 'footloose' individuals gain access and control of space and housing over less mobile and more dependent populations.

Keywords: tourism, gentrification, transnational gentrifiers, population change, mobilities, lifestyle migration, Barcelona.

1. Introduction

Ever since the seminal article by Elizabeth Becker (2015), the international media has given substantial coverage to the excesses of tourism and their effects, especially in larger European cities and in some established destinations. Debate on 'overtourism' and rising 'anti-tourism' stances has been assessed in analytic and critical ways (Butler & Dodds, 2019; Colomb & Novy, 2016; Milano et al., 2018; Koens et al., 2018), therefore revamping the scholarly interest for social change in cities, with a new focus on the agency of tourism. In fact, one of the most remarkable features of the relentless growth of tourism activity in cities, at least until the COVID-19 pandemic, is the impacts this is having on local communities. These include the externalities noted by early studies of tourism development such as the rising cost of commodities and housing, occupation of public space, noise, and air pollution, among others. These impacts portend the exclusion and marginalisation of the most vulnerable collectives, as places are increasingly 'tuned' to the practices and affordabilities of visitors.

Against this background, there is an increased interest in linking tourism with the restructuring of social geographies, suggesting that it drives gentrification (Cocola-Gant, 2018; García-Herrera, Smith & Mejías-Vera, 2007; Gotham, 2005; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017; Janoschka, Sequera, & Salinas, 2014; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018). These authors focus on the role of the visitor economy (and in particular of the short-term hospitality platforms like Airbnb) and on processes of capital investment in widening rent gaps and causing the displacement of longstanding residents (Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2019; García-Herrera, Smith & Mejías-Vera, 2007; Gotham, 2005; Mendes 2018; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018; Yrigoy, 2019).

Despite the different forms, geographies and temporalities of the process, gentrification is by definition a process of population restructuring characterised by the displacement of existing populations and the arrival of newcomers with higher socio-economic status (Smith, 2002). In this sense, other authors note that the recent dynamics of tourist cities can hardly be framed as gentrification and suggest using the term *touristification* as a more accurate characterisation (Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2019; Sequera & Nofre, 2018 and 2019). These authors argue that tourism does cause the displacement of longstanding residents, but not social class upgrading, in the sense that an excessive growth of tourism is somehow incompatible with residential uses and therefore middle-class residents would not move into these areas. However, there is little empirical evidence to support this claim and to conclude what the tourism-led population restructuring of certain neighbourhoods looks like.

The aim of this paper is to fill this knowledge gap, which is conceptual, methodological and empirical. We do so through a case study of Barcelona, focusing on some of its neighbourhoods and in particular the *Barri Gòtic* (Gothic Quarter), possibly its core tourist attraction area. On the one hand, we pin down the sociodemographic patterns that characterise population restructuring at a neighbourhood level; on the other hand, we offer an interpretation of the observed attraction and displacement processes drawing from recent advances in the study of urban geography derived from the 'mobilities turn'. Our argument is that we need to move from the implicitly assumed distinction between residents and visitors to consider instead how the population restructuring of central areas in contemporary cities could be the result of an assemblage of emerging forms of temporary dwelling, among which tourism is a powerful driver. This paper further explores how transient mobile gentrifiers outcompete less mobile and more place-dependent populations in a negotiation over urban assets, ultimately leading to a process of population restructuring in which a local 'sedentary' population is replaced by floating transnational dwellers. Eventually, our objective is to characterise tourism-led

gentrification as a particular process of population change, in which the question of population mobility plays a key role beyond the usual class dimension; and to present a framework of analysis that may be useful to confront other cases.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we propose a discussion of how tourism may be linked to or induce certain sociodemographic dynamics at an area level, which we frame as peculiar avenues of gentrification. In the third section, we introduce our methodology and research design, based on a mixed-method approach with a fundamental focus on demographic data, complemented by in-depth interviews with residents offering further insights which help to interpret the findings from the demographic analysis. We also contextualise our research in the *Barri Gòtic* of Barcelona, an area significantly impacted by tourism, which features the highest rate of tourist beds per inhabitant across the city. In the fourth section, we illustrate our empirical findings, exploring population changes in the *Barri Gòtic* since the late 1990s to 2017, and comparing them to other gentrified neighbourhoods in Barcelona that do not experience comparable tourism-related pressures. Interviews further reveal why the agency of tourism mobilities is central to understanding the differences between these neighbourhoods. Finally, in the fifth section we conclude with an interpretation of such results suggesting that the 'mobilities turn' may contribute to understanding population restructuring in tourist areas.

2. Gentrification, tourism, and population change: insights from the mobilities turn

Inherent to any definition of gentrification is a process of sociodemographic change and population restructuring (Smith, 2002). In the classical accounts of this process, gentrification hints at the displacement of a low-income population – particularly the elderly and those involved in manual labour – by young adults with higher levels of education and income and who are typically employed in managerial or professional services (Atkinson, 2000; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Van Criekingen, 2010; Smith 2002). Gentrification is then characterised essentially as a process of socio-spatial change in which working-class residents are displaced by middle-class newcomers, generally resulting in an increase of the acquisitive and educational attainment level of the area's residents. Sociodemographic analyses have been used extensively to explore whether a place experiences gentrification. The most popular metrics trace changes in socio-economic status for census tracts through time (Atkinson, 2000; Hochstenbach, Musterd, & Teernstra, 2015; Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010). To explain this change, gentrification studies have notably focused on residential mobility patterns and migration, analysing the profiles of in-movers and out-movers. Other authors argue that residential mobility is insufficient to explain social economic change at the neighbourhood level, and that demographic shifts should be considered as well (see Hochstenbach & van Gent, 2015 for an overview). For instance, due to the ageing of the traditional working class, change may result from high death rates of the long-term residents that are replaced by younger cohorts who are usually better educated than previous generations (for a critique of the displacement/replacement dichotomy see Slater 2009). Either way, in terms of age, the initial steps of gentrification imply a rejuvenation of the area concerned, as newcomers tend to be young adults while elderly residents comprise a significant proportion of the out-mover population (Atkinson, 2000). In an analysis of how diverse age groups are involved in different forms of gentrification according to their life course transitions, Hochstenchach & Boterman (2018) contest the traditional view that gentrification is associated with the residential trajectories of young middle-class people as a transitory period in their life-course, according to

which gentrifiers would tend to move out of areas offering 'urban amenities' – such as street life, night-time recreation, global eateries and the like – when they settle down and have children. Instead, their research shows that many gentrifiers 'stay urban' after having children, and also point to increasing numbers of elderly gentrifiers due to the ageing of affluent generations.

This literature also hints at changes in population and household growth associated with gentrification. The initial steps of gentrification, particularly in contexts of urban renewal programs, determine a reversal of the process of demographic and physical decline linked to the abandonment and stigmatisation of inner-city areas (Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008). For example, demographic decline was patent in run-down areas of the historic centre of Seville until the 1990s, and was followed by a gentrification process that implied population growth and a decline in the number of vacant dwellings (Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2019). However, gentrification may also cause population decline resulting from a decrease in the number of people living in each household. First-generation young gentrifiers challenged traditional family formations, and this entailed that gentrifying areas witnessed the growth of young adults living in one-person households (Ford & Champion, 2000; Odgen & Hall, 2004; López-Gay, 2008). Bailey & Robertson (1997) illustrate how in both Glasgow and Edinburgh between 1971 and 1981 their populations decreased due to a reduction in household numbers, itself the result of housing demolitions and the growing numbers of vacant properties. These authors further illustrate that after the implementation of urban renewal programs between 1981 and 1991, while household numbers in fact increased by 10 %, population totals continued to fall due to reductions in the average size of households. Therefore, population growth is not an indicator of whether gentrification took place in a certain place and it should be analysed in relation with household growth and composition.

In spite of the growth of tourism experienced by cities in the last three decades, the mechanism through which tourism causes population restructuring at area level, and the nature and magnitude observed, are still a moot point. Tourism is rather considered a side-effect of area regeneration programs that result in enhanced attractiveness for visitors and 'mobile consumers' (Boyle & Hughes, 1991; Evans, 2009; Pappalepore, Maitland & Smith, 2010; Jansen-Verbeke, 1998; García-Hernández, la Calle-Vaquero & Yubero, 2017; Russo & Capel, 2007). In fact, accounts of gentrification related to processes of urban renewal make explicit references to the attraction of tourists as part and parcel of the neoliberal restructuring of the urban economy that generally comes at the expense of longstanding residents (Eisinger, 2000; Judd & Fainstein, 1999; Hall, 2013). For instance, in cities such as Berlin, Amsterdam, London and New York, the development of tourism and gentrification went hand-in-hand and the spatial connections of both processes were highlighted by several authors (Novy, 2018; Maitland & Newman, 2008; Terhorst, Ven & Deben 2003). Yet tourism is not considered in this literature as an autonomous driver of gentrification: it is gentrified areas that become attractive for tourism, and some works examine how this may unsettle first-wave gentrifiers (Russo & Van der Borg, 2008; Tironi, 2009). Notwithstanding, not only do tourists tend to consume gentrifying areas but also mobile populations settle and gather in these neighbourhoods, such as international students, digital nomads (professionals who undertake remote work through the Internet and are not tied to a particular location) and young migrants (King, 2018; Malet-Calvo, 2018; Novy, 2018). More recently, centrally located gentrifying areas have been impacted by the rise of short-term rentals, leading to an increased displacement of residents and the inflow of transient visitors (Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2019; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018). These trends pose several challenges to the way we measure and conceptualise the population restructuring of areas that

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appear to be a melting pot of young, transient, and transnational populations. Gentrification research has traditionally relied on longitudinal census data, but due to the speedy nature of the Airbnb phenomenon and transient disposition of transnational mobile populations it is unlikely that census information released every ten years will capture rapid migration flows and residential mobility patterns taking place in tourist cities. Furthermore, when tourism scholars have examined population movements towards cities, the focus has been on identifying the mobility practices of the newcomers (Novy 2018; Williams & Hall, 2000), but not how the arrival of mobile users was restructuring the population of the places in which they settle.

