

Touristification or gentrification reloaded? Following urban transitions in Athens, Greece vis-a-vis domestic growth models through successive crises

Journal:	<i>European Urban and Regional Studies</i>
Manuscript ID	Draft
Manuscript Type:	Standard Articles
Keywords:	Capital switching, housing financialisation, debt restructuring, Metaxourgio, South EU, Golden Visa, recession
Abstract:	<p>While gentrification remains a subject of ongoing debate, it has gained prominence in Southern Europe, becoming intrinsically linked in the public discourse with housing affordability, displacement, and proliferation of tourism activities. Drawing on Geographical Political Economy, this paper sets a theoretical framework that situates gentrification within the cycle of uneven spatial development while revisiting its relation to touristification. The analysis employs a mixed-methods approach, consisting of a quantitative analysis of secondary data that documents Greece's shift from a construction-driven to a tourism-dependent model and the role of housing financialisation. Then, a qualitative analysis in Metaxourgio, a former working-class, inner-city neighbourhood, identifies the local specificities of gentrification in Athens from the mid-1990s onward. It is suggested that gentrification has organically adapted to changing urban growth models, thus influenced by increasing financialisation. Importantly, with Greece's growth models diachronically relying on extracting value from the built environment, gentrification has continuously served as a prime mechanism to exploit rent gaps. Despite contemporary discourses linking gentrification to Greece's reliance on tourism, this research traces geographically the process well before the onset of touristification. Moreover, it aligns closely within extant debates on the process of gentrification in the South EU, as well as with discussions regarding the potential correlation between gentrification and touristification. Overall, this paper stands out as one of the few mixed-methods analyses of gentrification outside the Anglophone world, thus making a significant contribution on the decolonisation of knowledge production regarding this type of urban transition.</p>

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60



Touristification or gentrification reloaded? Following urban transitions in Athens, Greece vis-a-vis domestic growth models through successive crises

Abstract

While gentrification remains a subject of ongoing debate, it has gained prominence in Southern Europe, becoming intrinsically linked in the public discourse with housing affordability, displacement, and proliferation of tourism activities. Drawing on Geographical Political Economy, this paper sets a theoretical framework that situates gentrification within the cycle of uneven spatial development while revisiting its relation to touristification. The analysis employs a mixed-methods approach, consisting of a quantitative analysis of secondary data that documents Greece's shift from a construction-driven to a tourism-dependent model and the role of housing financialisation. Then, a qualitative analysis in Metaxourgio, a former working-class, inner-city neighbourhood, identifies the local specificities of gentrification in Athens from the mid-1990s onward. It is suggested that gentrification has organically adapted to changing urban growth models, thus influenced by increasing financialisation. Importantly, with Greece's growth models diachronically relying on extracting value from the built environment, gentrification has continuously served as a prime mechanism to exploit rent gaps. Despite contemporary discourses linking gentrification to Greece's reliance on tourism, this research traces geographically the process well before the onset of touristification. Moreover, it aligns closely within extant debates on the process of gentrification in the South EU, as well as with discussions regarding the potential correlation between gentrification and touristification. Overall, this paper stands out as one of the few mixed-methods analyses of gentrification outside the Anglophone world, thus making a significant contribution on the decolonisation of knowledge production regarding this type of urban transition.

Keywords

Capital switching, housing financialisation, debt restructuring, Metaxourgio, South EU, Golden Visa, recession

Introduction

On January 28th, the residents of Metaxourgio, a former working-class, inner-city neighbourhood in Athens, Greece, organised a rather peculiar funeral — that of their neighbourhood. In this symbolic action, they dressed in black and carried the coffin of their beloved neighbourhood to protest against the proliferation of short-term rentals (henceforth STRs), rent increases, commodification of space, and ultimately, gentrification. Nevertheless, gentrification as an analytical concept remains quite contested in Southern Europe. Specifically for Greece, several scholars have postulated since the early 2000s that gentrification, an endemic Anglophone concept, cannot take root in the domestic mode of urbanisation and, in particular, in Athens, due to the numerous local idiosyncrasies: a tendency towards “spontaneous urbanism”, the dense and low-quality housing stock in the city centre, the high fragmentation of ownership and social mixing inside the multi-storey residential buildings, as well as the lack of former industrial spaces that could be repurposed and the absence of professionals in the knowledge economy who could form a class of gentrifiers (Maloutas, 2012). Nevertheless, in the 2010s, a consensus emerged among researchers who recognised gentrification in Athens only as a consequence of the city's rapid touristification.

Against this backdrop, the article at hand incorporates insights from early approaches from Geographical Political Economy that situated gentrification within broader processes of capital switching (Smith, 1982) and the subsequent reorganisation of urban housing and labour markets (Marcuse, 1986), as well as the role of financialisation in later waves of gentrification (Lees et al., 2008). To operationalise this theoretical framework, we use a mixed-methods approach that includes a quantitative analysis of Greece's changing growth models and increasing inflows of foreign direct investment (henceforth FDI) in real estate, as well as a qualitative analysis of the evolution of Athenian gentrification from the mid-1990s onward, based on fieldwork conducted between 2009-2012 and 2018-2020; for the latter, Metaxourgio is used as a case study. The analysis finds that while gentrification in Athens is currently attributable to Greece's dependence on tourism, as a process of urban transformation long predates the advent of touristification. More specifically, the analysis highlights how Athenian gentrification, as facilitated by debt restructuring and financialisation, has organically adapted to Greek growth models which have evolved from construction-driven to tourism-dependent. Importantly, with Greece's growth trajectory being diachronically based on extracting value from the built environment, gentrification has continuously served as a prime mechanism to exploit rent gaps.

Based on the above, the article's contribution to the literature relies on four main points. First, it presents a thorough documentation of gentrification in Athens, thus substantiating the existence of this process in the Greek context. Second, it deciphers the common mechanisms underlying gentrification and touristification and postulates that they are closely intertwined and mostly sequential processes. Third, its theoretically-grounded mixed-methods analysis reassociates gentrification to its broader articulating processes, closing a gap in recent research which emphasises outcomes (e.g. displacement, rent increases) over causes. Fourth, as one of the most comprehensive analyses of gentrification outside the Anglophone world, comprising multiple rounds of fieldwork over a long period of time and incorporating secondary data and indices, while making numerous connections to other cities in the southern EU, this research contributes significantly to decolonising the relevant literature.

The article is organised as follows. First, we present the literature on the links between the production of space, uneven development and gentrification, and the relationship between gentrification and

1
2
3 touristification. We then lay out our mixed-methods approach, followed by the empirical section which is
4 divided into two parts: a quantitative analysis based on secondary data and indices (including the Building
5 Share Index, see below) and a qualitative analysis based on fieldwork. We then discuss our findings within
6 the international literature and draw comparisons with other Southern European cases. Finally, we
7 delineate the key components of gentrification and touristification and juxtapose the concepts to foster
8 a more coherent comprehension of these processes of urban transformation.
9
10

11 12 13 **Gentrification, uneven development, and touristification: a theoretical framework**

