

Recent Socio-Spatial Transformations in the San Pedro Neighbourhood (Santiago de Compostela)

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Abstract: Santiago de Compostela has undergone many important transformations in recent decades, mainly due to the increase in tourist activity. In fact, the revival of modern Compostela pilgrimages has had an impact on the local economy and on the urban space. For some years, these changes have been spreading from the old walled enclosure to the different neighbourhoods of the city. Among them, the Barrio de San Pedro stands out, through which the French, Northern and Primitive Ways access the city. Formerly a former working-class neighbourhood of Compostela, this part of town retains a traditional identity that has favoured the appearance of incipient gentrification processes and is affected by the growing touristification of the city, which is leading to the proliferation of tourist flats and new commercial activities. For all these reasons, the main objective of this work is to recognise and analyse the recent functional and landscape transformations of the neighbourhood. To carry out this research we have used a methodology that combines several phases of analysis in order to obtain, from different perspectives, approaches to complex problems such as the one we are analysing, in particular: a review of planning documents, and participant observation. The results point to a transformation that implies a renovation of businesses to adapt to new audiences, and in parallel the closure of a significant number of stores due to lack of generational replacement or the effects of the crises of 2008 and later of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Neighbourhoods in Transition, Gentrification, Touristification, Barrio San Pedro, Historic Cities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Before and after the pandemic, several European World Heritage listed cities experienced a large increase in tourist flows, which have threatened their sustainable development transforming the living conditions of their inhabitants (Gaztelumendi, 2009; Lopez et al., 2019; Troitiño and Troitiño, 2009). These flows have their epicentre in historic city centres, and from there they spread to nearby streets. The most affected areas have been some neighbourhoods, which have experienced changes in residential, commercial and tourism patterns, and which, above all, have seen their uniqueness in the urban complex threatened.

This proposal analyses the case of the Santiago de Compostela San Pedro neighbourhood (Barrio de San Pedro), and just like the historic centre, is one of the most emblematic and traditional in the city. Located outside the city walls, that is, outside the historic walled city area known as the "almond", it has been a place of residence for craftsmen, merchants and the urban working class since the Middle Ages (Alsina, 1988). The main artery and transport route, which gives the neighbourhood its name and extends over it, is San Pedro Street (which coincides entirely with the last metres of the French Way, before reaching the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral). Since the beginning of the 2000s, the neighbourhood started to be known as the "SoHo compostelano" (Montero, 2014), as it has progressively attracted the attention of artists, urban creative classes and developed a very active associative citizen civic movement. The attraction that the neighbourhood has exerted on bohemian-bourgeois social sectors has caused an incipient process of gentrification, which has affected the vast majority of streets in the neighbourhood, and which has considerably increased the price of housing as well as commercial sales and rentals (Lopez et al., 2019).

The aim of this research is to reconstruct and analyse the main reasons that have motivated the transformations in recent years. From a methodological point of view, we combine different techniques to ensure different perspectives and approaches to complex problems: a review of planning documents, and participant observation. Through our fieldwork, we will reconstruct the urban and social dynamics that have characterised this unique neighbourhood of Santiago de Compostela, which has also been the focus of attention of municipal policies. The proposal will compare neighbourhood and political views that, despite acting in this central space, do not move in the same direction.

Among the results, we will highlight the emergence of new dynamics, since, in addition to gentrification, there is now talk of "touristification". The success of the Way of St. James and the pilgrimages in recent years has triggered the appeal of the neighbourhood, located in the final stages of the French, Northern and Primitive Ways. The proliferation of holiday rentals and the number of businesses targeting

tourists, and pilgrims, has, in particular, been increasing (Ramil et al., 2018). This situation has generated discontent amongst a part of the neighbours and traders partly due to recent public works to improve the landscape to integrate the French Way upon its entry into Santiago de Compostela, that in their view overlook the interests of the neighbours (Villa, 2019).

2. GENTRIFICATION, TOURISTIFICATION AND OTHER ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA

The notion of gentrification was coined in the 1960s (Glass, 1964) to describe the innumerable processes of change in a neighbourhood (Atkinson, 2008). This social process traditionally took place in inner city areas where the arrival of the middle class in working-class neighbourhoods increased housing prices and resulted in the displacement of low-income residents (Newman and Wyly, 2006; Smith, 2002; Watt, 2008).

