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GENTRIFICATION IN GHENT

*What is the impact of gentrification on the neighborhoods of the 19de
eeuwse gordel in Ghent?*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: INTRODUCTION	1
A. CONTEXT	1
B. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY	2
C. CONTENT	4
PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
A. DEFINITION OF GENTRIFICATION	6
B. WAVES OF GENTRIFICATION	8
C. REVIEW OF EXISTING THEORIES ON GENTRIFICATION	10
1) Classical models	10
2) Political explanations	15
D. CONSEQUENCES OF GENTRIFICATION	16
1) Economic consequences	17
2) Social consequences	19
3) Physical consequences	22
PART III: PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH AREA	24
A. CONTEXT	24
B. RESEARCH AREA	25
PART IV: PROBLEMATIC & RESEARCH QUESTION	27
PART V: METHODOLOGY	28
A. METHODOLOGY ANALYSIS	28
B. DATA	31
C. DEMARCATION OF TIME AND SPACE	32
PART VI: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	34

PART 1: IDENTIFICATION OF GENTRIFIED AREAS IN THE 19de EEUWSE GORDEL	34
PART 2: EVOLUTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, AND HOUSING INDICATORS	38
A. DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS.....	38
B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS	45
C. HOUSING	52
D. CONCLUSION.....	59
PART VII: PERSPECTIVES & GENERAL CONCLUSION	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY	74
APPENDICES	83

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Neighborhoods that experienced gentrification between 2005 and 2015.....	37
Table 2: Growth of the population between 2000 and 2018.....	39
Table 3: Age structure of the population in 2018..	40
Table 4: Growth rate and proportion of the 20–29-year-old population in 2000 and 2018.....	41
Table 5: Evolution of the type of households	43
Table 6: Share of people of foreign origin in 2018.....	44
Table 7: Average net income per taxpayer per neighborhood in 2005 and 2015.	46
Table 8: Share of taxpayers with a net annual income < €10.000 in 2005 and 2015. ...	46
Table 9: Integration in the labor market (2005/2006 and 2017).....	49
Table 10: Number and share of formula and non-formula stores in 2008 and 2017.	51
Table 11: Share of dwellings inhabited by the owner and tenant (%) in 2011	52
Table 12: Average surface per dwelling (m ²) and average number of people/household in 2014.....	54
Table 13: Evolution of the average housing prices between 2010 and 2014.....	58
Table 14: Median taxable income and unemployment pressure in 2005 for all neighborhoods of Ghent.....	83
Table 15: Median taxable income and unemployment pressure in 2015 for all neighborhoods of Ghent.....	84
Table 16: Evolution of commercial premises in focus areas	86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map 19de eeuwse gordel.....	26
Figure 2: Presentation of 12 deprived neighborhoods in 2005 and 2015.	34
Figure 3: Presentation of the neighborhoods in Ghent that experienced stronger appreciation than Ghent as a whole between 2005 and 2015.	35
Figure 4: Presentation of 'gentrified' neighborhoods in the 19de eeuwse gordel between 2005 and 2015.....	36
Figure 5: Share of the 20-29 and 30-39-year-old population in 2000 and 2018.....	42
Figure 6: Ratio of beneficiaries of a living or minimum income from the OCMW relative to the total population expressed per 1000 inhabitants (2005 and 2017).....	48
Figure 7: Share of social housing (%) in all neighborhoods in Ghent in 2012.....	55
Figure 8: Share of social housing (%) in focus areas in 2012.....	56
Figure 9: Affordability of living in 2017.	59

PART I: INTRODUCTION

A. CONTEXT

Ghent is a “hot” city. Those who follow the media about Ghent will confirm this, and will be familiar with reports about urban revitalization, the city’s increased attractiveness, diversity, and so on. However, the most eye-catching messages are usually the least pleasant to read, and they focus on inequality and poverty. The media’s points of attention can be placed within a broader framework of demographic, social, and economic evolutions. People who live in Ghent are undoubtedly aware of all the changes that the city has and is still undergoing (Maly, 2017; Debruyne, 2018; De Troyer, 2018). As Ghent is my hometown, I have actively witnessed these transitions. “Hipster” coffee shops and “cool” restaurants have progressively popped up in the city, while local businesses have disappeared. Dilapidated residential units have been converted into luxurious apartments. This has increasingly seized my attention and made me want to understand the process and driving force behind all these transformations. After thorough research, I realized that within this framework of changes, I could focus on one process in particular, whereby poor urban quarters gradually convert into middle-class areas: gentrification.¹

Since its first appearance in London, the process of gentrification has attracted a great deal of attention. At first, the phenomenon emerged in a couple of metropolitan capitalist cities, such as London, New York, Paris, and Sydney. However, gentrification quickly became *a global phenomenon* (during the second wave of gentrification). According to Smith (2002), the process is global in two directions: horizontal to all parts of the world from Sao Paulo to Cape Town and Seoul, but also vertical in the urban hierarchy from major cities to small towns.

¹ An extensive explanation will be provided further in this thesis (Part II.I Definition of Gentrification p.6).

Gentrification remains a highly controversial topic subject to numerous debates all over the world, especially regarding the effectiveness and morality of gentrifying an area. Opinions about this form of urban evolution differ widely. Some people refer to gentrification as the “spatial expression of economic inequality.” Others call it an “inevitable and natural process” of urban revitalization or “necessary evil” for metropolis revival (Gatz, 2007).

Gentrification arises from the intersection of history, policy, and dynamics of capitalism, and consequently, it touches a number of aspects in a society. This phenomenon exerts such an important influence on urban neighborhood change that it draws in the consideration of numerous stakeholders and has been researched by “various disciplines such as geography, economy, sociology, urban planning and political sciences” (Ilkuçan, 2004).

The combination of those three elements—the internationality, the controversy of the process, and the fact that it touches different aspects of society—have made it especially attractive to write my thesis about this subject. I always wanted to finish my master degree with a thesis on a topic that genuinely interests me. “Community building” and “real estate development” are themes that have always drawn my attention. Since those are involved in the process of gentrification, this provided an extra incentive to choose gentrification as a subject.

B. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The scientific literature on gentrification is extensive. Since the study of Ruth Glass (1964) on gentrification in London, a great deal of research has been conducted on gentrification by various disciplines, as mentioned above. There is also considerable literature on the different discourses of the causes of gentrification (Smith, 1979; Ley, 1996). In addition to the causes, the consequences of the process have also been widely discussed (Atkinson, 2002). Although the consequences of gentrification are often known, the existing literature remains inadequate concerning gentrification’s impact on the socio-economically weak original residents living in a gentrified or gentrifying neighborhood. In recent decades, gentrification has been used by numerous neoliberal authorities in both Europe and North America as a strategy for restructuring districts with the aim of solving neighborhood problems as well as generating higher economic

value. Political circles increasingly use terminology such as “social mixing” and “deconcentration of poverty” to promote gentrification. However, there remains little evidence proving this policy of “positive gentrification” (Lees, 2008). It is thus relevant to analyze whether the gentrification process improves or deteriorates the situation of low-income residents.

In recent decades, numerous scientists have conducted research in major advanced capitalist cities where gentrification takes place. In fact, the current literature on gentrification is almost exclusively founded on global metropolitan cities such as New York (Hackworth and Smith, 2000; Freeman and Braconi, 2004), San Francisco (Robinson, 1995), and Washington D.C. (Lee, Spain, Umberson, 1985) in the United States, and London (Atkinson, 2000; Butler and Robson, 2003, Hamnett, 2003; Lyons, 1996) in the United Kingdom. Whereas the aim of researchers in the United States was to provide an empirical base, the analysts in Britain attempted to theorize the process (Schaffer and Smith, 1986). Gentrification also takes place in other major cities, however, such as Toronto (Ley, 1986) and Montreal (Cole, 1985) in Canada, and Sydney (Bridge, 2001) and Adelaide (Badcock, 2001) in Australia.

Gentrification has evolved and taken a different shape over the years. Since the second wave (the late 70s), gentrification has no longer been limited to world cities, but also takes place in non-global cities. However, there is considerably less scientific literature available on the latter, because non-global cities are often not on the research agenda. This emphasis on global cities rather than smaller provincial cities has created an imbalance in the scientific literature. To reduce this disequilibrium, I decided to investigate the process of gentrification in the non-global city of Ghent. In addition, I also examine whether a difference exists between the results of this research and the literature that focuses on global cities.

The combination of the lack of scientific knowledge regarding gentrification’s impact on the low-income residents in a gentrified neighborhood and gentrification in non-global cities makes this research relevant. Despite the fact that the context is important in gentrification, little is known about gentrification processes in non-global cities, or how residents experience changes in the neighborhood. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to shed light on the meaning of gentrification in Ghent. First, the aim is to investigate in which neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel the process of

gentrification occurs. Second, this thesis examines gentrification's effect on the identified neighborhoods. This insight might result in better comprehension of the gentrification process, and hopefully—if needed (depending on the result)—lead to a better understanding regarding which new public policies should be generated to increase the socio-economic benefits in a gentrified neighborhood.

C. CONTENT

After describing the context, relevance, and content of this work in the present introduction, Part II outlines the literature review on gentrification relevant to this research. After first appropriately defining “gentrification,” the existing theories on the causes or occurrence of the phenomenon are depicted. This section further distinguishes the classical models from the political explanations. Furthermore, this part also focuses on the consequences of the gentrification process, which are categorized into three groups: economic, social, and physical.

Part III aims to set up the scene for the research. Although gentrification occurs in the wake of broader events, the phenomenon's impact remains local. The research area focuses on the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel. According to the media, politicians, and experts, the areas of this district are dealing with demographic and socio-economic changes. This section first describes the context in which the evolutions take place. Second, it also presents the specific neighborhoods comprising the research area.

Part IV presents the problematic and research question. In this section, the clear objective of this dissertation is thoroughly restated. Then, in Part V, an overview of the chosen methodology is provided, and the parts of the analysis explained in detail. The collection of data is also described, and some concerns regarding data availability and quality are enumerated.

The analysis consists of two parts. The first part strives to identify the “gentrified” neighborhoods in the 19de eeuwse gordel based on calculations assessing the appreciation of socio-economic-deprived neighborhoods. Based on the definition of gentrification, three evolutions occur during gentrification processes: demographic, socio-economic evolutions, and changes in the real estate market.

In the second part of the analysis, the evolution of those three domains is drawn. First, various demographic various figures are listed, starting with a number of demographic indicators in an attempt to map the population shifts. Then, the evolution of the socio-economic situation in the neighborhoods of the research area is analyzed. In the housing market, serious changes can also appear during gentrification processes. Behind the physical changes that can be observed, I strive to examine how the balance of the real estate market and the corresponding prices has evolved. Finally, by combining the figures of those three domains, the results of those evolutions are listed, and gentrification's effect on the discussed neighborhoods is determined.

In the final chapter of this work, some perspectives are presented and a summary of the entire research is drawn. Relevant questions are also addressed, such as whether this insight can result in better comprehension of the gentrification process in Ghent, and which new public policies should be generated to increase the socio-economic benefits in Ghent's gentrified neighborhoods.

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

A. DEFINITION OF GENTRIFICATION

The term “gentrification” first appeared in 1964 when British sociologist and Marxist Ruth Glass referred to a specific sociological process whereby inner-London working-class districts were transformed into middle-class neighborhoods through the invasion of a new urban “gentry” (Glass, 1964; Ilkuçan, 2004; Walker, 2008). In this process, middle-class pioneers discover and re-value working-class neighborhoods in the inner-city, whereby the existing population has to leave the district to make place for the new “gentry.” Glass’ original definition (cited in Schaffer and Smith, 1986) was formulated as follows:

One by one, many of the working-class neighborhoods of London have been invaded by the middle-classes—upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages—two rooms up and two down—have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. (...) Once this process of “gentrification” starts in a district, it goes on rapidly, until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.

This sociological definition of gentrification long formed the benchmark for urban research. It focuses primarily on the residential aspects of the process, and is today considered a definition for “the first wave of gentrification” (Glass, 1964; Smith, 2002; Smith, 1996; Ley, 1986). Since then, the definition of the term has evolved. With the appearance of new economic evolutions and political models, the nature of cities has changed drastically, explaining the constant resurgence of the literature. Even though a considerable amount of scientific literature has been written on gentrification, no unambiguous definition of the term has been agreed upon. First, this is due to the different perspectives regarding how gentrification arose. Second, gentrification exists at the interface of various disciplines, such as the economy, geography, political science, and sociology. While some definitions focus on the class

aspect, others point toward capital flows and so on (Lees, 1994; Bosch, 2011). For instance, Neil Smith (cited by Lees, Slater, Wyly, 2008; Ilkuçan, 2004), a key figure in the literature on the phenomenon, viewed gentrification as a discussion of capital and described it as a process “by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner city are refurbished by an influx of private capital and middle-class homebuyers and renters.”

Gentrification is sensitive to the context in which it takes place. Even though gentrification is a global process and possesses generalizable features in all cities across the world, it does not necessarily follow the same pattern everywhere (Lees, 2000).

To summarize, and with regard to all the existing definitions that can be found in the scientific literature, I would like to point out the core elements of gentrification:

- First of all, gentrification concerns the changes in the socio-economic composition of a neighborhood's residents, where the new residents obtain a higher SES (socio-economic status) than the original inhabitants (Clark, 2005). However, while not always explicitly mentioned, this primarily concerns changes in neighborhoods with a low SES. In other words, the process takes place in old, deprived neighborhoods where middle- or upper-class people settle in working-class areas. As a result, a more significant social mix will arise in the neighborhood, especially in the short term (Coenen, 2014).
- Second, gentrification implies the upward revaluation of the housing stock and the built environment. This concerns the existing housing stock that is being renovated and the new housing that is being built, but also the development and investment in commercial facilities in the neighborhood (Coenen, 2014).
- Third, gentrification often implicates the direct or indirect displacement of the (socio-economically weaker) original residents.

This issue of displacement and social repression lies at the core of the discussion concerning gentrification and causes strong politicization (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2010). On one hand, the process involves upgrading and rehabilitating an urban area.

On the other hand, however, the phenomenon also causes social repression and displacement. For the right, social repression forms as an unfortunate but inevitable result of processes in urban housing markets. The left views it instead as an indicator of the commodification of a basic human need. Researchers who are critical of the inequality of gentrification regard social displacement as a serious and systematic effect (Smith, 1996; Slater, 2006). Analysts who see gentrification as an effect or even as an objective of urban development consider this repression to be a rare and not particularly direct consequence (Freeman, 2002; Byrne, 2003).

Despite the academic debate concerning whether or not gentrification causes socio-economic injustice, the process is progressively encouraged in political circles, especially in Europe and North America. It is assumed that it reduces segregation and creates sustainable communities, and that the benefits of gentrification will be passed on to the low-income residents. However, there is little scientific proof of this approach of “positive gentrification” (Lees, 2008). New terminology such as “deconcentration of poverty” and “social mix” is increasingly being used in the promotional story about urban renaissance, causing the issue of social displacement to disappear from the picture. Several authors have been highly critical of this “support of gentrification as a policy for urban development” (Smith, Wacquant, Allen, Lees, 2008). Wacquant (cited by Van Bouchaute, 2012) called it “the shift from the denunciation to the celebration of gentrification, the elision of the established residents, and the euphemistic focus on social mixing.”

Over the course of this thesis, I conduct a critical evaluation of the concept of “gentrification.” The new policies promoting gentrification require critical attention concerning their capability of leading to a positive urban renaissance (Lees, 2008).

B. WAVES OF GENTRIFICATION

“Gentrification today is quite different from gentrification in the early 1970s, late 1980s, even the early 1990s” (Crookes, 2011; Lees, 2000). As discussed above, gentrification describes a continuously evolving, context-specific concept (Lees, 2000). Hackworth and Smith (2001) distinguished three waves of gentrification. Every wave is marked by a certain political and economic period.

First wave

The first wave of gentrification started at the beginning of the 1960s and lasted until the oil crisis in 1973. It took place in cities in the Northeastern United States, Western Europe, and Australia. The industrial inner cities of those large cities were dilapidated at the time. The residential units of the working class were thus in desperate need of revitalization. The government exerted a direct influence on this. The latter used gentrification as a method to offset the economic downturn of central districts in the city. Although risky, the public sector decided to finance the investments (Hamnett, 1973; Smith, 1979); this was called state-led gentrification (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). While the story of improving urban decline often justified the state's interventions, the consequences were strongly class specific. In general, the situation deteriorated even more for the urban working class (Smith, 1996).