Against this background, we suggest empirical, methodological and theoretical advances to make sense of how tourism is restructuring the populations of neighbourhoods that have become popular destinations. Empirically, from a sociodemographic perspective two main questions arise when it comes to studying the impact of urban tourism. Firstly, our analysis will attempt to show that tourism activity in certain neighbourhoods causes population decline linked to a decrease of inhabited dwellings. Urban scholars have recently suggested that the pre-pandemic excessive growth of tourism and short-term rentals involves a sharp wave of displacement of residents to such an extent that some areas are losing their residential base and tacitly becoming tourist clusters (Celata & Romano, 2020; Cocola-Gant, 2016; Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2019; Sequera & Nofre, 2018 and 2019). This outcome was also suggested by tourism scholars such as Law (2002) and Ap and Crompton (1993), who concluded that in mature tourist destinations residents tend to move out of the community and therefore that population decrease may occur. Other recent works discuss how residents of areas subject to high levels of tourism pressure shift their consumption patterns to avoid contact with tourists (Quinn, 2007) and eventually move out of certain neighbourhoods (Cocola-Gant, 2016; Colomb & Novy, 2016; Pinkster & Boterman, 2017; Zanardi, 2019). However, these studies lack demographic evidence to support such claims or the degree in which this process may have been taking place. Although it seems clear that for several authors there is a process of out-migration of residents, the profile of the population moving out is less apparent in terms of age, education or professional categories. In addition, we know that in gentrification processes population decline can result from a reduction of the household size and so the number of inhabited dwellings should be taken into consideration in any analysis. In relation to this, the surge of short-term rentals may be playing an important role. Not only has the sharing of apartment buildings between residents and visitors been identified as an important factor of distress for the community, but as landlords rent to visitors rather than to long-term residents (Cocola-Gant and Gago, 2019; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018) the rise of Airbnb and other platforms may have a significant impact on the number of households, potentially implying a reduction of dwellings occupied by 'permanent' populations.

Secondly, it is important to explore migration flows in areas impacted by tourism to have a clear understanding of the profile of individuals moving in and out of these areas. As mentioned above, a process of out-migration of residents may be taking place, but we aim to demonstrate that tourist areas are, at the same time, attractive to young transnational gentrifiers as a transitory period in their residential trajectories. In this respect, research that looks into the agency of tourism and other dimensions of human mobility in place transformation has been given a strong boost by the ground-breaking works of Urry (2000) and Sheller & Urry (2004). In particular, several authors examine the mobility and dwelling practices of transnational populations, such as lifestyle migrants, digital nomads and international students, who tend to settle in centrally located tourist areas (e.g. Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Cocola-Gant & Lopez-Gay, 2020; Huete & Mantecón, 2011; King, 2018; Malet-Calvo, 2018; Novy 2018; Russo &

Capel Tatjer, 2007; Williams & Hall, 2000). The expansion of such forms of temporary migration is noted to have a significant impact on the population restructuring of some neighbourhoods, leading to what authors have called transnational gentrification (Hayes, 2020; Sigler & Wachsmuth, 2016). This refers to a process of area change in which the gentrifiers are migrants from the industrialised West who relocate to cities usually in less-developed regions. In terms of sociodemographic profiles, the works of both Hayes (2020) and Sigler & Wachsmuth (2016) refer to the migration of North American retirees to Latin American destinations who usually invest in second homes, and therefore their work is linked to classical accounts of lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Huete & Mantecón, 2011; Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2019). However, the transnational migration of young people moving to cities due to lifestyle choices has been growing particularly in the European Union since the introduction of free movement of people in the 1990s (King, 2018). Central areas of tourist destinations such as Berlin (Novy, 2018), Lisbon (Malet-Calvo, 2018) and Porto (Carvalho, Chamusca, Fernandes, & Pinto, 2019) have witnessed the arrival of an array of young transnational mobile populations that are increasingly transient because they seem to stay in these destinations as a transitory period before settling down. These mobile populations consequently access housing via the private rental market and so they put further pressure on an already competitive housing market impacted by short-term rentals.

In sum, the increasing penetration of tourism may be leading to a particular form of neighbourhood change, characterised by a decrease of long-term resident populations, a decline in the total number of households, and the arrival of transnational and transient young gentrifiers deploying a wide range of dwelling practices, from the short stays of visitors in apartments rented on digital platforms, to the longer sojourns of the hypermobile lifestyle migrants, students and young professionals. For an interpretation of this process that situates it against the extant tourism-led gentrification literature, we will refer to the conceptual body of the 'mobilities paradigm'. This "set of questions, theories and methodologies" (Sheller & Urry, 2006: 210) emerged in the early 2000s to denote an epistemological shift from society as sedentary towards one in which it is conceived as inherently mobile (Urry, 2000). One first key insight of this literature for our research question is the need to move from a visitor vs. resident dichotomy towards a tourism mobilities perspective which considers the entanglements of a wide array of human and nonhuman mobilities, some more rooted in place than others (Hannam, Sheller & Urry, 2006). In this sense, the category of 'gentrifier' in tourist cities includes a variety of mobile population profiles whose dwelling and life practices tend to match and converge spatially with those of the tourist population. Following authors such as Cresswell (2006), Cresswell & Merriman (2011) and Jensen (2010), a second fundamental insight for our inquiry is that the transformation of tourist areas could be interpreted as the result of a negotiation played out in the economic as well as in the material and cultural dimensions of places, whereby more wealthy, footloose, physically able and digitally competent populations gain access and control of urban assets (such as housing and commercial facilities) and commons (such as public space and public life) over less mobile and more dependent populations. We therefore suggest that the population restructuring of tourist areas may well be the result of a process of neighbourhood change that caters to the practices and affordability of the flow of young gentrifiers on the move, leading to the out migration of more permanent populations not only because the area may became unaffordable for them, but also because the change becomes incompatible with their dwelling practices. Hence, our approach to the analysis of tourism-led gentrification highlights the mobile character of gentrifiers – and by contrast, the 'immobility' of resident populations which are displaced in the process – and interprets our

empirical results, characterising tourism-led gentrification as a shift from 'classical' gentrification, in the broader framework of a relational epistemology. We now explore these transformations in the city of Barcelona, starting in the next section with a presentation of our case study area and further advancing our conceptual contribution in the discussion section.

3. Methodology

3.1. Presentation of case study: Barcelona and Barri Gòtic

According to the MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index (2017) Barcelona ranked 12th in the world and 3rd in Europe (behind London and Paris) in terms of international overnight visitors. In 2017, 7.7 million overnight visitors checked into hotels, totalling almost 20 million overnight stays – four times higher than the figures recorded in 1993 and twice as many than in 2005 (www.bcn.cat/estadistica). The total number of overnight stays exceeded 32 million when holiday rentals are included (Barcelona City Council et al., 2017).

For local authorities, establishing Barcelona as a tourist destination has been a strategic aim in the restructuring of the city since the late 1980s (Balibrea, 2001; Russo & Scarnato, 2018; Smith, 2005). As a result, there has been a significant growth in tourism, which occurred particularly after the year 2000 and further intensified after 2010. The neoliberal answer to the post-2008 crisis was the promotion of more tourism and, importantly, the licensing without restrictions of tourist-oriented activities, such as terraces in public spaces, restaurants, bike and Segway-rental shops, cruise ships, and hotels. Furthermore, Airbnb was established in 2008, therefore this period witnessed the spread of short-term rentals and the increased use of housing as tourist accommodation. In 2011, the number of Airbnb listings in Barcelona was circa 3,000, growing to 16,000 in 2015 and reaching a peak of more than 18,000 in 2018 (Sales, 2019). The excessive growth of tourism resulted in the rise of community protests; not just in the city centre, but in several neighbourhoods across the city. The current COVID-19 pandemic has produced a global collapse of tourist flows in urban areas. In spite of the current debate on the future of tourism and whether this crisis has brought about a new consciousness of the urgency of a transition towards more tourism-resilient places (e.g. Haywood, 2020), it is also noted that – especially in the most tourism-dependent countries – the pressure to go back to business-as-usual once the sanitary emergence is over is very strong (Bianchi, 2020; Hall et al., 2020).