According to Davidson and Lees (2005), gentrification has four defining characteristics: reinvestment of capital, social improvement of the neighbourhood, changes in the landscape and perspective; and the direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups. Early studies of gentrification have observed how the arrival of middle-class residents in working-class neighbourhoods contributed to the displacement of their original inhabitants (Glass, 1964). However, more recent studies suggest that gentrification could occur without widespread displacement being a major concern (Boddy, 2007; Butler, 2007).

The driving cause behind gentrification is the commodification of consumable authenticity. Authenticity is often staged and has been identified as a criterion for measuring quality and adding value. In addition, authenticity is associated with reality, history, traditions, locality, and otherness (Özdemir and Seyitoğlu, 2017). When it comes to gentrification, authenticity has a transformative power because it explains and justifies the combination of products, the design of new businesses and the intangible atmosphere of restaurants, boutiques and gourmet shops. The most prominent pioneers and “authenticity seekers” who contribute to gentrification are the members of a culturally prosperous new white middle class (Butler 1997, 2003).

This new middle class assures its social status through its cultural capital, which is expressed in the willingness to appreciate the authentic and uses it as a vehicle of distinction from other social groups. It is this group that has increasingly settled in low-income neighbourhoods as residents and consumers in recent decades (Butler, 1997).

While retaining basic similarities such as landscape change, capital reinvestment, population inflow, and class-based displacement, gentrification is now expressed in different ways. Among them, the present research pays attention to commercial gentrification, understood as the gentrification of streets or commercial areas (Lees et al., 2008). Commercial gentrification is closely related to residential gentrification, as commercial gentrification emerges to meet the tastes and preferences of

newcomers (Bridge and Dowling, 2001; Ley, 1996). As the impact of commercial gentrification has become widespread, the social conflict surrounding displacement intensifies, as do social and spatial transformations. Neighbourhoods that cater to local needs become hotspots for shopping, dining, and art. Among the various commercial activities, dining out plays a decisive role in the expansion of commercial gentrification processes, similar to stages of shows open to consumption (Hubbard, 2017).

There are two other social phenomena associated with gentrification, namely the concepts of tourist gentrification and touristification. Both emphasise the interaction between tourism and urban change, focusing on the transformation and improvement of middle-class neighbourhoods in tourist areas marked by a proliferation of tourist and entertainment venues, cultural events, museumification processes and spectacularisation of urban space (Gotham, 2005).

In these urban centres, gentrification is exemplified in different processes and changes, such as *foodification*. According to Loda, Bonati and Puttilli (2020), the concept of *foodification*, is understood as the process through which the urban economic landscape vanishes to be progressively absorbed by a single type of commercial activity related to the sale and consumption of food.

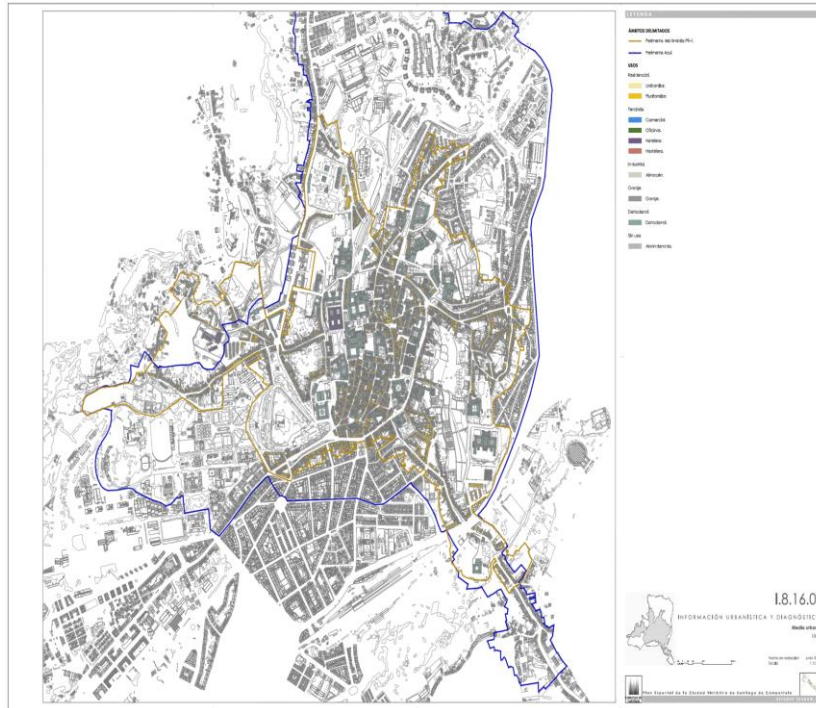
In 1999, Joanne Finkelstein (1999) coined the neologism *foodainment* to draw attention to how food - and in particular the construction of an aesthetic, cultural and urban imaginary around food, drink and going out to eat can constitute a touristic experience. In other words, *foodification* can be understood as one of the many consequences of urban overtourism, similar to the “airbnbisation” neologism to express changes and tensions in local real estate markets (Nofre and Sequera, 2019). Thus, the same social process of touristification can manifest in the form of foodification or airbnbisation, among others, since both refer to the growing presence of tourists, who sometimes gentrify the city, increasing the segregation between leisure spaces and residential neighbourhoods.