14
15 In gentrifying areas, working class households are being displaced due to economic factors (rent
16 increases), mobbing practices, and loss of community (Marcuse, 1986; Slater, 2012). These areas are in
17 turn occupied by middle class homebuyers, who, along with professional developers, push changes while
18 searching for a rapid capital turnover (Smith, 1982). As a result, the built environment undergoes a
19 transformation mainly reflected in changes in land uses, which are reoriented towards serving the new
20 users of space (Lees et al., 2008) and a reshuffling of the social composition in ways that align to the
21 middle-class predilection and distinction (Bourdieu, 1999). As such, most theorisations of gentrification
22 reflect a scientific and social urge to offer a political understanding of the socio-spatial restructuring of
23 inner-city areas that intensified after the decline of Fordism (Marcuse, 1986). Quite distinctively, Neil
24 Smith (1982; 2002) attached gentrification to uneven development by positioning it as a derivative of the
25 cyclical move of capital in the built environment from the suburbs to the city centre and a simultaneous
26 response to a prospect crisis of capital accumulation. Following his analysis, the capital that is invested in
27 the built environment for social reproduction, is immobilised in a specific material form (e.g. in the form
28 of houses, parks, schools). While immobilised, capital loses value unless further investment in the form or
29 repair/renovation is underway. Nonetheless, this slow de-valorisation also creates the possibilities for a
30 new phase of valorisation. As buildings lose value and get physically depleted, the market value of the
31 land on which the deteriorated structures are situated is subsequently reduced. Geographically, this leads
32 to a “locational seesaw”, namely the successive development, underdevelopment, and redevelopment of
33 given areas as capital jumps from one place to another, both creating and destroying its own opportunities
34 for development (Smith, 1982). The succession of valorisation and de-valorisation, both in temporal and
35 geographical terms discussed above, generate disparities between the actual and potential ground rent.
36 When this “rent gap” becomes sufficiently wide, the prospect of redevelopment and revitalization into
37 new land uses becomes financially attractive, prompting a resurgence of capital influx into the inner-city
38 market.
39
40
41
42
43

44
45 The above resonates with Harvey’s (2017) notion of capital switching. Namely, when the rate of profit
46 falls in major industrial sectors, circulating capital seeks an alternative arena for investment where the
47 profit rate remains high and the risk is low. At this point, there tends to be an increase of capital flows
48 from commodity production to the built environment (i.e., capital being rechannelled from the primary
49 circuit to the secondary one), which crystallise in space in the form of spatial fixes. Such instances of capital
50 switching have often served in postponing crises of accumulation (without however managing to abort
51 them completely) although often they simply represent a logical update of obsolete infrastructure. In
52 approaching gentrification as the result of capital switching, Smith (2002) postulated that particularly
53 during the historical conjuncture of the 1970s and 1980s gentrification’s unfolding was “somewhat
54 countercyclical” against the long swings in the economy. Smith’s later analyses have further expanded on
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 this, scrutinising gentrification as a form of spatial fix, where timing and spatiality are equally important;
4 as such, it stems from pre-existing institutional and economic structures fuelling investment opportunities
5 heralded by widening rent gaps (Smith, 1982), retaining strong local qualities (Slater, 2012), and producing
6 certain labour market structures (Gourzis et al., 2022).
7

8
9 State policies have proved particularly crucial for capital switching. Following the periodisation proposed
10 by Hackworth and Smith (2001), state, society and market arrangements have generated distinct waves
11 of gentrification. Specifically, during the first wave (1970s), gentrification was piecemeal and identified in
12 specific inner areas in US and Western European cities, funded by the public sector and aiming at
13 counteracting inner-city decline. For the second wave (1980s), the state stepped back and allowed the
14 process to develop in a more laissez-faire way, with gentrification incorporating land uses beyond housing
15 (such as cultural and art activities) and expanding beyond the city core. The third wave unfolded in the
16 aftermath of the stock market recession from the late 1980s onwards and was characterised as state-led.
17 Specifically, policies sought to absorb investment risks, promote market interests, and facilitate the
18 activities of big real estate companies that invested in areas beyond the city centre. By the turn of the
19 century, gentrification had turned into a global urban strategy (Smith, 2002) that was deeply intertwined
20 with processes of housing financialisation (identified by Lees et al., 2008, as the fourth wave). Lastly, in
21 the aftermath of the financial crisis, a fifth wave was suggested (Aalbers, 2019), one where new
22 international actors like institutional investors engaged in debt-driven practices of asset accumulation in
23 the context of local housing markets (Alexandri, 2022). In this process, capital is channelled into specific
24 areas through corporate practices and peer-to-peer accommodation platforms, raising rents and putting
25 pressure on rental properties in ways that increasingly larger social strata are excluded from housing. For
26 its part, the state is increasingly active in facilitating financial investments, as policies, especially at the
27 local scale, incorporate financial logics (Rolnik, 2019).
28
29
30
31

32 Given western economies' tertiarisation, the last waves of gentrification are intertwined with tourism.
33 According to Gotham (2005), tourism gentrification refers to the transformation of middle-class
34 neighbourhoods into relatively affluent and exclusive enclaves marked by a proliferation of corporate
35 entertainment and tourism venues. In more recent years such urban transitions have intensified; to
36 describe those, the relevant literature has adopted the neologism 'touristification' (Sequera and Nofre,
37 2018). However, since the term pre-existed in tourism studies, its extensive use by scholars in urban
38 studies is rather contested (Ojeda and Kieffer, 2020). In any case, in contrast to tourism-driven
39 gentrification, touristification describes a widespread conversion of the housing stock into STRs, with a
40 recycling multitude of visitors with higher disposable incomes displacing the permanent population
41 (Wachsmuth and Weisler, 2018). In this process, albeit tenants are the most vulnerable, homeowners
42 themselves cannot often evade exposure to chain displacement and lose their place within ever tighter
43 housing markets (Gourzis et al., 2022). Touristification has been documented across a variety of
44 geographical contexts (Jover and Díaz-Parra, 2020; Freytag and Bauder, 2018); nevertheless, it has
45 especially "blossomed" in vulnerable peripheral regions particularly dependent on tourism. For instance,
46 the crisis-ridden cities of the South EU quickly attracted investment interest from real-estate and financial
47 capital for tourism-related purposes; while local authorities, confronted with fiscal asphyxiation and
48 budget cuts, seized this opportunity and facilitated an entrepreneurial shift towards tourism-based and
49 sharing economies (Tulumello and Allegretti, 2020).
50
51
52
53

54 What becomes apparent from the above is that much of touristification's effect resonates with that of
55 'traditional' gentrification; indicatively, Aalbers (2019) uses the term touristification to discuss the role of
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 STRs in the 5th wave of gentrification. However, amongst the scholars of the European South, an intense
4 debate has emerged as to whether cities in the South EU are undergoing a new round of gentrification or
5 their 'touristification' is an entirely distinct process. As a way to contribute to these ongoing debates, we
6 analyse the case of gentrification in Athens and its interface with financialisation and touristification to
7 finally offer a detailed juxtaposition of these concepts.
8
9

10 11 12 **Methodological considerations**

13 This research is based on a mixed-methods approach. The empirical Section is divided in two parts of a
14 secondary and a primary analysis. The secondary analysis utilises macroeconomic, labour, and real estate
15 quantitative data (mainly) referring to the national level, to decipher Greece's shifting sectoral priorities
16 from the mid-1990s until after the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it covers critical periods for the country,
17 such as its long preparation for the 2004 Olympic Games and the successive crises of 2010-2022.
18 Specifically, this part begins with assessing Greece's pre-crisis construction-driven model (Mavroudeas,
19 2017) through the Building Share Index¹ (see Christophers, 2011; Kutz, 2016; Gourzis and Gialis, 2019),
20 which essentially compares investments in the secondary circuit to those in the primary. Subsequently,
21 the analysis assesses the extent of Greece's widely-documented fixation on tourism in the aftermath of
22 the 2008/09 Global Crisis (Gourzis et al., 2022) and the crucial role of foreign capital in real estate in this
23 context (see Surak and Tsuzuki, 2021). Finally, the evolution of the STR market in Greece is examined,
24 given its increasing significance for the country's growth (Lilius and Balampanidis, 2020). Secondary
25 analysis's methods and data are presented in detail in Table 1.
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 *Insert Table 1 around here*
33
34
35

36 The primary analysis focuses on Athens's gentrification through the representative case of Metaxourgio;
37 a former working-class inner-city neighbourhood that has undergone multiple rounds of gentrification
38 from the mid-1990s until today (Avdikos, 2015; Alexandri, 2018; Gourzis et al., 2022). Data for this part
39 are drawn from two rounds (2009-2012 and 2018-2020) of mainly qualitative fieldwork (except for the
40 questionnaires, which were partially quantitative, see Table 1). For questionnaires, the snowball sampling
41 method was used; to overcome its limitations, an adequate diversity in terms of gender, age and income
42 group was ensured. Fieldwork informants comprise experts and groups directly affected by and/or fuelling
43 gentrification. Qualitative methods are presented in Table 2. The primary analysis is complemented by a
44 policy analysis deciphering the role of the state (Lees et al., 2008), as well as neighbourhood-level
45 secondary data on rents² (i.e., yearly changes of average rents between 2011 and 2020) and Airbnb
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

54 ¹ Calculated as the share of Gross Fixed Capital Formations in the built environment (housing plus other construction)
55 in total GFCF (except for in agriculture) plus the compensation of employees.

