

How Do Barcelona and Madrid Cope with the Impacts of Globalisation?

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Abstract

The central aim of this article is to describe the state of art of the impact of globalisation on Barcelona and Madrid (Spain). It especially focuses on the transformations of their historic centres, the most accessible and highly contested spaces, and the reactions of their citizen movements and city councils. It begins by analysing the gentrification process. It then shows how these cities were even more intensively transformed by commercial gentrification, touristification and studentification, all within a general framework of financialisation. Consequently, both cities act like businesses, seeking high profits, and ignoring many of their citizens. Within this context, public policies have undergone a slight change of orientation. In this tense context, this article presents a series of reflections and suggestions for future action.

Keywords

gentrification – studentification – touristification – Madrid – Barcelona

1 Introduction

Cities are spaces that generate communal living and conflict. Lefebvre (1969) also states that everyday life is the screen onto which our society projects its lights and its shadows, its hollows and its planes, its power and its weaknesses. Today, the impact of neoliberalism has painted a global scenario of hyper-competitiveness through the promotion of city-brands (Harvey, 1989; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). This rivalry and passionate endeavour to position brands has intensified internal inequality and segregation (Marcuse, 1986; Sassen, 2014; Harvey, 2013), which has caused increasing breakdown of social cohesion. The impact of this is most intense in cities whose historical centres are the most coveted spaces and hubs for the clash between the opportunities of and tensions among diverse agents (Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Van der Borg *et al.* 1996; Hiernaux and González, 2014; Richards, 2016; Hernández-Ramírez, 2018).

There are similar urban dynamics in Barcelona and Madrid as a result of the two cities striving to become competitive. On the one hand, they have both somewhat rejected their historic centres; and on the other, they have both employed the political strategy of commodification of land, real estate speculation and expanding tourism. While urban centres became degraded and abandoned in the United States, in Europe the process has not been so linear. In the latter, the centres of cities like Barcelona and Madrid have benefited from their historical configuration and morphological, commercial and symbolic centrality. However, in the case of the two largest Spanish cities, this centrality in terms of functions and uses has implied a huge increase in pressure and interest from a wide range of capital and newcomers. Segregation and inequalities have become more visible due to this high degree of neoliberalism and polarisation. These transformative processes can mainly be observed in the central neighbourhoods of Barcelona and Madrid, i.e., the Raval and the Gòtic (Barcelona) and Lavapiés (Madrid).

Both cities have recently undergone major growth, Madrid from the 1980s and 1990s; Barcelona from the turn of the century. Both cities have reversed the trends of constant population loss through a series of evolutionary stages that have given rise to the consolidation of segregation between their centres and their peripheries through the processes of urban sprawl and residential differentiation. There is a clear difference between the northwest and southeast outskirts of Madrid (Leal and Domínguez, 2008), and between the northeast and northwest of Barcelona (Costa Losa and Porcel López, 2013). Their centres and peripheries feature intense demographic, economic, social, urban planning, political, and other differences as result of their local councils' market logics

and neoliberal policies, making both of them highly unequal and segregated cities. In the city centre, migrants and an ageing population coexist alongside gentrifiers, tourists and so on, giving rise to an extensive urban mosaic, and cities full of tension and contrasts.

The objective of this study is to show how neoliberal tendencies have affected these cities, especially their centres, and how through these apparently disconnected tendencies (gentrification, commodification, touristification, studentification and financialisation), working classes, the elderly, migrants, etc., have been forced out of their homes (Sassen, 2014) to be replaced by middle-high sectors, and financial capital. Despite significant (mainly political and economic) differences between Madrid and Barcelona, their central neighbourhoods serve to illustrate these processes as they are accessible and touristic, shaped by historical stages, and similar in terms of extension, population and density.

Methodologically, the article is based on a content analysis of media reporting on the impact of these processes and social resistance thereto, as well as policy documents related to local council strategies. It also involved participant observation (i.e. spending time with residents and engaging in numerous informal conversations during our many visits to the studied neighbourhoods) and more formal, in-depth interviews conducted between November 2014 and April 2018 with local council officials, the members/representatives of local organisations and local residents. These interviews typically lasted for one and half hours and questions were connected to their perception of the transformation and the resulting changes to everyday life in the neighbourhood.

2 Theoretical Framework: City as Exchange Value versus Use Value

Since the 1980s, the use of the term neoliberalism has expanded around the world and in all spheres, with multiple and contradictory meanings (Venugopal, 2014). Ong (2007: 1) refers to neoliberalism as “an economic tsunami that is gathering force across the planet”. On the one hand, this economic theory defends the priority of the market and the restriction of the role of the State, as well as the privatisation of the economy, and the exaltation of individualism and competitiveness. It promotes the establishment of market-friendly mechanisms and incentives to organise a wide range of economic, social and political activities. On the other hand, many academics focus on the intense effects of neoliberalism on territories: inequality, segregation, appropriation, expulsion, etc. (Smith, 1982; Piketty, 2000; Atkinson, 2003; Harvey, 23; Sassen,

2014). According to the World Inequality Report (2018), inequalities have vastly increased and major differences have been established between winners and losers. European cities have higher levels of polarisation in favour of rich sectors, as well as inequality and, above all, segregation.