3. METHODOLOGY

To carry out this research we have used a methodology that combines several phases of analysis in order to obtain, from different perspectives, approaches to complex problems such as the one we are analysing, in particular: a review of planning documents, and participant observation.

First, we have consulted territorial planning documents, such as the General Municipal Planning Plan (PGOM) and, above all, the 1997 Special Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Historic City of Santiago de Compostela (Figure 1), revised in 2005 and 2019, just before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

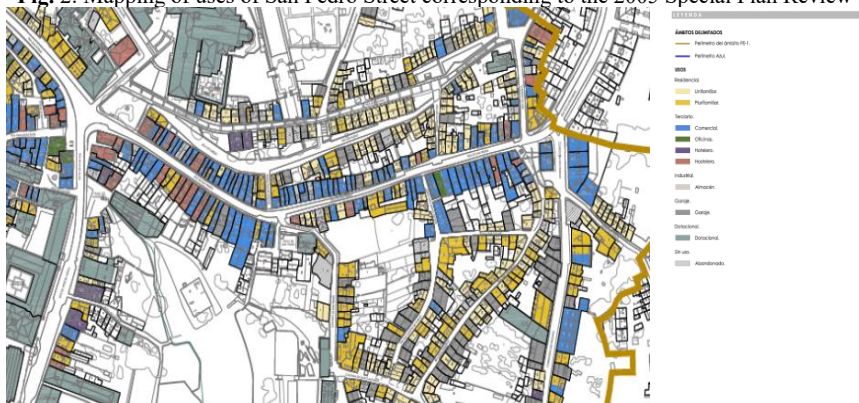
Fig. 1: PE-1 walled area (in orange), to which the Special Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Historic City of Santiago de Compostela applies



Source: City Council of Santiago de Compostela

Following the 2005 revision, the Special Plan provides a very useful cartography with complete differentiation of the main uses of the premises, namely: residential, tertiary, industrial, garage, facilities and unused. Likewise, within the category of tertiary use, the following subcategories were included: commercial, offices, hotels and hospitality (Figure 2).

Fig. 2: Mapping of uses of San Pedro Street corresponding to the 2005 Special Plan Review



Source: City Council of Santiago de Compostela

Taking into account that San Pedro Street, which gives its name to the homonymous neighbourhood and constitutes its main axis, is included in the PE-1, from the data included in the Special Plan, we have made a comparison with the uses corresponding to the years 2005, 2019 and 2022, in order to analyse the functional evolution of the case study. To examine the changes undergone by this street, in addition to the uses, we have considered the type of businesses and activities established at street level. For the year 2019 we have gathered information from Google Street View, with photographs corresponding to June of that year. As for the present year 2022, we have carried out field work visiting and photographing the premises located in all the ground floors of San Pedro Street.

As a result, the comparative analysis of changes in uses and activities between the years 2005, 2019 and 2022 allows us to analyse the evolution of the neighbourhood, especially focusing on commercial uses.

In order to analyse the evolution of changes in the use of commercial ground floors in the Barrio de San Pedro, we believe that it is necessary to differentiate several typologies, based on their evolution throughout the period studied. To this end, in the results section we elaborated a table (Table 2), in which we advance a categorization of commercial activities. In this way, we intend to highlight changes or permanence, and more in detail, issues that allow us to point to a process of gentrification and/or touristification.