Second wave

The second wave of gentrification—and the grounding phase as well, according to Hackworth—began with the economy boom occurring toward the end of the 1970s. In addition to the dominant Western cities, gentrification also occurred in smaller, non-global cities during this period, such as in Tenerife in Spain or Cleveland in the United States (1978–1988) (Smith, 2002). The government's role subsequently shifted from direct to indirect influence. Instead of implementing gentrification itself, the local government stimulated the private market. The prominent players in this wave were therefore the project developers and investors who operated within their favorable government policy. The government played more of a *laissez-faire* role. This phase of gentrification was accompanied by political struggle concerning the relocation of the lowest-class residents and opposition from the displaced inhabitants. Gentrification in the second wave was nowhere more extreme than it was in New York (Zukin, 1982; Zukin, 1987; Deutsche and Ryan, 1984).

Third wave

The global recession that occurred at the beginning of the 1990s flagged an unexpected end to the process of gentrification. During this crisis, some critics speculated on “degentrification.” For example, Bourne (1993) predicted the “demise of gentrification” by the decline of potential gentrifiers due to the decrease in income and a relative diminution of the housing supply in the inner city. However this

expectation of degentrification quickly reversed, since in 1992, the third wave of gentrification began. This wave differed significantly from the first two waves in at least four ways. First, gentrification no longer only occurs in first-world countries, but was now also emerging in developing countries, such as in Cape Town in South Africa (Visser and Kotze, 2008). Second, large commercial parties have become involved in large-scale gentrification projects through restructuring and globalization (Coakley, 1994; Ball, 1994). Third, the population's resistance has been slightly reduced, because many residents are already displaced. Finally, the government is now engaged in the process to a greater extent compared to the second wave.

Three important elements can explain the government's changing role. First, a shift occurred from a social democratic policy to a neoliberal policy. Second, there was a devolution and a need for state income. Because local authorities have less money at their disposal, they have to be creative in generating tax money. Finally, since the spatial focus is now aimed at entire neighborhoods, including areas outside the historic city center, the investments involve considerably more risk. As a result, local authorities are now increasingly involved in the gentrification process (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). This third wave is labeled "generalized gentrification," since "its incidence is global, and it is densely connected into the circuits of global capital and cultural circulation" (Smith, 2002).

C. REVIEW OF EXISTING THEORIES ON GENTRIFICATION

1) Classical models

The classical theories on "gentrification" revolve around two competing models: the demand-side and the supply-side theories. As Hamnett described, "Liberal humanists who stress the key role of choice, culture, consumption and consumer demand, and the structural Marxists who stress the role of capital, class, production and supply" (Hamnett, 1991). Whereas the first group claims that the movement of people forms the core of gentrification, the second group argues that the movement of capital—waves of disinvestment and investment—forms the roots of the process (Lees, Slater, Wyly, 2008). This section presents both theories as accurately as possible.

By the mid-1980s, the production-side versus consumption-side debate had become very heated (Slater, 2011). Both explanations emerged as a reaction to the neoclassical economic model's assumptions that gentrification is the result of an inevitable market-adjustment process whereby middle-class people decide—based on rational choices—to move back to city centers and away from suburbia (Lipton, 1977; Brat, 1987). Neoclassical economists believe that markets can automatically achieve Pareto optimality when the conditions for perfect competition are met, and there are no externalities that cause market failures (Van Acker, 2010). For instance, Lipton, among many other authors (cited by Lee, Slater, Wyly, 2008), viewed gentrification as a natural result of demographic changes and lifestyle preferences. The latter argued that the desirability of moving back to the city could be clarified by the features of the baby boom generation (later marriages, higher divorce rate, and fewer children).

DEMAND-SIDE EXPLANATIONS

The most influential author who took the demand-side approach was David Ley. His observations were developed in the context of the emergence of post-industrial cities, and his orientation was profoundly influenced by Daniel Bell's work "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society" (cited by Lee, Slater, Wyly, 2008). Since 1972, he analyzed socio-economic changes of Canadian cities to examine their influence on the process of gentrification (Slater, 2011). At the time, service- and finance-based industries had replaced manufacturing industries. As a result, the occupational structure in major cities had also altered. Inner cities that were previously inhabited primarily by manual workers had been invaded by a new educated and professional group largely occupying white-collar jobs. This new increasing middle class with significant purchasing power placed intense pressure on the inner-city housing market (Hamnett, 2003).

In the 1980's, the inner cities' new inhabitants were symbolized as "yuppies"—young urban professionals with significant purchasing power and a different lifestyle (Hamnett, 2003; Bouchaute, 2012). This emerging group pursued an enhanced quality of life that went beyond economic well-being. They sought to live in urban spaces where culture and recreation concentrate, and they perceived the inner city as "a mark of distinction in the constitution of an identity separate from the constellation of place and identity shaped by the suburbs" (Ley, 1996; Slater, 2011). Living in a

neighborhood with interesting architecture and cultural activities became a status symbol and a means of social distinction. Gentrification thus usually takes place where the new middle class can combine social practices with aesthetic preferences (Bourdieu, Pels Hofstede, 1989).

To conclude, demand-side followers illustrated how industrial and occupational changes in big cities created an increasing group of “gentrifiers,” who were determined to live in central areas of big cities (Hamnett, 1991). In other words, they argued that the movement of people formed the roots of gentrification, and they rejected the simplistic idea of neoclassical economists that gentrification was the reflection of demographic changes and lifestyle preferences (Slater, 2011).

SUPPLY-SIDE EXPLANATIONS

The supply-based explanation emphasizes the production side of the process and focuses on the function of institutional agents and capital in generating the potentiality and reality of gentrification (Schaffer and Smith, 1986). Similarly, Cordova (cited by Ilkuçan, 2004) put forward that gentrification was a production of real estate developers and agents, as well as financial institutions who managed the “who” and “where” of property shifts in the city.

Smith’s economic explanation for the process of gentrification was formulated with his famous rent-gap theory, which he had developed based on empirical research in Society Hill, Philadelphia, and Edinburgh. This theory was first articulated in the *Journal of American Planning Association* (Slater, 2011). It is important to mention that Smith was a Marxist, and that his ideas were firmly opposed to neoclassical economic models, which argued that consumer sovereignty formed the basis of gentrification. In other words, he was highly critical of the idea that the urban landscape was determined through the consumers’ choices of land and housing (Slater, 2011).

Smith argued that a significant rent gap in an inner-city neighborhood forms a necessary condition for the gentrification process to occur. This rent gap designates an imbalance between the actual ground rent (the economic gain capitalized and appropriated by the property owner) and the potential ground rent that could be capitalized under the conditions of the “highest and best use” of the land. The rent gap

arises as the potential value of land in the city center remains high while the value of buildings has fallen heavily. Significant rent gaps in inner-city areas create opportunities for the actors that profit from re-investing in that neighborhood. The size of the gap increases until it is profitable enough for developers to renovate or redevelop buildings so that the land's underlying value can be realized (Hamnett, 2003). For that reason, Smith refused to accept that neighborhood abandonment, deterioration, and consequential gentrification described the results of a natural and inevitable process. Instead, the latter claimed that the movement of capital—waves of investment and disinvestment—lies at the core of gentrification's existence (Lee, Slater, Wyly, 2008). Smith (cited by Slater, 2015) stated the following:

Gentrification occurs when the gap is wide enough that developers can purchase shell cheaply, can pay the builders' costs and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest on mortgage and construction loans, and can then sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer. The entire ground rent, or a large portion of it, is now capitalized, the neighborhood has been recycled and begins a new cycle of use.

When the contrast between old and new developments—the older located in the city center—becomes clearly visible, disinvestment in the inner city becomes increasingly rational and arresting for those saddled with older investments. A landlord holding investments in a deferred building—that once was at its highest and best use—has every reason to extract the capitalized ground rent from tenants and hold the maintenance costs at a bare minimum while waiting for the potential ground rent to increase in the hope of sudden redevelopment. As Alonso, Harvey, Knox, and McCarthy (cited by Lee, Slater, Wyly, 2008) observed, it is highly paradoxical when low-income people live on land that is valuable in central urban areas.

At first, disinvestment is difficult to notice. However, after a while, the housing conditions become so deteriorated that people who have the means to do so will eventually leave the building, and likely the neighborhood. The government and financial institutions will also single out loans to that particular area because of their “riskiness.” From that moment on, the neighborhood's decline occurs at a fast pace. As a result, more low-income tenants will settle in. In societies where class disparities are closely associated with racial-ethnic divisions, the neighborhood decline almost

automatically unleashes racist statements claiming that this decline was caused by this new group of people. In other words, a neighborhood's deterioration is almost inevitably blamed on those lower-income people that, in Western societies, usually come from a different cultural background. In reality, however, the poorer tenants are actually only able to move in once the residents who are able to afford to do so move out of that particular neighborhood that is being subjected to deliberate disinvestment, depreciation, and devaluation (Lee, Slater, Wyly, 2008).

Finally, once the government and developers have decided to re-invest in the neighborhood, people from the lowest part of the urban class structure who lacked the means to move and live in the disinvested area will eventually be displaced, directly or indirectly (cfr. Consequences). Investors want to make space and prepare the "revitalized" neighborhood for the new inhabitants. According to Smith (1996), gentrification comes down to narrowing the rent gap, as the potential ground rent can now be capitalized. Supply-side followers argue that the movement of capital lies at the heart of the gentrification process.

BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY

Over the past decades, intense debates between researchers have stressed the weaknesses in both models. Sociologist Sharon Zukin (cited by Van Bouchaute, 2012) was one of the first to point out the absence of culture in the Marxist supply-side explanations. In *Loft Living*, she described the "close connection, in late industrial capitalism, between accumulation and cultural consumption." According to her, gentrification referred to "a model of high-status cultural consumption and the colonization of an expanding terrain by economic institutions associated with the service sector" (Zukin, 1987; Van Bouchaute, 2012).

Hamnett (1991) argued that both theories provide necessary but insufficient elements for explaining gentrification. According to him, the supply-side model attaches little importance to the motives of gentrifiers and takes the presence and demands of the latter as self-evident. The demand-side model, on the other hand, ignores shifts in the land and real estate market and fails to question the presence of potential areas of gentrification. Hamnett (1991) suggested that gentrification resulted from an alteration in both a neighborhood's social composition and the characteristics of the housing supply.

In agreement with a number of authors, among them Hamnett (2003) and Clark (1992), neither consumption nor production theories are considered effective enough to explain gentrification. As some have explained, “Most gentrification researchers now accept that production and consumption, supply and demand, economic and cultural, and structure and agency explanations are all a part of ‘the elephant of gentrification’” (Lee, Slater, Wyly, 2008; Ilkuçan, 2004). Therefore, based on the above discussion, this thesis continues with the idea that both perspectives—the demand- and supply-side explanations—are equally relevant and could be reconciled.

2) Political explanations

Several authors have looked beyond the classical model and recognized the decisive role that governments’ political strategies play in contemporary gentrification. Smith (2002) stated that gentrification has converted into a major tool of urban policy. He argued that contemporary gentrification can be seen as a political strategy of urban renewal under the discourses of “social mixing” and “renaissance.” Similarly, Davidson and Lees (2005) claimed that gentrification has become a “politically loaded word.”

Politicians and policymakers use gentrification as a method to address economic and social problems in cities (Smith, 2002). Many industrial cities that transitioned to post-industrial cities possess a population structure characterized by a relatively low level of education, which does not match the labor demand in a “knowledge” economy. Therefore, retaining and attracting higher-educated and middle-class or wealthier households by upgrading the housing environment has become a policy goal for local authorities. However, governments do not use the term “gentrification”; they instead refer to “social mixing” (Slater, 2006).

Today, “social mix” stands for the desirable influx of more prosperous families into urban neighborhoods in the context of urban renaissance. This discourse presents social mix as a win-win policy, including for the “gentrifiers” and the “pre-gentrification” inhabitants, and for the neighborhood and the city as a whole (Freeman, 2002; Davidson, 2008). In this positive discourse, gentrification no longer appears as an issue, but as a solution. However, that positive representation of social mix through gentrification raises questions. The idea that the spatial proximity of the

lower and middle class would automatically cause a “social mix” is sociologically naïve. Rather than social convergence, socio-economic segregation can realistically be expected. Furthermore, the social effects of social mix are not at all positive (Lees, 2008).

In addition, gentrification leads to higher tax yield in the neighborhood. This provides another incentive for local politicians to encourage gentrification and ignore the negative effects that the process brings for working-class residents (Zukin, 1987).

D. CONSEQUENCES OF GENTRIFICATION

The literature on gentrification’s consequences is extensive. As the definition of the term implies, some actors benefit from the process while others are disadvantaged. Atkinson’s (2002) evaluation of the existing literature on the topic from between 1964 and 2002 concluded that the majority of all scientific studies on gentrification predominantly perceive adverse effects of gentrification. Evidence of gentrification’s positive effects can frequently be encountered in non-scientific literature, where the outcomes are primarily based on logic rather than empirical research (Atkinson, 2002). This is partly due to the fact that politicians and policymakers use gentrification as a method to address economic and social problems in cities (Smith, 2002), as discussed above.

Hamnett (1984) viewed gentrification as a process that takes place on economic, social, physical, and cultural fields, and described this as follows:

Simultaneously a physical, economic, social and cultural phenomenon, gentrification commonly involves the invasion by middle-class or higher-income groups of previously working-class neighborhoods or multi-occupied “twilight areas” and the replacement or displacement of many of the original occupants.

Smith (1987) also saw gentrification as a combination of economic, social, and physical change. According to him, “It is this combination of social, physical, and economic change that distinguishes gentrification as an identifiable process/set of processes” (Smith, 1987; Lawrence, 2010).

1) Economic consequences

Increase in real estate value and tax revenues

Gentrification can cause a heavy financial burden on lower-income occupants (both tenants and homeowners), primarily through the increase in housing value. This pressure intensifies for private tenants when landlords deliberately increase rent. The latter usually increments the rent in line with the purchasing power of wealthier purchasers and tenants seeking to live in that particular area (Atkinson, 2015). John, a tenant in Sydney (cited by Atkinson, 2015), described the general pattern of the process as follows:

What happens is people buy out in the city and renovate and they can sell and it pushes the value of all the properties up. Because originally, all the city stuff was all terrace houses, it was all working class. Now people renovate them, and they're trendy and they go up a lot in price, and it pushes people that have probably lived in the city for generations further out to the western suburbs.

Atkinson's (2015) empirical research on Sydney pointed out that the rise in rent also severely affected the residents' living conditions. Some interviewees had to cut dramatically on daily expenses, as they had to spend more on monthly rent. Their saving ability also reduced considerably.

Indeed, neighborhood gentrification further leads to an increase in real estate value (Smith, 1979). Such increases can be perceived as positive or negative, depending on the stakeholders involved (Atkinson, 2002). Quantitative research on the gentrified neighborhood "Downtown West End" in Toronto demonstrated that this increase is positive because of its positive influence on changes in the housing market in the neighborhood, while it is negative due to the ensuing rise in house prices (El Kalache, Fang, Moriah, Rodriguez, Tapper, 2004). A homeowner benefits from a raised property value, as this provides him with an asset that is increasing in value. However, the appreciation of real estate value also leads to a higher amount of property taxes owed, and this might pressure the homeowner into selling his home. A property that is increasing in value presents both opportunity and cost for the homeowner (Byrne, 2003). Tenants are expected to be less positive regarding the appreciation of real estate than homeowners, as they have to cope with higher rent.

This often results in displacement, an issue that is addressed further below (Byrne, 2003).

As already mentioned above, gentrification helps to raise city tax revenues through an increment in the number and affluence of households (Zukin, 1987).

Change in local services and facilities

Gentrification involves a broader change in the neighborhood than merely residential restructuring, to which gentrification initially referred. Numerous examples of the process have illustrated that gentrification also implies commercial redevelopment—shifts in the retail landscape (Bridge and Dowling, 2001)—and a new establishment of recreational facilities (Williams and Smith, 1986; Ilkuçan, 2004).

