



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

La Flor y Muerte de un Barrio

An Ethnography on Comprehensive Gentrification and Class Struggle in Urban Majorca

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3. CLOSURE? *LA MUERTE Y FLOR DE UN BARRIO*

... out of diamonds nothing is born, from manure flowers grow (Fabrizio De André 1967).

It has taken the guardians of philosophic faith some twenty years to discover the existence of a working class. At a time when sociologists have come together to decree that the working class no longer exists, the urbanists themselves have invented the inhabitant without waiting for either philosophers or sociologists. One must give them credit for being among the first to discern the new dimensions of the proletariat. By a definition all the more precise and much less abstract they have been able, using the most flexible training methods, to guide almost all of society toward a less brutal but radical proletarianization (Vaneigem 1997[1961]: 127).

We now find ourselves back in Ciutat, home. Relaxing, I think of all I have left behind, but always with my mind ahead... (Morell Huguet 1979: 164-5).

3.1. The uses of scale and heritage in comprehensive gentrification

As the descriptive sections of the first and second parts of the thesis have shown, the gentrification of Es Barri was indeed comprehensive. Not only because of the «comprehensive renewal» that the «Comprehensive Implementation Scheme for Sa Gerreria» brought by with its multi-scalar renewal combination seen in Section 1.4.3.2., but also also because the newcomers to Es Barri were both owners and tenants moving into new-built areas or the regenerated old blocks that remained there. It was also comprehensive because it meant a residential gentrification that at one point was threatened by a commercial gentrification based on nightlife first and tourism later, and because it implied the gentrification of the mediating planning schemes.

Furthermore, the very same institutions and social networks that had emerged in Es Barri before the reinvestment period, as well as the pioneering social organisation of the neighbourhood also became gentrified. Even people like Rafi self-gentrified in the expectation of a better and improved future. Yet this comprehensive gentrification process would not have been possible without two specific ideas that paved the way from the very beginning. The five publications that make the second part of this thesis are mainly about the ways in which the neighbourhood scale and the heritage preservation efforts at stake contributed to the gentrification of Es Barri in this long fifty-year period that stretched from the aftermath of the Spanish Civil war to the supposed culmination of a process described in Section 1.4.3.2.1

These two concepts, scale and preservation, also mentioned at different points of the first part of the thesis, allowed gentrification to be even more comprehensive than had been foreseen by the culminating renewal schemes. I began this thesis with the argument that I came to the field to research neighbourhoods and heritage, but not classes. I will briefly look at class in the final section (Section 3.2.) of this closure by teasing out the theoretical implications my urban-labour hypothesis contains (see Section 2.6.). Here, though, I wish to look into these two ideas, scale and preservation so that I can draw some conclusions on how comprehensive the nevertheless partial gentrification of Es Barri has been. Neighbourhood and heritage are indeed powerful realities that need some kind of clarification.

As this thesis has shown so far, a consequence of the gentrification process that has taken place in Es Barri has meant a far-reaching reformulation of the social relations that define the political economic context for the revaluation of its built environment. This renewal process has been publically boosted through images of improved lifestyle consumption and the full enjoyment of heritageable picturesque settings. The desire of exploiting Es Barri as a new centrality of often-conflictive mixed uses has served as a vehicle for understanding urban policies through the contradictions and ambivalences the «enjoyment of heritage» fosters. Departing from the findings of a qualitative research grounded in theory, this thesis has shown the guidelines of this urban renewal.

It has also illustrated the major consequences and responses that such new centralities yield within the realm of what has come to be known as civil society. The analysis has focused on the hegemony of urbanism, its urban regimes and the gentrification processes they have not only mediated but also managed, in what some have come to call the neoliberal city (Hackworth 2007) based upon a politics of place. Within such a dynamic, urbanism as planning has become an urbanism as a way of life, permeating culture, now a space where power is managed as a neoliberal governing practice (Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008).²³⁶ This neoliberal shift has made

²³⁶ Much has been written on neoliberalism in the last two decades. The peak of publications on the topic began in 2000 when some authors already foresaw the importance it would have in the following decade (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001[2000]). It is impossible to review here the range

use of how civil society organisations, individuals and groups of individuals have dealt with the renewal processes such as the one that has taken place in Es Barri.

«Neoliberalism» perhaps seems too big a word here. However, the prolific discussion that, in recent decades, has surrounded the stuff neoliberalism is made of, and the stuff it makes, proves we are facing a process that is far from minimal and accomplished; a process that has gone to the roots of our everyday practices and is ongoing. The major transformation of the industrial/manufacturing-based wealth producing economy into a service sector asset-based economy has not stopped yet. The policy shifts that the neoliberal turn has signified are far too many to account for in detail here. Among the several policy shifts that we encounter in a context that is not at

of issues the topic has raised. Although Harvey (2005) is perhaps the work I have followed the most, there are many other authors that also offer interesting insights also from a theoretical standpoint, albeit with slightly different political programmes in mind (e.g. many of the materials found in Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005). The production in geography (e.g. Brenner et al 2009, Peck and Tickell 2012), has by far exceeded that in social anthropology (e.g. Hilgers 2010) and ethnography (e.g. Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Dávila 2004). Most authors attempt to define its contents (e.g. Anderson 2003 and Gledhill 2007). Others have stressed how broad the term is and the various uses it has been put to in terms of a political theory that scrutinises the capitalist system (Chomsky 1999, Ferguson 2009, Centeno and Cohen 2012, Collier 2012, Dean 2012, Wacquant 2012, Bockman 2013, Ganti 2014, Venugopal 2015, etc.).