We have chosen the *Barri Gòtic* (Gothic Quarter, henceforth denoted just as *Gòtic*), located in the historical centre of Barcelona, as our case study. The *Gòtic* is one of the 73 neighbourhoods in which the municipality of Barcelona (which has 1.6 million residents in a 100 sq. km area) is administratively divided. The neighbourhood is the oldest part of Barcelona and hosts some of the most iconic attractions and must-see sites of the city. This has resulted in the growth of tourism-oriented services across the neighbourhood, particularly restaurants, hotels, and holiday rentals. Figure 1 shows that the *Gòtic* is the most touristified area of Barcelona. Considering that 64 hotels, 50 hostels, and 1,194 Airbnb listings existed in the neighbourhood in 2018, the result is that there are 71 beds offered to tourists per 100 inhabitants, meaning that the intensity of tourism in the area is substantially higher when compared to the rest of the city. Moreover, its proximity to the port means that it is visited by a large share of its yearly 2.7 million cruise passengers as well as frequented on the way to other attractions (Brandajs & Russo, 2019).

Figure 1. Number of tourist beds per 100 inhabitants in the 73 neighbourhoods of Barcelona, 2018 (the neighbourhoods included in the study are highlighted).
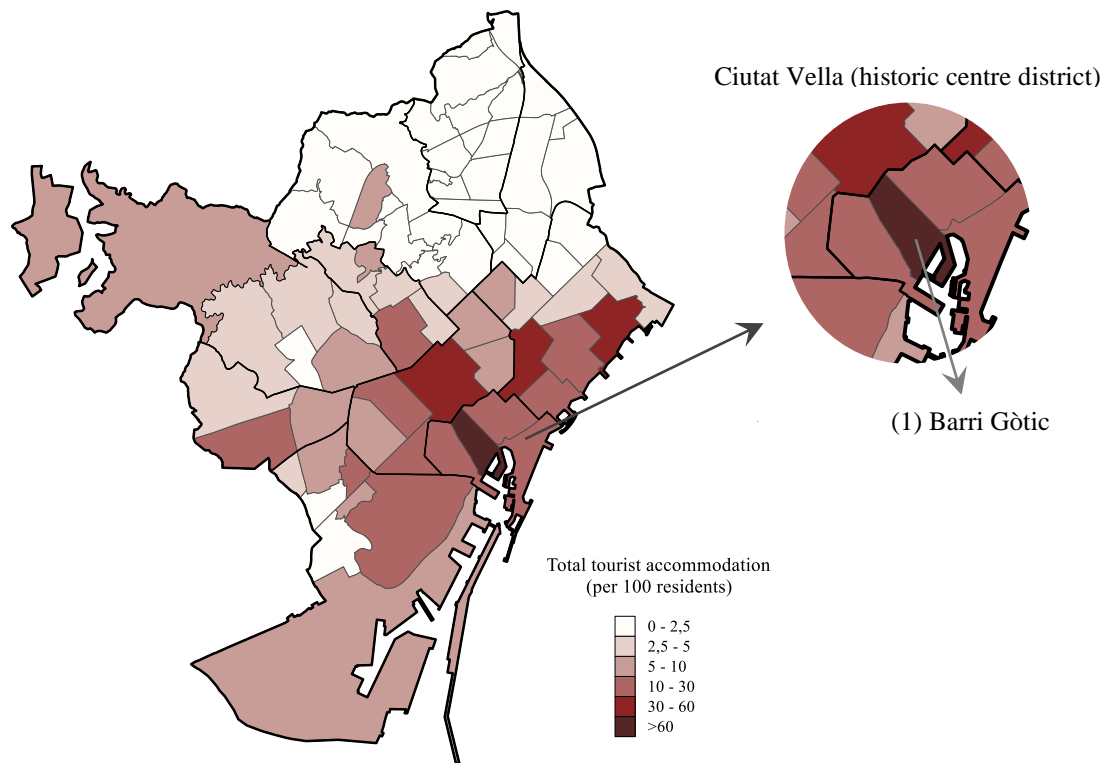
Source: own elaboration from data collected by Sales (2019). Includes all beds offered in hotels, hostels, pensions and tourist apartments.

The gentrification of the *Gòtic* started in the early 1990s. Subsequent censuses show that the mostly Spanish pioneer gentrifiers have been progressively replaced by transnational migrant gentrifiers (Arbaci & Tapada-Berteli, 2012; Cocola-Gant & Lopez-Gay, 2020). Notwithstanding, gentrification is still ongoing and elderly residents with lifetime tenancy agreements living in run-down apartments do exist in the neighbourhood. At the same time, residents in this area have been complaining about tourism since the early 2000s (Cocola-Gant, 2016). Protests have been more widespread since 2010 as the result of the deregulation of tourism-oriented services, following on from anti-crisis reforms. These policies have not only led to further growth and concentration of tourist activity, but also to the increasing reorientation of housing and commercial supply for the demands of visitors. Citizens and grassroots entities are particularly concerned with the induced changes in the social fabric of the neighbourhood. Their mottos often refer explicitly to the demographic implications of tourism, for example: "neighbours, a species threatened with extinction"; or "more tourist apartments, fewer families".

3.2. Research design and analytic methods

Our research uses a mixed-method approach which combines demographic analysis with in-depth interviews. A significant part of the investigation focuses on quantitative data, exploring (i) household and population variations at an area level, and (ii) the characteristics of out-migrant and in-migrant cohorts. We then compare the results of the quantitative analysis of

our case study with other neighbourhoods in the city that are undergoing gentrification processes but experience less tourism activity (Figure 1). The aim of this comparison is to explore whether any differences occur between population change in processes of tourism and classical gentrification. Finally, in-depth interviews are used to better interpret the results from the quantitative analysis, thus unravelling the relationship that the increasing penetration of tourists in these areas may have with such dynamics.

In terms of the sources used, due to the limitations of the census, the data are from the Spanish Population Register (INE and Statistics Department of Barcelona City Council). We used annual counts for the population living in the municipality by age, sex, citizenship and place of birth, as well as household data from the beginning of the Population Register in 1998 up until 2017. The dataset of Barcelona City Council (BCC) defines a household as every dwelling occupied by, at least, one registered resident. BCC also provided us with a 6-year register-based database (2011-2016) which includes information about sex, age, citizenship, place of birth, and educational attainment of each individual that has moved into, within, or out of the area under examination. We have also used the 2017 Barcelona Socio-Demographic Survey, that allows us to capture additional characteristics of residents, independently from their affiliation to the population register. The sample size is 10,415 individuals. Relying on both the population register and the 2017 Barcelona Socio-Demographic Survey we have created a set of indicators to measure the transient character of residents and migration flows in the area. These indicators will be described in the analysis. Additionally, to map the supply of tourism accommodation, we relied on data scraping from the Airbnb website undertaken by Sales (2019). We further conducted 42 in-depth interviews with residents living in the area for at least five years, 16 of which were transnational migrants from Western Europe and the US. We asked residents about how tourism has been impacting the neighbourhood since the 1990s and the way in which they have adapted over time to such changes. Interviews with migrants also focused on personal reasons for settling in the area and about their motivations behind moving to Barcelona. We initially recruited participants by personal contacts in the neighbourhood and from this starting point, respondents were asked to recruit another contact, thus triggering a snowballing effect. The snowball effect provided us with the possibility to contact residents living in the area for more than 25 years. Interviews were mainly conducted in Spanish. Some interviews with transnational migrants were conducted in English.

4. Results of the analysis

4.1. Population and household growth: a shrinking neighbourhood

In this first subsection we explore changes in the number of inhabitants and households in order to analyse whether there is a link between high levels of tourism activity and a decrease in the number of residents. The Spanish Population Register series started in 1998. At this point, the *Barri Gòtic* had 15,000 inhabitants. Soon after, the number of residents increased rapidly due to the growth of the foreign population. However, part of this increase was linked to an anomaly in the registration process. The City Council registered in the headquarters of the Statistical Department, which is located within the *Barri Gòtic*, all foreign citizens arriving in Barcelona who did not have a permanent address. As a consequence, the census tract where this department is located experienced an unprecedented growth in the number of inhabitants (Bayona, 2006). The rapid population growth between 2000 and 2007, is the result of this anomaly. In 2008, the Statistics Department started to debug the data and, in 2012, the effect of

the previous irregular procedure was eliminated. We have proceeded to correct the population series with a linear interpolation from 2001 to 2012 of the population with foreign nationality in the census tract in which the over-registration was observed. In this new series (Figure 2), the population peaked between 2008 and 2010 at around 18,000 inhabitants. However, following this, the population decreased to 15,400 individuals registered in 2015. Although recently the population grew by 600 inhabitants between 2015 and 2017, this increase is associated with another anomaly as vulnerable foreign populations have been registered in the census tract where the Social Services of the district is located. Thus, the total number of residents has decreased 7.5% during the period 2011-2017 (12.2% if the Social Service's census tract is not included), while the population in the entire municipality of Barcelona has remained stable, recording a slight increase of 0.3%. Importantly, Spanish individuals and foreign nationals have experienced differing trends since 1998: the former population has decreased by 4,200 individuals, while the latter has increased by 6,000.