56 ² Acquired from the real estate platform www.spitogatos.gr
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 listings³ (i.e., density of active listings⁴ for 2015 and 2023 and changes between 2015-2019 and 2020-
4 2023).
5
6
7

8 *Insert Table 2 around here*
9

11 **Greece's changing growth models: a quantitative analysis**

12
13 *Insert Figure 1 around here*
14

15
16 Figure 1a shows that investment in the production of built environment (both in terms of housing and
17 other constructions) accounted for a significant share of capital formations in Greece between 1995 and
18 2007; actually, the index's values for the country were much higher than the EU's before this was
19 subverted by the 2008/2009 Global Financial Crisis. Nevertheless, albeit high, the values of the Building
20 Share in Greece followed a mildly downward trend before the crisis, except for two instances where
21 capital left and then immediately returned to the production of space, identified as capital switching in
22 the literature (Gourzis and Gialis, 2019). Specifically, the first one (2002-2004) is associated with the
23 country's preparation for the 2004 Olympic Games, as critical infrastructure—stadiums, metro and tram
24 networks, extensive urban redevelopment projects, etc.—was being constructed at the time, although it
25 must be noted that investment in housing was higher than in other constructions. After the Olympics,
26 investment in housing further increased, signalling a housing bubble. However, this bubble soon burst in
27 2007, leading to a rapid decline in such investments, which in turn affected the Index's values. Despite
28 this downturn, investment in other construction projects continued to increase until 2009. During the
29 2010s, two more capital switching instances occurred: the first (2015-2016) stemming from a renewed
30 investment in infrastructure, which in the meantime had surpassed investment in housing; and the second
31 (2019-2022), stemming from a simultaneous increase in both types of construction investment.
32
33
34
35
36

37 Both instances of capital switching during the 2010s coincided with an expansion of tourism, in terms of
38 both output and employment, as shown in Figure 1b. Specifically, tourism's direct contribution to GDP
39 slightly retreated immediately after the outbreak of the crisis. Nevertheless, in the following years it grew
40 significantly, marking Greece's increasingly dependent on tourism, which unfolded in three phases. The
41 first (2009-2010) refers to a slight increase in the share of tourism in total GDP. The second (2012-2015)
42 was more significant, as tourism's share in GDP increased from 5% to 6.5%; even more remarkably, the
43 share of NACE I in total employment increased from 7.5% to 9.5%, stemming from a whopping 30% jump
44 in absolute numbers (as opposed to a mere 4% in total employment). The third phase started in 2016 and
45 peaked in 2019, prior to its interruption by the COVID-19 pandemic. At its peak, tourism's contribution in
46 total output and employment was 7.5% and 10% respectively; in the EU, tourism's share in GDP was 4.5%
47 (Eurostat, 2023) and in employment it was 5% (2019 data). As will be shown below, this third phase
48 followed the explosion of both STR market activity and FDI in real estate. Moreover, although the
49
50
51
52
53

54
55 ³ Freely available in www.insideairbnb.com, which collects data from www.airbnb.com through web scraping.

56 ⁴ Those with at least one rating in the last 12 months from the date of reference for each map.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 pandemic interrupted these trends, it did not subvert them, as tourism began to recover (both in terms
4 of output and employment) as early as by 2021.
5
6
7

8 *Insert Figure 2 around here*
9

10
11
12 In conjunction with upgrading tourism's role as an economic steamroller, after 2012 Greece actively
13 pursued foreign direct investments through a Golden Visa program, which refers to 5-year residence
14 permits to non-EU citizens by investment in certain forms of securities, bank deposits, or real estate; for
15 the latter, the program initially demanded investments to exceed 250,000.⁵ Very soon, this became the
16 main asset type preferred by investors, not only in Greece but in other countries offering these programs
17 (Surak and Tsuzuki, 2021). Conversely, FDI in real estate became almost synonymous with an application
18 for a Golden Visa: of the 7.8 billion Euros in total (during 2013-2022, see Figure 2a), the program attracted
19 5.5 billion (Rousanoglou, 2024). Specifically, although the Greek Golden Visa program was introduced in
20 2013, applications started mounting only after 2017 (from 500 in 2014 to 4,000 in 2019). An almost
21 identical trajectory is observed for FDI in real estate, which remained well below 500 EUR million annually
22 until 2017 and then surpassed 1 billion. Despite investment volumes shrinking during the pandemic, 2022
23 emerged as a record year for FDI in real estate, reaching nearly 2 billion euros. Tentative data also indicate
24 a similar trend for Golden Visa applications in 2023 (Rousanoglou, 2024).
25
26
27
28

29
30 20%-40% of the properties acquired under the Golden Visa program in the last 10 years are estimated to
31 have ended up on the STR market (Kathimerini, 2024). This reflects how housing has become a prime
32 investment asset, within a context of low land values, households liquidating their property thus pushing
33 supply, and increasing tourism flows (Bank of Greece, 2023). Specifically, STRs through peer-to-peer
34 online platforms appeared in Greece in the early 2010s. For some years it was a rather marginal
35 phenomenon, since operating such a listing required a licence from the National Tourism Organisation;
36 an abolishment of this regulation in 2015 allowed a myriad homeowners to convert their property into
37 STRs legally (increasing their number from 30,000 in 2015 to almost 90,000 in 2017, see Figure 2b).
38 Moreover, subsequent regulation attracted professional hosts with multiple listings, fuelling another
39 round of expansion (almost 176,000 STRs in 2019). Interestingly, the collapse of tourism due to COVID-19
40 did not suffice to convince hosts, neither small-scale nor professional ones, to withdraw their property
41 from platforms and render them available for long term rental. STRs therefore continued to rise (179,000
42 in 2020 and 188,000 in 2022), albeit at a lower rate, before this rate accelerated again. Athens occupies a
43 central position in the Greek STR market, having evolved in the late 2000s from a short transit destination
44 (between arrival in Greece and departure to an island) to an urban tourism destination of international
45 repute (Gourzis et al., 2022). For instance, in 2019, out of the 2 million overnight stays recorded
46 nationwide, Athens alone accounted for over 500 thousand stays.
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55
56

⁵ Law 4146/2012
57
58
59

Gentrification and touristification in Athens: insights from fieldwork in the Metaxourgio area

Brief historical background

Metaxourgio, located at the immediate vicinity of the Acropolis Hill and bordering the economic activities clustered in Omonia Square, saw the rise of neoclassical buildings in the 19th century, erected to accommodate affluent families whose transactions benefitted from direct access to Omonia. At the time, the Silk Factory, designed by the Danish architect Kristian Hansel, lent its name to the neighbourhood. As industrial activity began to concentrate around Omonia Square and along the neighbouring Piraeus axis, wealthier residents moved away and were replaced by the working class who sought proximity to employment opportunities in the industry. After the Greek Civil War in 1949, the antiparochi land development system led to widespread demolitions and modernisation elsewhere, but Metaxourgio saw fewer changes due to its industrial character. There, the few antiparochi buildings housed a few old bourgeois Athenians on the upper floors, while the lower floors were occupied by working-class Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians and Russians; for their part, the low-rise buildings housed a Roma population descending from the Thrace region. From the 1990s onwards, urban regeneration emerged as a key political agenda. Metaxourgio, with its infrastructure, accessibility, architectural heritage, and unique inner-city characteristics, yet low land values and a vulnerable population, became a focal point for gentrification. Below, we outline the 4 stages of gentrification of the neighbourhood, considering the shifting productive priorities and instances of capital switching analysed above.