4. THE AREA OF STUDY: SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Santiago de Compostela, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985, was designated in 1986 as the capital of the Autonomous Community of Galicia (Northwestern Spain). Is one of the Spanish cities with one of the most recognised tourism characters today (Calle Vaquero, 2019; Ramil, 2018; Santos and Lopez, 2019). Over the last few decades, the rise of urban and cultural tourism in Santiago de Compostela have joined the phenomenon of contemporary pilgrimages, undoubtedly the main distinctive feature of the city (Moscarelli et al., 2020).

To understand the importance of the tourism boom in Santiago de Compostela in recent years, it is necessary to consider the great urban transformation that the city experienced in the 1980s and 1990s, prompted by its declaration as a World Heritage City, as the capital of the Galicia region, and as a pilgrimage destination. From the hand of the mayor Xerardo Estévez, Compostela was endowed with a PGOU (General Plan for Urban Planning) at the height of its heritage, cultural importance and its new role as the capital of the autonomous Galicia. Signed by the architects Juan Luis Dalda and Ánxel Viña, the general plan was committed to consolidating the enhancement of heritage elements and increasing the quantitative and qualitative importance of green spaces. Even despite the limitation of the residential function, this plan defined a very attractive city as an urban setting, complemented by

ambitious cultural policies. This laid the foundations for later tourist attractiveness (Estévez, 2001; Dalda, 2007).

Although there were attempts to revitalise medieval pilgrimages and reinterpret them from the contemporary point of view in the second half of the twentieth century, the turning point was the 1993 Xacobeo Holy Year when the arrival of pilgrims in Santiago began to grow significantly (Hernández Soriano, 2016; Santos, 1999, 2006). The fact that Santiago de Compostela is the seat of the regional administration must also be taken into account when explaining the prioritization of many investments focused on enhancing heritage, cultural identity or rehabilitation and conservation of buildings in the historic centre. In this context, the reassessment of Santiago de Compostela as a destination of urban and cultural tourism experienced a very clear trend with the change of millennium (Martínez Roget et al., 2009). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the revolution of low-cost airlines and the growing trend towards tourism *short-breaks* increased the tourist nature of the city. To this we must add the marketing and promotion work carried out by official institutions, where considerable resources and efforts were invested (Pérez and Lois, 2018; Ramil, 2018).

This increase in the importance of tourism within the city's economy has led, as expected, to a number of changes in various aspects. Firstly, the increase in tourism pressure results in tensions in the housing market. In a city of around 100,000 inhabitants, with a university population of 25,000 students, the traditional student rental flat has had a lot of weight, which in recent years has been replaced by the promotion of holiday rentals. The progressive expansion of holiday rentals or homes for tourism use within the urban fabric has contributed to rising tensions (Santos and Lopez, 2019; Lopez et al., 2019). Secondly, the commercial sector of the city has been changing to adapt to the demands of the increasing number of pilgrims and tourists in general. Throughout these years we have witnessed (and not only in Santiago de Compostela) the replacement of traditional businesses with others with a clearly modern imprint and designed for a foreign audience (Lestegás, 2019). Thirdly, the increase in tourist flows is posing serious crowd management problems, since the urban space of a city with a historic plan such as Santiago is clearly small, with an area of 169.9 hectares between the old intramural old city and the historic neighbourhoods. In previous works we have already investigated the existence of the phenomenon of overtourism in Santiago, with a whole series of negative consequences, especially for the local population (Lopez et al., 2019; Piñeiro et al., 2019).

Considering all this background information, this text analyses the "San Pedro neighbourhood", a historic neighbourhood with a strong identity, and in which the working classes that lived outside the walls resided. This neighbourhood is the object of this research due to the changes that have occurred in recent years, related to the fact that three of the pilgrimage routes to access the city of Santiago de Compostela run through it, which means that approximately 60% of the pilgrims enter the city via San Pedro Street, its main artery. According to data from the Office of the Pilgrim, in 2019, it is estimated that at least 224,671 pilgrims crossed this street on their way to the Cathedral.

