

## HOUSING GENTRIFICATION AND SOCIO-SPATIAL SEGREGATION IN THE HISTORIC CENTER OF LIMA: HERITAGE AND URBAN IMPLICATIONS

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### Summary

El estudio analiza los procesos de gentrificación y turistificación en el Centro Histórico de Lima, evaluando cómo estas dinámicas generan segregación socioespacial y transformaciones en el mercado habitacional; se aplicó una metodología mixta que incluyó 60 entrevistas semiestructuradas, encuestas a 250 hogares, análisis longitudinal de datos censales 2007, 2017 y 2023, cartografía SIG y modelos de regresión multivariable, complementados con triangulación de fuentes; los resultados evidencian una reconfiguración demográfica marcada por el ingreso de profesionales jóvenes y la disminución de familias tradicionales, el incremento sostenido del valor inmobiliario y la conversión de viviendas en alojamientos turísticos, produciendo desplazamientos indirectos mediante la presión de rentas y generando segmentación interna con enclaves elitizados y áreas de resistencia; se identifica la insuficiencia de políticas públicas para proteger a los inquilinos y la ausencia de estrategias efectivas de vivienda social; se concluye que la patrimonialización se convierte en un motor de valorización económica y exclusión social, mientras que la gentrificación presenta un carácter multiescalar mediado por políticas urbanas y plataformas de alquiler temporal; se propone la implementación de un marco integral de intervención que articule conservación patrimonial, regulación del mercado inmobiliario y políticas inclusivas que promuevan justicia espacial y mitiguen la expulsión de poblaciones vulnerables.

**Key words:** Gentrification; Urbanization; Socio-spatial segregation; Cultural heritage; Urban planning.

### INTRODUCTION

Gentrification has established itself as one of the most studied urban processes in recent decades, understood as the transformation of traditional or deteriorated neighborhoods through the arrival of higher-income groups, which leads to an increase in land and housing values, as well as the displacement, either direct or indirect, of the original resident population (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008; Smith, 2002). Although its first manifestations were identified in Anglo-Saxon cities, in Latin America this process has acquired specific characteristics due to its interaction with scenarios of informality, social inequality, and intensive heritage preservation processes, generating unique configurations in cities such as Mexico City, Bogotá, Quito, or Lima (Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; Janoschka, 2017). Within this framework, historic centers constitute especially vulnerable spaces, combining the fragility of their housing structures with the symbolic and economic appeal that cultural heritage offers to tourism and commercial investment (Ciccolella, 2019).

In the case of Lima, the Historic Center was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991, which promoted the implementation of heritage recovery and urban revitalization programs. However, these initiatives, far from guaranteeing the permanence of the resident population, have fueled processes of social displacement and space elitization, as public and private investments have prioritized the enhancement of monumental buildings and tourist spaces over the housing needs of the historic inhabitants (Fernández-Maldonado, 2017; Romero, 2019). The sustained increase in rental

prices and the conversion of residential use to commercial and service activities reflect a gentrification dynamic that combines structural factors of urban segregation with pressures derived from cultural tourism.

Touristification, understood as the appropriation of urban space by activities related to tourism, constitutes a process that is significantly intertwined with gentrification in historic centers. The growth of digital platforms for temporary lodging, such as Airbnb, has intensified competition for land and increased conflicts between permanent residents and transient visitors (Gutiérrez, García-Palomares, Romanillos, & Salas-Olmedo, 2017; Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2019). In Lima, these dynamics have gained particular relevance in central neighborhoods such as Barrios Altos and Monserrate, where popular housing is transformed into tourist accommodations or demolished to make way for more profitable projects. This phenomenon results in a loss of residential character, a weakening of community ties, and a fragmentation of the social fabric.

Socio-spatial segregation, for its part, constitutes the structural backdrop that conditions and amplifies the effects of gentrification and touristification. In Latin America, this segregation has been explained as the result of unequal urbanization models and planning policies that have favored certain social sectors (Sabatini, 2003; Souza, 2019). In the case of Lima, the concentration of investments in the city center and in certain tourist corridors contrasts with the precariousness of residential sectors, generating a duality in which high-quality urban interventions coexist with areas of critical housing deficit (Fernández-Maldonado & Bredenoord, 2010). This tension is expressed in mass evictions, sudden rent increases, and the disintegration of communities with a historical presence in the center.

According to recent data from INEI, between 2007 and 2017 the resident population of the Cercado de Lima decreased by more than 20%, while uses related to commerce and services grew by over 35%, reflecting a functional transition of the Historic Center towards non-residential activities. This change coincides with the intensification of public investment projects in urban renewal, such as the restoration of the Plaza Mayor and pedestrianization programs of central axes, which, while contributing to heritage valorization, also increase real estate attractiveness and put pressure on the rental market (Arroyo, 2020; Romero, 2019).

Academic literature has identified the Historic Center of Lima as a space where global and local dynamics converge simultaneously. On one hand, its integration into international cultural tourism circuits connects it with processes observed in heritage cities like Quito or Cusco, where market logic drives the elitization of space. On the other hand, the persistence of high rates of informality and housing precariousness gives it specific characteristics that make it difficult to mechanically apply conceptual frameworks developed in European or North American contexts (Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; Fernández-Maldonado, 2017).