This is certainly true to the extent that it has been theorised from the relation it maintains with the state, government and bureaucracy (e.g. Lyon-Callo and Hyatt 2003, Jessop 2004, Wacquant 2009(2004), Graeber 2010), from its ideological implications (Tsatsanis 2009), its class dimension (Schmidt 204, Tyler 2015), the agency it contains (Lazzaratto 2009, Gershon 2011). Some have looked for its limits (Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008) or have explored it under the light of the current crisis (Kalb 2012). The approaches that criticise neoliberalism have been in turn criticised (Freeman 2007) Furthermore, it is a concept that has had many concrete applications: Heritage and issues of time (e.g. Herzfeld 2009b and 2010, Scher 2011), bohemia (Hancock 2015), food consumption (Harris 2009), and, nearer to this thesis, the city and the urban (Gough 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002, Weber 2005, Brenner and Theodore 2002 and 2005, Hackworth 2007, Ruben and Maskovsky 2008, Jones and Popke 2010, Peck et al 2013, etc.). Its end has also been predicted (e.g. Bevir 2011, Comaroff 2011), sometimes in a very positive way (Petras and Veltmeyer 2012).

As this list proves, neoliberalism, and its critique, does not follow a unique formula or a monolithic recipe. Its diverse presence responds to the particularities of different geographical contexts and its embeddedness in previous governing practices, in what Brenner and Theodore (2002) call the «actually existing neoliberalism». This project does not only rely on the destruction and dismantling of the welfare state but also on the creation and consolidation of neoliberalised state forms, modes of governance and regulatory relations (Peck and Tickell 2002 and Harvey 2006b). Likewise, neoliberalism is «a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurship freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free market and free trade» (Harvey 2005: 2).

all new (i.e. privatisation of public services, elimination of subsidies and withdrawal from social provisions), we find an interest in the encouragement of gentrification and the creation of new centres of «improved» consumption. Although the process is in itself far from loose, several of its main features are identifiable for analytical purposes.

First, the adaptation of cities to the «new economy» is best captured by the tensions that arise from what often appears to be the relation between the «space of flows» and the «space of places» (Castells 2001), and more particularly the adjustments the latter goes through in order to accommodate the former. I say «appears», though, because rather than place opposed to space, what we encounter here is a capital-class relation (Merrifield 1993). The spatial etch of these shifts has spread across the globe in the form of urban regeneration to the extent that it is referred to as a global urban strategy aimed at generalising gentrification (Smith 2006). The disinvestment of capital in urban land is usually shown and explained to the public as if it was a «naturalised» process of physical and social degradation that leads to the blight and brown fielding of urban environments.

Such a postulate legitimises the redevelopment of urban land given its current obsolescence (Weber 2002), outdateness and misuse. Other accounts though, and this is something I have written on extensively in this thesis, signal disinvestment in land as a precondition for its future reinvestment and consequent gentrification (Smith 1996). This happens to the extent that «fundamental inequalities of capitalist property markets (...) favour the creation of urban environments to serve the needs of capital accumulation, often at the expense of home, community, family, and everyday social life» (Lees et al 2008: 73). Nevertheless, it is precisely the impoverished and unstructured everyday lives of these dispossessed groups of people that actually help to labour the assumed lowest and worst uses of the capitalised ground rent.

Second, within the fittings of the state into the logic of the market's hegemonic neoliberalism signals, civil society, understood as a realm that lies beyond the state and the market, plays a controvert role (Harvey 2005, but also see all the other authors mentioned in footnote 236, pp. 370-1). Whereas, on the one hand there is the general assumption that opposition to the neoliberal urbanism deployed by the state is to be found in «civil society»; on the other hand, «civil society», or the organisations that

claim to be part of it, have often played a key role in the formation of neoliberal urban governing practices. At the least, they have smoothed their way (e.g. by adding value to places).²³⁷ The relation between neoliberal urbanism and civil society is a question of hegemony.²³⁸

Third, the logic of heritage and the neighbourhood ideal in the urban land and real estate market has taken a step forward from the monumentalisation of architecture and of community (Herzfeld 1991). As Howard puts it for the case of heritage, but it would also serve for the neighbourhood ideal, «if heritage is not portable, the transfer between current owners and future owners is likely going to be up-market» (Howard 2003: 231). Heritage and the neighbourhood community now not only continue to function as an urban management device thanks to tourism (see Orbasli 2000, for the case of heritage), but they also serve to «create» a new real estate practice of disinvestment in urban environments within the gentrification process and it jells a particular cultural environment for the expansion of capital.

This cultural environment comes to be thanks to the capitalist order that maintains the modes of action and the dispositions that are coherent with it (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 10-1). Moreover, it needs the help of those dissatisfied with the outcome of capital, in order to find the moral support it lacks and to incorporate devices of justice (ibid: 71). The construction of a unique image for places (special neighbourhoods, heritage sites), brings forth mechanisms of identity appropriation strongly induced by a market that maps centrality, boosting gentrification, the establishment of companies and the rise of the real estate value. Thus, heritage is again thought of from a policy of image that allows it to be sold, as a result of the entrepreneurial turn that the economy of cities experiences (Harvey 1989b: 256-78).

²³⁷ It is this sandwiched condition of civil society that makes heritage and the neighbourhood ideal appropriate fields for understanding the ways in which neoliberalism has become hegemonic, as well as for encountering claims, conflicts, appropriations and co-optations on what is judged as being appropriate for the common well-being of the urban environment.

²³⁸ A hegemony both understood as a result of the uneven patterns of space, the scalar hierarchy (Smith 2004), and what Kurtz (1996) calls hegemonic cultururation. In the case I am dealing with here, Kurtz's hegemonic cultururation becomes a question of how political and cultural agents enter and influence the urbanisation process through their acquisition and manipulation of economic and ideological instruments of power as they pursue their political goals.

Fourth, as pointed out on several occasions across the thesis, this way of understanding the city can be seen as a way of creating what Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) calls abstract space, a space defined by its exchange value and which subordinates the qualities of inhabiting to the creation of surplus value. This kind of space requires a specific type of user: one who is really able not only to appreciate the value of this environment but also to pay its price. That is to say, there is a will to create an embellished space generates an increase in property value, attracts capital and either newcomer residents or visitors (or both!) and that can be commercialised through a branded image. These general remarks frame the development processes that take place in many urban milieus, Es Barri being just one more case.