Figure 2. Evolution of the population in the *Barri Gòtic* by citizenship.
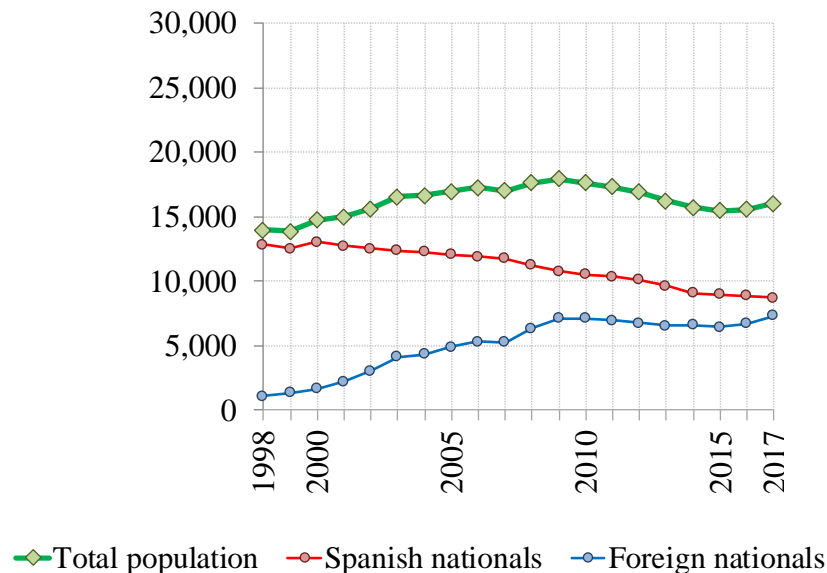
Source: Population Register, 1998-2017.

It is well known that population decline does not necessarily equate to a decrease in the number of households nor negative net migration. An aged population can also contribute to a decrease in the number of residents due to high death rates. This certainly was the case of the *Gòtic* at the end of the twentieth century (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1999). For this reason, we examine the recent evolution in the number of households living in the neighbourhood (Table 1). As the household series are also constructed from the Population Register, anomalies are also noted, namely a large number of households with 9 or more members in 2007, and a significant decrease between 2007 and 2011 because of the aforementioned debug of the register. In 2011, the number of households in the neighbourhood was around 7,000, compared to the 6,500 recorded in 2017, equating to a 6.8% decline over 6 years, when, in Barcelona as a

whole, the number of households during the same period has remained stable. The high number of one-person households could be seen as a sign of the gentrification of the area (more than 70% of these households are comprised of adults aged 18-65), but they too have decreased since 2011. This figure reveals that the decline in population witnessed after 2011 is mainly related to a fall in the number of occupied dwellings and not to an increase in single-person households as is generally the case in classical gentrification (Odgen & Schnoebelen, 2006). Interestingly, recent quantitative research across the 73 neighbourhoods in Barcelona found a spatial correlation between the growth of short-term rentals and the decrease in households, emphasising that the process is particularly intense in the *Gòtic* (Sales, 2019). This supports our assumption that part of the residential housing stock of the area has been replaced by other uses. The results of the qualitative research will further confirm this outcome.

Table 1. Evolution of the number of households in the *Barri Gòtic* by size, 2004-2015.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1		2,780	2,779	2,727	2,674	2,641	2,683	2,724	2,668	2,628	2,567	2,526	2,533	2,587
2		1,889	1,907	1,827	1,844	1,862	1,923	1,930	1,942	1,925	1,867	1,865	1,818	1,826
3		1,024	1,009	990	998	986	1,098	1,068	1,018	1,019	989	918	945	949
4		662	667	635	635	655	666	620	605	620	603	587	586	607
5-8		487	519	453	483	564	589	529	543	551	511	467	488	491
9+		462	447	481	422	393	169	141	116	87	101	98	80	77
Total		7,196	7,304	7,328	7,113	7,056	7,101	7,128	7,012	6,892	6,830	6,638	6,461	6,450	6,537

Source: Annual release of the Population Register, at date 30-VI. Statistics Department of Barcelona City Council.

Therefore, the area has been experiencing a process of population and household decline since 2011, while no other neighbourhood in Barcelona (out of 73) experienced a higher decrease in the number of residents and households during this period. Those neighbourhoods ranking just below are other central and tourist areas, such as *la Barceloneta* or *el Raval*, which experienced a decrease of around 3% in their number of households. This is far from the figures of the *Gòtic* but is consistent with our hypothesis. Despite this decrease, it is important to mention that the process does not mean that the residential base of the area has been replaced by visitors, even if this is the most touristified area of the city. It seems that Spanish residents have been moving out while the area has become attractive to foreign nationals. In the section below we further explore this issue.

4.2. Sociodemographic changes: transnational and transient gentrifiers

In this subsection we examine sociodemographic shifts in the population of the *Barri Gòtic* using four variables: sex, age, nationality, and level of education. Our analysis here aims at highlighting residential selection and migration flows in a tourist area, which ends in changes in the composition of the population living in the neighbourhood. We start by comparing the

population pyramids of 1998 and 2017 (Figure 3). The transformation that the population structure has experienced over the past 19 years is extraordinary. The number of over-65s has halved and the 25 to 39 age group has become the largest section of the population pyramid. In 1998, the latter age group represented 23% of the population, but now constitutes 37% and includes significantly more men than women. Despite this increase in the adult population, the base of the population pyramid has not experienced any change, and only 8.4% of the population is under the age of 15 – the lowest percentage among the 73 neighbourhoods of the city. It is also by far the area with the highest ratio of adults (25-59) to children (0-14): 7.6 compared to the city's average of 4.1.

The increase in the number of people aged 25 to 39 is due almost exclusively to the arrival of foreign nationals which account for 69% of this age group. The presence of Western European citizens is particularly high, especially individuals from France, the UK, and Italy. Europeans currently represent more than half of the foreign nationals in this age group. The percentage of native people (those born in the province of Barcelona) in the 25-39 age group is extremely low, constituting just 14% of the population and is an unusual feature of the city (the city-wide average for this age group is 45.1%). This clearly reflects the infrequency in which young locals include this neighbourhood in their residential strategies. Furthermore, previous studies have also shown that this area is not a popular destination for highly-educated individuals moving to Barcelona from elsewhere in Spain as it is for high skilled transnational migrants (Lopez-Gay, 2016).