Insert Image 1 around here

Stage 1: The urban regeneration plans and sporadic private initiatives of the 1990s

As noted above, until the late 1980s Metaxourgio primarily accommodated lower-income households and hosted small-scale industrial activities, like garages and car repair shops. Due to a long period of disinvestment, certain parts of the area had become hubs for illicit activities, i.e., illegal brothels and drug use. However, this period saw the state-led urban regeneration of the neighbouring Plaka. Similar plans for urban regeneration were pursued for most other areas surrounding the Acropolis, including Metaxourgio. Contrary, though, to the stages proposed in the literature for Anglophone cities, which typically identify marginal gentrifiers as the initiators of the process (see Lees et al., 2008), the initial wave of gentrification in Athens was led by middle- and upper-middle-class homebuyers who possessed the means to purchase, invest in, and restore low-rise neoclassical buildings (Photo collage F1 & F2). These households, rich in cultural and educational capital, “*knew what (was) going to happen in Metaxourgio*” (F1- I) as they were acquainted with gentrification in Western cities like London and New York, where they had resided as university students or employees earlier in their lives. Additionally, they maintained close networks with local and central state politicians. Leveraging their exclusive information and resources, they invested in Metaxourgio while state regeneration plans for the area were still in paper, capitalising on the low land values. Thus, during the initial wave of gentrification in Metaxourgio, state regeneration plans that hinted at future development activities acted as precursors to the rent gap; however, construction activities in the area were sporadic, primarily targeting the renovation and upgrading of existing housing stock with architectural qualifications.

1
2
3 *Stage 2: State interventions and cultural initiatives during the late 1990s and early 2000s*
4

5 State interventions played a proactive role in the gentrification of Metaxourgio, as with many other inner
6 city areas. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, planning schemes were viewed as an emergency to prepare
7 the city for the 2004 Olympic Games (Alexandri, 2018). This period witnessed the establishment of a metro
8 system, large-scale pedestrianisation, and regeneration of public spaces; reflecting the first instance of
9 capital switching (see Figure 1a). Metaxourgio also benefited from the construction of a metro station
10 (Metaxourgio St.), the pedestrianisation of several streets, and multiple rounds of its main square's (Avdi
11 Sq.) redevelopment, including the conversion of the Silk Factory into the Municipal Gallery. Such
12 interventions attracted in turn many private cultural uses (Photo collage F2) which were displaced from
13 other areas closer to the Acropolis that had already undergone intense gentrification (F1-I & F2-I). Such
14 interventions underlined the state's commitment to revitalising historic inner-city areas, making
15 gentrification as a standard planning practice and contributing to the widening of rent gaps in former
16 working-class areas. However, as in Metaxourgio the rent gap was only beginning to widen, rents in
17 antiparochi and low-rise, under-maintained buildings remained affordable, attracting a multitude of
18 artists and other so-called marginal gentrifiers, who saw an opportunity to reside in this *"authentic place
19 that makes you feel like being in an urban village"* (F1-I) and be able to *"freely express (themselves)"* (F2-
20 I). Simultaneously, new uses and users, as well as the area's artistic potential provoked speculative
21 behaviours, as landlords began to evict families, including Roma residing in low-rise buildings (F1-I).
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

29 *Stage 3: Gentrification proper and the exploitation of the rent gap after 2004*
30

31 In 2007, Metaxourgio was benefited by the opening of yet another metro station (Keramikos St.) which
32 further increased the area's accessibility. Around this period, the 'Oliaros' real estate company acquired
33 64 architecturally interesting buildings prompting artists to use them as ateliers and exhibit spaces and
34 organised cultural events such as the "Remap art walk"; simultaneously, GEK-TERNA, a major Greek
35 construction company, built a 5-level residential complex, one of the largest building projects in Athens
36 at the time (F2-I). Moreover, a considerable culinary scene comprising numerous gourmet restaurants
37 emerged, while residents' associations took initiatives to beautify open spaces (e.g., bring to view the
38 "Dimosio Sima", the ancient cemetery of prominent men) and run rebranding campaigns, often prompted
39 by redevelopment companies (F1-I & F2-I). Despite these activities taking place amid the construction
40 fever and capital switching of 2005-2007 (see Figure 1a), the development of gentrification in
41 Metaxourgio was not linear, as alongside private capital, affluent and marginal gentrifiers, numerous
42 Chinese entrepreneurs opened wholesale warehouses and large retail shops with inexpensive goods.
43 Their presence, nonetheless, contributed to increased demand thus rent hikes (F1-I). Thus, residents
44 observed only a *"low-key transition"* (F2-I), which nonetheless was hindered by the remaining illicit
45 activities (F2-Q). With the onset of the economic crisis, private capital initiatives across the country were
46 significantly impeded (Gourzis and Gialis, 2019). In Metaxourgio, Oliaros put its whole project on hold (F2-
47 I). Against this backdrop, a new entertainment trend kicked-off in this neighbourhood, that of
48 'neokafenía'. These were cafés combining traditional and modern elements, catering to a young audience
49 of all genders, in contrast to the traditional Greek cafés which are typically frequented by (mostly older)
50 working-class men. Importantly, the neokafenía, offering spirits and mezze at low prices, provided
51 affordable entertainment for marginal gentrifiers who continued settling in the area for its *"diversity,*
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *atmosphere, and low rents*" (F2-I), but also to *"meet people with similar interests, bond and develop new*
4 *ideas and projects*" (F1-I). Then, neokafenias guaranteed the continuation of gentrification despite the
5 negative financial and property impacts of austerity. Moreover, it was not uncommon for these marginal
6 gentrifiers, but also for new entrepreneurs, to renovate the edifice purchased or rented, thus contributing
7 to a "sweat equity" type of gentrification (F2-Q, F2-I & F1-I). Overall, both alternative recreation uses and
8 spontaneous gentrification practices served as a buffer for real estate prices and sustained the rent gap.
9 At the height of the crisis in 2014, rents in Metaxourgio had fallen by only 20% compared to 2011,
10 mirroring the decline seen in well-known middle-class neighbourhoods such as Ampelokipi, Kolonaki and
11 Acropolis.⁶
12
13

14
15
16
17 *Insert Image 2 around here*
18

19 20 *Stage 4: Financial logics in tourist gentrification after the deep recession of 2009-2014* 21

22
23 Gathering numerous theatres, workshop spaces, galleries, wine bars, restaurants, and cafés, while hosting
24 pop-up dance shows in public spaces, by the mid-2010s, Metaxourgio had emerged as the city's cultural
25 district. Moreover, the area saw numerous new hotels opening (including small boutique ones), and STRs
26 multiplying, amid Greece's third phase of tourism expansion (see Figure 1b). Specifically, although other
27 neighbourhoods by the Acropolis Foot saw Airbnb listings earlier with higher densities, Metaxourgio
28 followed close behind (see Figure 3a). However, due to its architectural heritage and vibrant nightlife (F2-
29 Q), the area saw a density increase of 370% between 2015 and 2019 (see Figure 3b) and became one of
30 the priciest areas in Athens (regarding STRs; Gourzis et al., 2022). Reflecting wider trends, while most
31 listings were managed by individuals exploiting the vague regulatory framework to supplement their
32 income, they faced stiff competition from professional investors owning multiple listings who entered the
33 market after 2016 (F2-I). Nevertheless, economies of scale consolidated around STR loci, comprising a
34 multitude of ancillary services like automatic laundromats, co-working spaces, and cafes, with a more
35 clear orientation towards serving short-term visitors (F2-Q). All the above entailed extensive renovation
36 of the existing building stock (F2-I; F2-Q), which was reflected as capital switching unfolding after 2019
37 (see Figure 1a). However, STR activities also led to a steep rise in rents; characteristically, in Metaxourgio,
38 rent increases during 2011-2020 (29%) far exceeded those in other middle-class neighbourhoods with
39 lower STR density (see Figure 3a) such as Ampelokipi (16%) and Kolonaki (10%). This in turn led to
40 increasing displacement pressures on both long-time residents and marginal gentrifiers, with the latter
41 noting that they were replaced by urbanites who were *"like (them), but with more money"* (F2-I). In recent
42 years, Metaxourgio's STR market has grown exponentially; specifically, Airbnb listings' density increased
43 from 520 per sq.km. in July 2020 to over 700 in September 2023, marking one of the sharpest density
44 increases in the city. At the same time, long-term rentals are scarce, with average monthly rents being
45 around €800⁷ in a country where the monthly gross minimum wage stands at €830.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

54
55 ⁶ According to Spitogatos Data.