This impact particularly affects urban centres, which are so highly privileged and contested in terms of capital interest. These have traditionally been the spaces that concentrate the most heritage, history, leisure and cultural facilities, are well-connected and are also spaces that offer investment opportunities. They tend to shift both demographically and sociologically and can become much more segregated than other areas of the city due to their changing inhabitants. Sassen (2014) describes this process as “expulsions”, both physically from the city centre and symbolically from society. Furthermore, historic centres are affected by the economic value of their brands in a context of globalisation and international competitiveness (Zukin, 1995).

There are three particularly prominent capitalist logics that act by reinforcing each other: gentrification, touristification and studentification. According to Glass (1964), gentrification refers to the arrival in specific neighbourhoods of middle-upper class populations that cause changes to the previous socio-economic characteristics. This gentrification goes along with commodification (Smith 1982; Cole, 1985), a parallel process according to which commercial gentrification replaces traditional trade and everyday facilities, and which is also linked to the new middle-upper classes. These are sometimes parallel processes or otherwise one leads to the other. Touristification is the transformation of a city into a monopolised and hyperspecialised landscape of tourist resources and activities (Lanfant, 1994). Intensified touristification since the beginning of the 21st century has led to new confrontations, tensions and challenges in city centres (Novy and Colomb 2016). And finally, studentification is the significant influx of students looking to learn at universities abroad or far from their homes (Smith, 2005), a phenomenon that has recently boomed in Madrid and Barcelona, as in other European cities (Hubbard, 2008). All these processes act together with financialisation (Epstein, 2005), whereby capitalists and corporations have appropriated city centres from a logic of mobility and change; while migrants, working classes, the elderly, traditional commerce, and so on have been forced to leave the central spaces due to the lack of affordable housing, public facilities and services, etc. These processes are sometimes noiseless, while in other cases there can be social resistance.

In this tense scenario, the public authorities have ambivalently promoted the logic of capital appropriation. However, in the recent history of these two

cities (since the 2015 elections¹), different progressive governments have sought to counteract these trends, with more or less success, sometimes allying with a particular social base or otherwise confronting them in a logic that is hard to diagnose, mainly due to the lack of a temporal perspective. Likewise, and in response to these pressures, social activism has had the possibility and capacity to organise resistance and a collective project. Lefebvre (1969) believed in the changing power and capacity of the working classes, while later, Harvey (2013) and Soja (2008) updated these organisational postulates on the basis of different social class variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, and so on. New residents and stakeholders have also organised themselves in defence of their interests with regard to such varied issues as the Airbnb boom, the accommodation sector, second generation gentrifiers, big firms, and others. However, these are frequently unable to coordinate full collective resistance as they are focused more on their differences than on their common concerns (De Sousa Santos, 2014). In both cities, the active and activist role played historically² and currently by neighbourhood movements is especially important.

These resistance movements seek to turn residents into citizens as part of the struggle for the right to the city and for the right to be different (Uitermark et al., 2012). They have also been consolidated as benchmark organisations for the generation of relationships, critical spirit and social capital based on bonds of trust. A significant number of experts and political representatives arose from these associations and led the first local democratic governments (1979), generating a certain convergence between the movements and the administration. The role of neighbourhood associations has continued for decades and today they are one of the main civic movements that criticise and demand proposals for the city and its people, which they achieve by acting as a network that connects different social and urban movements (Vilà, 2014).

3 Madrid and Barcelona: Two Segregated Cities

Madrid and Barcelona have undergone intense demographic and social changes in recent years, which have increased the inequalities that have been

1 *Barcelona en Comú* and *Ahora Madrid* – two most progressivist and left parties in Spain – gained the municipal elections after long period of right party governing.

2 ~~In the early 1980s after the Spanish Dictatorship.~~ The relevance of current movements rooted in post-~~11M~~ ^{11M} ~~which battles~~ are not the same than the neighbourhood associations ~~(at the beginning of the Spanish democracy).~~

developing for decades. Their centres coincide with the limits of the historic cities and, as a result, have been involved in successive stages of development and transformation. In both cities, Ciutat Vella (Figure 1a) and Distrito Centro (Figure 1b), i.e., their respective historical centres, are highly densified (252.2 inhab/ha in Madrid and 234 inhab/ha in Barcelona) and are administrative districts that include several neighbourhoods with very different characteristics. For all these reasons, the two centres are currently heterogeneous areas where highly diverse realities coexist (Vilà and Domínguez, 2015), and which play a strategic role in the functioning of the city as a whole. Urban reform, commitment to new activities, an increase in tourism and the massive arrival of new immigrant and student populations have turned these central areas into major points of reference, where development processes are happening together with negative processes of degradation.