In addition, the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of the neighbourhood have made it a place cherished and valued by certain sectors of the population, who have been empowered and entrenched (from a symbolic and identity point of view) in this

urban area. The most evident signs of this sense of identity are manifested in the existence of an active neighbourhood and cultural movement, in the importance of premises linked to artistic collectives, in the widespread use of the Galician language or in the identification of the neighbourhood as gay-friendly, to highlight the most relevant examples (ScqLab, 2017). The San Pedro neighbourhood has been chosen by young professionals, students, creative sectors and the world of culture and the arts, so that today it has a strong identity based not only on the sense of place, but above all on the wealth of neighbourhood and associative relationships (Liñeira, 2014).

5. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In this research we propose the analysis of the businesses located on San Pedro Street, in order to study the different commercial evolution behaviours recorded from 2005 to the present day. The response of the different businesses has also been different, depending on a number of complex factors. Business ownership, trade regime, location, economic capacity of the business owners to deal with crises, type and orientation of the business, target audience and many other factors constitute the basis for explaining the evolution of commercial activity in the San Pedro neighbourhood. In any case, the changes in commercial uses, in the activity of the businesses, in their typology and in their main economic, cultural and social traits help to understand the transformation of the neighbourhood in the last two decades (see Table 1).

Table 1. Evolution of selected businesses in San Pedro Street

Property Number	2005	2019	2022
9	<i>Barbería</i> Milenio (name in Spanish)	Milenio <i>Barbershop</i> (translation into English, perceived as more trendy)	Milenio barbershop
23	Velocípedo bicycleshop	Velocípedo bicycleshop	Unoccupied due to retirement
26	San Clodio grill	San Clodio grill	Restaurante DeLito (Traditional grill restaurant with modern decoration and presentation)
47	Bar O Mosquito	Unoccupied due to retirement	Unoccupied due to retirement
52	A Rúa hardware shop	A Rúa hardware shop	<i>Os mundos de Carlota</i> children bookshop

112	Sareliña fashion	Sareliña fashion	Unoccupied due to retirement
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Source: Own work from photographs (2005 and 2019) and direct observation (2022).

In 2005 students were still residing in the San Pedro neighbourhood. However, the rise in rental prices due to the increase in urban-cultural tourism and pilgrimages was a determining factor in the displacement of students to other parts of the city, and even to towns in the urban periphery of Santiago, outside of the compact city. In the San Pedro neighbourhood, the offer of accommodation and catering businesses has become increasingly oriented towards tourism (Piñeiro et al., 2019). This trend peaked before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, the San Pedro neighbourhood has become increasingly attractive to certain segments of the young or young-adult population with more or less bohemian profiles. The emergence of the neighbourhood movement, together with the popularisation of San Pedro as a fashionable area linked to culture and the arts, has also resulted in a proliferation of businesses targeting this new proto-gentrified class (Liñeira, 2014). We can use the word hipsterisation or indicate that these places are part of what we can call *trendy*, in the sense of "*fashionable*" or "*very modern*".

Third, many of the neighbourhood's traditional businesses came to the end of a cycle and of a historical journey as their traditional owners retired. This process was already visible before the turn of the century and remains so today. In many cases, the traditional businesses that have closed down were managed by families who own the premises in which they developed their professional activity over a long time, and who chose to sell or rent the premises in the absence of generational replacement. There are also cases in which the owners have decided to keep the premises closed and empty, as a social dormant asset, since there is no urgency to obtain an economic return from it.

Finally, the neighbourhood, just like the city of Santiago and almost the entire world, has been affected by two major crises: the economic crisis that broke out in 2008 and the pandemic that began in 2020. The occurrence of these two crises in such a short period of time is fundamental to understanding why many establishments have not survived from 2005 to the present day. Some had to close in the first and others in the second crisis.

Taking this into account, and in light of the field work carried out, we can differentiate the following types of business in relation to their evolution in recent decades (Table 2, Figure 3).

Table 2. Typology of trade changes in San Pedro Street (2005-2022).