Figure 3. Population structure of the *Barri Gòtic* by nationality, 1998-2017.
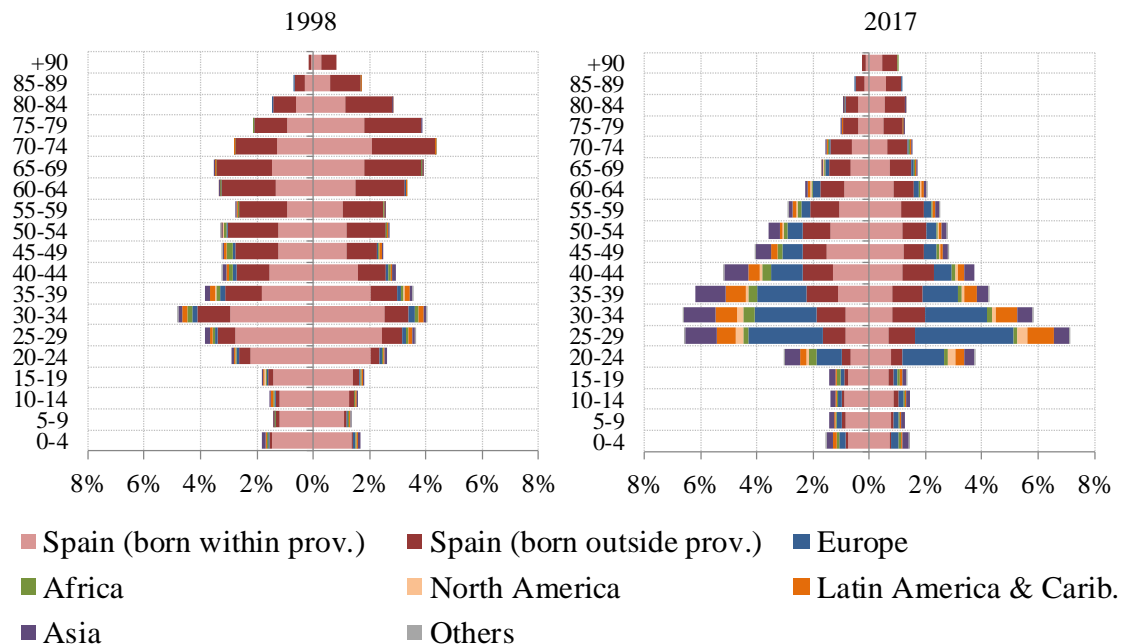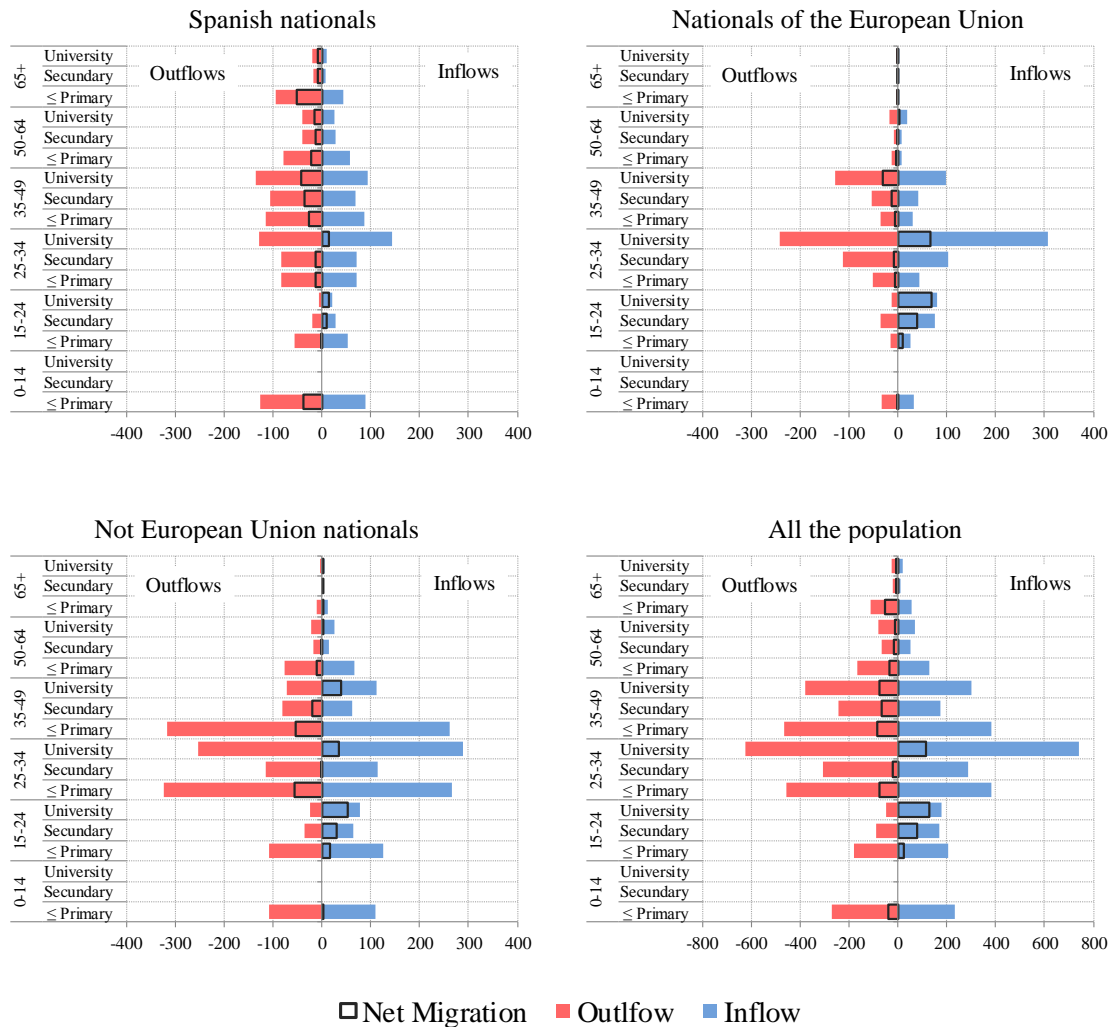

Source: Population Register.

These data show that the progression of gentrification in the *Gòtic* is not homegrown but transnational. The elderly have been replaced by young adults with low fertility. However, the arrival of young adults in the area is linked to transnational migration flows, while Spanish residents have been moving out. For this reason, the analysis of migration flows and residential mobility are central for a better understanding of sociodemographic changes in the neighbourhood. We explore the most recent flows of population by level of education and nationality below (Figure 4).

The first point to consider is that between 2011 and 2016 the *Gòtic* lost Spanish citizens of all ages except the highest-educated young adults. However, this positive net migration is very low. The rest of the age groups experience negative net migration, regardless of educational attainment. Secondly, the net migration of European citizens is also positive among young adult age groups, and it is remarkably higher than any other origin. In addition, the positive net migration of young individuals with secondary-level education is remarkable, hinting possibly at the attractiveness of the neighbourhood for Erasmus students and other international undergraduate groups. Finally, negative net migration of extra-EU individuals is evident, especially among the least educated. Therefore, the *Gòtic* experiences a process of gentrification in which the newcomers are predominantly highly educated young migrants and the population leaving is the less educated, particularly Spanish residents.

Migration flows also show significant changes in the elderly and under-18 populations, especially among Spanish citizens. The population loss experienced among those groups is significant. First, the negative net migration registered at the top of the pyramid indicates that the population rejuvenation is not just the effect of mortality, but also the consequence of the out-migration of the elderly from the area. Second, the fact that in the population pyramid the number of children is rather low is not just related to the presence of small households and low fertility, which may be the case observed in many other examples of gentrified neighbourhoods (Ford & Champion, 2000; Odgen & Hall, 2004; Odgen & Schnoebelen, 2005). Instead, data show a significantly negative net migration of children which suggest that families may be leaving the area. In fact, the 35-49 age group experiences the highest negative net migration, even among European residents. As in other cases of gentrification, this suggests that young gentrifiers that arrived in the previous decade may be moving out once they have children.

Figure 4. Average annual flows (outflows and inflows) and net migration by age, educational attainment and nationality in the *Barri Gòtic*, 2011-2016.

Source: Registered inflows and outflows by the Statistics Department of Barcelona City Council.

We further show how highly mobile young individuals play a major role in the population restructuring of the neighbourhood. Transient populations are harder to trace than more non-transient residents. To overcome this limitation, we have created a set of indicators (Table 2). The first four use data from the residential and migratory flows belonging to the population register. The annual in-flow rate including any type of arrival into the area doubles the average rate of the city, meaning that the area is significantly attractive for new residents. In addition, arrivals from other municipalities and countries play a major role compared to the rest of the city. The out-flow rate to other neighbourhoods within Barcelona also doubles the average rate of the city. Comparing the two rates, the *Gòtic*'s overall net migration is slightly negative, but the figure reaches very strong negative values when we only consider movements within the city. This reveals that the area seems to be the arrival point for individuals from outside Barcelona but who are likely to move out soon afterwards to settle in a different area of the city. In other words, the *Gòtic* is an area with high levels of population mobility – high rates of people moving in but who are unlikely to settle for a long period – which results in an increased number of transient residents.

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In order to provide more evidence on this dimension, we created a second set of indicators relying on the 2017 Barcelona Socio-Demographic Survey. This survey offers information about the year of arrival in the neighbourhood and in the dwelling, among other characteristics. Half of the surveyed population in the *Gòtic* arrived in their dwelling of residence within the last 5 years, reaching an astonishing 79.4% for the 20-49 age group while the average in Barcelona is 29.3% and 49.2% respectively. Results of the other indicators regarding these variables confirm the substantial differences between the *Gòtic* and the rest of the city. Furthermore, we calculated the percentage of people who lived outside Spain before moving into the city. Results show that 55.3% of residents in the *Gòtic* fit in this category while the average in the city is 32.2%. Importantly, for the 20-49 age group this figure reaches 64.8% in the *Gòtic* but in the rest of the municipality is 44.7%. Therefore, it seems that the percentage of transient residents is particularly high among young transnational populations. Finally, the proportion of individuals declaring that they are not registered in the Population Register (compulsory for every inhabitant of Barcelona, no matter the legal status is) is a good indicator of the specific attractiveness of the *Gòtic* for transient dwellers: 6.5% of the neighbours are not recorded by the Spanish Population Register, a proportion that is superior to a factor of 10.0 to those living in other city neighbourhoods. In Barcelona, almost half of this group is foreign born, has a university degree and has arrived in Barcelona within the last two years.

In sum, the area has experienced a process of population restructuring whereby increasingly transient young transnational gentrifiers replace Spanish residents, particularly the elderly, families with children, and those with lower levels of educational attainment. Among transnational gentrifiers, data show that they are unlikely to be retirees but rather young graduates and international students that fuel the fast mobility and transient character of visitors. Importantly, the decrease in the total number of residents and households should not be linked to the attractiveness of the neighbourhood. The flows moving into and out of the neighbourhood are more intense than in the Barcelona average, and this is inherent to the floating and transient nature of the dwellers of the *Gòtic*. The decrease in population and households is therefore the result of out-migration from the neighbourhood. In the next section, we compare these results with other gentrified areas of Barcelona and better illustrate the extent to which such population changes seen in the *Gòtic* are unique.