FIGURE 1A Districts of Barcelona

WIKIMEDIA (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BARCELONA_DISTRICTS_MAP.SVG)



FIGURE 1B Districts of Madrid

WIKIMEDIA (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/archive/4/4c/20171201045537%21DISTRITOS_DE_MADRID_%28ANTIGUA_DISTRIBUCI%C3%B3N%29.svg)

4 Recent Demographic Trends in Madrid and Barcelona: from Loss of Population to Growth, Decline and Changes

There have been three major stages in the recent demographic evolution of both cities: a) 1970–2001; b) 2001–2011; and c) 2011–2018. The *first stage* between 1970 and 2001 was characterised by decentralisation and suburbanisation, with migration of the mainly young adult population to the metropolitan areas or

peripheries. As López-Gay (2017) points out, the generations born between 1960 and 1975, the so-called baby boomers, were the principal protagonists of metropolitan suburbanisation in both cities, who were faced by a more accessible real estate market when leaving home. This marked the beginning of a stage when the relative importance of the city centre began to decline steadily. While in 1981 the city centres of Barcelona and Madrid represented 41.3% and 67.4% of the total metropolitan population respectively, by the end of the period, in 2001, they represented 34.3% in Barcelona and 55% in Madrid (Bayona and Pujadas, 2014).

In the *second stage* (2001 to 2011), the cities regained their populations and a stage of continuous increase began, largely due to the arrival of foreign population in the city centre. It is interesting to highlight that the 2005–2008 period was one of higher mobility and economic expansion, and the second, from 2009–2011, was a period of economic crisis. Simultaneously, the so-called “Spanish property bubble” created a feedback loop, leading to extreme and chaotic urban growth (Burriel, 2008). During the 2001–2011 period, main residences in the Barcelona city centre increased by 15%, while in the rest of the province, they increased by 28%. In Madrid, the differences in growth between core and periphery were even larger an increase by 22.2% in the number of main dwellings in the former, compared with 44.8% in the latter. For example, in 2008 more than 40% of moves in Barcelona involved foreigners (Bayona-i-Carraso *et al.*, 2017). In short, Barcelona and Madrid entered the twenty-first century at the reurbanisation stage, that is, one in which their urban centres regained population (Champion, 2001).

Finally, the *third stage* covers the period from 2011 to 2018, and was one of demographic decline, including in city centres. Until 2011 there was a decrease in immigration and an increase in emigration, which was concentrated in the centre of the city and continued until the last two years of this stage, whereupon there was a slight upturn in the city centres of both Barcelona and Madrid, whose populations represented 33.6% and 48.9% of their respective total metropolitan areas (Figure 2).

An analysis of the main population indicators at the beginning of the 90's shows a highly ageing, autochthonous population, with a very low presence of population born abroad and mainly of middle-low socioeconomic class with a high percentage of people with insufficient education and very few with higher education. Although Madrid and Barcelona share this general profile, Barcelona had a noticeably older population (ageing index of 248% compared to 100% in Madrid) and a somewhat greater weight of foreign-born population. Data from 2001 shows a greater presence of university graduates in the centre of Madrid, as a consequence of the lesser degradation of its city centre.

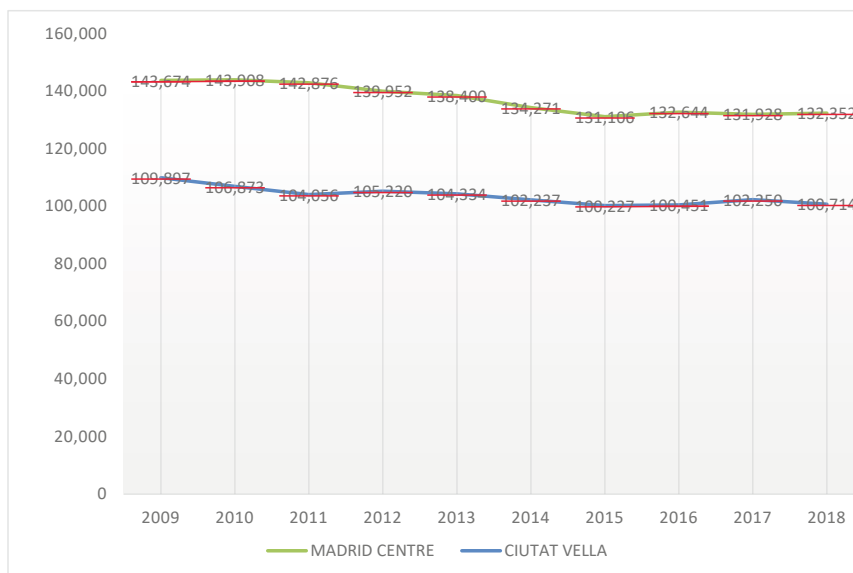


FIGURE 2 Evolution of population in the centres of Madrid and Barcelona (2009–2018)
BY THE AUTHORS, BASED ON MADRID AND BARCELONA CITY COUNCIL DATA

Today (2017), the age pyramids show how much has changed, with both centres being remarkably rejuvenated, especially by the arrival of predominantly foreign population ([Pyramids 1 and 2](#)). This rejuvenation has also altered the composition by gender. While in 1991, there were more adult women, there has been a shift towards a greater weight of men of working age. However, there were other changes besides sex and age.

There have been two other relevant changes: on the one hand, the massive arrival of foreign population that in Barcelona now represents 52.5% of the total population of the city centre and in Madrid 30.8%; and on the other hand, the increase in the population with a higher education (30.6% in Barcelona and 39.7% in Madrid) (Bayona-i-Carrasco and Pujadas, 2018). These changes have been more intense in Barcelona than in Madrid (Table 1). This data, together with an increase in the indicator of Disposable Family Income in both cases, is a clear suggestion of gentrification.