Although the case of Es Barri presents its own peculiarities, it falls into this scheme since many of the reviewed traits are present: the embellishment of the urban environment; the urban «grounding» of capital; the involvement of organisations that confronted this grounding of capital but that nevertheless contributed it (think for instance of the *festes* described in Sections 1.2.2.1.); a promotion of gentrification from all possible scales of government and at all possible levels of implementation –hence my insistence on calling it comprehensive; an explicit will to re-centralise, an exorbitant rise in the price of land and the built environment, etc. As seen, though, this has not been a clear-cut, straightforward process. Es Barri had to be left fallow for some time, and it took more time to devise the tools that aided the later neoliberal harvest.

Scale and heritage, though, are not only the tools of renewal. In their own way they also become a personal matter –not «personal» as in «individual», but «personal» as in specific people being the bearers of class relations and interests. The professional life of the architect Alomar Esteve not only embodies the *longue durée* process of the renewal of the Centre including the phases of disinvestment and reinvestment found in the rent gap hypothesis, but it also proves that both heritage and neighbourhood were already alive and kicking in the renewal schemes implemented in the 1950s. Section 1.4.3.1. explains how the work of the architect and planner Alomar Esteve framed Es Barri for its worst and lowest uses that led it to the disinvestment period of the rent gap known locally as Barri Xino.

The importance of the figure of Alomar Esteve for town planning exceeds by far the limits of Majorca and is both huge and complex even at a Spanish scale. After achieving the approval of his scheme for Ciutat in 1943 (works would not take place until 1947, 8 years after the war, and would end just before the 1960s), Alomar Esteve travelled to Massachusetts. There he trained at MIT where he became familiar with major developments in planning and he even met Lewis Mumford. He returned to Spain, not Majorca but Madrid, imbued with the urban organicist approaches then preached in the USA. His *Theory of the city* of 1947 (Alomar Esteve 1980) is proof of this decisive influence in which he works out the «neighbourhood unit» together with heritage conservation.²³⁹

Both the neighbourhood and heritage would undoubtedly become Alomar Esteve's main theoretical contributions to the Spanish urban planning scene of the time, which aimed at conferring «character» to the idea of the city. He was not only the planner who changed the physiognomy of the whole of the Centre of Ciutat in the mid 20th century, with tourism already in his mind. He also worked in 1952 for what would become the first draft bill of the Law Governing Land and Urban Planning, a law for the whole of the Spanish territory which was approved in 1953, and which would finally see the light of day in 1956. Moreover, he was also responsible in 1964 for legally denominating as heritage, Spanish historic centres (in 1963 he accepted the post of General Commissioner of National Artistic Heritage).

Alomar Esteve worked as a general reporter for the Committee of Monuments and Sites of the Council of Europe. In 1967, he became the Vice-president of the International Council of Monuments and Sites –ICOMOS– under the auspices of the UN (Alomar Esteve 1986). Alomar Esteve opposed total museification. Thus,

²³⁹ For an explanation of the physical determination of the neighbourhood unit ideal see Lawhon (1999), and for a recent critique of this planning tool see Mehaffy et al (2015). Notice that in Spain the neighbourhood unit was called Inner Renewal Special Scheme (Pla Especial de Reforma Interior, PERI). Of course, this is only one meaning of what neighbourhoods are about, it is that from the planning perspective. For other approaches that deal with the topic of the neighbourhood scale, please see Sections 2.3, 2.4., and 2.5. Other authors who express different views and are of interest here are: Keller (1975[1968]), de Certeau (1994), Galster (2001), Kearns and Parkinson (2001), Tosi (2001), and Gravano (2003 and 2005). Bear in mind that all of these authors normally stress the idea of a neighbourhood that is lived from experience and not from the Lefebvrian abstract space, which the neighbourhood unit is about.

«character» was not only relegated to the monumental core and to certain elements of its margins, but it was reworked throughout. «Character» was planned and built anew, very much in the sense that Cocola Gant describes in the case of the Gothic quarter in Barcelona (Cocola Gant 2011). Its borders needed to be «guttled», to open up the Centre while making out of them central residential units. This is probably why in the first place; Alomar was not in favour of a preservation that froze the built environment to extent of making it lifeless:

What practical role can these old neighbourhoods play in the organism of a modern city? Some French city-planners have launched a name and concept we do not share: that of *quartier musée*, museum quarter. A museum is usually a dead being that needs to be embalmed in order to be preserved. Let us not embalm our cities but quite the opposite: let us inject new blood into the veins of those we want to conserve and the only way to achieve this is to assign to them a mission. These are generally residential neighbourhoods, and nothing seems to be against them in keeping on being so ... A historic neighbourhood, just as a residential neighbourhood, requires silence and stillness (Alomar Esteve 1980: 178-9).

For Alomar, historic neighbourhoods were not, in the first instance, residential neighbourhoods. One had to accomplish a mission to bring life where it had previously been removed. Here lies the secret of Alomar's combination of preservation and scale. The neighbourhood unit was the means to implement an idea that related more to transplant surgery than to planning. Meanwhile, a museum had to be avoided but life had to be brought in, as if life had never been there before the regeneration of the built environment began.²⁴⁰ As for silence, this argument became successful too, at least years later against the *Ruta Martiana*. Furthermore, some neighbourhoods, such as Sa Calatrava, seem to be made of precisely that, solid silence (Franquesa 2010).

Decades after Alomar Esteve's renewal interventions, the ideas of heritage and neighbourhood were resurrected to create confidence for investment in Es Barri. Civil-society organisations came in nicely to pave the way for gentrification. Let us return to the question of the name of Es Barri (see Image 1, Appendix of images). Regarding the

²⁴⁰ Bringing in life was the business behind Alomar Esteve's oeuvre. For a straightforward view that shows how Alomar Esteve's preservation was a means for preparing the built environment for newcomers because of the profit behind the evictions and the sale of the square metre, see Riera i Frau (1994).

use of the name of Sa Gerreria, in 2007 Joan Pascual, then secretary of ARCA [Association for the Revitalisation of Old Cities], the main heritage preservationist organisation in Majorca, recalled having influenced its creation. Sa Gerreria was the name of one of the streets of the neighbourhood and it also epitomised the neighbourhood heritage to be preserved since, at the time of the renewal, the chimneys belonging to many potteries were still standing (see Image 6, Appendix of images).