Table 2. Set of indicators regarding migration, residential mobility and transient populations

		20-49 years old			All ages		
		Gòtic	Rest of Ciutat Vella	Rest of Barce-lona	Gòtic	Rest of Ciutat Vella	Rest of Barce-lona
Population register flows	In-flow rate (‰). All origins. Annual average, 2011-2016.	283.9	273.1	161.9	208.6	195.5	100.1
	In-flow rate (‰). Only arrivals from other neighbourhoods. Annual average, 2011-2016.	92.5	83.1	66.8	69.9	60.2	42.2
	Out-flow rate (‰). All destinations. Annual average, 2011-2016.	284.7	261.9	155.0	217.5	195.6	97.7
	Out-flow rate (‰). Only destinations to other neighbourhoods. Annual average, 2011-2016.	117.7	96.5	65.4	91.4	72.6	41.2
Barcelona Socio-demographic Survey, 2017	% Arrived in BCN within the last 2 years	25.3	25.1	12.3	15.6	14.5	6.5
	% Arrived in BCN within the last 5 years	51.3	40.1	19.4	32.8	23.3	10.4
	% Arrived in the dwelling within the last 2 years	50.6	44.5	30.7	33.3	29.1	17.5
	% Arrived in the dwelling within the last 5 years	79.4	65.1	49.2	52.1	42.7	29.3
	% Lived outside Spain before arriving in BCN [1]	64.8	58.7	44.7	55.3	52.5	32.2
	% Not registered in the Spanish Population Register	11.5	4.0	1.0	6.5	2.3	0.6
	% Foreign born with university degree [2]. Age group 25-49	49.1	41.0	34.5			

Source: Registered in-flows and out-flows (2011-2016) and Barcelona Socio-demographic Survey, 2017 (Statistics Department of Barcelona City Council).
Note: All indicators from the Barcelona Sociodemographic Survey are calculated out of all the individuals, except (1) among the individuals that ever lived outside Barcelona and (2) among all the individuals that arrived in the dwelling within the last 5 years.

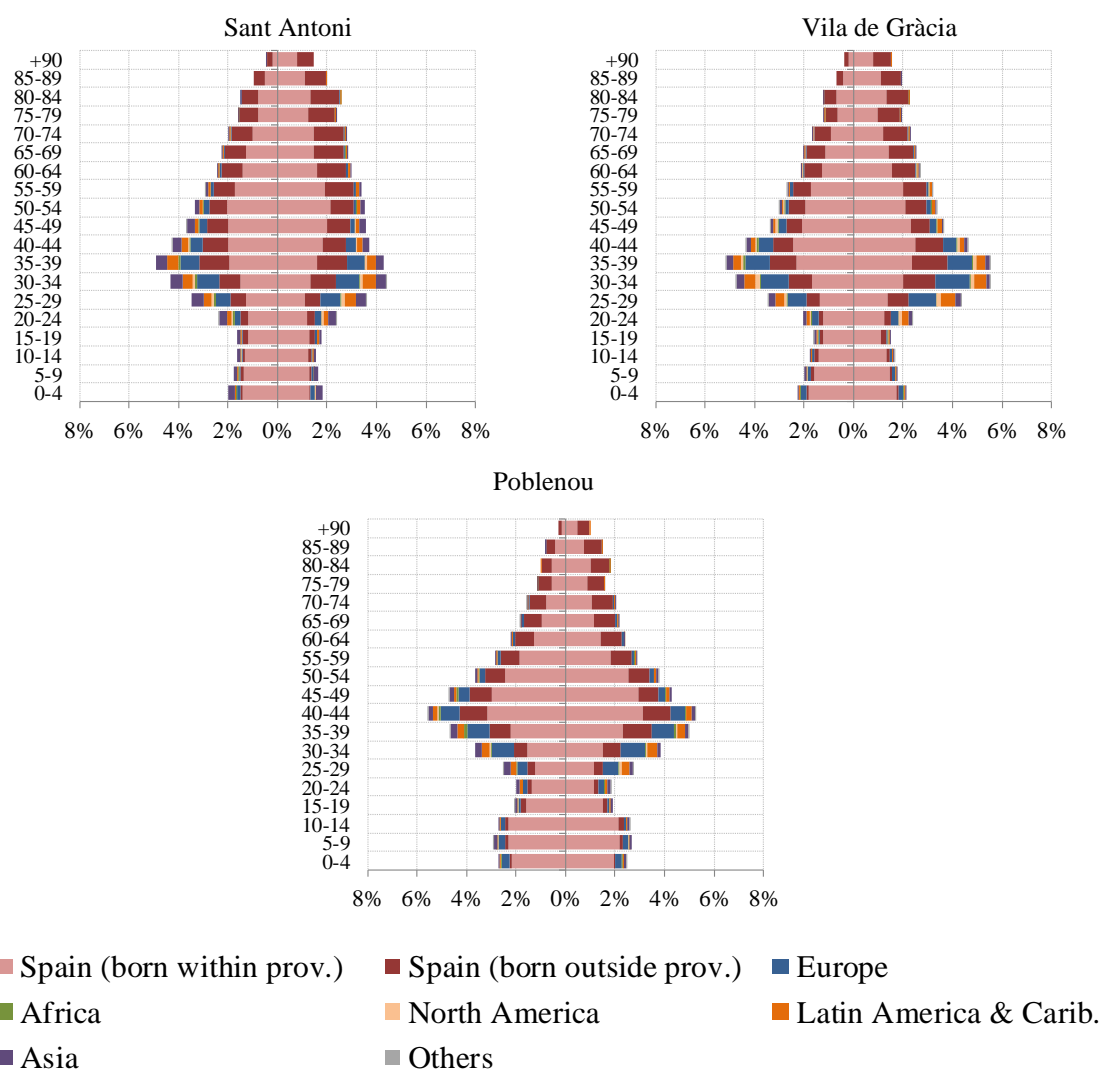### 4.3. Contrasting gentrification trends in Barcelona's neighbourhoods

In this subsection, we compare the sociodemographic changes observed in the *Barri Gòtic* with population dynamics in *Sant Antoni, Vila de Gràcia,* and *Poblenou* (Figure 1). These three neighbourhoods are experiencing intense gentrification processes (Porcel, 2016), but are not exposed to the same pressure from tourism as in the *Gòtic*. None of these, in fact, have experienced population decline as intensely as the *Gòtic*. *Vila de Gràcia* is the only neighbourhood that registered a population decrease (and a drop in the number of households) between 2011 and 2017, but at a much slower pace than in the *Gòtic* (-1.1% compared to -7.5%). The population pyramids in 2017 (Figure 5) and migration flows registered during the period 2011-2016 (Figure 6) show that these three neighbourhoods have: (i) a high proportion

of young adults; (ii) a significant presence of European citizens; and (iii) high levels of residents with university degrees. These 3 indexes coalesce in a positive and above-average net migration rate of the highly educated.

However, in the *Barri Gòtic* we identified some features that are not found in these three neighbourhoods. First, the number of young local adults, born within the province of Barcelona, is much higher than in the *Gòtic*, where they represented 14% of the resident population. In *Poblenou* they account for 45% of the population aged 25-39, in *Vila de Gràcia* this figure is 39%, and in *Sant Antoni* it is 35%. Consequently, there tends to be fewer European residents in these three neighbourhoods compared to the *Barri Gòtic*: while Europeans are the largest group among the foreign citizens, they do not account for more than 20% of the total population of this age group (which is half of the percentage observed in the *Gòtic*). Thus, the first thing to note is that gentrification in these neighbourhoods is more homegrown and less transnational.

Secondly, the presence of children in the three neighbourhoods is also low compared to the Barcelona average, but still much higher than in the *Gòtic*. The ratio of adults (aged 25-59) per child (aged 0-14) in *Sant Antoni* – the highest in these neighbourhoods – is 5.1, and in *Poblenou* it is 3.2; whereas in the *Gòtic* it is 7.6. In contrast with the negative net migration of minors observed in the *Gòtic* area, *Poblenou* experienced positive net migration (Figure 6). In *Sant Antoni* and *Vila de Gràcia* the in-migration rate of the younger age cohort is slightly negative, but far less so than in the *Gòtic*, where the annual net migration rate of the 0-14 age group is -27.3‰ (the neighbourhood loses 27 children out of 1,000 every year due to residential mobility and migration) and in *Vila de Gràcia* the figure is -12.6‰. Therefore, although gentrifiers may move out as they have children (Hochstenchach & Boterman, 2018), the extent to which this process takes place in the *Gòtic* is significant, highlighting how gentrification is driven by young and transient newcomers.

Figure 5. Population structures by nationality, 2017.