5 Two Urban Centres with a Tendency Towards Gentrification

Thus, during the eighties and nineties, the upper and middle class populations of Madrid and Barcelona moved to the periphery, leaving the working classes

TABLE 1 Population indicators. Centre of Barcelona (Ciutat Vella) and Central District of Madrid (1991–2017)

	Barcelona				Madrid			
Indicators	1991	2001	2011	2017	1991	2001	2011	2017
Sex ratio	87.4	98.6	112.0	109.3	88.8	85.0	98.4	99.3
Population 0 - 14 years (%)	10.6	9.7	10.7	10.8	15.1	9.5	8.7	8.7
Population 15 - 64 years (%)	63.0	66.7	74.0	75.5	69.8	68.4	75.3	75.0
Population, 65 years and more (%)	26.4	23.6	15.3	13.7	15.1	22.1	16.0	16.3
Age mean	46	44	41	41	39.1	43.6	42.3	44.0
Index of ageing	248.7	243.7	142.2	126.5	100.0	232.5	183.2	187.9
Index of overageing	22.7	26.9	36.6	36.9	20.7	30.8	38.2	36.6
Population born in the city (%)	53.1	45.5	32.7	30.4		48.6	39.5	37.5
Population born in the rest of Spain (%)	41.2	30.3	20.2	17.1		33.7	27.8	31.7
Population born abroad (%)	5.7	24.2	47.1	52.5	2.9	17.8	32.7	30.8
Ratio of graduates (%)	6.1	13.7	23.7	30.6		20.3	31.9	39.7
Single-person households (%)	30.5	38.3	34.9	37.8				48.5

SOURCE: BY THE AUTHORS, BASED ON THE POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS 1991 AND 2001 AND ON THE CONTINUOUS POPULATION REGISTER 2017.

in the city centre. Meanwhile, from the 1990s, immigrants arrived and settled in the city centre. Later in this period of intense inward and outward migratory movement, certain sectors of the middle-upper class and different population sectors (e.g. the LGBT community, one-person households or couples with or without children, younger people with a higher level of education) typically returned to the centre, attracted by the availability of rented accommodation, a charming accessible area, cultural facilities, particular lifestyles, etc.

Currently, in Madrid, 38% of the population in the centre has a higher education compared to an average of 26% in the city as a whole (Madrid City Council, 2017). In Barcelona, the difference is minimal: 30.5% as opposed to 30.9%. In the first wave, arrivals in Barcelona centre were young people with less purchasing power but in the second and third stages, the new arrivals were of a higher socioeconomic level, so-called super-gentrification (Lees 2003). In the case of Madrid, inward migration began in the eighties, led at first by the LGBT population in the neighbourhood of Chueca, to later spread to other downtown neighbourhoods, such as Universidad, Justicia

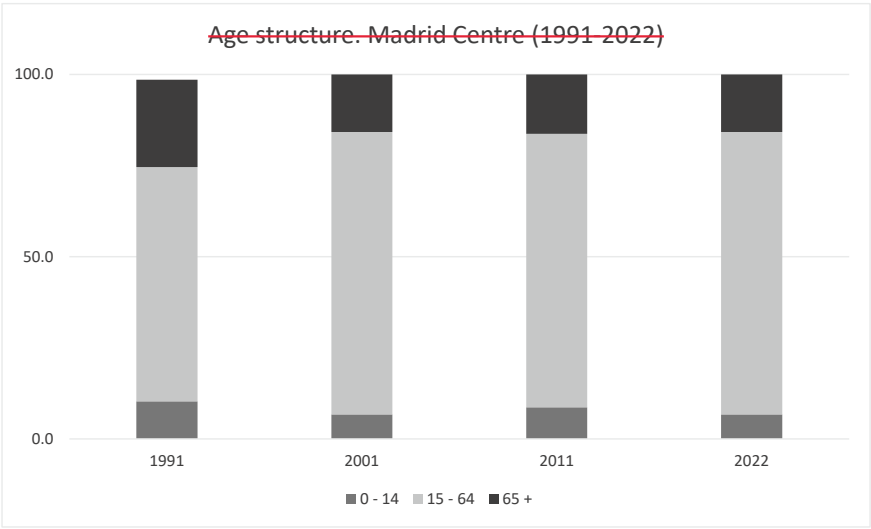


FIGURE 3A ~~Set of pyramids 1: age in Barcelona city centre: 1991, 2000, 2017~~
BY THE AUTHORS, BASED ON THE POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS,
1991 AND 2001 AND THE CONTINUOUS POPULATION REGISTER ~~2017~~