56 ⁷ According to Spitogatos data.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

Insert Figure 3 around here

For Peer Review

Discussing the changing nature of gentrification in the EU South through a period of successive crises

This research traces gentrification in Athens in the context of Greece's growth models over the last 30 years. Drawing upon key findings, we focus on three interrelated dynamics: the causal relationship between gentrification and capital switching, the role of financialisation in sustaining and transforming gentrification in the context of an increasingly tourism-dependent growth model, and the link between gentrification and touristification as spatial processes and analytical tools.

Early interpretation of gentrification regarded it as a spatial fix of capital that leaves industrial production to be invested in the production of space (Smith, 1982) and accommodate urban transitions (i.e., new types of CBDs) in the post-industrial city (Marcuse, 1986). Employing a similar approach with Athenian gentrification, we identified the 2004 Olympic Games as a landmark event (Alexandri, 2018; Gourzis and Gialis, 2019), which resonates with research on Barcelona post 1992 Olympics and the broader impact of mega events on urbanisation (Smith, 2002). Specifically, the 2004 Games in Athens demanded major investment in infrastructure, as manifested in the 2002-2004 instance of capital switching, comprising among others a new airport, metro and tram systems, while also entailed extensive urban redevelopment projects (Gourzis and Gialis, 2019). This construction fever, which extended Greece's diachronic emphasis on construction over industrial production (Mavroudeas, 2017), fostered an environment of rampant property speculation. This benefitted the multitude of construction companies in the country (Herod et al., 2021), which intensified their activity after the Olympics (as reflected in the 2005-2007 capital switching), seeking to capitalise on the rent gaps that emerged through the development of such infrastructure in underutilised inner-city areas. Indicatively, Metaxourgio had particularly low land values despite being very central, accessible, sparsely built, and architecturally interesting — attractive enough for investments like the GEK-TERNA residential complex. While then the mid-1990s to early 2000s values of the Building Share reflected an attempt to modernise infrastructure, the post-Olympics spatial fixes constituted a logical market response to investment opportunities (see Gotham, 2005). Simultaneously, the disproportionate share of investment in the built environment before 2007 can also be seen as an attempt to overcome overaccumulation tendencies of Greek manufacturing, which faced persisting problems (e.g., a limited access to credit and low innovation potential) that were further exacerbated by the adoption of the common Euro currency (Mavroudeas, 2017). Instead of fending off an approaching crisis, however, investment in the built environment rendered capital immobile and vulnerable against devalorization (see Harvey, 2017), leading to the burst of a real estate bubble already in 2007. The aforementioned trajectory is also relevant for other Southern EU countries; Spain, for instance, exhibited capital switching in the same period before culminating in a housing bubble burst (Kutz, 2016). With recession dismantling Southern European construction-driven growth models, incumbent governments shifted attention to the profit potential of the tourism industry, implementing a series of policies to protect and bolster it with cheap labour (Herod et al., 2021).

Despite these macroeconomic conditions, gentrified areas in Athens saw limited drops in land values, while land use change and the inflow of new residents sustained the process, with this kind of "recessive gentrification" as documented in other cities like Madrid (Janoschka et al. 2020). A mechanism underlying such gentrification was the perception of housing as a financial asset by institutional landlords, individual investors, and small property owners. Besides investors' capacity to exploit rent gaps and maintain steady revenue streams (Janoschka et al., *ibid*), housing financialisation was crucially facilitated by state policies (Belotti and Arbachi, 2021). In the case of the crisis-ridden South EU, these were associated with debt

1
2
3 restructuring, including the venture of social housing units and non-performing mortgage portfolios to
4 institutional investors, and legislative amendments for debt servicers, Real Estate Investment Trust
5 activity, and the introduction of Golden Visa programmes. This institutional framework aimed at de-risking
6 investments and attracting capital to places strained by austerity Memoranda (Alexandri and Janoschka,
7 2024). In Greece, three intertwined conditions drew investments in housing real estate. First, real estate
8 assets were particularly cheap: assets had lost nearly 40% of their value between 2010 and 2017, and
9 house prices in Athens (€1,497 per sq.m. in 2016) were significantly lower than in other Mediterranean
10 cities like Lisbon (€3,117) and Madrid (€4,127) (Alexandri, 2022). Second, Greek Golden Visas were among
11 the cheapest in the EU, as €250,000 of investment in real estate was solely required until recently. Third,
12 austerity measures and increased taxation slashed households' disposable income leading to a sharp
13 increase in Non-Performing Loans (Alexandri and Janoschka, 2018). As a result, many households were
14 forced to sell their property, thereby generating a supply of distressed assets. As a later amendment in
15 Greece's insolvency regime (Law 4738/2020) further dismantled the protection of primary residences,
16 debt servicers were allowed to openly advocate for further liquidations (Alexandri, 2022).
17
18
19
20

21 However, Greece's attractiveness to investors did not surge until 2017, when international rating agencies
22 waived the possibility of default. With improved economic performance, investor trust was reinstated,
23 leading them to identify the country's low real estate values and liberalised legal framework as risk averse
24 opportunity for investment (Alexandri, 2022); this was clearly documented in Golden Visas and FDI in real
25 estate increases after 2016. With a small percentage of acquired assets allocated for personal use
26 (estimated at around 6%; Bakas, 2024), most assets were reintroduced into the housing market at higher
27 rents as either long-term rentals for gentrifiers or STRs, especially the smaller flats in central Athens
28 (Bakas, *ibid*). At the same time, small property owners, facing declining disposable incomes, seized the
29 opportunity to generate additional revenue by converting parts or their entire homes into STRs (Lilius and
30 Balampanidis, 2020). State regulations again played a key role in facilitating the market, as the initial surge
31 of STRs followed Law 4336/2015, which abolished the need for licensing by the National Tourism
32 Organization, leading to the culmination of the period when STRs were regarded as a "spontaneous and
33 informal practice" (Lilius and Balampanidis, *ibid*). However, with Law 4472/2017 introducing the legal
34 entity concept and removing the restriction of two listings per individual, the STR market was
35 professionalised and its expansion was accelerated. Our fieldwork indicated that among the inflowing
36 professional hosts were foreign investors acquiring prime assets for tourist accommodation through the
37 Golden Visa program, as well as Greek and foreign architecture firms which turned into asset management
38 companies. In some cases, this surge in STRs was resulting in "ghost hotels", namely entire antiparochi
39 buildings converted into Airbnb listings (see Wachsmuth and Weisler, 2018).
40
41
42
43
44

45 The above illustrates how the process of asset accumulation by institutional and individual investors in
46 Greece has been debt-driven and in most cases was related to a potential for tourism exploitation.
47 Portugal and Spain similarly became prime examples of housing dispossession through debt restructuring
48 and policies attracting FDI, intertwining with an increasing tourism dependence. Indicatively, from 2010
49 to 2019, tourism's direct contribution to Portugal's output rose from 5.5% to 8%⁸ while the share of
50 accommodation and catering in total employment in Spain increased from 7% to 9%.⁹ Drawing upon the
51 above, the rise of tourism as a pivotal economic force in the South EU is intrinsically linked to the pre-
52
53

54
55 ⁸ Based on UNWTO data.