ARCA appeared in 1987 in order to mobilise people in favour of the preservation of built heritage, both monumental heritage and that of a more humble origin (see Pascual and Llabrés 2004 for an expert account on behalf of ARCA). One of ARCA's first actions was to oppose the demolition plans the Social-Democrat municipal government of the time had for Es Barri. Since it thought that the name of Barri Xino was too linked to drug trafficking and prostitution, and that there was therefore a need to dignify the area with a new name, ARCA chose Sa Gerreria [The Pottery]. ARCA was also the organisation that promoted the elevation of the potteries of Can Cama and Can Baptista to the condition of heritage, in an attempt to instil in Ciutat's cultural scene an industrial heritage under the label of social heritage [read working-class].²⁴¹

Eventually, when the scheme was finally approved in 1995 by Mayor Fageda, the new 'heritageable' name of Sa Gerreria was adopted, one that would fit nicely with the artisan tone of the broader EU-funded Urban – El Temple Project (see Section 1.4.3.2.). Another important «civil-society» actor in this story was the Federation of Associations of Neighbours' Associations (FAVP). The Neighbours' Federation of Ciutat was created in 1980 (*Última Hora*, 28/11/ 1980). As seen in Section 1.2.2.2. (pp. 42-3), neighbourhood associations had been a means for the working-class organisations to

²⁴¹ The idea of «social heritage», gained force with the work of the art historian Àngel Gené (2002 and 2003). This was mainly a heritage of the built environment of the working classes, not of the working classes per se. And by using the term «social heritage» the issue of class becomes somewhat diluted in a kind of cultural politics linked to real estate.

As for the Can Cama and Can Baptista proposal, it went beyond the mere nomination of two potteries as industrial heritage. The project gave value to a whole neighbourhood by recalling a collective past of potters (*Associació per a la Revitalització dels Centres Antics* 1991). However, the people living there then, were also working class and had a legacy of struggle to vindicate, one that was ignored again by the authorities. As I argue in Section 2.4., that heritage of the chimneys represented a pseudo-industrial past. A working class heritage is solely that which is based upon the struggles faced by the working class, that is, those of the living and working conditions.

oppose both the dictatorial regime and capital. When democracy came in, the associations lost people who went into office. There was then a need to join forces at a city scale.

The main aim of FAVP was to fill the gap left by the left-wing activists who, because of the democratic transition, had moved into office with the 1979 democratic elections. There was a need for a critical view of the processes happening at the time. Many of those who carried out this task in earlier years became «institutionalised» in the end.²⁴² Nevertheless, the movement created by the FAVP was incredibly active in denouncing precariousness in the urban reproductive spaces of the city. Along with the local authorities and with the help of press magnates it also made efforts to publish the problems encountered by the city (e.g. Serra 1994/1995, and Salas Fuster 2000).²⁴³ The instant between the disinvestment and the reinvestment moment of the rent gap was not a fleeting one.

This instant was a moment too. It is therefore important to notice that by «instant» I am referring to the capital switch that the State enabled with the implementation of all those planning schemes, equally based upon the elaboration of thorough surveys and real estate expectations. Increasingly, much of the work carried out before the design of the planning schemes, was not developed by civil servants or other State bureaucrats. Rather, in a perfect example of neoliberal governance, the very same organisations belonging to the heteroclitite pool of what has come to be known to us as «civil society» developed the reconnaissance of the territory long before the final approval of the specific planning scheme in 1995 (Ajuntament de Palma 1995).

In 1991, FAVP, together with ARCA and GOB –the main nature conservationist organisation in the Balearic Islands- presented an objection report (Federació d'Associacions de Veïns de Palma 1991) to the proposal of the PEPRI of Sindicat (Sa Gerreria) of the Social Democrat government of the *Partit Socialista de les Illes Balears* that would soon leave office. The report denounced several aspects of the PEPRI of Sa Gerreria, amongst them: the lack of preservationist measures for the built environment,

²⁴² A thorough account of this can be followed in Mengod Bonet (1994 and 2008).

²⁴³ Alemany Morell (1986) is one of the best works to treat this topic of the institutionalisation of the neighbours' associations, albeit at a very early stage.

the absence of an interest for the street layout; the tearing apart of the Historic Centre by building a new city within it; an artificial and strange cultural offer; a high concentration of public services; the failure to protect archaeological remains; and a vague reference to social aspects since there was no study whatsoever of the current social situation in Es Barri.

Most importantly, though, this attention to the lack of a social study was to become the basis of a future collaboration of the neighbours' movement with the City Council. In 1992, the Association of Neighbours of Canamunt was created on purpose to counter attack renewal.²⁴⁴ In 1993 Canamunt, the new neighbours' association, presented an exhaustive social report (*Associació de Veïns de Canamunt – Ciutat Antiga 1993*) that included statistical data of the inhabitants of the PEPRI of Sa Gerreria, itself a part of the statistical unit of Sindicat (see Image 1, Appendix of images). This data covered information such as age, gender, jobs, level of education, size of and condition of homes, economic activity of businesses, cases of social need and social integration, housing conditions, etc.

The study was entered for a research award from the City Council of Ciutat and it won the first prize, which meant a research grant for those involved. The data provided was precious thanks to its detail. No one had ever before given such a quantitative image of Es Barri. In an incredible exercise of inverse imagination, Lefebvre's abstract space had been worked out from the bottom rather than from above. The data provided was equally important to the people planning renewal, as it was to those who had in mind gentrification, without naming it. Everything they needed had been provided by the very organisation that had officially declared itself committed to maintaining the population. However, who were the actual authors of the report? Were they ordinary members of Canamunt?