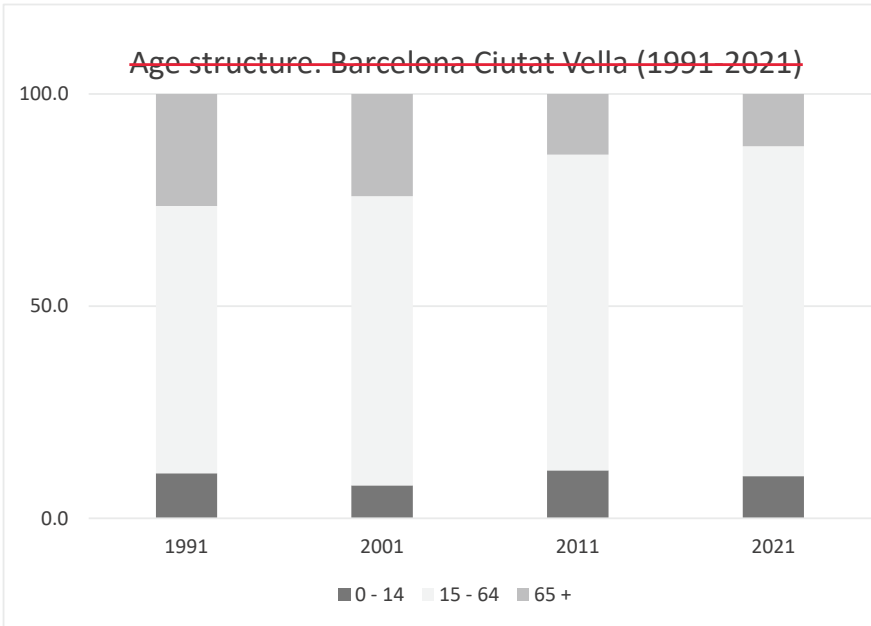


FIGURE 3B ~~Set of pyramids 2: age in Madrid city centre: 1991, 2000, 2017~~
BY THE AUTHORS, BASED ON THE POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS,
1991 AND 2001 AND THE CONTINUOUS POPULATION REGISTER ~~2017~~

and Embajadores. During the crisis period (2008–2014), the central district of Madrid's gross income per capita rose by 5.7%, being one of the three districts with the greatest increase in this indicator, while the average for the city as a whole decreased by -0.2% (Madrid City Council, 2017). In more or less the same period in Barcelona (2007–2016), the Ciutat Vella district experienced the greatest growth in income per capita. An analysis of the household disposable income indicator suggests the same idea: Ciutat Vella rose from 68.1% in 2001 to 86.9% in 2016.

At the same time, there was an evident process whereby traditional trade was replaced by more modern trade, aimed at gentrifiers, tourists, students, etc., and displacing population groups and traders located in central or valued areas (Cordero and Salinas, 2017; González and Waley, 2013). It is observed that traditional shops were replaced to satisfy new demands and consumption patterns: fresh and local products, in trendy stores and vintage spaces, what is known as trendification or gentrification of trade. Hyde (2014) analyses how these processes are driven by the diversified tastes of the upper classes for authentic urban experiences, and the need to serve a wide variety of tourism experiences (Dwyer, et. al, 2009) especially of a cultural or gastronomic nature, with the transformation of local supply markets into gourmet markets being the most representative example of traditional and/or symbolic spaces being adapted to new needs (Coles, 2014; Crespi-Vallbona and Domínguez-Pérez, 2016).

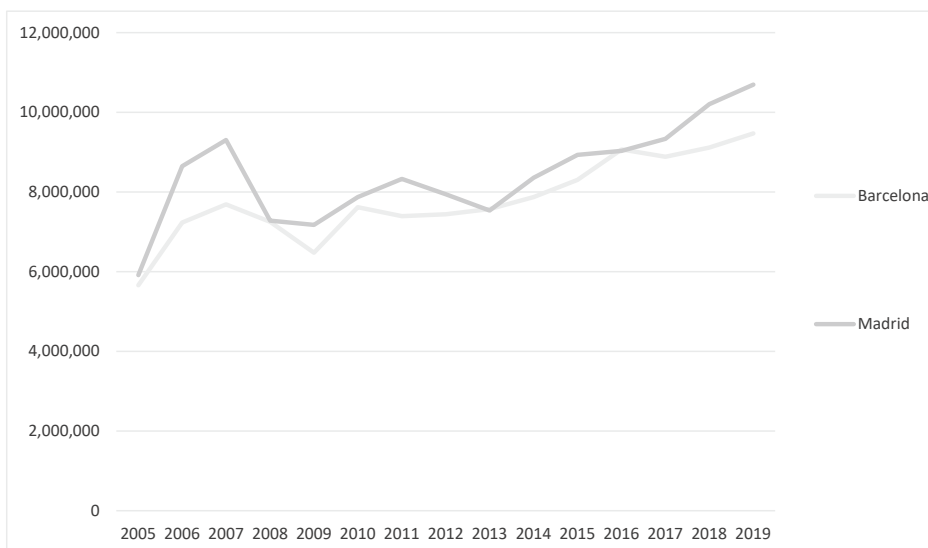


FIGURE 4 Madrid and Barcelona. Evolution of international tourism (2005–2019)
BY THE AUTHORS, BASED ON TURISME DE BARCELONA DATA

6 Two Attractive Cities for Tourism, Especially in Their Urban Centres

In 2017, urban tourism grew by 7.7%, having been especially boosted by international markets (ECM, 2018). These rising numbers of tourists have led to certain impacts on urban centres (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007; Postma and Schmuecker, 2017) including a significant presence of massification and loss of authenticity (Donaire, 2008; Herzer, 2008). Madrid and Barcelona are the two most popular cities for tourists in Spain and have therefore undergone the greatest impact (Figure 4), including intense development of tourist accommodation, which has been especially dramatic in the case of horizontal or collaborative accommodation (private residential housing used to house tourists). The main intermediaries, such as Airbnb and Homeaway, use websites to offer flats for rent by tourists both legally and illegally, which has means there is less accommodation available for rent by local residents. Madrid had 10,564 accommodation units available on the Airbnb platform in 2015, which had risen to 17,301 in 2019 (Insideairbnb.com, 2019). In Barcelona, from 632 legal tourist accommodation establishments in 2010, there were 9,606 in 2014 (Data from PEUAT, the Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation, 2017).