56 ⁹ Based on EU-LFS data for NACE I.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 existing construction-driven growth models: not only both rely on extracting value from the built
4 environment, but the urban landscapes that had resulted from the construction-driven model served as
5 spatial fixes for the subsequent tourism-dependent model. As different types of owners and investors
6 aimed at rent increases and rapid capital turnover, gentrification, being part of extant spatial fixes,
7 transformed into a business plan. As a result, a severe crisis of housing affordability in many European
8 cities and especially of the EU South has emerged, affecting a multitude of social groups from the most
9 vulnerable up to the middle class. Given past theoretical debates regarding the analytical purchase of
10 gentrification, as well as current ones regarding the boundaries between gentrification and
11 touristification, below we tender a theoretical juxtaposition that may help clarify definitional conflation.
12
13
14

15 Drawing upon common observations in the literature and our analysis, four components are identified as
16 crucial for gentrification. First, the exploitation of rent gaps through capital investment in land uses that
17 maximise rent extraction (Smith, 1982). Second, state interventions, although these can be highly
18 dependent on geographical and historical timing; from proactive rezoning on the basis of historic
19 preservation during initial phases (see Zukin, 1987), to an investment de-risking laissez-faire approach
20 during later ones. Third, the inflow of higher-income groups as gentrification's consumers, although the
21 socio-economic background of newcomers differs over time, spanning from the so-called bourgeois-
22 Boehme to lifestyle mobilities and remote workers (Cocola-Gant and Lopez-Gay, 2020; Gourzis et al.,
23 2022). Fourth, the increasing displacement pressures for lower income groups including that of marginal
24 gentrifiers, and for less profitable land uses, which all lead to the erosion of the social and spatial
25 composition of neighbourhoods (Slater, 2012). For its part, touristification also stems from strategies that
26 maximise rent extraction through investments in the built environment, but with a clear focus on tourism.
27 The role of the state remains crucial, as touristification also relies on a favourable regulatory framework.
28 A crucial difference between the two processes refers to the user group (Sequera and Nofre, 2018);
29 however, when the recycling multitude of short-term visitors is examined as a coherent inflow, it becomes
30 apparent that they often possess a higher disposable income than the permanent population, thus being
31 able to exert their preference over space equally to gentrifiers (Gourzis et al., 2022). Lastly, touristification
32 similarly leads to displacement of lower income households (Wachsmuth and Buglioni, 2024);
33 interestingly, as observed during our fieldwork in Athens, higher income households can also be displaced,
34 not due to economic factors, but rather because of a loss of neighbourhood identity, social ties, and the
35 nuisance caused by tourism flows and uses.
36
37
38
39
40

41 Thus far, literature discourse on the need to distinguish the two processes revolves around questions of
42 agency and timing. Regarding the former, without the user group of gentrifiers, it is argued, the
43 gentrification discourse is inapt (Sequera and Nofre, 2018). However, questions of agency in
44 touristification directly refer to those revolving around 'proper' gentrification. Whether the consumers of
45 urban space are middle-class residents, lifestyle migrants, or the "ephemeral tourist", the underlying logic
46 of real-estate leveraging relies on the realisation of profit, with those unable to contribute to this
47 endeavour facing displacement or marginalisation. Regarding the latter, it is argued that there are areas
48 undergoing touristification without being gentrified (Sequera and Nofre, *ibid*), or that there is no temporal
49 overlapping between the two processes, thus they do not constitute a single phenomenon (Jover and
50 Díaz-Parra, 2020). Beyond the numerous documented cases where touristification closely follows or
51 coexists with gentrification (e.g., Tulumello and Allegretti, 2021), we have documented above the
52 common mechanisms underlying both processes. Moreover, recent research has pointed to online short-
53 term accommodation platforms opening up medium-term rental markets as a way to circumvent
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 tightened regulation in the sharing economy (Wachsmuth and Buglioni, 2024), capitalising on the pre-
4 COVID-19 trend of remote workers staying for some time in many southern European cities (Cocola-Gant
5 and Lopez-Gay, 2020). Against this backdrop, would the academic discussion resort to concepts like
6 medium-term rental gentrification, medium-term touristification, or platform gentrification entering
7 another grey zone of concept production, or can we trace the roots of new rounds of gentrification in the
8 insatiable appetite of capital to expand upon novel housing sub-markets?
9
10

11 12 13 **Concluding remarks**

14
15 The contribution of this research in the literature relies on two crucial and intertwined arguments. First,
16 gentrification is deeply embedded in broader capitalist processes related to the circulation of capital; as
17 such, modes of urbanisation cannot be seen independently from modes of production and processes of
18 financialisation. Second, its specific form develops in tandem with geographical contingencies, including
19 local political economic path dependencies, investment incentives, and cultural factors. As such, while
20 southern European gentrification initially derived from construction-driven models of urban
21 development, it was then shaped by policies of financialisation as exemplified via debt restructuring, and
22 later adapted to an increasing dependence of the economy on tourism.
23
24

25 Due to the geographical contingency of the process and, therefore, its conceptual ambiguity when used
26 outside the Anglophone context, several scholars have argued about its lack of academic rigour (Maloutas,
27 2012); while this loss of momentum has led others to suggest the need to allow the concept to disintegrate
28 under the weight of its own burden (Bondi, 1999). At the same time, a battle is raging over the
29 appropriation of the concept. On the one hand, social movements for the right to housing around the
30 globe emphasise the political and class connotations associated with it, while on the other hand, market
31 and institutional actors aim to deliberately dissociate gentrification from its class connotation by using it
32 interchangeably with urban recovery, revitalisation, and development. In this article, we have argued that
33 the concept of gentrification remains highly relevant and timely due to its strong structural dimension. To
34 further support our argument, we have linked it to touristification, a term more commonly used but less
35 politically charged.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

List of References

- Aalbers MB (2019) Introduction to the forum: From third to fifth-wave gentrification. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 110(1): 1-11.
- Alexandri G (2018) Planning gentrification and the 'absent' state in Athens. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(1): 36-50.
- Alexandri G (2022) Housing financialisation a la Griega. *Geoforum* 136: 68-79.
- Alexandri G and Janoschka M (2024) Local Housing Policies and Corporate Social Financial Logics: Insights from the Financialization of Housing in Barcelona. *Housing, Theory and Society*: 1-19.
- Avdikos V (2015) Processes of creation and commodification of local collective symbolic capital: A tale of gentrification from Athens. *City, Culture and Society* 6(4): 117-123.
- Bakas T (2024) Golden visa / Χάθηκε η ευκαιρία αξιοποίησης ως αναπτυξιακό «εργαλείο» επενδύσεων και νέων θέσεων εργασίας [Golden Visa / A lost opportunity to use it as a development tool for investment and new jobs]. *TVXS*, 6 April.
- Bank of Greece (2023) ΤτΕ Έκθεση για τη Νομισματική Πολιτική 2022-2023 [Report on Monetary Policy 2022-2023].
- Belotti E and Arbaci S (2021) From right to good, and to asset: The state-led financialisation of the social rented housing in Italy. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 39(2): 414-433.
- Bondi L (1999) Between the woof and the weft: a response to Loretta Lees. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17(3): 253-255.
- Bourdieu P (1999) *Distinction a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge: London and New York.
- Cocola-Gant A and Lopez-Gay A (2020) Transnational gentrification, tourism and the formation of 'foreign only' enclaves in Barcelona. *Urban studies* 57(15): 3025-3043.
- Eurostat (2023) Tourism: €572 billion gross value added in the EU. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/WDN-20230414-1>
- Freytag T and Bauder M (2018) Bottom-up touristification and urban transformations in Paris. *Tourism Geographies* 20(3): 443-460.
- Gotham KF (2005) Tourism gentrification: The case of New Orleans' French Quarter. *Urban Studies* 42(7): 1099-1121.
- Gourzis K and Gialis S (2019) Dismantled spatial fixes in the aftermath of recession: Capital switching and labour underutilization in the Greek capital metropolitan region. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 43(4): 741-759.
- Gourzis K, Herod A, Chorianopoulos I and Gialis S (2022) On the recursive relationship between gentrification and labour market precarisation: Evidence from two neighbourhoods in Athens, Greece. *Urban Studies* 59(12): 2545-2564.
- Hackworth J and Smith N (2001) The changing state of gentrification. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 92(4): 464-477.
- Harvey D (2017) *Marx, capital, and the madness of economic reason*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Herod A, Gourzis K and Gialis S (2021) Inter-regional underemployment and the industrial reserve army: Precarity as a contemporary Greek drama. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 28(4): 413-430.
- Holm A, Alexandri G and Bernt M (2023) *Housing policy under the conditions of financialisation*. Science Po: Paris.
- Janoschka M, Alexandri G, Ramos HO and Vives-Miró S (2020) Tracing the socio-spatial logics of transnational landlords' real estate investment: Blackstone in Madrid. *European urban and regional studies* 27(2): 125-141.
- Jover J and Díaz-Parra I (2020) Gentrification, transnational gentrification and touristification in Seville, Spain. *Urban Studies* 57(15): 3044-3059.