The fact is that the members of Canamunt were never ordinary people; they were committed activists, people who eventually took office. Their task was to analyse the data they had gathered in their 20-day field research, most of which was collected from the census. The team was made up of five heavily politicised people, one of whom was

²⁴⁴ Renewal is merely a euphemism for gentrification.

a Canamunt member and the other four academics and civil servants at the early stages of their careers. The members of the research team were Ballester Brage; his partner Josefina Santiago, a social psychologist and social worker, who would later become a professional politician for the former Communist Party and now Regional Minister for Social Affairs; Isa, a member of Canamunt mentioned in Section 2.3., who became the municipal secretary of the former Communist Party in the late 1990s and early 2000s; her boyfriend of the time, a social worker who was the town-planning spokesman of the same party; and Pilar Bellod, another social worker.²⁴⁵

The University of the Balearic Islands' social researcher Ballester Brage led this study. It is surprising to notice that although Canamunt fiercely opposed renewal, it seemed to have reached a pact with the City Council then governed by the Conservative Christian Democrat *Partido Popular*. Despite the fierce opposition of Canamunt, this study received a specific monetary aid from the Local Housing Authority [LHA] and won the VIII Ciutat de Palma Awards, mentioned above. All of a sudden, the neighbours' association became part of the planning strategy. Some Canamunt members now realise that this move may not have been wise. They started to have contacts with the Christian Democrats in 1991, after twelve years of a Social-Democrat government in Ciutat.

Interestingly, that Social Democrat government had received Communist support, especially in the first eight years of their municipal mandate after the dictator's regime (1979-1987), although not in the third term (1987-1991). Rather than giving a full support, what Canamunt and the larger FAVP did, was withdraw their alliance, together with the Communist Party. However, this was not been a unilateral move. Due to the collapse of the iron curtain in 1989, the very same Social Democrats felt

²⁴⁵ History seems to repeat itself. Many are the politicians that have begun their careers in Es Barri. Take for instance Moyà and Truyol (2010). This was a report commissioned by Canamunt to improve their performance and organisation in Es Barri. This time the research was qualitative. Not that there were interviews or participant observation. It was all about meetings and activities to get to know each other within the association.

The conclusions were strongly influenced by my presence at the meetings. In the end they asked for equal treatment for all bars and demanded the integration of further segments of Es Barri that were being left out by the so-called middle-classes that comprised the association. These people to be integrated were mostly long-term residents that were seeing their network fade away. Truyol is now a city councillor.

strong enough to abandon to their fate the soon to be former-Communists, and their trade and urban union pillars, the latter being the FAVP in the case of Ciutat. Nevertheless, here we also encounter people who, rather than being considered individuals, are bearers of the struggle between capital and the working class.

Ballester Brage's interests began beyond quantitative studies, when studying the concept of community (Ballester Brage 1989). He would later focus his research on clarifying the sociological concept of «social needs» (Ballester Brage 1999) and, together with other social scientists and social workers he would carry on writing commissioned quantitative evaluations and small reviews on the social aspects of renewal, both of the PEPRI of Sa Gerreria and, believe it or not, of the Urban – Temple Project funded by the URBAN Programme, for which he acted as the main academic specialist (Ballester Brage and Orte Socías 2001, and Ballester Brage et al 2001). These were demographic studies of the neighbourhood before and after the renewal of the PEPRI of Sa Gerreria and the Urban – El Temple took place.

Having said this, Ballester Brage has also developed bounded qualitative techniques (Ballester Brage 2004). At one point or another renewal schemes need the approval of academic expert knowledge.²⁴⁶ Academia is not exempt from being part of the collective social action that favours the closing of the rent gap.²⁴⁷ Other expert knowledge that may also contribute the same way as academia could be that of art (e.g. photography: Bonnin 2008), journalism (e.g. Riera and Ballester 1999) and even the protests and vindications of true activists (López 2003).²⁴⁸ At the end of the day, comprehensive gentrification builds on what is already available and makes it its own.

²⁴⁶ This happens at all scales. See the jumping scales we find in the EU-funded reports on urban (e.g. Council for Cultural Co-operation 1995/1998).

²⁴⁷ Perhaps the information I have gathered in this thesis might also be of use for broadening even more the rent gap. In any case, I am not the only one. I have met one undergraduate and a master's student in the field working on similar topics. Whereas Muñoz Florit (2002/2003) offers an engaging critical undergraduate work on the topic of renewal, Mas Fiol (2008) is much more focused on the technicalities.

²⁴⁸ *Mi querido puta barrio* (López 2003), «My dear fucking neighbourhood», is the title of a VHS video documentary Víctor López the poet recorded. On his unplanned route through the different sites of the Urban – El Temple project, he looks for what the neighbourhood is in the words of the people he encounters in the street. It is also a documentary against the war in Iraq that was taking place at the time.

In any case, the exhaustive quantitative data the studies of Ballester Brage contain, aided the renewal of the neighbourhood, which was primarily based upon expropriations and pulling down buildings. Although one might think there is no connection, I argue that the moves in the planning regime of the URBAN on a larger scale, and those of the development of the spaces of heritage and the neighbourhood ideal on a lower one, are important for understanding how class struggle works in the realm of the urban. All of this happened with the opposition, but also implication of the so-called «civil society» organisations. At the end of the day the issue at stake here is that surplus value is not only created from those «opportunities» we normally see as basic when recouping rent gaps.

Beyond the mere differentials buildings and land hold, that is, «the order and simplicity of gentrification» (Clark 2005b) based upon the highest and best uses, there is a need for a specific help that is definitely grounded. Abstract space, now neoliberal too, finds its concretion in the urban, in the familiar, in the very same field in which the working class grazes upon the apparently good-intentioned projects of heritage and neighbourhood. I therefore contend that people who favour a comprehensive gentrification make «opportunities» available; one that happens at all levels. While the extraction of surplus labour is on those workers who rebuild, pull down, build, advertise and even sell properties or plan the neighbourhood unit, there is a labour force out there that decisively contributes to the production of opportunities.