The conversion of housing into accommodation for visitors has caused an out-migration of residents, a shortage in housing, and increasing prices, which also means that other residents are excluded because they have so few options for moving into the area (López-Gay and Cocola Gant, 2016). This has led to a vast presence of tourists and floating population in the central areas, and a reduction in the lower class and immigrant population, as well as the disappearance of traditional trade.

7 Two Attractive Cities for the New Class of Students

Finally, the democratisation of the educational sector has increased the community of international students and their socioeconomic level everywhere. As more and more students look to travel away from their homes and even abroad to further their education (OCDE, 2011), the phenomenon of studentification (Smith and Holt, 2007) has, in recent decades, led to the consideration of academic tourism as a new typology of tourism with particularly distinctive features (UNWTO, 2011; Rodríguez et al., 2012). UNWTO defines this category as all students that travel away from their usual residence for a short period of time (less than one year), inside their own country (domestic academic tourism) or abroad (international academic tourism) for training, education and/or research. Rodríguez, Martínez-Roget and Pawlowska (2012) state that

the economic impact for cities that host academic tourists is similar to that of more traditional stays.

Spain is one of the leading countries for receiving Erasmus students, and Madrid and Barcelona are among the most attractive of its cities (*El Economista*, April 14th, 2016), and their city centres are particularly sought-after places. A vibrant student community of middle-upper socioeconomic level living in the city centre (Madrid and Barcelona are the two Spanish cities with the highest enrolment fees (*El Plural*, September 13th, 2017; *Idealista*, November 1st, 2018), and also to live) can revitalise their public spaces, leisure areas, streets, and so on.

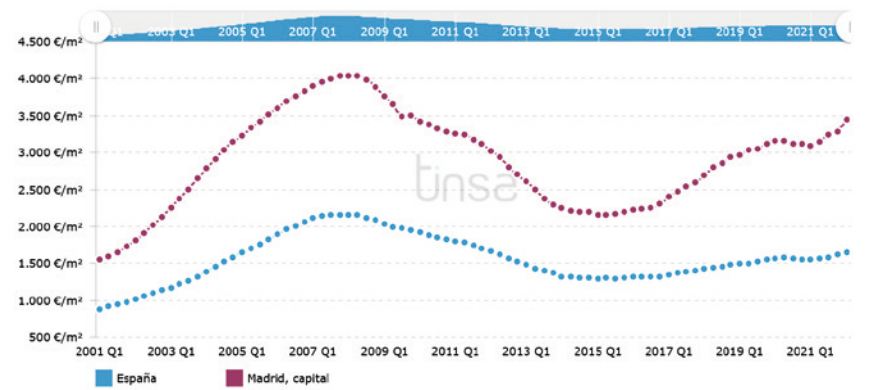


FIGURE 5A Second-hand housing prices, Barcelona and Madrid average (2001–2018)
TINSA

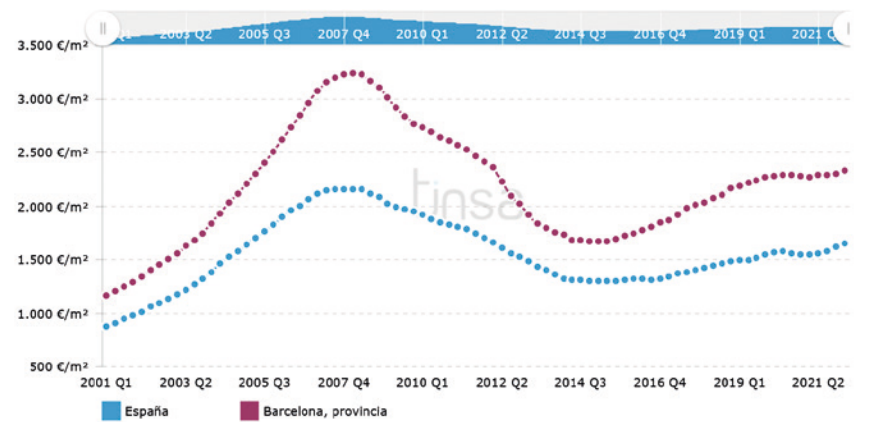


FIGURE 5B Second-hand housing prices, Barcelona and Madrid average (2001–2018)
TINSA

8 **Rising of Housing Prices**

This specialisation in attracting a highly qualified population has a general effect on housing whereby it has become more exclusive (and excluding), and as this phenomenon spreads outwards from the central neighbourhoods, there is a progressive suburbanisation of poverty (Hochstenbach and Musterd, 2016). This also generates changes to the tenure system, with the emergence and consolidation of rental as an alternative to ownership (Módenes and López-Colás, 2014); rising housing prices (Figures 5, 6 and 7); and tighter conditions for obtaining a mortgage, which also has an impact on the behaviour of residential mobility (López-Gay, 2017).