- 1
2
3 Kathimerini (2024) Χρυσή βίζα: Πάνω από 2,5 δισ. τα έσοδα για την Ελλάδα [Golden Visa: Over 2.5
4 billion in revenue for Greece]. *Kathimerini*, 19 February.
- 5 Lees L, Slater T and Wylie E (2008) *Gentrification*. Routledge: New York.
- 6 Lilius J and Balampanidis D (2020) "Live Like a Lifelong Tourist"? The Contradicting Realities of Finnish
7 Offshore Service Workers in Athens. *Urban Planning* 5(3): 177-188.
- 8 Maloutas T (2012) Contextual diversity in gentrification research. *Critical Sociology* 38(1): 33-48.
- 9 Marcuse P (1986) Abandonment, gentrification, and displacement: The linkages in New York City. In
10 *Gentrification of the City*. Routledge: London and New York, pp.153-177.
- 11 Mavroudeas S (2017) Troika's Economic Adjustment Programmes for Greece: Why Do They
12 Systematically Fail?. In: *The Internal Impact and External Influence of the Greek Financial Crisis*, pp.23-
13 45.
- 14 Ojeda AB and Kieffer M (2020) Touristification. Empty concept or element of analysis in tourism
15 geography? *Geoforum* 115: 143-145.
- 16 Rolnik R (2019) *Urban warfare: Housing under the empire of finance*. Verso Books.
- 17 Rousanoglou (2024) «Χρυσή βίζα»: έφερε πάνω από 5,5 δισ. ευρώ ξένα κεφάλαια ["Golden Visa": it
18 brought more than Eur 5.5 billion foreign capital]. *The Kathimerini*, 3 February.
- 19 Sequera J and Nofre J (2018) Shaken, not stirred: New debates on touristification and the limits of
20 gentrification. *City* 22(5-6): 843-855.
- 21 Slater T (2012) Missing Marcuse: On gentrification and displacement. In: *Cities for people, not for profit*.
22 Routledge: New York, pp.171-196.
- 23 Smith N (1982) Gentrification and uneven development. *Economic geography* 58(2): 139-155.
- 24 Smith N (2002) New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as global urban strategy. *Antipode* 34(3):
25 427-450.
- 26 Surak K and Tsuzuki Y (2021) Are golden visas a golden opportunity? Assessing the economic origins and
27 outcomes of residence by investment programmes in the EU. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration*
28 *Studies* 47(15): 3367-3389.
- 29 Tulumello S and Allegretti G (2021) Articulating urban change in Southern Europe: Gentrification,
30 touristification and financialisation in Mouraria, Lisbon. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 28(2):
31 111-132.
- 32 Wachsmuth D and Buglioni B (2024) Neither housing nor hotel: The emergence of "medium-term
33 rentals" in post-Covid Canadian cities. *Canadian Planning and Policy* 1: 68-89.
- 34 Wachsmuth D and Weisler A (2018) Airbnb and the rent gap: Gentrification through the sharing
35 economy. *Environment and planning A: economy and space* 50(6): 1147-1170.
- 36 Zukin S (1987) Gentrification: culture and capital in the urban core. *Annual review of sociology*, 13(1):
37 129-147.
- 38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Focus of analysis	Method	Temporal scope	Data source
Constructions-driven model	Building Share Index	1995-2022	Eurostat data on Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) data by asset type
Tourism-dependent model	Tourism's direct contribution to GDP ¹	2008-2021	UN Tourism ²
	Share of employees in accommodation and catering (NACE I) in total employment	2008-2022	Authors' calculations based on Eurostat Labour Force Surveys microdata
Role of FDI in real estate	Approved Golden Visa applications	2013-2023	Greek Ministry of Migration, as published by Kathimerini (2024a; 2024b)
	FDI in real estate volume		Reports by the Bank of Greece ³
STR market expansion	Listings in online peer-to-peer accommodation platforms	2015-2023	Studies by the Institute of the Greek Tourism Confederation ⁴
	Stays in listings in online peer-to-peer accommodation platforms		Eurostat data on short-stay accommodation offered via online collaborative economy platforms ⁵

Table 1: Secondary analysis methods and data

¹ Following UN's definition, as described here: <https://w3.unece.org/SDG/en/Indicator?id=209>

² Available at: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-statistics/economic-contribution-SDG>

³ Available at: <https://www.bankofgreece.gr/en/statistics/external-sector/direct-investment/direct-investment--flows>

⁴ Available at: <https://insete.gr/studies/?lang=en>

⁵ Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/tourism/database>

Methods per round of fieldwork	
First round of fieldwork 2009- 2012	Second round of fieldwork (2018-2020)
(A) Semi-structured, open-ended interviews lasting 60-90 minutes with: 13 lifelong residents, 27 new residents, 10 new entrepreneurs, 12 migrants, 2 Roma, 4 planners, 4 policy makers, and 3 real estate agents (75 in total)	(A) Semi-structured, open-ended interviews lasting 45-60 minutes with: 4 residents (incl. 2 working in the area), 2 STR entrepreneurs, 1 real estate agent, 1 notary public, 1 relevant researcher, and 5 Trade Union representatives ¹ (14 in total)
	(B) Structured, open- and close-ended questionnaires lasting 10-20 minutes with: 21 residents, 21 workers, and 20 business owners/managers (62 in total)
Methods implemented in both fieldwork rounds	
(A) Mapping of land uses and buildings' condition	
(B) Photography	
(C) Participatory observation	
Coding of fieldwork methods in text	
F1 or F2	First or second round of fieldwork
F1-I or F2-I	Interviews (the capacity of the informant is also indicated in the text)
F2-Q	Questionnaires
F1-M or F2-M	Mapping

Table 2: Fieldwork methods and their reference in text

¹ Namely, the leaders of the trade unions in the catering, tourism/lodging, constructions, commerce, and cleaning sectors.