3.2. The urban labouring of class: Dememory, move and struggle

Against the description of the spatialisation of classes that are already formed, there is a need to explain politically how spatialisation intervenes in the urban struggle that makes them. Gentrification is often an account of classes that do not seem to be objectively built by the process, at least not in terms of labour, only of dispossession. However, what if there is a labour in gentrification? What if this labour is necessary for gentrification to come true?

There was a time when neighbourhoods were not the cosy places many see them as nowadays but places that were at the disposal of capital. I am not referring to the neighbourhood-planning unit, but to how urbanisation was subsumed by

industrialisation. Here we return to the Lefebvrian hypothesis of the urban society we saw in Sections 1.3.1., 1.3.2. and 2.6., that holds that urbanisation is now the hegemonic driving force of capitalist accumulation at a planetary scale. However, this does not change the subjugation and exploitation of the working class. The following quote from the 1970s already signalled the importance of neighbourhood within the capitalist order:

[Neighbourhoods a]re born from the need of capital to concentrate cheap labour force that will be bought as a commodity in the labour market, in the factories. Therefore, capitalism will concentrate the working class in neighbourhoods that look like beehives, without places where people can meet, since such a working-class concentration can threaten the capitalist interests if it socialises against the exploitative system. In these neighbourhoods, lacking as they are in an appropriate urban planning, only workers can live, since their salary is not enough to live where the rich live, in their residential areas. Likewise, capitalism has managed to separate us even from the place where we live, with its big avenues, imposing on us the miserable wage that they give us a different form of life ... (Alemany Morell 1986: 857, third vol., originally in *Asamblea – Barrios y pueblos* 1975, June, Mallorca: 5)

Interestingly, this was the view many people who recognised the existence of the working class had of the concept of neighbourhood in the 1970s. Classes, like Vaneigem's quote to this third part shows, were also made in the spaces of social reproduction and collective consumption. But what if the making in the spaces of social reproduction and collective consumption were not only those of the conditions imposed by capital but are also about the ways in which everyday life, by being there, by making the city with one's own daily activity, creates value? This is the argument I hold for my urban-labour hypothesis that is based upon the intuitive and qualitative approach I have to the class gap hypothesis (see Image 44, Appendix of images).

Of course, speaking of class has not been an easy task in recent times. Everyone knows that Gorz (1982[1980]) said farewell to it in his search for a post-industrial socialism, or that Bauman (1982) spoke of it as almost a spooky memory. The ways in which we forgot what the working class was about were excellently gathered in Wood 1998[1986] and remembered now and again for ever after (e.g. Smith 2000). Perhaps one of the main threats to the legacy of class in the last decades has been the emphasis of movements. Coinciding with the fall of the Communist bloc in Europe, ever since

Touraine (1992) first mentioned it, movements have questioned the presumed static vision many previously had of class.

In one way or another, from left-libertarian positions to more conservative ones, a set of authors have helped to make of movements a new subject that is not necessarily linked to the productive fabric that makes society (e.g. Della Porta and Diani 2006(1999), Edelman 2001, Crossley 2002, Tilly 2004, Day 2005 Mayo 2005, and Zibechi 2010(2006), just to mention a few of the most well-known). Having said this, there are authors that do see in movements an expression of the subjective dimension of class (e.g. Aronowitz 2003, the contributions to Barker et al 2013). Indeed, as I try to defend here, class is truly alive and kicking and it is in many ways. One of these ways is as the basis of the production of space, including neighbourhoods. In fact, class is not something in itself static and fixed as many would like to have it:

Classes are simply not the transcendent, coherent, and empirically well delineated things they are too often taken to be. Nor do they generally represent themselves in such a way. Rather, a relational concept of class can be used to specify the mechanisms, processes, and shifts in basic social relationships that constantly generate frictions between current repertoires of “matter-of-fact” knowledge, daily work, and reproductive routines on the one hand, and the more abstract rationalizations and legitimations (Kalb 1997: 20).²⁴⁹

Further developments of Lefebvre’s insights on the coming of urban society might shed some light on this question of class being on the move rather than moved out by «movements». As seen, Lefebvre’s views were supported on the pre-eminence of what once was considered just a secondary circuit (see Section 1.4.2.), and it was actually inspired by Rosa Luxemburg’s thesis on the accumulation of capital via the expansion of capital beyond its own realm (Luxemburg 2003). However, whereas Luxemburg argued in her analysis that the success of the centre in accumulating capital was based on the constant depletion of the newly phagocytised peripheries, Lefebvre maintained that these peripheries can also be created nearby or even within the very same centres:

The capitalist mode of production is defined by its reproduction, in all the senses of the term; from the reproduction of the labour force to that of means of production and the relations of production. Surplus, its making, its realisation, its

²⁴⁹ See Kalb (2010) for a similar, updated relational approach to class.

reinvestment, are part of the functioning of the mode of production, thus, enlarged accumulation ... Since there is production surplus, there is reproduction of relations, capitalism carries on ... *Capitalism integrates and invents anew sectors so to engross production and the generation of surplus*. It disintegrates and partially reintegrates the historic city, pre-capitalist agriculture; it invents the leisure sector; it extends to the mass production of weapons, of energy, etc. (Lefebvre 1976/1976/1977/1978, 2nd volume: 322, my emphasis).

Thus, for Lefebvre, the ongoing original accumulation of capital Luxemburg refers to (Luxemburg 2003) happens not only at the edge of the empire but also within, overall *integrating* when not *inventing sectors anew*. Or to say it in a slightly different way and perhaps pushing it a little further, the edges of empire, the «outside», are only to be found «inside» (De Angelis 2007: 225-37). We here move into a hazy area which is much disputed nowadays among different approaches all of which at least share their emphasis in the capacity capital has to perpetuate by finding new niches in which to develop (Lefebvre 1976c/1976d/1977/1978, 2nd volume). They argued that capital accumulation proceeds only by constantly drawing upon a *non-capitalist* «hinterland» or region.