Type	Examples of premises
(1) Unchanged iconic traditional establishments	María Luisa haberdashery (No. 53); Suso shoeshop (No. 19); O Dezaseis restaurant (No. 16), Sande bar (No. 35); Bar O Cruceiro (No. 119); San Pedro churro shop (No. 121); Espazo Aberto theatre and dance school (No. 48)

(2) Traditional establishments that have closed	Velocipede bicycleshop (No. 23); O Mosquito bar (No. 47); Sareliña fashion (No. 112); Prisma academy (No. 110); A Rúa hardware shop (No. 52)
(3) <i>Trendy</i> establishments that have emerged since 2005	Cadrado Dóce Coffee Shop (No. 17); Mononoke (No. 33); Dr Mortis tattoo (No 62); A Maceta restaurante (No. 120); TS A Casa vegetarian restaurant (No. 113); A Moa restaurant (No. 32); WAX! Cultura DJ record shop (No. 69)
(4) Establishments that have been <i>trendified</i>	Milenio barbershop (No. 9); DeLito restaurant (No. 26); Café de Clem (No. 118); Carmiña foodstore (No. 54)

Source: Own work from photographs (2005 and 2019) and direct observation (2022).

The first typology of establishments is composed of traditional businesses which have not changed over the years. Here we can differentiate two subgroups.

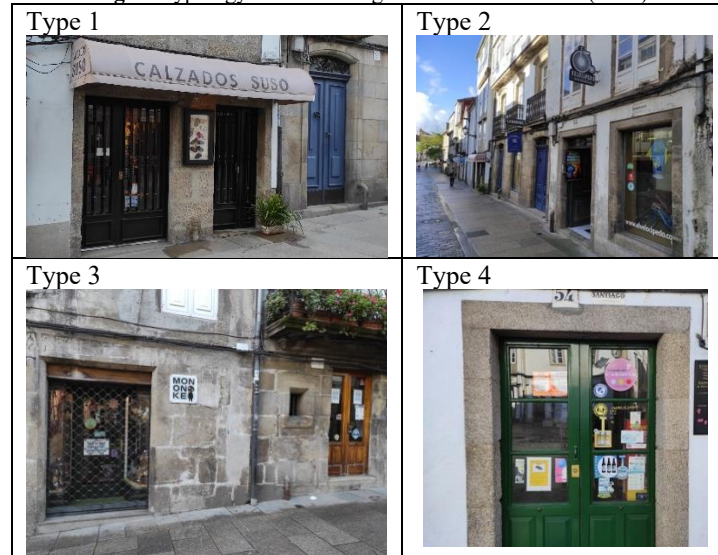
First of all, the traditional establishments and businesses in which the main customers are the local, mainly elderly neighbours, who have been residing in this area for decades. They are part of a Santiago trade prior to the appearance of the peripheral shopping centres and will stay open as long as their owners are still active. It is based on very close social ties, consolidated over many years, and constitutes the paradigm of what we could call "local neighbourhood trade". The traditional spirit of the neighbourhood, which will then be claimed and reinterpreted by the proto-gentry and the youth of the neighbourhood movement, lives in this type of distinguished premises.

Secondly, the existence of businesses that also have a long tradition, and that have continued open throughout this time is worth highlighting, although their clientele could be qualified as mixed as it integrates traditional residents with new residents, visitors and tourists. Although it is common to see the elderly population of the neighbourhood in the winter months, in medium and high tourist season it is usually more common to see pilgrims and even groups of tourists. The local guides lead tourists through this area, which they show as an example of the authentic life of the San Pedro neighbourhood.

A second type of premises are establishments that have closed in this period. As we have explained above, the main reason has been the retirement of the business owner, which is almost always the owner of the premises. The lack of generational replacement explains the decision to close the business, since in many cases the owners usually have a secure financial situation and can live off the income generated.

The third and fourth types of establishments show the great changes that have occurred in the neighbourhood in recent years and its evolution towards the aforementioned concept of "SoHo compostelano". The third group of establishments that we have classified are those that we can describe as *trendy*, and that are oriented to this new urban class that has been identified and territorially empowered in the neighbourhood. In all these cases, we are dealing with modern businesses, renewed with all the attributes of postmodernity. The fourth and final type corresponds to those traditional establishments that have adapted their aesthetics, their business model, their decoration and the type of marketing over these years to the new type of inhabitant and customer.