In the literature, two opposite approaches can be found regarding residents' perceptions of the change and the emergence of services and facilities. On the one hand, residents perceive them as negative. Higher-income people usually have different demands for goods and services than the original residents with lower incomes. The new facilities and services commonly target the new residents with higher incomes. This leads to an increased polarization within the neighborhood (Atkinson, 2002). The example of the Mission District in San Francisco, where young middle-class professionals invaded the area, can help to illustrate this. The latter were attracted by the quarter's "unique cultural identity, transit access, proximity to downtown, and increasingly hip nightlife scene. Trendy restaurants, bars, and clubs began to price out local-serving businesses and the nonprofit organizations supporting the neighborhood's immigrant population" (cited by Lee, Slater & Wyly, 2008). Butler (2003) argued that as the middle class increases in a particular area, the number of shops for low-income people decreases, and sometimes even disappears altogether.

From a spatial perspective, the arrival of new facilities and services can result in two separated shopping areas within the same neighborhood: one refined shopping area for middle-class residents, and one for the native residents (Doucet, 2009). The spatial separation of services and facilities often automatically induces a psychological sense of separation, and sometimes even leads to a feeling of exclusion on behalf of the original residents. This, in turn, is likely to trigger emotions of irritation toward the incoming residents (Atkinson, 2000).

On the other hand, the literature outlays that the renewal of local facilities and services can also positively affect residents (Henig and Gale, 1987). Byrne (2003), for instance, argued that gentrification can improve the economic potential of the urban poor: “Existing residents should find expanding employment opportunities in providing locally the goods and services that more affluent new residents can afford.” Similarly, Vigdor (2002) suggested that new facilities and services provide new job opportunities for residents in the neighborhood. Quantitative research in the gentrified neighborhood “Downtown West End” in Toronto revealed that commercial activities are increasing mainly due to the appearance of new shops, restaurants, “entertainment establishments,” and art galleries. Most native residents experience their emergence as advantageous, stating that “they can afford to shop at the new stores and they feel welcome at the new stores” (El Kalache et al., 2004). In addition, it is very probable that, prior to the gentrification process, the original residents did not have access to basic services such as pharmacies, stores with fresh and healthy food options, and so on (Wrigley, 2002). Gentrification can bring basic facilities to the neighborhood that all residents can benefit from. Although, in the beginning, the original residents may often see the new facilities and services as for “other people,” they can also benefit from the neighborhood’s improved image as new people visit due to the new facilities and services (Doucet, 2009).

It is important to note that empirical studies must be placed in their specific context, and that, consequently, the perception of the change in local services and facilities is heavily context dependent.

2) Social consequences

Displacement

Schwirian (1983) stated that displacement is “a central topic” in the gentrification literature. Since more than half of the gentrification studies are devoted to the issue (Atkinson, 2002), the latter’s statement is undoubtedly true. For instance, Atkinson (2000), Davidson (2008), and Lyons (1996) analyzed displacement in London, while Newman, Wyly (2006), Freeman and Braconi (2004) researched displacement in New York (Bosch, 2011). The most important question on this subject concerns how many households are displaced and how to measure this, which, due to methodological

reasons, remains difficult (Slater, 2011). Atkinson (2002) referred to measuring displacement as “measuring the invisible.” The latter forms a significant issue for implementing adequate policies, since neoliberal authorities hold to the idea that displacement is a small problem. Displacement usually occurs heavily in large urban areas with a strong economy, such as London, San Francisco, Washington, New York, and so on. Atkinson (2002) described that it is mainly the poor households, the elderly, single mothers, and the working class that are displaced by gentrification.

Marcuse (1986) distinguished four ways in which displacement takes place: (1) directly, when residents are forced to leave their homes by forces beyond their control (for instance, when a landlord pulls back a dwelling from the market for renovation purposes to sell it at a price that is in alignment with the gentrifiers’ purchasing power); (2) by exclusion, occurring when the housing and quarter become unaffordable due to the increase in prices; (3) by chain, when a consecutive chain of households move out when a unit is being renovated; and (4) by pressure, when residents fear displacement because they witness the moving of their neighbors and relatives. All types of displacement cause a severe lack of affordable housing supply in urban areas (Byrne, 2003). The extent of displacement can differ between cities, and even between neighborhoods within the same urban area. The scope of displacement in a certain neighborhoods is also context dependent (Atkinson, 2002).

Changing social cohesion

As discussed earlier, governments see gentrification as a means to improve social cohesion between different population groups. Gentrification affects social cohesion in the following ways.

1. Loss of social capital and networks

Governments often advocate that “gentrifiers” function as “role models” for the original residents. The idea is that original residents could benefit from the influx of wealthy households because they set the right example, such as for integration into the labor market. This also suggests that gentrification reduces poverty concentration in urban areas (Kennedy and Leonard, 2001). However, the literature reveals that the effects of role models are overestimated. The probability of cosmopolitan middle

classes building up networks with poorer residents is small, so the chance of original residents experiencing social increase through role models remains limited (Uitermark, Duyvendak, & Kleinhans, 2007). Many old working-class neighborhoods are traditionally characterized by a strong social cohesion, thanks to the strong local social networks. When gentrification makes its entry into such a neighborhood, this can mean the destruction of the social structure that has existed for a long time, for example, because numerous residents have been displaced (Newman and Wyly, 2006).

2. Differences in identity

The identity of the neighborhood can change through gentrification. In his research on gentrification in New York, Freeman (2006) noted that, “In both neighborhoods, Harlem and Clinton Hill, an increasingly visible presence of whites was perhaps the most noticeable change associated with the emergence of gentrification.” Several studies have emphasized that local communities set up organizations with the aim of limiting and influencing the process of gentrification (Robinson, 1995; Smith, 2002; Wilson, Wouters, Grammenos, 2004). It appears that low-income residents, ethnic minorities, the elderly, and young children attach considerable importance to their neighborhood. Many gentrifiers feel less concerned with the neighborhood because of their cosmopolitan lifestyle (Van Kempen, 2010).

3. Changing common norms and values

The neighborhood’s changing demographic composition puts pressure on the common norms and values within the neighborhood (Freeman 2006). Tensions between groups of residents can arise concerning what behavior and activities are acceptable. For instance, while activities such as drinking beer in the front yard or barbequing in the park can be considered normal by “pre-gentrification” residents, “newcomers” may consider this behavior unacceptable (Freeman, 2006). For residents of lower classes, this means that they have to adapt to the norms and lifestyle of the middle class—the “natural and normal category” in the city (Lees, 2008).

Although governments use gentrification as a method to enhance “social cohesion” between different population groups, little empirical evidence has been provided demonstrating positive outcomes.

Crime

The outcomes of research on crime rates in gentrified neighborhoods remain contradictory. While some studies indicate a decrease in crime rates in gentrified neighborhoods (McDonald, 1986), others illustrate an increase and shifts within different types of crime (Covington and Taylor, 1989). Atkinson (2002) stated that two theories explain the relation between crime and gentrification. The first hypothesis is that the crime rate falls due to the displacement of criminal elements and social problems that come along with low-income residents. The second asserts that the crime rate increases due to the increased prevalence of wealthy households, which triggers acts of criminality (Atkinson, 2002).

3) Physical consequences

Renewal of the physical structure

The most obvious physical consequence of gentrification is the renewal of the neighborhood’s physical structure. Renovations of old, dilapidated buildings lead to an upgrade in the neighborhood’s physical appearance (DeGiovanni 1984). Quantitative research on gentrification in the Downtown West End in Toronto has illustrated that nearly three-quarters of the respondents experience that more homes are being refurbished, and that they are seen as positive effects (El Kalache et al., 2004).

Countering vacancy and tending to population decline

The process of gentrification starts in neighborhoods with relatively numerous vacant properties (Smith, 1996). With the introduction of new households, these building vacancies will be prevented. Another physical consequence of gentrification is the conversion of dwellings. Gentrification usually occurs in working-class districts characterized by small housing units. By transforming small and subdivided

accommodation units into larger residential units, they become adequate for more prosperous households, usually with fewer family members. In the literature, gentrification is related to population decline because a larger number of residents are displaced than living in the area (Atkinson, 2002). The literature does not indicate how residents view the conversion of housing and the population decline.

PART III: PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH AREA

A. CONTEXT

Anyone who wants to talk about gentrification in a city should view the city with a magnifying glass, as one will be attempting to analyze a local change. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that these changes take place within a broader urban context.

The context of Ghent considerably differs from that of cities that have been more frequently researched concerning gentrification. As mentioned above, little systematic research has been conducted on gentrification in non-global cities. Gentrification can be expected in Ghent for various reasons, in which factors from both consumption and production theories play a role. Belgium traditionally possesses strong suburbanization, in which a number of middle-class families have left the city to live in the suburbs. Those quarters were very often left impoverished, and have since been invaded by migrants (De Decker, Van den Broeck, Loopmans, 2012). Ghent has been working for a couple of decades to counter the urban flight and formulate a response to the deindustrialization (Maly, 2017).

Although the city government is socially oriented and seeks to improve social housing, more liberal political agendas also play an increasing role in making the city attractive to visitors, tourists, investors, and companies (Boussauw, 2014). This may be due to the diffusion of new urban forms and the lifestyle of global cities (Dutton, 2005), but it also aligns with the consumption-side explanation: urban policy responds to the preferences and patterns of consumption of the groups they want to attract. To counter the urban flight of young families—usually two-income households—more single-family homes are needed, amongst other things.

The renovation of these houses primarily takes place in the so-called “19de eeuwse gordel” and in the city periphery (Stad Gent, 2018). The term “19de eeuwse gordel” refers to the heritage of working-class districts from Ghent’s industrial expansion period during the 19th century, where—in the rapid urban expansion—low-quality

speculative housing was frequently built on a massive scale. Districts were developed around the city center to provide an answer to the influx of factory workers from the countryside. The poor condition of the housing supply can thus be historically traced back to Ghent's industrial development in the 19th century, and the expansion that the city underwent at that time (Boussauw, 2014; Debruyne & Oosterlynck, 2009; Van Bouchaute, 2013).

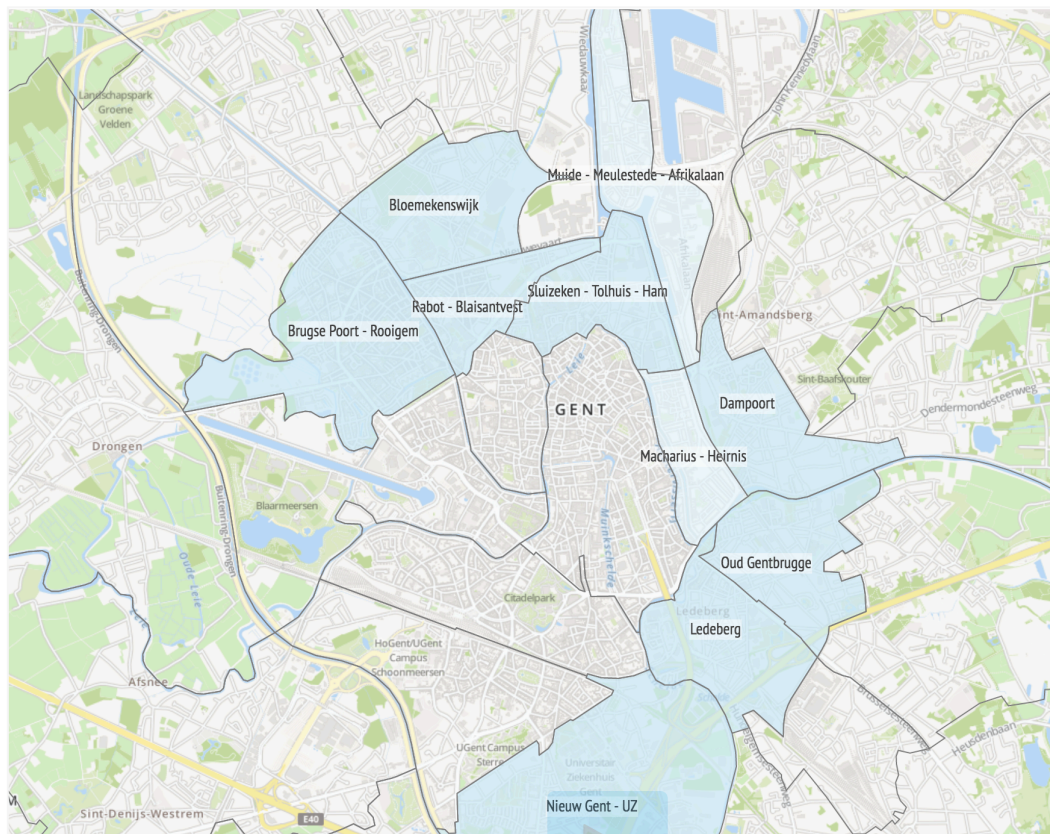
The city of Ghent wants to demolish old homes and buildings in these neighborhoods, create more green space, and provide both social houses and new buildings (Stad Gent, 2018). Such investments are in accordance with the production-side explanation of gentrification. Van Bouchaute (2013) pointed out that urban renewal projects in the districts of the 19de eeuwse gordel have been focused on the "return of well-off populations" since the 1970s, with the explicit aim of reconquering those neighborhoods on the right-wing extremes: to make Ghent attractive again, and competitive especially. Similarly, Maly (2017) suggested that Ghent has been working to reclaim the middle class in the city, stimulate creative professions, and attract tourists. Since the 19de eeuwse gordel has traditionally been inhabited by working-class people and migrants, urban renewal in these neighborhoods could also increase the "social mix," which not only constructs socio-economically mixed areas, but also contributes to the "good image" of the city with a "good social cohesion" (Debruyne & Oosterlynck, 2009; Maly, 2017).

B. RESEARCH AREA

As discussed above, and from the definition of gentrification, the phenomenon occurs in old districts inhabited by low-income groups possessing limited access to facilities, but when re-investment takes place, higher-income groups move in. I therefore expect that gentrification in Ghent will primarily occur in the 19de eeuwse gordel, which is also why I have decided to conduct this study in the 10 neighborhoods comprising this territory. The entire city of Ghent consists of 25 neighborhoods separated into four city parts: the inner city, periphery southwest, periphery northeast, and the 19de eeuwse gordel. Therefore, when the "territory of Ghent" or the "city of Ghent" is discussed further in this thesis, this refers to the entirety of the 25 neighborhoods that form Ghent. The most recent 19de eeuwse gordel comprises the following 10 neighborhoods or areas and can be situated in the map below (Stad Gent, 2018):

- Brugse Poort – Rooigem
- Rabot – Blaisantvest
- Bloemekenswijk
- Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham
- Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan
- Macharius – Heirnis
- Dampoort
- Nieuw Gent – UZ
- Oud Gentbrugge
- Ledeberg

Figure 1: Map 19de eeuwse gordel



Source: Buurtmonitor, Stad Gent

PART IV: PROBLEMATIC & RESEARCH QUESTION

Through various initiatives, such as urban renewal, Ghent policymakers are striving to lure young families and middle-class inhabitants back to the city and revive disadvantaged neighborhoods. It is assumed that the latter would lead to less socio-economic segregation and more sustainable communities, and that the benefits of gentrification would be passed on to the low-income residents (Van Bouchaute, 2012). However, there has not yet been any systematic research involving gentrification's effect on neighborhoods in Ghent. As such, certain questions remain unanswered, such as what are the consequences for the average income or position in the labor market for neighborhoods that have to deal with gentrification. Furthermore, while changes in the real estate market generally accompany gentrification, the question remains whether this holds true for Ghent as well.

Therefore, this purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the meaning of gentrification in Ghent. To begin, this dissertation investigates in which neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel the process of gentrification occurred between 2005 and 2015 (1). Second, this thesis examines gentrification's effect on the identified neighborhoods (2). To this end, the following questions are asked:

- In which areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel does gentrification occur?
- What are the demographic, socio-economic, and housing evolutions in the identified "gentrified" areas?
- Based on the analyzed evolutions, what impact does gentrification have on the neighborhoods?

This insight might provide a better comprehension of the gentrification process in a non-global city, and will hopefully lead to a better understanding regarding which new public policies should be enacted to increase the socio-economic benefits in a gentrified neighborhood.