Also in this period, international investors have become interested in purchasing residential buildings (Sassen, 2014), which is described as a good investment opportunity in the specialised economic press (ABC, March 30th, 2018; Finanzas, January 4th, 2018), as shown in Figure 6.

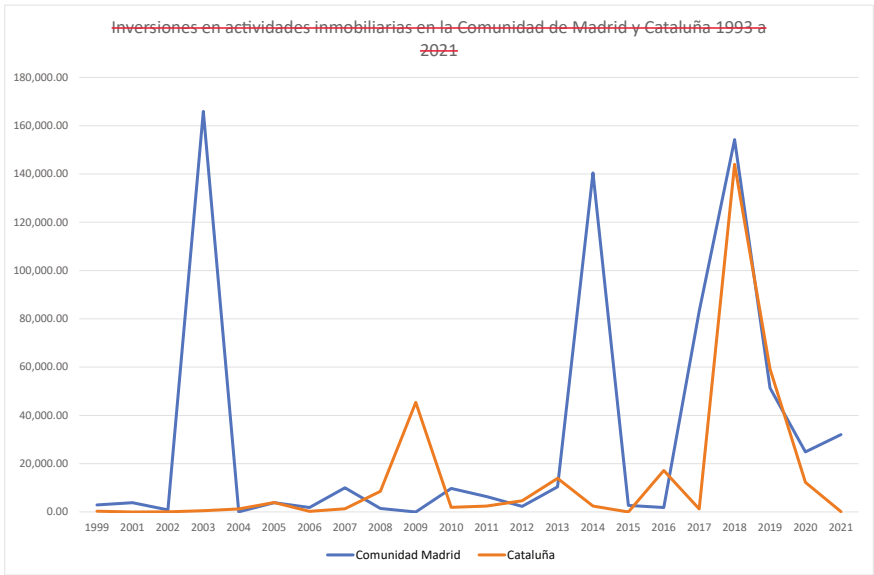


FIGURE 6 Gross investment flows from other countries in real estate activities in Madrid region and Catalonia (1993–2017)
STATISTICS OF EXTERNAL INVESTMENT IN SPAIN, DATAINVEX ([HTTP://DATAINVEX.COMERCIO.ES/PRINCIPAL_INVEX.ASPX](http://datainvex.comercio.es/principal_invex.aspx))

9 Urban Policy with a Strategic Neoliberal Tendency

These trends are related to the trajectory of the public policies implemented during this period. Most urban regeneration interventions from the end of the 20th century in Madrid (Leal and Sorando, 2016) and Barcelona took place in their historic centres. The appropriation and accumulation of the historic centre of Madrid by the dominant capitalist classes have changed its morphological structure as well as introducing new ideological and cultural settings (Morcillo Álvarez, 2017). Barcelona is somewhat different due to the effect of the Llei de Barris (2004), which seeks to enhance the whole city, including the periphery, and not only the central area. Hence activity has been more extensive in Barcelona and more retracted in Madrid.

These market logics can be contrasted against the public authorities, who play an important role in this game of interests, either by supporting or hindering it. Both cities underwent a major turnaround in the last municipal elections (2015), whereby two conservative governments (the *Partido Popular* in Madrid, *Convergència i Unió* in Barcelona) were replaced by two progressive left-wing parties that had only recently appeared in the political panorama and featured a strong presence of social activists. Both cities, however, have very different political backgrounds in terms of their municipal governments. While Madrid has been governed by conservative forces since the nineties (three legislatures from 1991–2003, 2003–2011 and 2011–2015), Barcelona has been in the hands of left-wing formations since the first democratic elections in 1977 (*Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya*, sometimes in coalition with *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* and *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds*, forming a left-wing tripartite). But despite their different political trajectories, neoliberal logics have been present in both cities for decades.

However, from 2015 onwards, the results of elections have reflected the emergence of resistance movements against all these aforementioned changes. The symbolism of both mayors (Manuela Carmena in Madrid and Ada Colau in Barcelona, the latter well-known for her background as an activist in defence of citizens' rights and housing as the leader of the *Plataforma por los Afectados por la Hipoteca* (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages – PAH)) represents not only a shift to the left in both city councils, but also reveals a change in politics and its relationship with social movements. The two city councils set out on their respective political adventures in 2015, against a background of highly unequal urban structures and deep-rooted neoliberal economic and social ideologies (as observed for Madrid by Mendez, 2018; and for Barcelona by Degen, 2004; Palou, 2006; Richards, 2016).

In this most recent stage, interventions in Barcelona have focused on its areas and uses. The Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT), approved in 2017,³ orders and controls tourist accommodation, guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the city's inhabitants and establishing a zoning of accommodation. This includes Zone 1, the decrease zone (Ciutat Vella, Poblenou, Vila Olímpica, Poble Sec, Hostafrancs and Sant Antoni), where new accommodation cannot be opened even if others close; Zone 2, the freezing zone, where new accommodation can only be opened if others close; and Zones 3 and 4, where growth is limited. However, limitations on licences for tourist flats and the closure of illegally established ones does not solve the local residents' main concern: rising house prices, both of those for sale and for rent (as Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró (2018) analysed in the neighbourhood of La Barceloneta). The local government is implementing several measures to try to curb rising rental costs, such as expanding the public housing stock, with the construction of new housing and asking financial institutions and large owners to give or sell properties for use as council housing. The main cause of evictions is unpaid rent, so the council is urging the competent administrations to implement measures to limit the price of rent in the free market. Public subsidies have been extended to the payment of rent, but potential beneficiaries must have a net income of less than 16,000 euros and the rent of the flat may not exceed 800 euros.