Sant Antoni

Vila de Gràcia

Poblenou

- Spain (born within prov.)   ■ Spain (born outside prov.)   ■ Europe
- Africa   ■ North America   ■ Latin America & Carib.
- Asia   ■ Others

Source: Population Register.

Regarding the patterns seen in the residential and migratory flows, none of these neighbourhoods experienced population loss similar to the *Barri Gòtic*, which affected all age groups except the youngest adults with a range of educational attainments. Finally, in terms of the 65+ age group, the average annual net migration during the period 2011-16 in the *Gòtic* was -31.1‰ while in *Sant Antoni* – the area with the lowest net migration among the ones we selected – it was -12.6‰. Consequently, although negative net migration of the elderly is a feature of gentrification, the intensity in which this process occurs in the *Gòtic* area is particularly high.

Figure 6. Average annual flows and net migration by age and educational attainment, 2011-2016.
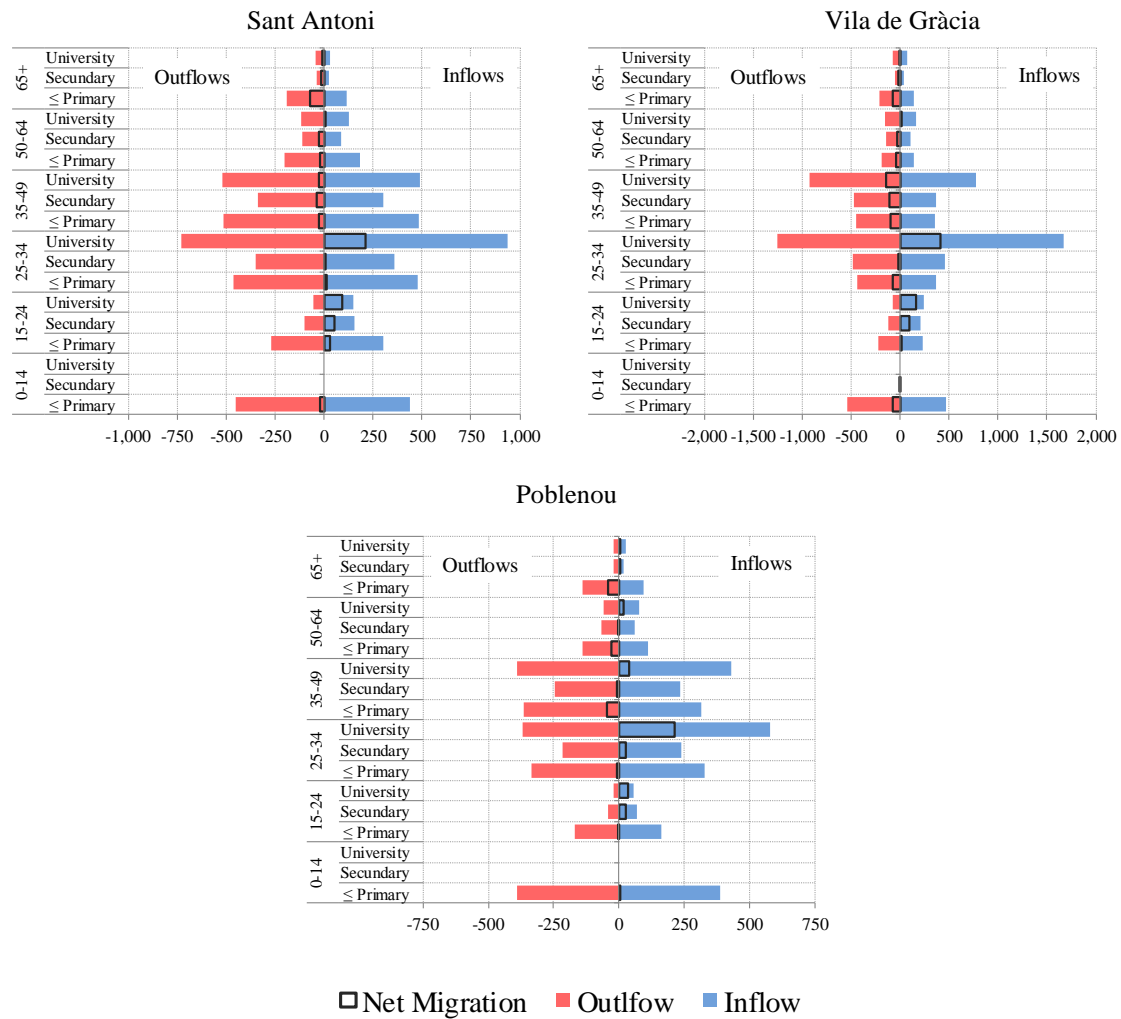
Sant Antoni

Vila de Gràcia

Poblenou

□ Net Migration   ■ Outlfow   ■ Inflow

Source: Registered inflows and outflows by the Statistics Department of Barcelona City Council.

In sum, the changes taking place in the *Barri Gòtic* presents a number of sociodemographic features that are alien to the most common patterns of population change observed in gentrified neighbourhoods, even in the city of Barcelona. We suggest that these particular changes in the population witnessed in the *Gòtic* neighbourhood are linked to the pressure from tourism that the area experiences. We turn now to examine the results of the qualitative exploration in order to further develop this point.

4.4. Living in a tourist neighbourhood

In this last subsection, we present the results from interviews to examine to what extent the decrease of population and households could be linked to the excessive growth of tourism activity, and to provide further insight on the process by which floating transnational populations become enmeshed in processes of gentrification in tourist areas.

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Regarding the first issue, all participants, including transnational migrants, depict a process of population flight. Tourism makes the area increasingly unliveable and a common strategy adopted by residents is to simply move out. Our participants were living in the area for at least five years and they explained how their social networks have been shrinking as a result of the above. Therefore, it is important to note that population flight particularly affects long-term residents. As a participant stated, *"most of the people we know have gone because they were tired of living here"*. This confirms the suggestions from the literature that in neighbourhoods impacted by tourism one approach which residents follow is withdrawal (Ap and Crompton, 1993; Colomb & Novy, 2016; Pinkster & Boterman, 2017). Interviews reveal that gentrifiers who arrived in previous years are also moving out, especially once they have children. In understanding this process, we find two interwoven key factors. First, daily disruptions caused by tourism make the area less and less attractive for certain residential routines which generally characterise the long-term resident population. The main disruptions that we identified were noise, overcrowding of public spaces, and lack of commercial services. Noise is the most dramatic factor highlighted by all participants, and this has also been noted in other tourist areas of the city (Nofre, Giordano, Eldridge & al., 2018). Several residents stated that they are unable to sleep, and noise was presented as a public health issue that affects the daily well-being of the community:

"We deal with noise very badly. Shouting all night in the streets, parties in holiday apartments, cleaning services, music coming from pubs, etc. It is unliveable here".

Exclusion from public spaces is a point of distress as well. On the one hand, the proliferation of tourist-oriented terraces corresponds to an increasing shortage of spaces to rest and sit on. On the other hand, overcrowding and mobility issues, caused by the large number of visitors – many of which use bikes or Segways to move around – is seen by participants as undermining the well-being of the population, particularly the elderly and children. Interviews with elderly residents reveal that they tend to be isolated at home because: (i) there are no places for them to rest in the street; (ii) walking on their own may be dangerous due to overcrowding; (iii) they do not have places to go to. For children, overcrowding means that it is dangerous to play in public spaces even if the entire neighbourhood is a vehicle traffic-free area. The overcrowding of public spaces is related to changes in retail services too. Commercial facilities in the neighbourhood increasingly cater to mobile populations while services used by 'sedentary' residents tend to disappear. This is clearly evident in regard to retail facilities which place-dependent residents need on a daily basis, including bakeries, greengrocers, and even pharmacies. The change in retail implies that residents need to walk to other neighbourhoods to access daily products, which is a significant disruption for the elderly and for people with children as the overcrowding of public spaces makes it increasingly difficult for them to move around. As women often have caring responsibilities, we noted that female residents were particularly affected by these issues. As a female resident stated:

"Yes, I know people who have left. It is a permanent flight [of people]. And they have left because of noise, lack of facilities, mobility problems, especially if you have children. This is not a place to have children. Taking your children to school without distress is important! It becomes a daily fight".

The second issue in understanding the decrease in population and households is the conversion of housing into short-term rentals, meaning that apartments have been taken away from the market for long-term residents. In the *Gòtic* area, grassroot movements claim that holiday rentals were the cause of evictions as early as 2005, but interviewees state that the

process grew significantly after the expansion of Airbnb and similar platforms. In fact, the decline in the number of households and the population has been constant since 2011 – the period that marked the affirmation of the Airbnb phenomenon in the city. Tenants are especially affected as landlords replace them with visitors, and this seems to be particularly relevant in the *Gòtic* area as the percentage of homeowners is only 27.4%, while the average in Barcelona is 58.9%. For instance, a landlord stated: "*I inherited the building from my mother in 2009. I have five flats there. The agreements with tenants expired in 2010-2011, so for me it was easy to get rid of them*".