PART V: METHODOLOGY

A. *METHODOLOGY ANALYSIS*

The way in which gentrification can or must be measured depends on which definition is used to define the phenomenon. In addition, there are different ways to map this for each chosen definition. For instance, gentrification can be investigated on the basis of fieldwork on the one hand, or by carrying out analysis on data on the other. The use of fieldwork provides a highly detailed description—at the individual level—of the changes in specific neighborhoods over a short period (usually less than a year). Quantitative methods, by contrast, make it possible to measure gentrification's effects over a more extended period (from several years), but will fail to grasp several details (Coenen, 2014). The method used for this analysis is essentially quantitative through the use of existing statistical databases collected by specialized entities (see *data* below). In addition, in order to obtain a better understanding and gain more insight, I have wandered through the neighborhoods of the research area numerous times and engaged in several conversations with local residents.

The analysis consists of two parts:

- 1) The identification of gentrified areas in the 19de eeuwse gordel.
- 2) An analysis of the evolution of demographic, socio-economic, and housing indicators in the identified “gentrified” neighborhoods primarily focusing on the following questions:
 - (a) Do the analyzed demographic, socio-economic, and housing trends confirm that the process of gentrification takes place in the identified areas?
 - (b) If yes, then based on the evolutions, what impact does the process of gentrification have on those neighborhoods?

(1) In the first part of the analysis, I identify the gentrified zones in the 19de eeuwse gordel. Abiding by the definition described in the theoretical portion of this thesis, gentrification implies an upward change in the socio-economic composition of the

residents of deprived neighborhoods. In other words, the process implicates the appreciation or upgrading of deprived areas. Therefore, I have determined the gentrified areas based on calculations that assess the appreciation of socio-economic-deprived neighborhoods.

Since the SES of a neighborhood depends on average income, education level, and position on the labor market, those three indicators can be included in the formula to measure a neighborhood's SES (Coenen, 2014). However, the Buurtmonitor² does not provide data regarding the average level of education per neighborhood. Therefore, I have chosen to compile the neighborhood's SES based on two indicators: the median taxable income on the one hand, and the unemployment pressure rate on the other. Data for both was retrieved from the Buurtmonitor of the city of Ghent. Furthermore, this section elaborates on where my data comes from.

Unemployment pressure rate concerns the percentage of unemployed jobseekers between 18 and 64 years old compared to all 18 to 64-year-olds in the neighborhood. By including multiple facets of SES in the analysis, socio-economic deprivation is better approached than if only income had been included in the formula (Christiaens, 2015). It is assumed that the median income is lower in socio-economic-deprived neighborhoods and that the percentage of unemployed jobseekers higher. Therefore, the following formula applies:

Formula (1)

Deprivation

$$= \frac{\left(\frac{\text{Median taxable income neighbourhood}}{\text{Median taxable income Ghent}}\right)^{-1} + \left(\frac{\text{Unemployment pressure neighbourhood}}{\text{Unemployment pressure Ghent}}\right)}{2}$$

A high outcome on this index guarantees high levels of socio-economic deprivation within the neighborhood. Similar to the method of Van Criekingen (2009), I consider all neighborhoods of Ghent with a deprivation index higher than the deprivation index of Ghent as a whole (higher than 1) to be socio-economically deprived. Comparably,

² To consult via <https://gent.buurtmonitor.be>

In paragraph 'Data' (p. 31) more information is provided on the Buurtmonitor.

Van Crieckingen regarded all areas of Brussels with an average household income lower than the average household income of Brussels as deprived. As both the median net income and the unemployment pressure of Ghent, in its entirety, are included in the formula, the deprivation index is 1.

Since gentrification implies the appreciation of deprived neighborhoods, the variable in this study is operationalized as a decrease in deprivation within the neighborhood. This is accomplished by the ratio of the deprivation measures: the deprivation from 2005 is compared to the deprivation index from 2015, as can be seen in formula (2) below. Upgrading implicates a decrease in the deprivation index, and as a result, the index from 2005 should be higher than the index from 2015. This means that all neighborhoods with an upgrading index higher than 1 have socio-economically improved more between 2005 and 2015 than Ghent has in its entirety. Since formula (1) contains data from Ghent as a whole for both 2005 and 2015, a comparison of both snapshots also provides a comparison relative to the appreciation of the entire territory of Ghent. In a sense, the deprivation measures are weighted against average values across all neighborhoods. Van Crieckingen (2009), in his study on Brussels, considered all areas possessing a rate of increase in tertiary education levels that was higher than the rate of this increase in the whole of Brussels. According to the same principle, this thesis states here that the quarters of Ghent, which demonstrated a higher appreciation than the general appreciation of Ghent at the city level, experienced gentrification over the same period. The higher the ratio, the stronger the appreciation of the neighborhood.

Formula (2)

$$\text{Appreciation} = \frac{\text{Deprivation 2005}}{\text{Deprivation 2015}}$$

As the described definition of gentrification states, the upgrading starts in socially deprived neighborhoods. Therefore, from the deprived neighborhoods from 2005, only the neighborhoods that have experienced an upgrade higher than 1 between 2005 and 2015 will be selected. I then consider those neighborhoods “gentrified” (Van Crieckingen, 2009). In this dissertation, I only take into consideration the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel.

(2) In the second part of this analysis, the evolution of demographic, socio-economic, and housing indicators is analyzed in the identified “gentrified” areas of part one. However, stating that the identified areas are gentrified—based solely on the formulas and calculations of part one of the analysis—is premature and imprecise. Therefore, I also analyze the evolution of other factors and indicators in the identified zones that, in general, accompany the gentrification process. By examining those evolutions, I first want to determine whether the analyzed trends indicate a process of gentrification in the identified neighborhoods. Second, if they do, I want to determine the effect of those evolutions on the neighborhoods. The analysis thus attempts to gather and synthesize different indicators and at different times. In the theoretical portion, I already outlined that the concept of “gentrification” is not easy to grasp, as there are different approaches to the phenomenon. This is why I have striven to develop some clear indicators that make for an adequate and complementary synthesis. This way, it is possible to analyze gentrification’s effect on the neighborhoods in the 19de eeuwse gordel in Ghent.

The various indicators can provide a diverse picture of the situation, which makes it necessary to focus on more than one indicator. For example, in a neighborhood, many of the non-working jobseekers may be able to find work, which means that the unemployment rates will decrease in that neighborhood. However, it may also be that they only find poorly paid jobs, providing little changes to the neighborhood’s socio-economic composition. It is even possible for both the average income and the share of unemployed jobseekers in the neighborhood to rise strongly. In order to obtain a more complete picture, it is thus necessary to examine a combination of indicators.

B. *DATA*

This study primarily uses data from the Buurtmonitor of the city of Ghent. In addition, I also utilize descriptive statistics made available by specialized entities such as Statistiek Vlaanderen and Woningent. The Buurtmonitor assembles data from the population register and includes all registered residents of Ghent. The data portal enables comparison of, amongst others, demographic, social, and economic data. The numbers are stored in different subjects, and topics are grouped by theme. It is also possible to choose one or more areas and one or more periods per subject, thus allowing the user to analyze the evolution of various indicators in different neighborhoods. The data reflects the city’s existing situation in different areas, but the

figures do not say anything about the measures of the policy itself. Throughout the analysis, the majority of data comes from this portal, because it is the only one that provides data on the neighborhood level.

C. DEMARCATION OF TIME AND SPACE

Theoretically, it is difficult to determine the period during which gentrification should be measured. Different results can be found over different periods. The only thing that can be known is that gentrification describes a process, and not a sudden change. Therefore, quantitative research that examines short periods (1-2-3 years) risks overlooking changes. However, no studies have examined what an overly short or overly long period is. In addition, pragmatic considerations must also be examined, and the availability of the data taken into account (Coenen, 2014).

The most important information required from the Buurtmonitor for identifying the gentrified neighborhoods in the first part of this analysis is income data. However, since the Buurtmonitor only provides data on fiscal income from 2005 and, for the time being, only until 2015, the maximum spread for comparison over time is therefore a period of 10 years. In addition to data on fiscal income, the first analysis also utilizes data on unemployment from the Buurmonitor, made available by the VDAB.³

For the demographic indicators, this thesis analyzes the evolution over 18 years, from 2000 to 2018. Most demographic data is available for this period, and as mentioned above, evolution can be more easily studied over a more extended period. For the socio-economic indicators, I work with the same period of 10 years for which I identified the gentrified zones: 2005–2015. The year 2015 is the latest available data regarding fiscal income. When there is data available for more recent years, I take 2005 as the starting period and the most recent year as ending period into account. I can do this because gentrification is a phenomenon that continues to evolve (Lees, 2000). I decided to use 2005 as a starting point because many urban renewal projects have started by then in the 19de eeuwse gordel (Stad Gent, 2018). Furthermore, I wanted to investigate 10 years. For the housing indicators, there is not much data

³ VDAB: Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding. The figures of the VDAB are a snapshot of 31/03 of the concerning year.

available. I always make sure that the analyzed years comprise the period between 2005 and 2018.

Because gentrification is primarily a phenomenon that takes place within a broader context, I always compare the figures found for the neighborhoods of the research area with data for the entire territory of Ghent. For some indicators, there is no data available on the neighborhood level. In that case, I limit myself to discussing the regional trend. It is also possible that some neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel have already been extensively affected, while other areas have only encountered changes in the past few years.

PART VI: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

PART 1: IDENTIFICATION OF GENTRIFIED AREAS IN THE 19de EEUWSE GORDEL

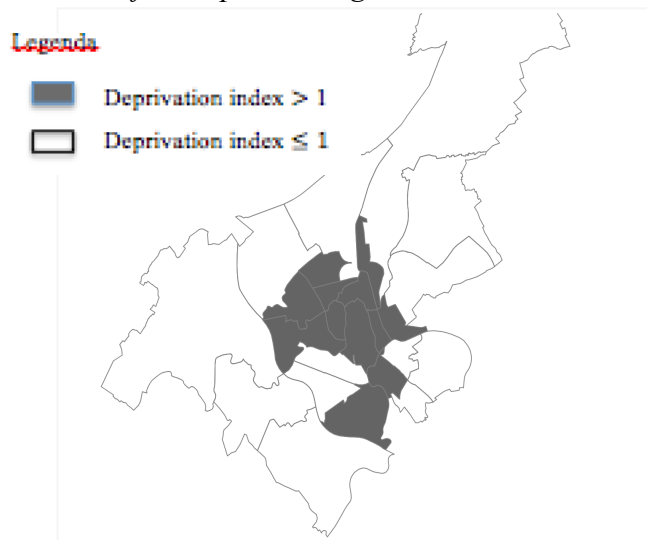
Socio-economic deprivation. The precise calculations for the 2005–2015 deprivation index depend on the income and unemployment pressure data of Ghent as a whole in the year in question. After obtaining this data in formula one, I obtain the following two formulas:

$$\text{Depriv 2005} = \frac{\left(\frac{\text{Median taxable income neighbourhood}}{\text{€13.225}} \right)^{-1} + \left(\frac{\text{Unemployment pressure neighbourhood}}{10,3\%} \right)}{2}$$

$$\text{Depriv 2015} = \frac{\left(\frac{\text{Median taxable income neighbourhood}}{\text{€17.765}} \right)^{-1} + \left(\frac{\text{Unemployment pressure neighbourhood}}{9,6\%} \right)}{2}$$

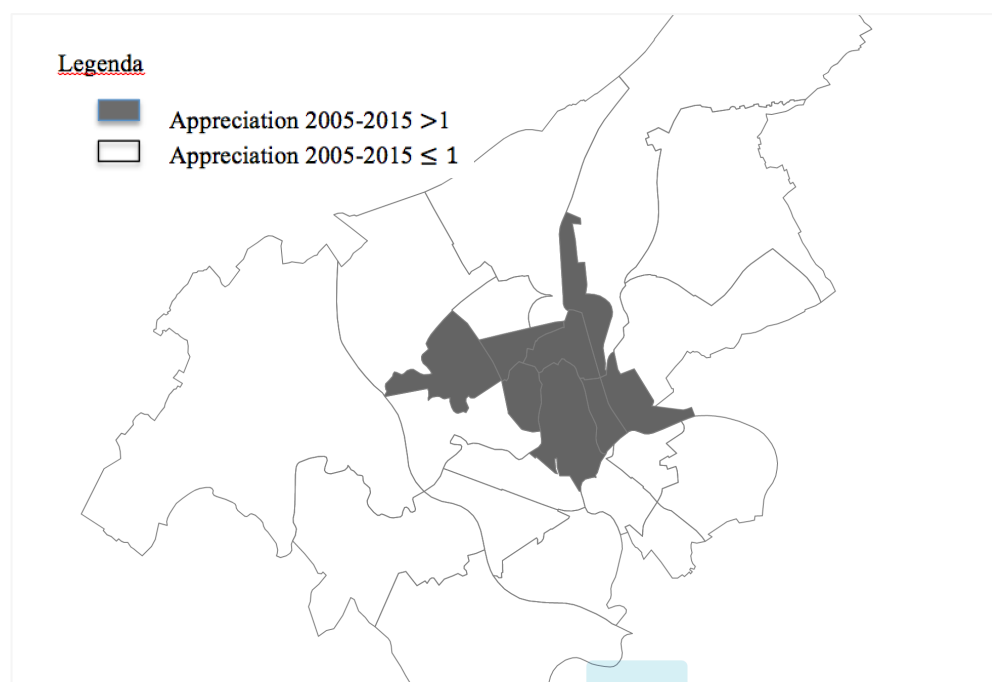
I then filled in the above formulas for the 25 neighborhoods of Ghent with the data from the Buurtmonitor (see Appendix 1), obtaining the deprivation indexes for 2005 and 2015 (see first two columns of the table 1). In 2005, 12 of the 25 neighborhoods of Ghent were deprived as they had a deprivation index higher than 1 (see table 1).

Figure 2: Presentation of 12 deprived neighborhoods in 2005 and 2015.



In 2015, 8 of the 12 deprived neighborhoods in 2005 possessed a lower deprivation index than in 2005. Finally, in order to measure the appreciation of the deprived neighborhoods between 2005 and 2015, I calculated formula two for the eight neighbourhoods that possessed a lower deprivation index in 2015 than in 2005. After the calculations of formula two, the following eight neighbourhoods are assumed to have experienced gentrification (appreciation index > 1) between 2005 and 2015: Binnenstad, Elisabethbegijnhof – papegaai, Brugse Poort – Rooigem, Rabot – Blaisantvest, Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, Muide – Meulebeke – Afrikalaan, Dampoort and Macharius – Heirnis.

Figure 3: Presentation of the neighborhoods in Ghent that experienced stronger appreciation than Ghent as a whole between 2005 and 2015.



In this dissertation, I only take into account the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel. Therefore, I am going to consider the following eight areas; Brugse Poort – Rooigem, Rabot – Blaisantvest, Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, Muide – Meulebeke – Afrikalaan, Dampoort and Macharius – Heirnis. They can be located on the map below.

Figure 4: Presentation of 'gentrified' neighborhoods in the 19de eeuwse gordel between 2005 and 2015.

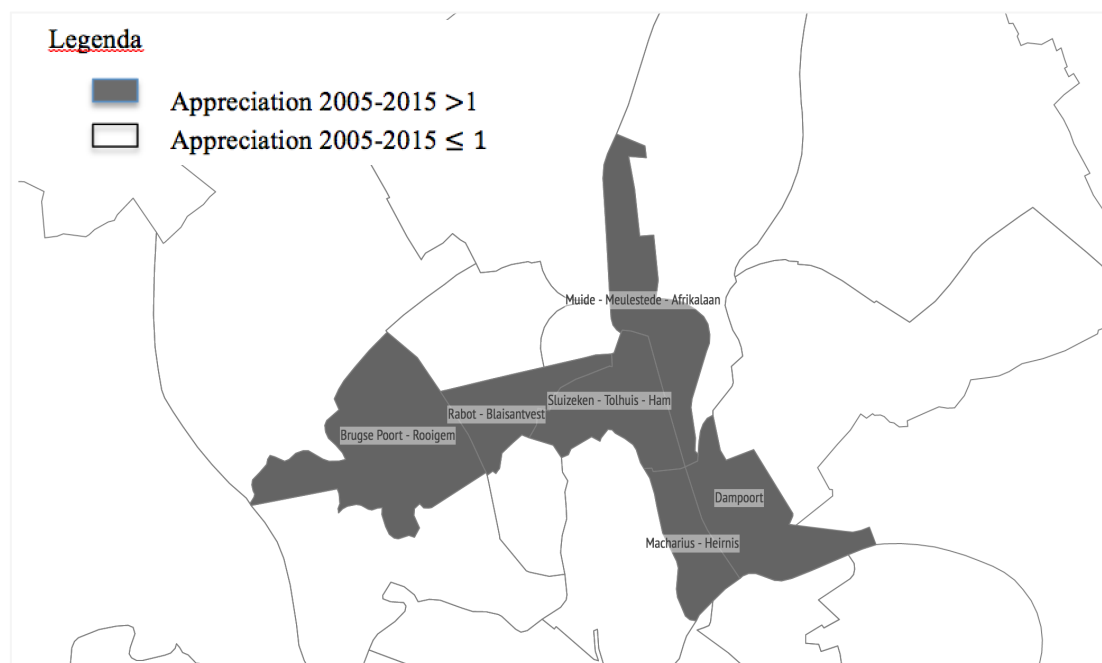


Table 1: Neighborhoods that experienced gentrification between 2005 and 2015.