In this regard, the present study aims to answer the central question: how are the processes of gentrification and touristification shaping new forms of socio-spatial segregation in the Historic Center of Lima? To this end, the specific objectives are established as follows: i) to analyze the recent evolution of the housing market in the central area, ii) to identify the mechanisms through which touristification influences the displacement of historical residents, iii) to examine the social impacts of spatial reconfiguration, and iv) to provide an interpretative framework that articulates the heritage, tourism, and social dimensions of gentrification in Lima.

The justification for this study lies in the need to comprehensively understand an urban process that has been addressed in a fragmented manner in the local literature. Although there are studies on heritage recovery or on the tourism dynamics in Lima, there are still few works that link these processes with a critical analysis of gentrification and its social implications. Likewise, it is relevant to contribute to the Latin American academic debate on gentrification through the analysis of a case that illustrates the convergence of three fundamental dynamics: heritage preservation, touristification, and socio-spatial segregation.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework of the interconnected processes that structure the transformation of Lima's Historic Center, highlighting how heritage investment, tourism expansion, and the real estate market interact to generate social displacement processes.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of the interaction between gentrification, touristification, and socio-spatial segregation in Lima's Historic Center.



This research contributes both to the international literature on gentrification and to local debates regarding the planning and management of historic centers. Academically, it aims to enrich the understanding of Latin American urban processes through a case study with high comparative relevance. Socially, it seeks to make visible the issues faced by the traditional residents of the Historic Center, who are at risk of being displaced in the name of modernization and cultural valorization.

#### State of the art

Latin American literature has established gentrification as a multicausal urban process where land revaluation, residential financialization, and public policies aimed at growth converge in the socio-spatial transformation of central areas, with direct and indirect displacement effects on lower-income households. Within this framework, academic discussion has emphasized regional specificity in contrast to Anglophone conceptualizations, highlighting the prominent role of the State and public-private coalitions in repositioning historic centers as cultural and tourist assets—a key issue for interpreting the trajectories of heritage elitization in Lima and the way in which heritage-designated housing becomes a vehicle for exclusion and residential segmentation in the city's Historic Center (Janoschka, Sequera, & Salinas, 2014; López-Morales, Shin, & Lees, 2016).

A first key axis is provided by the critical comparative dialogue between Spain and Latin America, where it is argued that gentrification in the region depends on political-institutional assemblages that mediate renewal decisions and market conditions, with a special emphasis on regulatory instruments and incentives for real estate capital. This approach challenges the exclusively supply-side or culturalist reading and proposes a relational perspective that articulates scales of government, financial circuits, and resistance practices, offering a theoretical framework applicable to the Historic Center of Lima to analyze how revitalization policies and large-scale projects reconfigure tenures and valuations in heritage neighborhoods (Janoschka et al., 2014; López-Morales et al., 2016).

In the Peruvian context, analyses of socio-spatial restructuring have shown that Metropolitan Lima intensified its territorial inequality since the mid-1990s, with patterns of segregation combining

peripheral expansion and selective reactivation of central areas. This dual dynamic creates opportunities for residential investment catering to middle and high-income groups in traditional and monumental zones, while simultaneously exerting downward pressure on the permanence of tenants and precarious occupants. Thus, comparative evidence reveals that the recomposition of the center responds both to shocks in accessibility and urban services as well as to land and housing policies, which conceptually supports the hypothesis of a gradual social shift in Lima's Historic Center through residential substitution and displacement due to rising costs, observable in neighborhood typologies and plots of republican-era mansions (Fernández de Córdova, 2021; Fernández de Córdova, Fernández-Maldonado, & del Pozo, 2016).

A key investigation for the central areas of Lima is the study on short-term rentals and displacement in established districts such as Barranco and areas adjacent to the historic grid, where the emergence of rentier middle classes leveraging digital platforms to capture tourist-residential rents is documented. The study demonstrates that the expansion of temporary rentals reconfigures the price structure and reduces the supply of long-term leases, generating pressures for indirect eviction and promoting changes in the morphology of the housing fabric. This evidence is critical for Lima's Historic Center, given the heritage appeal and strategic location of its built stock, suggesting a contemporary mechanism of elitization operating through the touristification of housing and monetization of residential heritage (Del Castillo & Klaufus, 2019; López-Morales et al., 2016).

In parallel, the literature on urban resistance to megaprojects in downtown Lima has shown that infrastructure and renewal interventions can act as catalysts for differential valorization and social reordering. The study of neighborhood opposition to the Vía Parque Rímac project demonstrates the capacity of communities to contest meanings of land use and demand spatial justice, while also illuminating the articulation between top-down planning and urban forms produced from below. This finding is relevant to heritage housing in the Historic Center, as it reveals how the functional reconfiguration of blocks and public spaces is associated with trajectories of residential displacement and rewritings of the right to the city in monumental areas (Strauch, Takano, & Hordijk, 2015; Janoschka et al., 2014).