Interviews with transnational migrants reveal that they are young professionals and suggest that tourism is a central explanatory variable in understanding why they settled in the *Gòtic* area rather than in other neighbourhoods, confirming the spatial overlap of tourism and other forms of mobilities (Novy, 2018). Most participants mentioned the feeling of integration and satisfaction that they experience in the area because they can maintain a leisure-led lifestyle and have transnational friends, while other less central neighbourhoods are 'more Spanish'. For instance, when asked why he moved to the Gòtic area, a North American resident explained that he feels more comfortable there because he finds services in English and is surrounded "by people like me". Tourism in the *Gòtic* area has caused a growth in the number of cafes, restaurants, and self-styled 'tapas' bars catering to transnational consumers that in fact have little to do with traditional Spanish food and culture. In such places, the staff speak English and serve 'brunch' alongside other gastronomic specialities according to globalised standards of consumption (Soro, 2016). Interestingly, from the point of view of long-term Spanish residents, the fact that migrants become spatially concentrated in tourist enclaves implies the formation of transnational commercial and residential spaces, and this seems to be crucial in explaining why Spanish people have been moving out of the neighbourhood. An opinion repeated among Spanish participants is that *"bars sell things that are not for us"* and that *"the feeling is that you do not have places to go to"*.

The transient nature of the populations attracted into the neighbourhood, whether the "*tsunami of visitors*", as one resident put it, or transnational dwellers such as international students or cosmopolitan professionals, is a key driver of distress for the long-term resident population. All participants mention that while there is little chance of meaningful encounters with hurried visitors, the floating population of transnational dwellers are also leaving little space for establishing neighbourly interactions. In fact, many Spanish residents define the flow of young transnational gentrifiers as 'permanent tourists'. This seems to be eroding a sense of community based on social relations, which long-term residents consider essential to reproduce their quality of life. For instance, a primary school teacher who has been working in the area for thirty years notes that *"European children are mobile like their parents. It is not the norm that they start school and finish it six years later"*. Or, as a Spanish resident states: *"The apartments are occupied, but they are not occupied by neighbours. A distinction must be made between the more permanent people and the ones who are passing through"*. Similarly, *"It is very difficult to live in a community where there are no permanent neighbours".* As a result of this transformation of the neighbourhood's social configuration, long-term Spanish residents see the support and care that stable social networks provide progressively eroded, and feel increasingly isolated and helpless. Notably, such loss of community relations affects the elderly the most as well as the neighbours – mainly women – who look after them: *"Living with neighbours is not the same as living with transient people. My dad is 82. I was not worried too much because I knew I had Eva [his next-door neighbour]. But now he does not have her anymore. In the building there are tourists and newcomers from Europe. Probably they are nice people, but my*

dad does not feel he is accompanied in the neighbourhood. That mutual help is crucial. The elderly who are left without a familiar environment, without a neighbour (...): it is the rupturing of social bonds".

5. Discussion and conclusions: gentrification in the age of mobilities

Smith (2002) suggested that the 'end result' of any example of gentrification is a process of population restructuring and residential mobility, manifested in the profiles of the in-movers and out-movers. Yet, despite the rise of research on tourism-led gentrification, the evidence to suggest what it looks like in terms of population dynamics is scarce. Our analysis of the transformation of the socio-demographic structure of the *Barri Gòtic* since the late 1990s allow us to identify this empirical gap. In these conclusions, we draw from the conceptual and epistemological toolbox of the 'mobilities paradigm' to offer an original interpretation of our results which point to a specific form of gentrification, but based on different processes and possibly a wider ontology of forces at play than in classical gentrification.

The mobilities literature invites us to examine space as constructed and constantly reproduced in its material, social and semantic dimensions through the practices, negotiations and interrelations of a myriad of human and non-human mobilities (Cresswell & Merriman, 2011). Cresswell (2010) and Kaufmann et al. (2004), among others, postulate a political dimension of mobility, the product of a multitude of human/environment interfaces (Cresswell, 2006: 167), suggesting that the distribution of power in the negotiation for/through space can be analysed through the uneven characteristics of the mobilities involved and their relational codetermination; as argued by Adey (2010), "mobility and immobility are understood as an effect or an outcome of a relation - of a position or of effort and pressure" (p. 18). In this sense, it can be proposed that both tourist and non-tourist mobilities are involved in the production and distribution of power unfolding in gentrification processes, and that these mobilities "are both productive of such social relations and produced by them" (Cresswell, 2010: 21).

This analytic approach unfolds in two dimensions in our paper. Firstly, in terms of the supposed opposition between stable and transient populations, namely residents versus visitors. This point is important to challenge the rebuke of touristification as a form of gentrification (e.g. in Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2019, p. 7: "Touristification (…) cannot be strictly understood as gentrification because the tourists do not settle down permanently"). The resident versus visitor dichotomy seems to be a simplification of a process of population restructuring that may be better understood as the result of flows of different forms of tourism mobilities. We showed how a tourist neighbourhood is attractive for flows of young transnational people with different levels of transitory character, from the short-stay of visitors, the longer stay of students and the similarly transitory settlement of young professionals. In this sense, we claim that tourism gentrifies – driving processes of place restructuring that make such areas rather attractive for an array of transnational gentrifiers which seem to intensify the traditional reading of gentrification as a transitory place of dwelling in the life-course of young middle-class populations. From a methodological viewpoint, we propose that the analysis of mobility-related indicators hinting at the mobile biographies of gentrifiers suggested in this paper may be a fundamental addition to current readings of gentrification.

Secondly, the mobility perspective also unfolds in terms of the distribution of power and the material dimensions of the negotiation for dwellings, and ultimately for space, that a performative reading of the 'mobilities clash' in touristified neighbourhood presupposes. Such

negotiation is not exclusively based on economic power but also on other factors, as underlined by Cresswell (2010), such as physical prowess, available time, or cognitive capacity. From this point of view, we clarify that although class differences still underpin the gentrification of the *Gòtic* neighbourhood, there are material dimensions at play – the uneasiness of long-term, less educated and less adaptive long-terms residents in 'sharing space' with mobile populations, and conversely the convergence between the mobile and dwelling practices of transnational gentrifiers and tourists – which mark a fundamental trait of tourism-driven gentrification. We have shown that the neighbourhood loses portions of its resident population, as a sizeable part of the housing stock is occupied by 'mobile dwellers' that stay for short to medium periods of time and lay down barely any roots in the community. At the same time, the analysis of migration flows reveals that transnational gentrifiers tend to dwell in the *Gòtic* as part of a transitory period. The tourist transformation of the neighbourhood, distressful as it may be for long-term Spanish residents, seems in fact to be a pull factor for young transnational populations. They could thus be characterised as a mobile and floating population as well, in between the stickier, sedentary character of long-term residents and the extremely short nature of visitors' transits. The point is that although the residential base of the *Gòtic* has not completely receded, the increasing substitution of long-term residents with transient dwellers is key to understanding the impacts of this process on community life. As revealed by our interviews, the overcrowding of public space, the noise at night-time, and the reorientation of the commercial structure to meet the demand of such groups, are all affecting the everyday life of elderly and long-term residents, especially when the social ties and support system that 'stable' community networks provide are also receding. If they do not leave the area for purely economic reasons, they may well decide to do so in search of a better quality of life in other neighbourhoods. This does have peculiar consequences in terms of the area dynamics, such as the erosion of a taxpayer base, democratic representation, and resident-oriented commercial and social services that are necessary to support the lives of long-term individuals who stay in the neighbourhood.

Thus, some key characteristics of tourist mobilities – for instance, their temporal and compressed patterns, their dependency on systems of signs (and increasingly on technologies) that decipher place and allow an easy anchoring to it, or their relatively loose rhythms in terms of day/night-time routines – exacerbate their competitive capacity over urban assets. On the one hand, these characteristics are not at odds with the spatial and social dwelling practices of some transnational hyper-mobile populations, who are indeed attracted to dwelling in 'touristy' areas. On the other hand, this assemblage of transient mobilities unsettles the position of 'stickier' and more dependent resident populations in the negotiation over 'moorings' (Hannam et al., 2006), such as housing, commercial structures, and other forms of social capital, ultimately provoking their abandonment from neighbourhoods of high tourist intensity. Eventually, a local and 'sedentary' resident population is replaced by transient dwellers, a floating transnational middle-class population that is extremely adaptive, especially in regards to practices of habitation (changing home frequently; renting with short-term contracts; sub-letting rooms to allow them to stay in expensive city centre locations; sharing home among fellow students or single expats, etc.).

In conclusion, tourism does drive gentrification, but a particular form of gentrification that may be better explained by considering a mobilities perspective, in which class determinants are as important as *negotiation in motion* – that is, power enacted by actual mobility, representations of mobility and embodiments of mobility (Jensen, 2010). Future research could be useful to unpack different aspects of this 'silent struggle' examining closely

the hindrances that 'living with tourists' produces for long-term residents, or assessing the role that housing and area renewal policies may have in moderating this pressure.

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