	Deprivation 2005	Deprivation 2015	Appreciation 2005–2015
Binnenstad	1,1268	1,0663	1,0567
Bloemekenswijk	1,2790	1,2811	
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	1,3509	1,2853	1,0510
Dampoort	1,1736	1,1272	1,0412
Drongen	0,5856		
Elisabethbegijnhof - Papegaai	1,2329	1,2237	1,0075
Gentbrugge	0,6552		
Kanaaldorpen en - zone	0,3932		
Ledeberg	1,1884	1,2039	
Macharius - Heirnis	1,2664	1,1341	1,1166
Mariakerke	0,6755		
Moscou - Vogelhoek	0,8217		
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	1,4773	1,3841	1,0673
Nieuw Gent - UZ	1,1504	1,3526	
Oostakker	0,6420		
Oud Gentbrugge	0,8794		
Rabot - Blaisantvest	1,7460	1,5594	1,1197
Sint Amandsberg	0,8217		
Sint Denijs Westrem	0,6349		
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	1,5872	1,4569	1,0894
Stationsbuurt Noord	0,8227		
Stationsbuurt Zuid	0,7614		
Watersportbaan - Ekkergem	1,1487	1,1596	
Wondelgem	0,7540		
Zwijnaarde	0,6348		
City of Ghent	1	1	1

PART 2: EVOLUTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, AND HOUSING INDICATORS

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

The demographic indicators attempt to provide a general view of the evolution of the population in the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel in comparison with Ghent. I expect to observe specific trends in the identified districts of the research area, such as a change in the population composition.

Scope of the population

In 1977, Ghent's population was just over 246.000 people. After 1977, Ghent experienced a "city flee," and its population decreased significantly. In 1999, however, this fall had been countered, and Ghent's population has continued to increase ever since. Today, anno 2018, the counter indicates a population of 259.579 people against 224.042 people in the year 2000. This means that the population has increased by as much as 15,7%, and it is expected to grow to 273.873 people by the end of 2027 with a growth ratio of 5%. This surge is due to two phenomena. First of all, Ghent possesses a positive natural growth, which means that more births than deaths occur every year. Second, there is more migration to the city than from the city. Those figures make Ghent, together with Antwerp, the fastest growing cities in terms of population in Flanders (Stad Gent, 2018).

In the table below, it is possible to observe the evolution of the number of inhabitants in all the neighborhoods of Ghent versus the city of Ghent between the period of 2000 and 2018.

Table 2: Growth of the population between 2000 and 2018.

	2000	2018	Growth Ratio
Dampoort	9.498	12.630	1,33
Rabot - Blaisantvest	7.293	8.069	1,11
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	14.993	19.145	1,28
Bloemekenswijk	7.733	9.478	1,23
Binnenstad	15.170	18.418	1,21
Drongen	12.732	12.973	1,02
Gentbrugge	7.196	7.821	1,09
Kanaaldorpen en -zone	3.658	2.484	0,68
Elisabethbegijnhof - Papegaai	6.096	7.551	1,24
Ledeberg	8.156	9.684	1,19
Sint Amandsberg	16.305	19.128	1,17
Oud Gentbrugge	7.606	9.139	1,20
Oostakker	11.324	13.831	1,22
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	4.862	6.192	1,27
Moscou - Vogelhoek	4.852	5.515	1,14
Macharius - Heirnis	5.355	6.725	1,26
Nieuw Gent - UZ	7.387	7.917	1,07
Sint Denijs Westrem	6.050	6.259	1,03
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	9.203	11.191	1,22
Stationsbuurt Zuid	7.430	8.033	1,08
Stationsbuurt Noord	11.245	12.216	1,09
Watersportbaan - Ekkergem	6.838	7.762	1,13
Zwijnaarde	6.936	7.199	1,04
Wondelgem	13.290	16.526	1,24
Mariakerke	12.686	13.693	1,08
City Ghent	224.042	259.579	1,16

Source: Buurtmonitor, Bevolkingsregister Stad Gent

Ghent's fastest growing quarters in terms of population (in relative figures) are Dampoort, Brugse Poort – Rooigem and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan. All neighborhoods of our research area—except for Rabot – Blaisantvest—possess a minimum growth ratio of 1,20, which means that the population in those areas grows at a fast pace relative to the entire population in Ghent.

Population density

Above, it was made clear that the population has and is still increasing while the surface of Ghent's territory remains the same. Consequently, the number of inhabitants per square kilometer—the population density—also increases. Ever since the industrial expansion, all areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel have been the most densely populated areas of the city, with Rabot – Blaisantvest and Macharius – Heirnis leading with

respective population densities of 8.475 residents/km² and 7.279 residents/km² in 2000. These figures increased to 9.376 residents/km² and 9.142 residents/km² in 2018. To sum up, in Ghent, the population density in areas with a high socio-economic status appear relatively stagnate between 2000 and 2018, whereas a significant rise in density in all areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel can be noted (Buurtmonitor, 2018).

Age structure of the population

The population's age structure provides an important indicator in my analysis, as “gentrifiers” are, as mentioned in the theoretical portion, typically, but not necessarily, young people. Overall, Ghent is a young city. In comparison with Flanders, Ghent has more 25–39-year-olds, more young children, and fewer 65–79-year-olds. The rejuvenation in Ghent is the result of births and a massive influx of new young people settling in Ghent. Furthermore, there is still no aging of the population in Ghent. This influx of young people is partly due to the fact that Ghent is a student city. According to a survey conducted among new residents in Ghent in 2012, nearly half of the new inhabitants have studied in the city (Stad Gent, 2018).

The youngest neighborhoods can be found in the 19de eeuwse gordel, and in particular, in Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan (27,4%) and Rabot – Blaisantvest (27,2%), where the proportion of people between 0 and 19 years old is above average for Ghent (21,2%), and significantly higher than in the inner center (10,7%). The more peripheral neighborhoods possess a higher proportion of people over 65 (Sint-Denijs-Westrem (26%), Drongen (23%), and Mariakerke (22%)) (Buurtmonitor, 2018).

Table 3: Age structure of the population in 2018.

	% 0–9 years old	% 10– 19 years old	% 20– 29 years old	% 30– 39 years old	% 40– 49 years old	% 50– 59 years old	% 60– 69 years old	% 70– 79 years old	% 80+ years old
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	14,4	11,0	17,1	17,9	12,9	9,9	8,0	5,4	3,4
Dampoort	13,7	11,3	15,9	18,4	14,4	10,6	7,9	4,7	3,2

Macharius - Heirnis	10,5	9,1	22,5	17,5	14,2	10,9	7,9	4,9	2,5
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	15,1	12,3	15,7	17,4	14,7	10,3	6,4	4,9	3,1
Rabot - Blaisantvest	14,4	12,8	18,0	17,1	13,8	10,5	7,0	4,1	2,4
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	11,4	10,5	19,0	17,3	13,2	9,4	7,4	5,1	6,6
City of Ghent	11,4	9,8	16,5	16,1	12,7	11,8	9,5	6,7	5,4

Source: Buurtmonitor, Bevolkingsregister Stad Gent

The table below zooms in on the evolution of the proportion of the 20–29-year-old population in the 2000 and 2018 periods. The first figures represent the growth rate relative to the year 2000, and the numbers in brackets depict the proportion of the age group in the respective year. The figures do not depict a clear trend. However, it is clear that Macharius – Heirnis and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham possess a significantly larger proportion of 20–29-year-olds in 2018 than the city of Ghent.

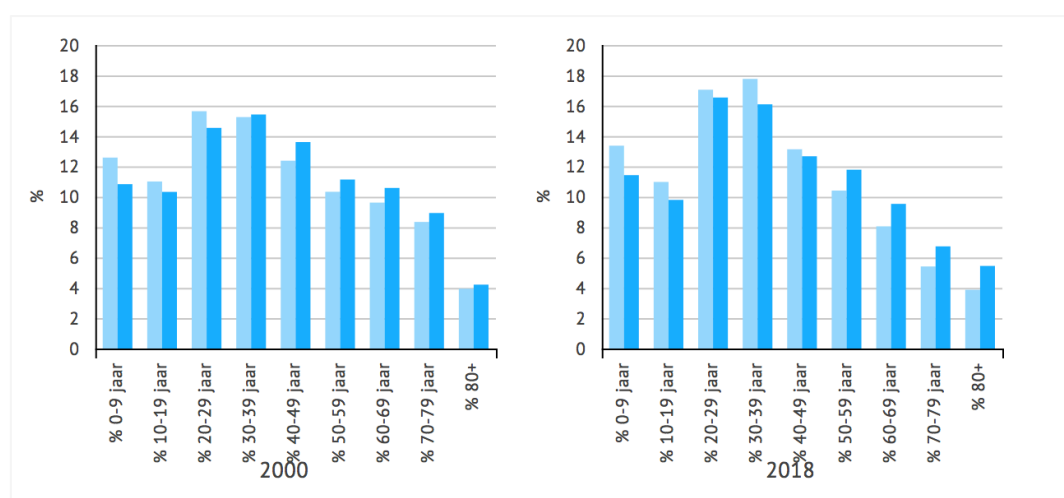
Table 4: Growth rate and proportion of the 20–29-year-old population in 2000 and 2018 (%).

	2005	2010	2015	2018
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	6,0(16,8)	6,5(16,9)	2,5(16,2)	8,3(17,1)
Dampoort	8,8(16,9)	7,4(16,7)	2,9(16,0)	2,1(15,9)
Macharius - Heirnis	3,4(20,8)	1,8(20,5)	5,7(21,3)	11,8(22,5)
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	0,4(14,8)	-1,4(14,6)	-2,9(14,3)	6,4(15,7)
Rabot - Blaisantvest	7,7(18,0)	14,1(19,0)	6,2(17,7)	7,7(18,0)
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	3,0(18,9)	-1,3(18,1)	-5,3(17,4)	3,6(19,0)
City of Ghent	7,0(15,6)	9,6(15,9)	10,8(16,1)	13,8(16,5)

Source: Buurtmonitor, Bevolkingsregister Stad Gent

In the bar table below, the light blue bars represent the 19de eeuwse gordel in its entirety, while the darker blue bars portray the entire territory of Ghent. It demonstrates that the share of 20–29 and 30–39-year-olds increased in the 2000 and 2018 periods in the districts of the 19de eeuwse gordel, whereas other age groups stagnated or decreased. When examining the proportion of 20–29 and 30–39-year-olds for these neighborhoods, it can be seen that they occupy a larger proportion of the population than the city average. This means that the research area has continued to rejuvenate over the past two decades.

Figure 5: Share of the 20-29 and 30-39-year-old population in 2000 and 2018.



Source: Buurtmonitor, Bevolkingsregister Stad Gent

Households

The average size of the households provides information concerning some housing needs and forms an indicator of the type of housing, as the household's size determines the dwelling's size. In the research area, I again observe a clear difference with other neighborhoods in Ghent: the average size of the households in 2018, except for Macharius – Heirnis, is greater than 2.2 people. Rabot – Blaisantvest, Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, and Dampoort demonstrate the most significant averages of 2,4; 2,39; and 2,38 people per household in 2018, respectively. The difference compared to the city average is apparent in the table below.

The share of single and single-parent families is significant, representing approximately 49% of the total households in Ghent. Between 2000 and 2008, this

indicator increased annually by a few percentage points, reaching 43.6% in 2008, and it has been slightly decreasing ever since. This phenomenon is found in every city (Stad Gent, 2018). I also observe that some neighborhoods of the research area possess a significantly larger share of single and single-parent families compared to the entire territory of Ghent, with Macharius – Heirnis possessing the largest proportion of 47,1% of single households within the research area.

Table 5: Evolution of the type of households.

	Number of people/household (pp/hh)		Percentage of singles (%)		Percentage of single-parent families (%)	
	2000	2018	2000	2018	2000	2018
Dampoort	2,26	2,38	38,3	37,8	8,6	8,2
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	2,16	2,39	41,1	39,1	9,9	9,9
Rabot - Blaisantvest	2,10	2,40	49,7	42,9	10,1	9,2
Brugse Poort - Rooigeu	2,05	2,24	45,3	42,7	8,7	9,8
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	2,16	2,30	52,7	46,5	7,7	7,3
Macharius - Heirnis	1,98	2,04	52,6	47,1	7,6	7,4
City of Ghent	2,14	2,19	41,3	41,4	7,7	7,6

Source: Buurtmonitor, Bevolkingsregister Stad Gent

Origin nationalities

Rather than considering current nationality, I find it more relevant to analyze the number of residents with a foreign origin, as this better covers the target group. Many individuals with an originally foreign nationality have acquired the Belgian nationality in past decades. The children of the latter automatically receive Belgian nationality at birth. That is why population by origin provides an essential indicator for calculating

people of foreign origin. Ghent currently counts more than 150 origin nationalities, and this number is still increasing. The most common origin nationalities are Turkish, as the most common, followed by Bulgarians in second, and with Moroccans taking third place. This is the result of different migration waves. One out of three Ghent residents have a background in migration. The education figures also reveal that almost a third of the youth (2.5–18 years) that go to school in Ghent do not speak Dutch as their mother tongue.

Ghent is gradually becoming a majority-minority city, or a city where the majority of inhabitants comprise a wide range of minorities. It is mainly the districts of the 19de eeuwse gordel that possess a high proportion of people with a foreign origin. In the Rabot – Blaisantvest, Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, people with a migration background are no longer a minority, but a majority.

Table 6: Share of people of foreign origin in 2018 (%).

	Foreign origin	EU15 origin	EU13 origin	Turkish and Maghreb origin	Non-EU and non-Turk & Maghreb
Rabot - Blaisantvest	69,70	4,40	15,70	35,70	13,90
Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham	62,10	4,70	16,20	30,10	11,00
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	58,00	4,40	13,00	26,30	14,20
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	51,10	4,40	8,40	23,70	14,60
Dampoort	46,10	4,30	11,60	22,70	7,50
Macharius - Heirnis	38,20	6,90	9,10	12,00	10,20
City of Ghent	32,60	5,10	5,70	12,00	9,80

Source: Buurtmonitor, Rijksregister – Provincies in cijfers

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The SES is mainly determined by the average income of a neighborhood. The income is mostly dependent on the position in the labor market and the level of education, and it determines which part of the housing market, services, and facilities one has access to. In the beginning of this analysis, I identified the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel that have experienced an increase in SES. In this section, I conduct a more detailed analysis of the evolution of the socio-economic factors, which will (hopefully) lead to a better comprehension of the trends.

Fiscal income

Average net income per taxpayer: This indicator provides a first clear indication of the purchasing power, and thus, the standard of living of the neighborhoods' inhabitants as well. The average net income per taxpayer in 2015 for the entire territory of Ghent accounted for €22.033 (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2018).

<i>Total Net Income (€)</i>	4.618.059.798 €	
_____	= _____	= 22.033 €
<i>Total Number of Taxpayers</i>	209. 593	

The figure above is calculated without subtracting the zero declarations. The following neighborhoods possess the lowest average net income of the entire territory of Ghent, with all incomes falling below €17.000 per year by the end of 2015 (Buurtmonitor, 2018):

- Rabot – Blaisantvest: €14.365
- Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham: €15.273
- Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan: €16.669

Table 7: Average net income per taxpayer per neighborhood in 2005 and 2015.