Trade is also changing. Within this framework, the city councils' priority is to actively support small local businesses and commodities rather than allowing a tourism monoculture to take root. The Uses Plan of the Ciutat Vella District is one such example that regulates activities (catering, food stores and accommodation), delimiting areas where the establishment of new activities is highly restricted, others that are more intermediate and others still that are more permissive.

In the case of Madrid, since 2015, political interventions have been undertaken to limit the presence of traffic in the city centre, as well as the regeneration of public spaces, commercial actions (such as easing restrictions on opening hours), pedestrianisation of central areas, etc. (Madrid City Council website). However, as some of these measures have focused on the embellishment of these areas, they have sometimes caused the adverse effect of causing housing prices to rise.

3 At that moment, this law was rejected by a court's decision in March 2021. However, another PEUAT has been approved in December 2021, with similar objectives.

In short, despite these limited attempts to generate change, the centres and their neighbourhoods have continued to regenerate and become more attractive, while at the same time encouraging some residents to opt to sell their homes in order to capitalise, others to invest in the centre, and others to leave due to their deteriorated living conditions (in terms of more noise, more dirt, less local commerce, intensified use of public space, etc.) and the whole change in lifestyle change that this entails.

10 Spaces of Articulated Social Resistance

Social activism movements have formed and risen in response to all these appropriation and commodification processes, defending the right to the city and to be different. In Madrid, such movements have included *Acibu*, *Lavapiés donde vas*, *Espacio social de Tabakalera*, *Somos Malasaña* and *PAH centro*, while similar movements in Barcelona include the *Federació d'Associacions de Veïns de Barcelona* (FAVB), *SetNet Fem Plaça*, *Plataforma Aire Net*, *Ciutadà del Parlament* and *Plataforma de veïns i veïnes contra els Habitatges d'Ús Turístic de Barcelona*. These initiatives work from different fronts, sometimes united, sometimes separately, but in all cases demanding a new model of city and constantly putting pressure on their respective local governments.

11 Conclusions

This article aims to present the main urban transformations to globalised cities, specifically focusing on Barcelona and Madrid, which have followed comparable trends and represent useful laboratories for study. They share certain similarities in terms of the evolution of their urban centres, first through the peripheralisation of the population and abandonment of the centre (leading to a predominantly ageing and immigrant population), and later, the return of the middle-upper classes and young people, and the arrival of academic tourism. The recent loss of population and increase in housing prices in city centres has occurred in parallel with gentrification, touristification, studentification and foreign investment processes. Furthermore, the incidence of conservative municipal policies until 2015 has concentrated urban regeneration in the touristified centres, accelerating all these processes and leading to the erosion of the city as a social, political and common good. The social response

has involved changes to the political directions of local governments and the organisation of social resistance movements that are willing to criticise, debate, and struggle for the right to the city, for the right to be different and for the right to not be silenced. This requires negotiation. This requires conciliated formula to foster coexistence. This requires tolerance and urban justice. Cities will go on being spaces of conflict. Popular movements will continue to campaign for their right to the city and communal living. City councils will deal with these matters in accordance with their party interests.

The different contexts from 2015 onwards between the two cities, with both city councils with left-wing parties looking for implement progressive and similar approach scenarios that allow us to venture different changes and policies from previous periods with conservative governments. In the case of Madrid, the interruption of this progressive programmes by the arrival again of conservative governments (from 2019) makes the result evaluation of its political actions quite difficult. In the case of Barcelona, the continuity of the progressive party in the city council has supposed the maintenance of a specific policy (PEUAT2021) to control and measure the concession of tourist licenses avoiding a density of tourism accommodation facilities in specific areas of the city to protect residents' right to rent a house.

The shaped synergies and collaborations between social movements and the Barcelona City Council are key to advance in a better understanding and conciliation about the social and economic residents' needs and the international tourist projection of this destination. This is a first step to build a co-management of a mature tourist city with a network governance pattern and a bottom-up important role that looks for negotiate good conditions and actions instead to impose them. This way to run a city is very complex and difficult, but also, much more inclusive and egalitarian.

Far from the fragmented logic of the city and specific physical parts of it, which benefits capitalism, a city needs to be viewed as an integral whole. The emerging vulnerability and inequality need to be countered and more equitable and inclusive societies must be promoted instead. According to the OECD (2018), the city of competitiveness needs to be combined with the city of social cohesion, and this is especially so in the cases of Madrid and Barcelona, where policy needs to be more in line with the promotion of equality and the reduction of segregation, which is happening more intensely in Barcelona than it is in Madrid. The real challenge is to keep on with this way of doing and making decisions independently of the political party running the local administration. Cogovernance with all the stakeholders should be the critical rule.

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