That is, markets could expand only if there were new areas to expand to, and these areas are *non-capitalist* areas; but inversely, these non-capitalist areas could actually support the capitalist economy well in advance of becoming thoroughly organized according to the commercial principles of imperialism, itself a necessary means for the expansion of capital. Nevertheless, the summary I have given of capital's relation to space is devoid of the urban social formation of which Lefebvre speaks. This social formation is not confined solely to capital's requisition, via its expansion and the State's search for its spatial fixation. It is, most importantly, also about the labour process that maintains and contends both expansion and fixation; and, indeed, about the political form, in such changing circumstances, of the relations capital, rent and labour maintain.

As Lefebvre clarifies in the introductory quote of Section 2.6., space is about class, more specifically, social space is about class struggle. In short, urban society comes from a class society, such as the industrial one, and is in fact a class society in its becoming but not necessarily in its end (Lefebvre 1996: 177-81). That «becoming» relates to the fate of the middle classes, arguably the central cornerstone of much of the

literature dealing with gentrification (see, for instance, Butler and Robson 2003). The literature on middle classes highlights the preferences based on acquired tastes and on their consumption trends. Interestingly, Lefebvre depicted the middle classes as the «passive object» of politics and not its «active subject» (1991/2005, 3rd vol: 159).²⁵⁰

For him, classes came into being through their ambiguous relation with the State, nurturing it while rejecting it without propounding any alternative, rather than capital itself (1977: 151-6). In a sense, Lefebvre almost viewed the middle classes as a working class in itself devoid of any chances of becoming a class for itself. Similarly, De Angelis emphasises this aspect of the middle class as a sedated working class:²⁵¹

As laboring subjectivity, the middle class is, after all, an empirical term to describe a subset of what we would theoretically call *working class*, the name of a social and political subject that we understand reproduces its livelihoods in opposition to and as part of capital, a term that for us includes both the waged and the unwaged, it is segmented and divided in a wage hierarchy, and it is planetary in character. The middle class for us *is* working class minus a firm presence— aspirational, symbolical, or concrete-in the outside of capital» (2010: 963; his emphasis).

No matter how sketchy it might look, for Lefebvre, the class that could become a class for itself was still the working class. Contra those who accuse him of failing to flesh out the spatially determined human condition as well as to indicate how the transformation of society could be achieved (Unwin 2000: 23 and 26), Lefebvre located an expanded version of the working class as one that experienced the everyday inequality found in the urban realm. Since it was the main object and subject of the

²⁵⁰ The literature on the topic is vast, from nowadays classics of the mid-1990s when the middle class burst back on the scene (Savage et al 1992, Barry 1994, Butler and Savage 1995, Kokca 1995, Levi 1996) to more recent accounts specialised in the gentrification topic (e.g. Rosseau 2009). The literature on social mix that relates to gentrification could also be included here (Sequera Fernández 2013, Bacque et al 2011 and 2014, Bridge et al 2014, Jackson and Benson 2014, and Tissot 2014). Another genre worth mentioning that is akin to these of the middle classes and the social mix is that of treating class as a container not as a relation, thus rendering class as somewhat completely empty, without contents related to a context. Savage et al (2013 and 2015) are perhaps the best example of this with categories of class not only completely devoid of any productive content but with such a shallow understanding of consumption that makes the different categories presented into a kind of muppet show for prime time TV. For a critique see: Bradley (2014), Mills (2014).

²⁵¹ For many authors, middle classes have to do with idleness on display (Benjamin 1999: 802-3) or an effort to avoid labour (Kaufman 2003).

becoming of urban society, he had to revamp the working class in urban terms, often incurring what one could perceive as an abuse of the category of «user», itself a concept belonging to the urbanism he reviewed. Although not explicated as such, the challenge was to render «users» into «working class».

Nevertheless, he indeed viewed space and the urban as class-pervaded concepts. In this sense, the following quote is just one of many examples found in his texts:

The new proletariat? The «new working-class»? They are not found in the high-tech forefront industries, but in the council flats, in the new cities, towns and neighbourhoods. This proletariat no longer feels either the past paucities or the past so-called stigmata of the proletarian condition. It is housed, nourished, distracted ... If the previous generation vindicated above all the economic plan, if it wanted and wants consumer goods, increase in salaries, in a word, the end of the old misery, the new generation wants something else. The fridge and the car do not seduce it any longer ... they do not satisfy it (Lefebvre 1973: 209-10).²⁵²

In this light, Lefebvre's interest lay in exploring the social relationships that account for the current political forms, including, of course, the relations maintained between the urban and the city. Likewise, the consumption involved within the realm of social reproduction becomes of central importance and directly links the urban to the sphere of production to the extent of being bound up with it through social space and time (Lefebvre 2005: 2).²⁵³

Attempts at a class analysis related to gentrification do exist beyond social anthropology (e.g. Wacquant 2008). Moreover, Smith (1996) often accompanied his rent-gap hypothesis with the description of a class-struggle situation. In addition, Smith explained gentrification from a more obvious class analysis vantage point by relating class to community, the realm of social reproduction represented by the neighbourhood (Smith and LeFaivre 1984). Yet, one of the downfalls of the rent gap

²⁵² My own translation from the original version in French (Lefebvre 1973). Notice that the English version I use elsewhere in this thesis (Lefebvre 1976b) is partial and for some reason it does not include this excerpt. The English translation only covers less than half of the original chapters.

²⁵³ This is a point de Certeau (1984) also deals with. Through a subtle analysis, he shows the «production» exercised in any of the activities commonly catalogued as «consumption». However, as Goonewardena spells out (2008), there are major differences between both authors. Unlike Lefebvre's, de Certeau's programme is definitely anti-Marxist and it «worries less about changing the world, while emphasising the becoming of the creative consumer (130-1).

hypothesis is that it does not account anew for the «labour» invested in the process, or for its exploitation in the realisation of the surplus value the rent gap unveils. Bridge (1995) has made his class analysis point clearer when depicting gentrification as a form of a latent class structuration:

The determining relation is that between capital (in the form of speculator-developers) and labour (inner-city residents) in the way that gentrification fits into the overall re-valorization of the urban system ... Any other claim for the significance of gentrification for class relations would, to adapt the title of a recent film on the subject, seem to be a case of 'High Hopes' (ibid: 245).