	Average Net Income Per Taxpayer		
	2005	2015	Growth Rate
Rabot - Blaisantvest	10.809	14.364	0,33
Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham	12.400	15.273	0,23
Muide-Meulestede-Afrikalaan	13.074	16.669	0,27
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	13.457	17.531	0,30
Dampoort	15.068	19.792	0,32
Macharius - Heirnis	16.739	22.556	0,35
City of Ghent	17.020	22.033	0,29

Source: Buurtmonitor, Statbel

The share of taxpayers with a net annual income lower than €10.000 is clear in the table below. In Rabot – Blaisantvest, no less than 44% of the taxpayers reported a net annual income of less than €10.000 by the end of 2015. Those figures allow one to gain an idea of how many people live below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

Table 8: Share of taxpayers with a net annual income < €10.000 in 2005 and 2015.

	2005	2015	Growth Rate
Rabot - Blaisantvest	48,7	44,6	-0,08
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	46,3	43,5	-0,06
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	42,7	36,5	-0,14
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	39,9	35,3	-0,11
Dampoort	37,1	33,1	-0,10
Macharius - Heirnis	36,4	32,8	-0,09
City of Ghent	35,2	29,9	-0,15

Source: Buurtmonitor, Statbel

Poverty indicators

Within European policy, the following three indicators are used to measure poverty: 1) at-risk-of-poverty based on income, 2) severe material deprivation, and 3) households with very low work intensity. These indicators are based on different characteristics of poverty and social exclusion. Together, the three indicators form the European poverty indicator “risk of poverty or social exclusion.” Unfortunately those figures are only available at the country and regional level. Below, I discuss the indicators that are relevant and can be compared to the poverty situation in Ghent (Statbel, 2018).

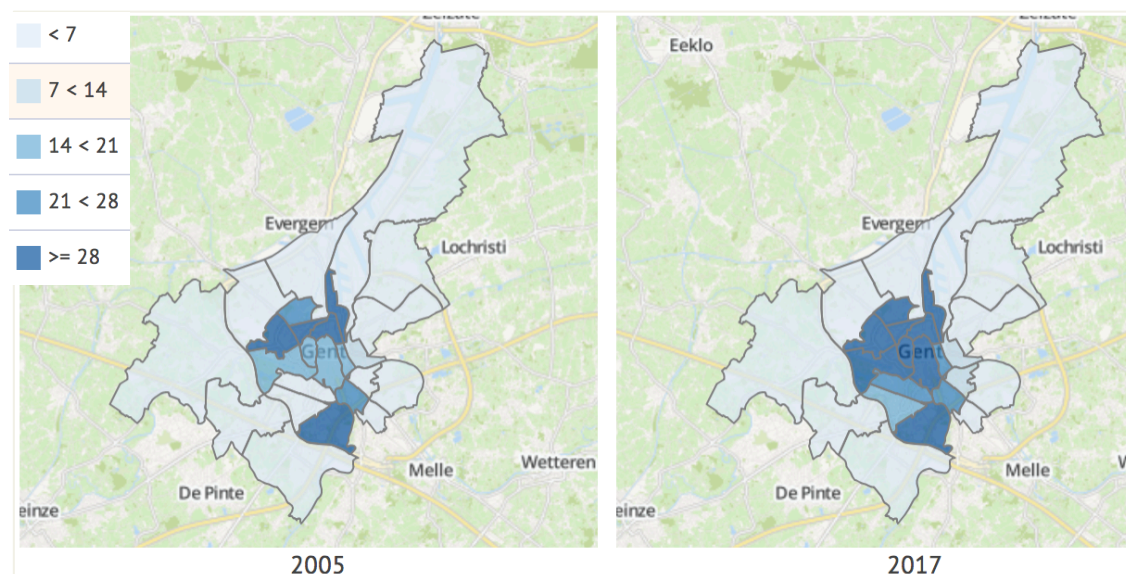
Poverty risk based on income (financial poverty): In order to gain insight into the poverty situation of a country or a region, the poverty risk rate is traditionally used in Europe, describing the proportion of people living with an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. This threshold is set at 60% of the median net available standardized household income in the country. It is assumed that people who live in a household that has to survive with an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold run an increased risk of poverty (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2018). In general, certain population groups face increased risk of poverty, including single households, single-parent households, young people, and seniors (Stad Gent, 2018). According to the most recent survey (2017) of the EU-SILC (European survey on income and living conditions), the Belgian at-risk-of-poverty threshold is, for a household of one person, €1.139 per month. The percentage of the population living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in the Flemish Region is 10,5%, considerably lower than in other regions. This figure can be compared with the amount of the minimum allowances. This reveals that a living wage or social integration wage from the OCMW for a single person is €910,52 per month. This minimum wage remains below the poverty threshold. The minimum unemployment benefit (without seniority allowance) is also slightly less than the at-risk-of-poverty threshold: €1.052,48 (Vlaamse overheid, 2018). However, while specific data cannot be obtained concerning the number of people living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in the research area, the situation can still be pictured by examining the average income and the share of people with a net annual income lower than €10.000 in these neighborhoods.

Low-work-intensity indicator: The low-work-intensity (LWI) indicator denotes the proportion of families with a low labor intensity. A family has an LWI when the adults

(max. age 59 years) in the family worked less than 20% of the potential working hours during the past year. Rabot – Blaisantvest and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham comprise the neighborhoods with the largest share of households with an LWI. Those two areas were also identified in the first part of this analysis.

The number of beneficiaries of financial support of the OCMW: The number of beneficiaries of a minimum wage from the OCMW in Ghent rose between 2005 and 2017 for both young adults and the active population. After a decline was experienced between 2010 and 2012, this indicator has increased until 2017. This increase cannot solely be ascribed to an increase in poverty, but also to the effect of a more proactive search for people to guarantee their entitlement to an (equivalent) integration income. Per every 1.000 residents between the ages of 18 and 24, 84 people were entitled to financial support in the form of a minimum wage or equivalent minimum wage from the OCMW in 2017 in the entire territory of Ghent. This figure amounts to 141 in Rabot – Blaisantvest and Brugse Poort – Rooigem. This age group counts the most beneficiaries. Overall, it seems clear that the identified neighborhoods of the research area possess the highest number of financial support beneficiaries, with Rabot – Blaisantvest and Brugse Poort – Rooigem as the front-runners (OCMW Gent, 2017).

Figure 6: Ratio of beneficiaries of a living or minimum income from the OCMW relative to the total population expressed per 1000 inhabitants (2005 and 2017).



Source: Buurtmonitor, OCMW Gent

Integration in the labor market

This section contains various indicators that tell more about the labor market in the determined neighborhoods of the research area. I strive to create a clear view via unemployment figures and the level of education. An overview is provided in the following table:

Table 9: Integration in the labor market (2005/2006 and 2017).

	Unemployment pressure rate (%)		Unemployment pressure rate among youth (18–24) (%)		Job-seekers long-term unemployed (>2 and < 5 years) (%)		Highly educated non-working job-seekers (%)		Low-educated non-working job-seekers (%)	
	2005	2017	2005	2017	2005	2017	2006	2017	2006	2017
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	16,1	12,1	24,1	15,4	22,6	24,1	14,2	15,7	56,1	55,2
Dampoort	13,2	10,6	19,4	15,5	22,8	22,2	18,5	18,3	53,5	53,4
Macharius - Heirnis	15,4	10,7	19,0	12,4	21,5	27,2	27,8	28,2	43,5	41,1
Muide – Meulestede - Afrikalaan	18,0	13,9	28,4	17,3	22,1	23,1	10,9	11,8	65,8	59,9
Rabot - Blaisantvest	22,1	15,0	25,9	18,6	25,6	24,3	9,8	9,5	62,1	61,7
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	19,4	14,5	26,8	18,0	27,6	21,0	16,9	16,8	52,7	52,8
City of Ghent	10,3	8,8	16,0	12,3	21,8	21,8	19,7	21,4	49,5	47,8

Source: Buurtmonitor, VDAB

Unemployment pressure rate: This indicator describes the ratio between the number of unemployed jobseekers (at 31/03/X) and the number of residents between the ages of 18 and 64 (potential working population). Unemployment stimulates the mechanisms of marginalization and social exclusion. This often results in difficult access to housing and basic goods and services. The unemployment pressure rate is most significant in Rabot – Blaisantvest, which is also the neighborhood with the lowest average net taxable income. If one looks at the proportion of the young unemployed (18–24-year-olds) among the unemployed, it can be noted that the identified “gentrified” areas indicate a substantially higher proportion of young unemployed people. The figures rise to or exceed 18% in Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham and Rabot – Blaisantvest. When the figures for 2017 are compared to 2005, it can be stated that the overall employment figures in the focus areas relative to the entire territory of Ghent have improved to a significantly greater extent.

Level of education: The population of old city districts is often characterized by a relatively low level of education (Corijn & Vloeberghs, 2009). This is evident from the indicator that focuses on the number of unemployed people possessing a high level of education diploma. In the research area, most unemployed people who offer themselves on the labor market have obtained a low level of education. A jobseeker is considered to possess a low level of education by the VDAB if he did not obtain a diploma or certificate of secondary education. A person is highly educated if he has attained a bachelor or master diploma (VDAB Studiedienst, 2010). However, it can be established from the previous table that in most neighborhoods, the number of holders of a higher diploma has and continues to increase.

Economic activities

This section examines whether the focus areas have experienced an enhancement of the economic activities. The presence of new businesses contributes to a neighborhood’s attractiveness and economic vitality. Therefore, it is, among other factors, relevant to examine the evolution of the number of retail businesses in the various neighborhoods of the research area. The evolution of entrepreneurial degree should also be examined, but unfortunately, this data is not available for the research area.

From Buurtmonitor, it was found that Ghent, in its entirety, possesses more than eight retail stores per 1.000 inhabitants. Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan and Macharius – Heide count the lowest number of stores with 5 and 5,5 per 1.000 residents. Overall, all areas of Ghent seem to have experienced a decrease in the number of stores, except for Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham. This is not surprising, since the number of non-formula stores in the focus area decreased between 2008 and 2017, except for in Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, where the number of formula and non-formula stores increased. An increase in the number of formula stores⁴ provides an important indicator of economic activity, since it implies that more large businesses are attracted to the areas.

Table 10: Number and share of formula and non-formula stores in 2008 and 2017.

	Stores (Nbr)		Stores relative to inhabitants (per 1.000)		Formula stores (Nbr)		Non-formula stores (Nbr)		Formula stores relative to all shops (%)		Non-formula stores relative to all shops (%)	
	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017
‘Brugse Poort’	152	127	9,1	6,7	17	19	140	108	10,5	20,7	92,1	85,0
‘Dampoort’	110	100	9,9	8,1	16	14	94	86	15,1	14,4	85,5	86,0
‘Macharius’	40	34	6,3	5,5	8	5	33	29	17,5	14,7	84,6	85,3
‘Muide’	34	31	5,9	5,0	5	5	29	26	19,2	22,7	85,3	83,9
‘Rabot’	82	66	10,5	9,0	9	7	72	59	12,3	11,3	87,8	89,4
‘Sluizeken’	101	128	9,8	11,3	6	15	97	113	4,8	11,7	96,0	88,3
City of Ghent	2.581	2.281	10,8	8,8	526	562	2.167	1.719	16,0	24,6	84,0	75,4

Source: Buurtonitor, Locatus, Provincies in cijfers.

⁴ Locatus registers a point of sale as a formula if it has seven or more establishments worldwide, or if the company employs more than 100 employees (Locatus, 2016).

From my observation, I have noticed that numerous new businesses have been established in the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel. For instance, in Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, I have witnessed the appearance of a number of new commercial activities during the past 10 years, such as the inauguration of a gourmet restaurant, the arrival of young enterprises, and temporary projects such as DOK, Nieuwland, and 019. The Rabot – Blaisantvest has also opened a hip, chic, and exclusive pop-up restaurant named M. The aim was to attract a particular target audience to the restaurant and the neighborhood, namely, young, hip foodies who were previously not present in the area (Maly, 2017). In the annex of this dissertation, I have attached a table of some commercial premises in the focus areas. The table illustrates, for instance, that the number of bakeries and mini-supermarkets has fallen over the years in most areas, and that slightly more café-restaurants are present in the discussed neighborhoods (see Appendix 2).

C. HOUSING

Characteristics of the housing

Number of dwellings inhabited by owners and tenants: The proportion of homes occupied by the owner varies across the different neighborhoods in the focus area, with Dampoort counting the highest share of 52%, while Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham counts the lowest rate of 32% in 2011 (only data available). Of course, a clear correlation exists between the average income and the average number of owners. The most impoverished areas of Ghent in terms of fiscal income also accommodate the least number of owners, and thus the highest number of tenants. The latter remains the most vulnerable group, as rent prices increase due to urban development and revitalization. The number of owners in the most deprived areas remains far below the regional average. Ghent counted approximately 15.000 social tenants, 51.000 private tenants, and 51.000 owner-occupiers in 2017 (Vlaamse Woonraad, 2017).

Table 11: Share of dwellings inhabited by the owner and tenant (%) in 2011.

	Share of dwellings occupied by the owner	Share of rental housing (inhabited housing)
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	31,8	67,3
Rabot - Blaisantvest	33,8	65,5
Macharius - Heirnis	39,9	59,7
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	40,9	58,3
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	44,3	55,2
City of Ghent	49,7	49,7
Dampoort	51,9	47,4

Source: Buurtmonitor, Census

The average surface per dwelling: The districts of the 19de eeuwse gordel possess a considerable share of small houses in their territory. This often consists of old workers' homes or larger houses that have been divided into apartments after the original inhabitants have fled the city. Many families of foreign origin, who often form large households, live there. The combination of a limited living area per person and the significant share of large households indicates a substantial population density, and often overcrowding of the homes as well. In terms of surface, Rabot – Blaisantvest is the second smallest district in Ghent, with a considerably large number of inhabitants. It is therefore the most densely populated district of Ghent. In 2014, the average surface of the dwellings in Rabot – Blaisantvest was 96 m² compared to an average of 126 m² in Ghent. The figures in the table below make it possible to compare the neighborhoods. It is thus once again clear that the average surface per dwelling in the focus areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel is well below the average of the city of Ghent.

Table 12: Average surface per dwelling (m²) and average number of people/household in 2014.

	Average surface per dwelling (m ²)	Average number of people/household
Rabot - Blaisantvest	96,0	2,39
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	98,1	2,36
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	101,3	2,31
Brugse Poort - Rooigem	101,8	2,23
Macharius - Heirnis	111,6	2,02
Dampoort	119,5	2,39
City of Ghent	125,7	2,17

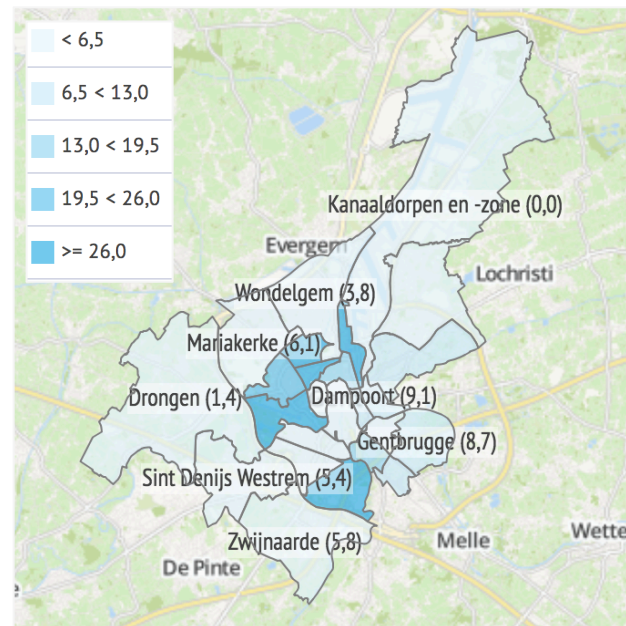
Source: Buurtmonitor, Algemene Administratie Patrimoniumdocumentatie (Kadaster)

Minimum average comfort: In 2017—except for Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham—less than 88% of the housing stock in all districts of the focus area was equipped with average comfort. The average comfort is defined by the fact that a home must be equipped with a bathroom, hot running water, and central heating. The map demonstrates a considerable contrast: the figures fluctuate around 85% in the areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel, compared to 92% in the surrounding neighborhoods. According to the Flemish Housing Council, approximately 40% of private rental homes in Ghent do not meet the minimum standards for habitability (Vlaamse Woonraad, 2017). A home's minimum average comfort provides an indicator telling more about the circumstances in which people live, and this is of course closely related to the income that is earned (Buurtmonitor, 2018).