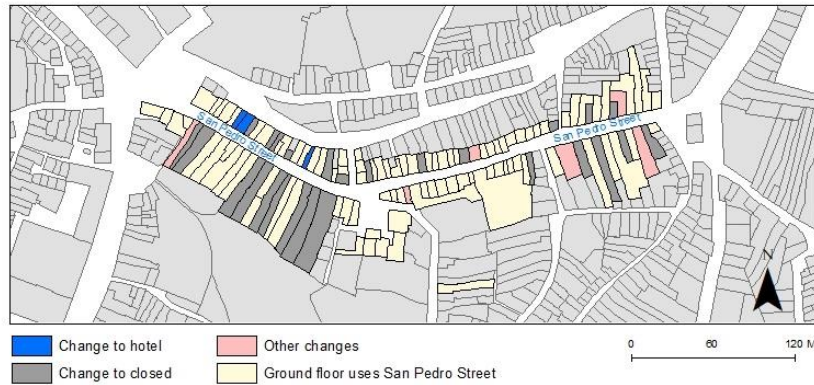
Fig. 3: Typology of trade changes in San Pedro Street (2022)



Source: Authors.

In this way, there is a minority of establishments that have not noticeably changed over the last few years. They offer highly valued and well-established products or services, and the reason for their business survival is based on their traditional character and orientation to a majority audience. Among them we can mention shops such as haberdasheries or shoe stores for the older residents of the neighbourhood, which continue to be their loyal clientele. These long-lived businesses currently have the greatest problems, due to the absence of generational replacement at their owner's time of retirement. This circumstance favours the existence of a large number of closed commercial premises, which become part of the real estate market with properties for sale, to rent or simply destined to close. When these establishments are rented or sold, the new owners of the businesses usually adapt them to the demands of the new public: new residents of the neighbourhood, young people, and tourists. Thus, the transformation that certain places have undergone is particularly relevant, adapting to the new social environment, and contributing to the transformation of the commercial and cultural landscape of the San Pedro neighbourhood.

The following map (Figure 4) shows the results of the above-mentioned changes. We have used the viewfinder of the online Land registry (Catastro) records, which provide a cartographic representation of the area of study with the numbering and characteristics of each of the properties.

Fig. 4: Changes of use in San Pedro Street (2005-2022)

Source: Own elaboration based on Cadastral Electronic Site and direct observation (2022).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Since its first conceptualisation and definition, the process of gentrification has displayed different social and economic features that combine differently depending on the context of reference, and no less relevant than its territorial scope. Hence, the plurality of definitions of gentrification, some of which have been stated above. However, it is true that the end result of gentrification is a transformation of the urban landscape (from a material and immaterial point of view).

In this research we wanted to pay attention to the socio-spatial dynamics in the San Pedro neighbourhood, which because of its dynamic transformation, could be defined as a "neighbourhood in transformation". Here, the commercial sector very clearly reflects the amount and magnitude of these changes, which greatly affect, and are related to, its identity. This dynamic of continuous change implies that many businesses have closed down, almost always due to a lack of generational replacement. Others remain true to their traditional essence with little change. Finally, there are new businesses that open to adapt to new types of audiences or as a result of the transformation and modernising pre-existing businesses.

At the same time, and in parallel with this gentrification process, the Barrio de San Pedro has known, during the study period, a growing importance of tourism and its repercussions in the space itself. It is not just that three paths cross the neighbourhood (The French Way, The Northern Way, and The Primitive Way), but the very expansion of tourist activity in the city has introduced important changes in economic functionality and in urban landscapes. The combination of gentrification and tourism has given rise to phenomena such as the aforementioned foodification.

The management of a neighbourhood as emblematic as the San Pedro neighbourhood becomes increasingly complex precisely because of the inter-action of new contemporary urban dynamics. Therefore, new forms of governance should be designed; they should be less oriented by economic criteria, and more concerned with keeping the centres of the cities inhabited, still desirable for their citizens (Koens et al., 2018 Milano, 2018)

Ultimately, this research aims to open a new line of work, supported by new sources and methods which we will expand upon in the near future, as we recognize possible advances in research with the use of semi-structured interviews with citizens, associations and local agents of interest. Our intention is to continue working with evolutionary analyses that allow us to assess not only the changes that have occurred in the neighbourhood but also the understanding of the logics that explain these transformations, in accordance with demographic, social and economic evolution, as well as the perception of the neighbourhood both by the residents and by visitors and tourists.

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