Here, labour appears to be related to the inhabitants. Nevertheless, Bridge plays down the importance of gentrification, and with it, the very same Lefebvrian urban, when coupling its class consequences. In fact, the affected labour he invokes is, in the last instance, a labour defined by means of workplace, not residence. Likewise, this is not a labour involved in the devaluation or revaluation involved in gentrification. Thus, there is therefore a need to explore in more detail the urban dimension of labour. That is, the contribution of «inhabiting» to class formation.

Gentrification might shed light on these matters since it unveils in a very particular manner a labour that is not necessarily a commodity labour, a labour I have come to call «urban labour»; a labour the social space of which, is haunted by the surplus labour and the rent form mobile and fixed capital respectively extract from it. Nevertheless, it is hard to find in the original and subsequent work on rent gaps any explicit reference to the actual objective class relations that take place in their building. Such a shift in focus would certainly mean highlighting a working-class perspective that not only focused on the subjective aspects of displacement and distinction (Paton 2014), since a working class perspective is not only about the loss of rights and the dispossession of assets and the crushing of collective spaces.

A working-class perspective should also look into the making of the productive fabric of the city via what I have come to call «urban labour». I have therefore attempted to illustrate such a relation by looking at the diverse governing practices the neighbourhood holds but, most importantly regarding the social relations of the production of space, I have thought anew labour's capacity for containing and conveying class struggle. In this sense, Henri Lefebvre's visionary understanding of

urban society's *oeuvres* (see Lefebvre 1996) becomes essential for a political development of an updated version of what the working class is. However, besides the political dimension, one should also bear in mind the economic condition, constraints, and determination, of this working class.

Smith's rent gap theory proves extremely useful (see Smith 1996 for his latest update). Nevertheless, rather than looking at the exploitation of the rent gap from the point of view that emphasises the inexorable expansion of capital this thesis sets its aim at teasing out the necessary labour each moment of the rent gap relies on. By emphasising «labour», I necessarily question the validity and actual usefulness of the «middle classes» and the «underclass», as well as the «vicinity effects» of their daily tasks. In this light, this thesis actually argues both types of «classes» are none other than fractions of the same class, fractions united by their cooperation in the development of the surplus generated by the rent gap.

This is not a mere linguistic turn. As far back as 1959, Lefebvre already knew class consciousness was not a clear picture one had to follow blindly, reproducing a simplistic philosophy and ideology of class. These approaches did not bear in mind the particularities of class encountered on the ground, particularities expressed in fractions. Therefore, argued Lefebvre, there is always the need for particularising, for differentiating the analysis that leads us to consider real social groups as fractions of a class rather than a class. Likewise, a sociology would be possible without having to get rid completely of political economy or history (Lefebvre 1989(1959: 571). This question also relates to that of the silence on class I have encountered in the field where nobody spoke in these terms, now left for academics or certain activists to deal with.

Yet, as seen throughout this thesis, class happens. What remains to be seen, though, is whether there will ever be a common working class awareness, from such disparate fractions, a common awareness that informs the making of a historical subject that can efficiently subvert the prevailing urban order. Perhaps we are not that far from finding this in the very same field:

Es Brut [the dirty place] was the moniker used for referring to some of the streets of our neighbourhood ... that were frequently visited by those who were looking for entertainment beyond established morals and legal drugs. It was in the name of this «dirtiness», or better said, against this «dirtiness», that the [renewal] of Sa

Gerreria began and which has so far devastated a third of our neighbourhood. Along with that «dirtiness» the «dirtiness» of potters, blanketers, furriers, and so many other jobs that got dirty in order to bring to life Palma's most valued industrial neighbourhood. Now we are left with the cleanliness of real estate's speculation, the destruction of the historic and human heritage, and the viewing of places that are now so clean they have become empty.

Therefore, it is no time to cook an *arròs brut* [a typical Majorcan rice dish] and elaborate, both from the leftovers and from new ingredients, a finger licking good. This is our project: to put together what is left and what is lacking so to build a lively and open neighbourhood... (AV Canamunt – Ciutat Antiga 2010: 1).

These are not social-mix whims, nor mere social preservationist efforts, although both things may well be found to some extent. These are new flowers that once again appear from desolation, not a desolation of the degraded underclass Barri Xino that the Phoenix of Catalina (opening quote of Part 1) re-emerged from, but a desolation brought about by the urban policies of exclusion and renewal. A desolation that was the result of deprivation, foreclosures, evictions, and renewal. These new flowers come from the old and they therefore claim a common past of struggle from which to build an everyday practice that is well-aware of the in-depth experience it has gained throughout decades. This experience carries the seed for making of Es Barri, and the city, a more inclusive and equal place, to avoid, as Image 41 (Appendix of images) shows, «houses without people and people without houses».

This thesis has aimed at questioning the ontological status of class by working out an epistemological and methodological proof for how theory and field meet. Gentrification has served as the descriptive empirical process from which to draw out these analyses and reflections. Furthermore, with the aim of complementing Neil Smith's contribution regarding the State as the collective mediator, I have argued that each of the rent-gap moments of disinvestment and reinvestment are laboured by different groups (the so-called underclass and the middle classes) that, despite the fact they carry out a struggle that subjectively brings them together, they are apparently unaware that they form a single working class that produces surplus for others, thanks to what I come to call their «urban labour».

Likewise, I contend that for rent gaps to be successful and find a profitable closure there is the need to maintain as wide as possible the class gap upon which urban labour is founded (see Image 44, Appendix of images). Despite Canamunt's efforts and

the political imagination they bring with their everyday actions of festive critique this opening between the class fractions is far from narrowing, it is actually growing, therefore allowing rent-gap closures. Of course, my informants in the field know very well that there is plenty of business left to do there. Take for instance Rafi who, knowing I was putting an end to my relation with Es Barri and its people so I could write this piece of work, she announced: «You can't leave... The (hi-)story of the neighbourhood hasn't finished yet!»²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ In Spanish, the language Rafi speaks, «historia», means both history and story.