Social housing supply

The share of social housing indicates the percentage of social housing compared to the total number of households in the area. As is clear in the map below, this indicator differs considerably from neighborhood to neighborhood in Ghent. The areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel exhibit a substantially larger supply of social housing than the neighboring areas.

Figure 7: Share of social housing (%) in all neighborhoods in Ghent in 2012.



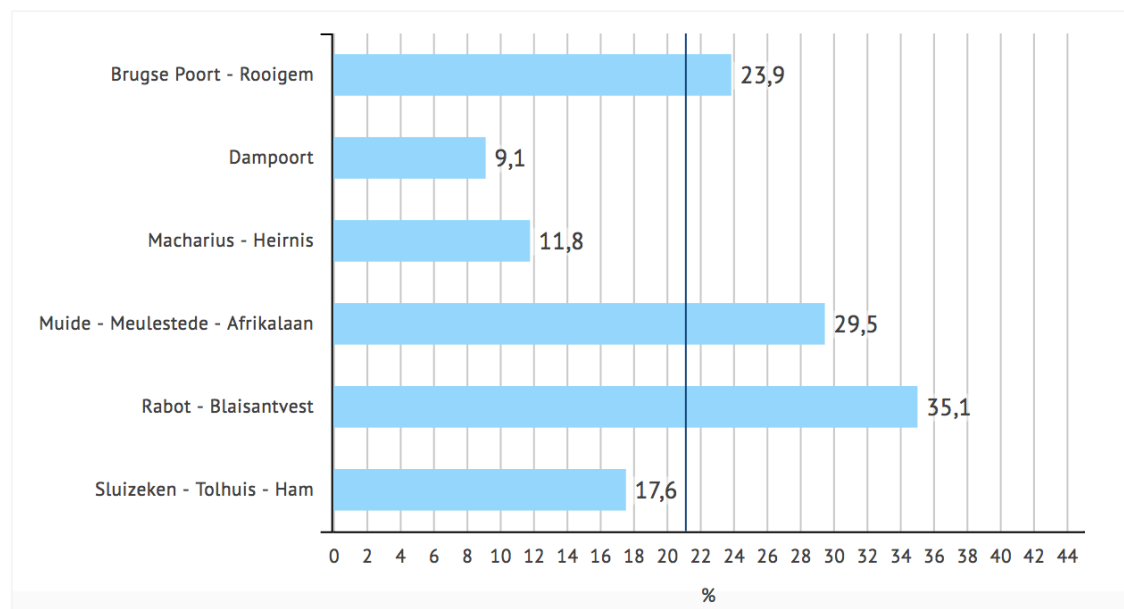
Source: Buurtmonitor, Stad Gent, Dienst Wonen

In 2012, in Rabot – Blaisantvest, 35,1% of the dwellings involved social housing. This neighborhood is currently subject to massive real estate projects that will significantly affect the area, including the construction of a new sustainable neighborhood—the Tondelier project—and the replacement of the three Rabot towers. In 2017, Chritina Vandekerckhove published the documentary “Rabot” on the inhabitants of the three apartment blocks that are now being demolished and replaced. The towers were inhabited by 840 residents, and 400 new apartments—360 of which are social dwellings—of low-density will be provided in return. The documentary exhibits images of apartments of poor quality and safety standards. For instance, one of the buildings provided only one entrance hall and one lift for 190 apartments over 17 floors (Vandekerckhove, 2017). The calculation of the rent that residents will have to pay for their social housing is relatively complicated, since it depends on the market value of the dwelling, the household income, and the number of people in the household. At maximum, it will reach the market value, and at least the minimum rent. The market values of the apartments vary per type and size, but are all range from between €609 and €833. The average rent that the residents pay is €300, substantially lower than in the private market (Wonen Vlaanderen, 2018).

Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan counted a share of 29,5% of social housing in 2012. In 2016, residents of the quarter and the city of Ghent jointly launched the urban renewal project Muide Meulestede Morgen. Instead of waiting for plans from the government, residents took initiative together with the city of Ghent to tackle challenges in their neighborhood. Residents, neighborhood organizations, and city services worked to achieve a vision of the future in a process involving all kinds of workshops. The ambition was to increase the supply of adapted social rental housing and single-household homes, but by how many remains uncertain today (Woningent, 2017).

The bar table illustrates that, apart from the aforementioned neighborhoods, the Brugse Poort also possesses a significant percentage of the social housing supply. The vertical blue line represents the average of the focus areas. The average of the city of Ghent was 12,8 % in 2012. However, even though this amount has certainly increased by 2018, the number of candidate tenants on the waiting list for social housing remains high. In 2016, 10.270 people were on the waiting list for social housing in the entire territory of the city of Ghent (Stadmonitor, 2018).

Figure 8: Share of social housing (%) in focus areas in 2012.



Source: Buurtmonitor, Stad Gent, Dienst Wonen

Real estate market

Evolution of the prices of rented and owner-occupied homes: The average price of a home has risen significantly in the entire area between 2010 and 2014. According to figures from the “FOD Economie” (2018), the average sales price of an ordinary house in the first half of 2018 was €274.925 in Ghent. This demonstrates an increase of 268% compared to the average price from 2000. The underlying trend is that Ghent’s population continues to grow and more single households want to settle in the city. As a result, the pressure on the real estate market remains high. Even though no exact data is available concerning the evolution of rental prices on the neighborhood level, these can be estimated by looking at the evolution of the housing prices. A rising cost price of a home will lead to an increase in rental prices. The growth rate of the average selling price is highest in Brugse Poort – Rooigem (37%), Dampoort (21%), and Rabot – Blaisantvest (13%). In general, these homes are also of lower quality (measured on the basis of surface area and comfort).

In Ghent, the monthly rent of a studio is usually between €400 and €500. The rent of a one-bedroom apartment ranges from €450 to €600. For a two-bedroom apartment, the tenant pays €600–800 per month. The rent of a house with a few bedrooms is usually €800 or more (rising to more than €1.000). It has been established that in the past few years, the supply of housing of up to €600 units has decreased, while the supply of €800-category units has increased (Vlaamse Woonraad, 2017).

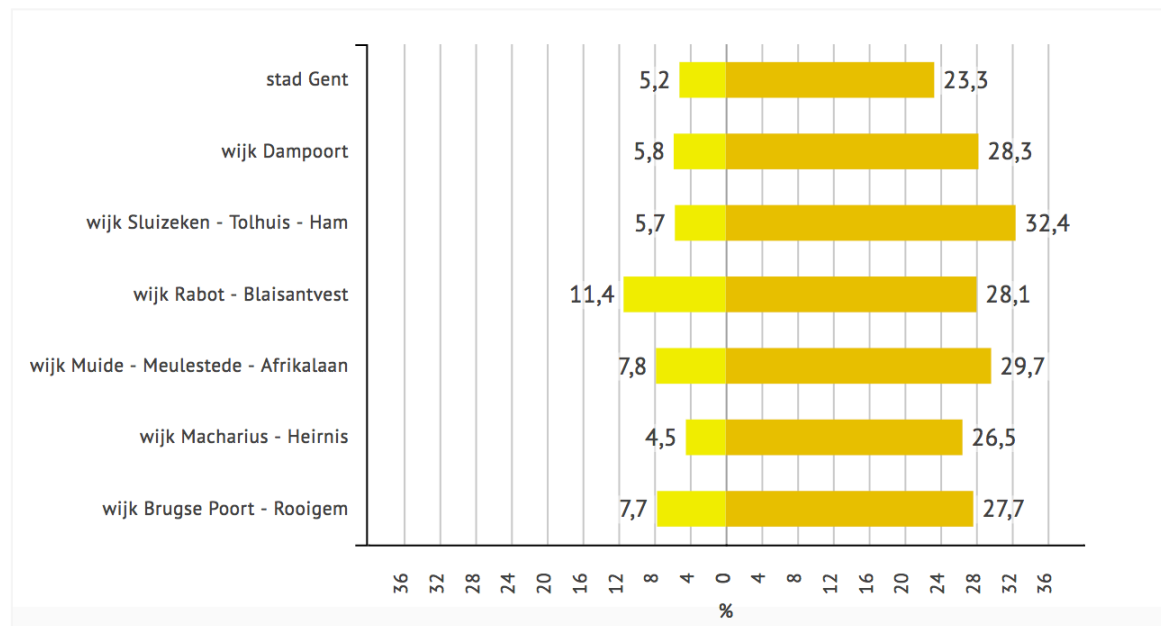
Table 13: Evolution of the average housing prices between 2010 and 2014

	Average price apartments		Average price houses		Average price all types of housing combined	
	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014
Brugse Poort – Rooigem	135.466	160.793	156.811	226.134	152.367	208.735
Rabot - Blaisantvest	x	x	150.611	158.940	153.768	173.871
Muide - Meulestede - Afrikalaan	170.127	x	150.367	175.495	156.748	165.128
Dampoort	x	240.537	184.704	211.814	180.104	218.003
Sluizeken - Tolhuis - Ham	x	x	187.952	200.258	203.581	206.081
City Ghent	198.413	218.918	225.614	260.803	217.514	247.828
Macharius - Heirnis	x	223.132	237.078	277.420	251.605	255.789

Source: Buurtmonitor, FOD Financiën (Kadaster).

Affordability of living: In order to analyze the affordability of living, two indicators are examined: the inability to pay the rent or instalment in the past 12 months (the share of residents that belong to a household with payment difficulties that have faced problems paying housing costs in the past year) and the share of residents whose total household expenditure for housing takes up at least 30% of the total household income. The mirror bar table below indicates that 11,4% of the residents of Rabot – Blaisantvest were unable to pay the rent or instalment at least once during 2017. This was the highest of all Ghent neighborhoods. Regarding the share of residents whose total housing expenditure exceeded 30% of the total household income, Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan exhibited the most significant figures: 32,4% and 29,7%, respectively. Overall, more than half of the Ghent households rent their homes, and more than half spend more than 30% of their income on rent (Vlaamse Woonraad, 2017).

Figure 9: Affordability of living in 2017.



■ Inability to pay the rent or instalment in the past 12 months (%)

■ Housing expenditure > 30% of total household income (%)

Source: Buurtmonitor, Survey Stadsmonitor

Investments in housing projects: The Buurtmonitor displays data concerning the number of planned housing projects consisting of at least 10 housing entities in 2015 and 2018. The neighborhoods of the research area are amongst the areas demonstrating the most investments in 2015, especially Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham (741), Rabot – Blaisantvest (597), and Brugse Poort – Rooigem (572).

D. CONCLUSION

We first go back to the definition of gentrification that we previously formulated:

Gentrification describes the process whereby working-class neighborhoods are transformed into middle- or upper-class neighborhoods. This process can be explained by the interaction of both the supply (waves of investments and disinvestment, capital injection) and demand side (consumer preferences) theories. Three elements are inherent to the process. First, it involves a change in the population's composition in old, rather deprived urban neighborhoods. Second, it implies the upward revaluation of

the built environment and housing stock. Third, gentrification often implicates the direct or indirect displacement of the (socio-economically weaker) original residents.

When discussing the evolution of neighborhoods that, according to critics, are subject to the process of gentrification, it is important to put forward a number of crucial indicators. In the early stages of gentrification, unfortunately, it is not easy to demonstrate this, as it is an evolution that takes place over years. However, neighborhoods where the process has already taken place to a large extent will meet the following characteristics:

Changing demographic characteristics: The improvement of social status is considered an important indicator. This primarily concerns a higher level of education and an improved position on the labor market. Strictly speaking, the composition of the population, especially its age structure and the number of people in the households, should also change. The decrease in population density is also an indicator, but it is only noticeable in the truly long term.

Income: The average income will rise in neighborhoods facing extensive gentrification.

Economic activity: The neighborhood's economic vitality will be enhanced. This generally involves a change in the retail landscape. Very often, local businesses that have been present in the area for decades are renovated or replaced by new ones, or new businesses arise. The emergence of new businesses contributes to the neighborhood's attractiveness.

Real estate market: The process will be accompanied by an appreciation of the real estate value including rising rental and purchase prices for homes. This increase in property value can create a financial burden for the neighborhood's original occupants, however. The degree to which the prices on the property market evolve also depends on the measures that the government may or may not take. Such measures involve questions concerning whether the government will stimulate the arrival of higher incomes or try to support the socio-economically weaker residents.

Spatial changes: The districts discussed should be revitalized through investments in renovations. In the public space as well, changes can often be observed that indicate a changed target group. This work, however, does not delve deeper into gentrification's effect on the public space.

This section combines the figures of the descriptive statistics and examines whether it is possible to distinguish certain trends that support my assumption (based on my calculation) and indicate that the gentrification process occurs in the following neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel: Brugse Poort – Rooigem, Dampoort, Macharius – Heirnis, Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, Rabot – Blaisantvest, and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham. This will also enable evaluating gentrification's (socio-economic) effect on particular neighborhoods.

Demographic evolution

The demographic indicators provide the clearest view of the evolution of the neighborhoods discussed. The most important question that needs to be asked here is whether there is an improvement in the social situation, and to whom can this merit be ascribed.

The figures demonstrate that Ghent's overall population keeps increasing. This surge is first due to a positive natural growth, meaning there are more births than deaths every year. Second, there is more migration to the city than out of the city. The focus areas of this thesis belong to the neighborhoods with the highest population growth ratio. The fastest growing quarters of Ghent (in relative figures) are Dampoort, Brugse Poort – Rooigem, and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan. It is also observed that the growth in population density (in %) between 2000 and 2018 correlates with the population growth. This is logical, since the surface of Ghent's territory remains the same. Looking at population growth and population density in the different neighborhoods, it can be noticed that population growth has predominantly been greatest in the areas that were already densely populated. Thus, a decrease in population density as a consequence of gentrification is not yet noticeable in the focus areas. Another striking connection is that the areas with the highest population density are the neighborhoods with the most inhabitants of foreign origin.

This thesis finds a young population in Ghent, especially in the 19de eeuwse gordel. The district, in general, possesses a considerably higher proportion of people in their 20s and 30s, and households that are, on average, more sizable than in the entire territory of Ghent, especially in Rabot – Blaisantvest. A large concentration of "young people" (20–29-year-olds) can be found in Macharius – Heirnis, Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, Rabot – Blaisantvest, and Brugse Poort – Rooigem. Those quarters consequently

exhibit a greater than average number of single households. The growth rate of the 20–29-year-old population group for the period between 2012 and 2018 is most significant in Macharius – Heirnis and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, and consequently, the proportion of single households is the highest and the average household size the lowest in those areas. From those results, it can be deduced that Macharius – Heirnis and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham have become desirable quarters for young people in recent years.

Most single-parent families can be found in Nieuw Gent – UZ. Most neighborhoods in Ghent have few one-parent families, not because fewer couples divorce, but rather because of the cost price of the housing market. Given the more limited financial access after a divorce, many single-parent families are dependent on those areas of Ghent where people can rent or buy cheaper, and Nieuw Gent – UZ provides social housing. This can also explain why the share of single-parent families is the lowest in Macharius – Heirnis and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, where housing prices have become higher than in other areas.

Gentrification is characterized by the residential mobility of two groups. On the one hand, middle-class people generally move to a gentrified neighborhood. This group often consists of young, graduated adults, childless and at the start of their professional career. They are largely dependent on rental properties. They form a mobile group that often forms the engine for the gentrification process (Van Bouchoute, 2012). According to Stad Gent and figures from the Buurtmonitor, a number of young graduated people today settle in the areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel. As mentioned above, they decide to live in those areas because they are upcoming and very close to the city center (Stad Gent, 2018).

On the other the hand, socio-economically weaker residents are often forced to move out of the neighborhood due to the rise in (rental) prices. In order to measure this residential mobility, indicators such as moving intensity and migration balance could be analyzed. The city of Ghent possesses information regarding the number of people who move out or settle in a certain neighborhood. With this data, this thesis is able to map strong increases in the number of people leaving and settling in the neighborhood. However, these only depict the relocation movements, without providing any information regarding the socio-economic profiles of the people arriving or departing,

making it impossible to measure direct displacement as a consequence of gentrification. The sharp increase in the number of people leaving the neighborhood can only serve as a possible indicator of where displacement might occur (Coenen, 2014). Macharius – Heirnis, Rabot – Blaisinvest, Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham demonstrate considerable negative outcomes of the migration balance which means that a significantly greater number of people move out of the neighborhood than move in (Buurtmonitor, 2018). In other words, it is highly possible that displacement occurs in those quarters.