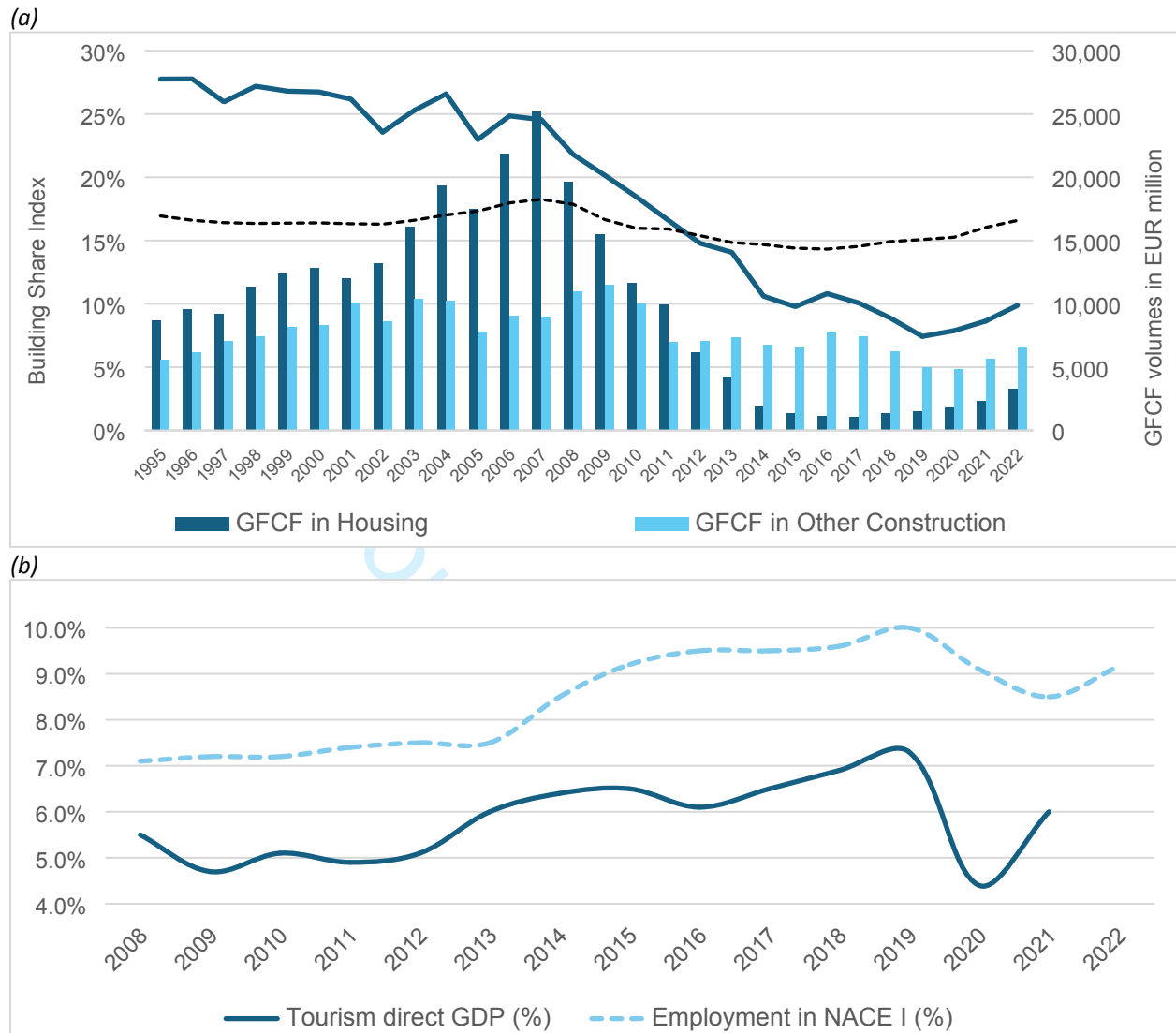


Figure 1: (a) Building Share Index in Greece and the EU27 (left) and GFCF volumes in Housing and Other Constructions in Greece in EUR million (left), 1995-2022. (b) Tourism direct contribution to GDP, NACE I contribution to total employment (%), Greece, 2009-2022

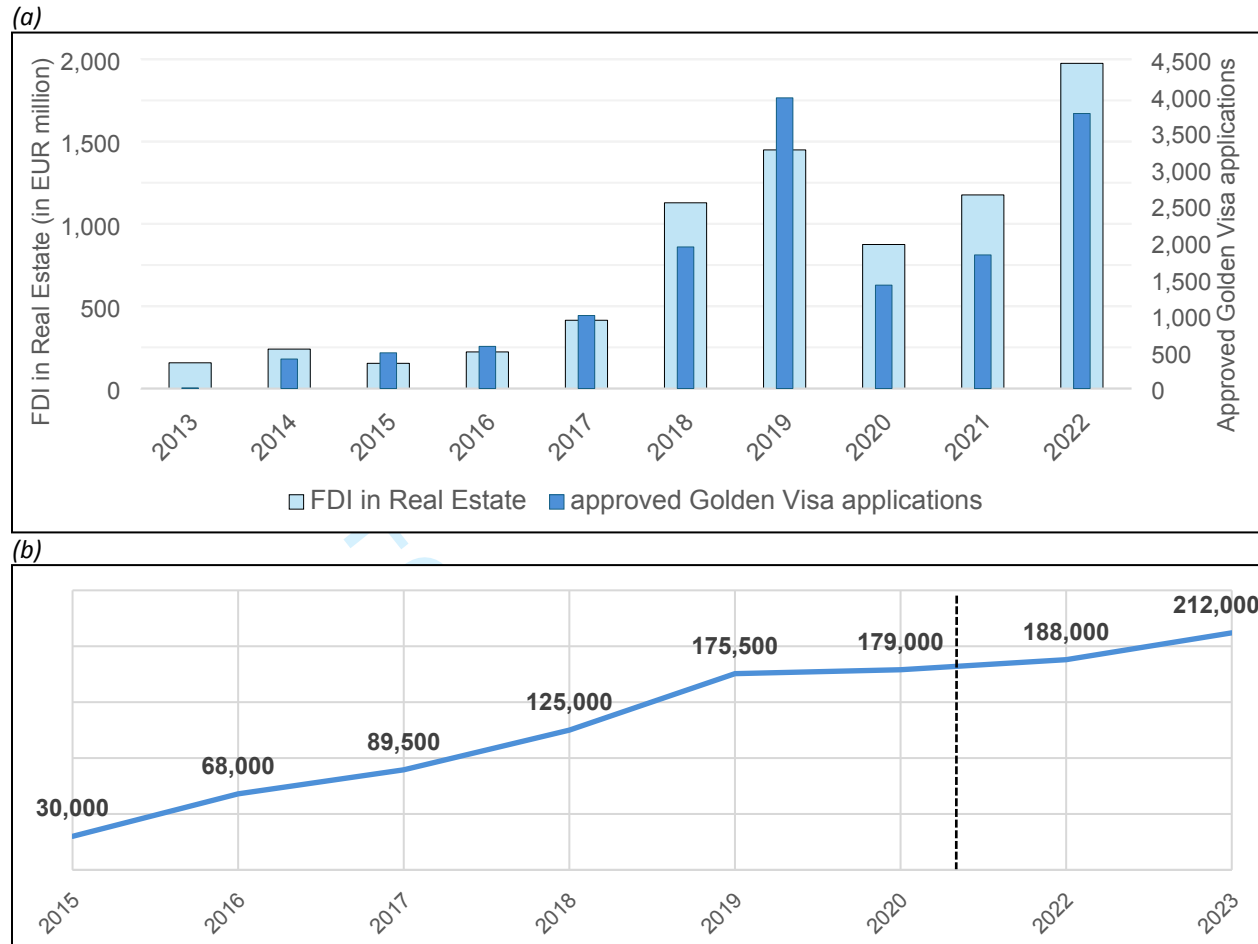
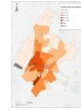
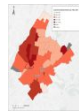


Figure 2: (a) Approved Golden Visa applications and FDI in Real Estate (per year), Greece, 2013-2022. (b) Number of listings uploaded to peer-to-peer accommodation platforms, Greece, 2015-2023



(a)



(b)

Figure 3: (a) Airbnb listings per square km at the neighbourhood level, City of Athens, 2015 and 2023. (b) Change of Airbnb listings' density at the neighbourhood level, City of Athens, 2015-2019 and 2020-2023

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47



Image 1: A renovated residential building (upper left), often with a taverna on the ground floor (upper right), the GEK-TERNA residential complex (bottom left) and an ethnic restaurant (bottom right). *Source: F1*

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60



Image 2: A renovated neoclassical building (upper left), a boutique next to a dilapidated building (upper right), a theatre (bottom left), and an art gallery (bottom right). *Source: F2*