To sum up, I refer back to the question asked in the first paragraph of this section: “Is there an improvement in the social situation, and to whom can this merit be ascribed?” In answer, I observed one apparent trend: more young, educated people settle in the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel. This, in the long term, should lead to an increase in social status, since more people with a higher education are settling in a neighborhood characterized by an average low level of education. This trend is most noticeable in Macharius – Heirnis, where the share of 20–29-year-olds has grown significantly over the past six years. At the same time, it was observed that the possibility of displacement is the highest in the same neighborhoods. It can thus be stated that the demographic statistics support my assumption that the process of gentrification occurs in the focus areas.

Socio-economic evolution

The socio-economic indicators provide a more ambiguous result. This is mainly because it is not always possible to determine evolution due to a lack of data. A number of trends can be distinguished, but drawing a conclusion solely based on this data is not easy.

One of the most defining indicators for a person's position on that social ladder is income. After all, this determines the standard of living that individuals and their families can wield. The net income per tax declaration is considerably lower in the research area than the entire average of Ghent. Rabot – Blaisinvest and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham are the poorest neighborhoods with the highest number of inhabitants living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, making the residents of those areas the most vulnerable to displacement. However, the growth rate of the average net income per taxpayer in the research area—except for Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham and Muide –

Meulestede – Afrikalaan—is greater than the average growth rate of the entire territory of Ghent. Dampoort (32%), Macharius – Heirnis (35%), and Rabot – Blaisantvest (33%) experienced the most significant growth in the 2005–2015 period. The strong increase could certainly indicate that a group of more wealthy residents settled in those areas.

The population's income is determined by the position occupied (or not) on the labor market. A low level of education will often lead to an uncertain position on the labor market, which can be accompanied by a limited income. A neighborhood that has to deal with gentrification should witness positive evolution in the longer term. The analytical analysis has revealed that the districts of the 19de eeuwse gordel possess a high percentage of low-skilled people. However, the profile of the unemployed improves moderately. For Brugse Poort – Rooigem, Macharius – Heirnis, and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, an increase can be seen in the number of unemployed with a higher education diploma. This can point to two things: more people with a bachelor or master diploma have settled in those neighborhoods, or more original residents are able to obtain a higher diploma.

When examining all the analyzed socio-economic figures combined, one can deduce the following: the neighborhoods from the research area with the lowest average income per taxpayer are also the neighborhoods with the highest unemployment pressure rates, with the highest unemployment figures belonging to young people (18–24 years old). Those neighborhoods are, respectively, Rabot – Blaisantvest, Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan. The unemployment indicators for those areas have evolved positively between 2005 and 2017, and at a higher rate than the other focus areas, especially in comparison with the whole city of Ghent. However, the figures remain particularly high in comparison with the entire territory of Ghent. The high demand for skilled workers in the region can be problematic, and partly explain the relatively high long-term unemployment rate in those areas. Residents are not only confronted with low demand for low-skilled workers, but also have to compete with the often highly skilled newcomers and commuters. Gentrification thus often creates jobs in the neighborhood, but these are rarely filled by the original residents.

Finally, the data monitor illustrated that the number of non-formula stores has decreased for every area except Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, which has witnessed a remarkable increase in both formula and non-formula stores. Brugse Poort – Rooigem, Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham have experienced an increase in the proportion of formula stores relative to all stores in the 2008–2017 period. This suggests that more formula shops have been established in the areas or neighboring quarters, and have perhaps subsequently replaced local non-formula shops. This indicates an increase in the commercial interest in those neighborhoods. From my observation, I noticed that, in general, the neighborhoods have experienced the appearance of a number of new, hip, trendy bars, restaurants, and small enterprises.

To conclude, I can affirm an increase in the average income, a decrease in the unemployment figures in the identified “gentrified” areas, a moderate increase in the profile of the average unemployed, and a slight enhancement in the economic activity in the discussed neighborhoods. Consequently, those evolutions support my assumption that gentrification indeed occurs in the pre-identified areas.

Housing evolution

The cadastral statistics indicate that the number of owners in most neighborhoods of the research area remains meager compared to the entire territory of Ghent and the Flemish region. It can therefore be stated that a large group of residents of the old city districts is unable to become owners of their home and is allocated on the rental market. The houses in that rental market are often of poor quality, low comfort, and typically rather small. The average surface of the dwellings is the lowest in the neighborhoods that relatively count the largest households: Rabot – Blaisantvest and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan.

The social housing supply remains deficient. Even though the number of social dwellings has increased during the past five years, and the city and social housing companies have inaugurated numerous projects in the research area, the number of candidate tenants on the waiting list for social housing remains high. In 2016, 10.270 people were on the waiting list in the entire territory of Ghent (Stadsmonitor, 2018). This figure does not include all the private tenants that belong to the target group of the social housing policy, since not everyone applies for support. The city administration does not yet sufficiently focus on replacement construction. Anyone who is put out of

his dwelling today cannot go anywhere else. That is why the share of social housing in large-scale construction projects must increase.

The figures illustrate that the average price of a home has risen significantly between 2010 and 2014, particularly in Brugse Poort – Rooigem (37%), Dampoort (21%), and Rabot – Blaisantvest (13%). Again, it can be observed that the growth rate is most important in the area with the lowest average housing prices. There is also a general increase in rent, and this rise is even more pronounced in the small housing units. The pressure on the rental market on the demand side can be explained by an increasing number of inhabitants, namely a greater influx of students and their demand for single-household dwellings and the permanent inflow from migration (Van Bouchaute, 2012). On the supply side, there is a decreasing stock of cheap rental housing and a lack of collective housing. The rise in prices and the decline in the supply of financially viable housing entities means that access to the private housing market for economically weaker households is severely hampered. I note that more than half of the rental households have to expend more than 30% of their monthly income to rent. The rise in rental prices places a burden on the family budget and often makes it impossible to spend money on matters that can improve the socio-economic situation (for example, savings, health, education). Consumer and housing prices also surge faster than the already low income. While the average income has risen sharply between 2005 and 2015, the number of tax declarations of less than €10,000 has decreased by a much smaller rate.

There is a limited amount of “neighborhood-specific” data on the evolution of investments in the real estate market. However, when looking at the number of planned housing projects, one can conclude that investments are made more often in most areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel. Even though no exact data is available concerning the number of renovations and building licenses in the research area, according to both Stad Gent (2018) and my observations, the discussed neighborhoods are experiencing numerous investments in urban renewal projects.

As discussed in the theoretical segment, the supply theory suggests that gentrification is provoked by waves of investments and disinvestments, upon which Smith’s rent-gap theory was founded. My data analysis—the poor quality of the housing, the evolution of the housing prices, and the number of housing projects—confirms that such waves

are taking place in Ghent. The city and private investors are currently investing in a number of large-scale renewal and building projects in areas that were subject to disinvestment during recent decades. However, they lack sufficient connection with the original socio-economically weaker residents. Those homes should go to the people who live in severe conditions. Unfortunately, according to De Decker (2014), in Flanders, there is rarely a relationship between building new homes and demolishing bad ones. The housing policy is liberal, providing a great deal of private housing and too few social rental properties to reduce the prices. In the private rental market, the government provides little regulation regarding price and quality. It can thus be stated that a better connection between housing-quality policy and affordability policy for low-income tenants of the private rental market is necessary to limit gentrification's adverse effects on the more impoverished residents.

PART VII: PERSPECTIVES & GENERAL CONCLUSION

Perspectives

As briefly discussed in the theoretical segment, the gentrification process needs to be considered within the context of an economic and political system. This brief section aims to encourage the reader to think about the gentrification process in Ghent within the context of the evolution from Keynesian to neoliberal economic policy. Keynesians are the founders of the welfare state where the government has an important role to play. They consider the market (the private sector) to be unstable and failing in many areas and therefore believe that adjustment by the government is needed (Heylen, 2014). The gentrification phenomenon can more easily take place in an undisturbed, market-driven context in which the government's powers are restrained. The gentrification in the 19de eeuwse gordel can thus be understood within a broader evolution toward neoliberalization of the city. Contemporary gentrification is not a direct derivative of a linear transition from the Keynesian prosperity city to the neoliberal city. However, it can be investigated just how neoliberal strategies influence a gentrification policy in their interaction with existing arrangements (Van Bouchaute, 2012). This thesis does not go into detail on this matter, but it remains interesting to mention for further reasoning. Below, some examples are provided concerning how the government plays an essential role in supporting the development of gentrification processes.

Concerning the restructuring of the housing market, a great deal of pressure is placed on social housing. The analytical research has already demonstrated that the planned social housing in the research area remains insufficient for the massive demand. The result is that a substantial proportion of relatively low-income families remain dependent on the private rental market. The government has also abolished control on rent prices and subsidies for the construction of specific social housing projects. Therefore, interest groups often argue for introducing rent allowances or rent control (Van Bouchaute, 2012). Another example is the strong commitment to a “creative

economy”⁵ in the 19de eeuwse gordel. This focus on the “creative segment” of the labor market contrasts sharply with the need for low-skilled jobs for the vulnerable groups in the areas. As Oosterlynck explained, “The city mainly needs a policy to attract qualitative jobs for the low-skilled—the traditional policy of a welfare state. The policy is now in default, perhaps except for initiatives in the social economy. Now there is only a policy to train people, equip them to enter the labor market. However, there is no policy to create those jobs effectively” (Oosterlynck, 2012).

Part of the relevance of this dissertation is that the research was conducted in a non-global city, which is important because little systematic research had been performed on the latter. It is also important to reflect on the findings and determine whether major differences were found in the mechanism of the process in a global and non-global city. In general, the mechanisms are very similar, but occur on a smaller scale. Much like in metropolitan cities, gentrification in the 19de eeuwse gordel combines factors from the consumption and production theories. However, I noticed a pattern of “silent” gentrification from the 1970s, in which pioneers from a socially progressive segment of the middle class consistently buy and renovate affordable spaces. Those operations trigger gentrification, but the effects are difficult to notice. It is only until recently that property developers have been responsible for the development of lofts and luxury apartments at strategic locations in the districts. The gentrification of the neighborhoods is not a mere dynamic between consumption and production factors in an “interesting” space. It is also stimulated by the government, particularly through their renewal policies.

General conclusion

Anyone wandering through the neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel will be able to observe with their own eyes that the district is involved in a battle between old and new. The zone appears to become an interesting place to invest in real estate, businesses, and other projects. Houses in a dilapidated state stand side by side with

⁵ Creative enterprises are companies that are active in the following areas: new media, audiovisual art, culture-related activities, publications and prints, creative services, design, diamonds, and fashion (Stad Gent, 2018).

ultramodern lofts. The local Turkish baker looks out at an expensive restaurant on the other side of the street. Middle-class residents of a new residential complex catch a glimpse of the customs and traditions of their Moroccan neighbors. In addition, one can also see the government jumping in and investing in the 19de eeuwse gordel, ranging from public-private real estate projects to the redevelopment of public space. However, this raises the question of whether one can now also conclude that these investments and the arrival of a new group of households with a better socio-economic background have ensured that some areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel have changed. Furthermore, one must also ask whether it can be said that the older, poor residents are better off thanks to the changes, or whether they are suffering from increased socio-economic segregation.

In recent years, gentrification has been a much-discussed phenomenon pointing to the transformation of old, rather deprived urban neighborhoods into middle-class quarters through mechanisms of both the supply and demand theories. New investments by private individuals, building groups, or the government revitalize the quarters physically, socially, and economically. The young middle class is subsequently attracted to the city and settles in those areas. In the longer term, however, this can lead to the displacement of the socio-economically weaker original residents due to the ensuing rise in real estate value. In the beginning of this thesis, it was asked whether the research area in question is undergoing such an evolution, and what that means for its demographics, socio-economic characteristics, and housing.

To begin, I identified which neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel are assumed to have undergone gentrification in the period between 2005 and 2015, based on formulas that measure socio-economic deprivation and appreciation. According to the outcomes of this first part of the analysis, the Macharius – Heirnis and the Rabot – Blaisantvest experienced the most significant appreciation of the SES in the 19de eeuwse gordel. Second, I looked at the facts, namely, figures in the form of indicators. From this, this dissertation strove to determine how the identified “gentrified” neighborhoods have changed in terms of demographics, socio-economic characteristics, and housing. Despite the multitude of figures, it turned out to be difficult to reach an unambiguous conclusion. Specific indicators underwent a clear evolution, while others did not change significantly, or at least, not in comparison with the average of the city. So this raises the question of what was seen in the focus areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel.

Unfortunately, there are still insufficient data that indicate whether the neighborhoods have become systematically richer due to the arrival of new residents and/or the improved socio-economic position of the original residents. Overall, the average resident in the entire research area remains in an unenviable position where inhabitants are confronted with high unemployment rates, high housing prices, large households, and few comfortable homes.

The demographic level indicated a clear rejuvenation of the resident and a large proportion of the number of singles and single-parent families—especially in the Macharius – Heirnis—who traditionally depend on the cheaper or rental real estate market. There is also more migration to the city than out of the city. Young graduates in particular are looking to live in the city, and preferably close to the city center. The average income in the focus areas has also risen more sharply than the city average, but it is still much lower. The stronger increase could, in any case, indicate that a group of more wealthy residents settled in the discussed areas of the 19de eeuwse gordel. In the areas with the highest growth rate (Rabot – Blaisantvest, Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan, and Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham) of the average income, a strong improvement is observed in the unemployment pressure rates. The position on the labor market also seems to be improving moderately for the Brugse Poort – Rooigem, Macharius – Heirnis, and Muide – Meulestede – Afrikalaan.

It must be noted, that the figures do not reveal who leads to an increase in the average income, who causes the unemployment rates to fall, and who ultimately holds that higher diploma: the older resident (who sees his social position improving) or the newcomer. However, since more single, young, graduated people move to the discussed neighborhoods, from the increase of the average size of the households, and the moderate fall of the proportion of taxpayers with a net annual income lower than €10.000 (in comparison with the sharp increase in average income), it can be summarized that it is highly possible that the positive socio-economic evolution can be ascribed to the newcomers and that the situation of the original residents does not change or perhaps even deteriorates. In other words, the neighborhoods are becoming richer, but not the original residents. To be certain, the figures should be evaluated on an individual level.

Concerning the real estate prices, it is still considerably cheaper to live in certain neighborhoods of the 19de eeuwse gordel. However, the average price has increased significantly over the past decade, and at a faster rate than the average income. Many tenants of the private market struggle to pay the rent every month. A large portion of the population of the focus areas has to spend more than 30% of his income on the monthly rent and almost immediately sees his quality of life drop. Furthermore, the supply is not suited to the demand; more single-household dwellings are needed. The rise in prices and the decline in the supply of financially viable housing entities mean that access to the private housing market for economically weaker households is severely hampered. Concerning the evolution of planned projects in the property market, it can be concluded that investments are made more often in the 19de eeuwse gordel. Private investors and the government aim at emphasizing the attractiveness of residences and public spaces in the district. It can thus be concluded that waves of reinvestment are taking place in the 19de eeuwse gordel. Unfortunately, this occurs at the expense of the private market's socio-economically weaker tenants, a number of which belong to the target group of the social housing supply. It is noted that the social housing supply does not meet the needs of the target group within the private rent. A more coherent local housing policy is necessary where all involved actors cooperate with the city of Ghent as a stimulating leader. Landlords must invest in their homes so that they meet the minimum requirements for habitability according to the Flemish Housing Code. The government should regenerate mechanisms to monitor the rental prices on the private market. Social housing companies should provide significantly more social rental housing with the government's support through the allocation of more subsidies.

Because the numerical indicators of gentrification do not offer an unequivocal answer, one could state that the process is likely in an initial phase. The process is still in the hands of some private individuals, the first larger real estate companies, and a first set of policy measures that accompany and even encourage this process. After all, clear physical tendencies can already be seen in these neighborhoods, including changes in public space, re-evaluation of existing homes, and large-scale real estate projects. The city is trying to attract private capital to the 19de eeuwse gordel and assumes that the whole process of change benefits the established, often poorer residents. Throughout the analysis, however, it was made clear that until now—with some exceptions—the

process has not implied any grand improvement to the socio-economic wellbeing of the existing residents. Moreover, in some cases, it has even deteriorated their situation—especially regarding housing—and so created more polarization in the neighborhoods. This thesis thus supports the view of various critics and agrees that a better framework for the gentrification processes in Ghent is required.

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