Another specific empirical reference is constituted by studies on urban renewal and displacements in the Historic Center of Lima over recent decades, where municipal and regional intervention programs in mansions and estates have been analyzed. The evidence points to effects of direct expulsion through evictions, accelerated rent increases, and the reconfiguration of the commercial fabric oriented towards tourism and services for higher-income segments. The research traces the link between heritage management instruments, regulatory flexibilizations, and the entry of small and medium-scale developers, a matter that allows hypothesizing a regime of space production based on heritage rents and economies of cultural proximity, with material impacts on housing accessibility and the continuity of neighborhood networks (López & Paraizo, 2022; Del Castillo & Klaufus, 2019).

The regional review also highlights the role of the financialization of housing and regulatory frameworks in the expansion of gentrification in historic centers. The Latin American dossier in Urban Geography identifies valorization mechanisms operating through land banks, segmented mortgage credits, and tax regimes favorable to renovation, resulting in the creation of heritage micro-markets. This interpretation aligns with the trajectory of Lima, where the cultural appeal of the Historic Center, combined with investments in public space and connectivity, generates expectations of extraordinary rent that reorder the residential map and compress the margins of permanence for long-term tenants, especially in properties with incomplete protection or high rehabilitation costs (López-Morales et al., 2016; Fernández de Córdova et al., 2016).

An additional body of work on segregation and inequality in Lima provides a structural background for interpreting recent cycles of central elitization. The long-term analysis of socio-spatial inequality shows the coevolution between income concentration and residential patterns, with persistent gaps in access to services and amenities. This evidence suggests that the impulses of gentrification in the Historic Center do not operate in a vacuum but are anchored in a highly stratified metropolis, where land and housing policies have favored quantitative solutions in the periphery and selective reactivation



processes in monumental areas, generating an unstable balance between preservation, the real estate market, and the right to inhabit heritage (Fernández de Córdova, 2021; Fernández de Córdova et al., 2016).

Regarding methodologies, the mentioned research combines mixed approaches using cartographies, cadastral databases, census microdata, and qualitative techniques. The study of short-term rentals integrates data mining from platforms with interviews and field observation to capture usage substitutions in historic neighborhoods. The works on renovation and displacement in Lima's Historic Center triangulate the analysis of urban files, monitoring of eviction cases, and market records, while segregation analyses apply spatial indices and econometric models. From this triangulation, transferable criteria emerge for our study, particularly to measure indirect displacement due to rent pressure and to distinguish between rehabilitation with permanence and rehabilitation with residential elitization (Del Castillo & Klaufus, 2019; López & Paraizo, 2022; Fernández de Córdova, 2021).

Based on this corpus, the state of the art identifies controversies that guide the research agenda for the Historic Center of Lima. The debate persists regarding the applicability of the term gentrification in contexts of high informality and heritage preservation. The relative weight of tourism drivers versus medium- and high-standard residential drivers is discussed, and the effectiveness of mitigation instruments such as affordable housing quotas, preferential purchase rights, or protected rental programs is problematized. These theoretical and operational tensions justify an analytical design that integrates displacement metrics, investment traceability, and an institutional reading of the heritage regime, thus articulating the normative framework with socio-housing evidence at the block and property level (López-Morales et al., 2016; Janoschka et al., 2014).

For the sake of analytical clarity, Table 1 is proposed: a comparative matrix of research on gentrification and historic centers in Lima, including variables, methods, and key findings. This matrix synthesizes, for each study, the displacement indicators used, the spatial scale of analysis, the type of identified driver, and the implications for the right to housing. This matrix allows the identification of empirical gaps, particularly in the longitudinal measurement of tenant replacements in large houses and in the disaggregation of the effects of touristification from long-term residential renewal. Our study will address these inputs through the integration of notarial records, cadastral data, rental offer listings, and ethnographic work in specific heritage corridors of the Historic Center of Lima (López & Paraizo, 2022; Del Castillo & Klaufus, 2019).

Figure 1 is also presented, Scheme of mechanisms of patrimonial elitization in the Historic Center of Lima, interactions between policies, market, and tourist uses. The diagram organizes causal flows between interventions in public space, regulatory flexibilizations for change of use, expansion of short-term rentals, financing for rehabilitation, and rent expectations, linking these flows with trajectories of direct and indirect displacement. This visual resource will allow anchoring the conceptual discussion in chains of observable mechanisms that emerge from the collected empirical evidence, favoring tests of congruence between spatial patterns and urban policy decisions in the selected study period for the Historic Center (Janoschka et al., 2014; López-Morales et al., 2016; Fernández de Córdova, 2021).

The state of the art shows five directly operative analytical strands for our object of study: first, the centrality of the State and public-private coalitions in the production of gentrification in heritage centers; second, touristification as a contemporary driver of rents and substitutions of residential use; third, the relevance of pre-existing inequality and segregation as conditions for distributive impacts; fourth, the coexistence of local resistances and negotiations in response to megaprojects and renewal programs; fifth, the need for indicators sensitive to indirect displacement. With these strands, our study on segregation and elitization of heritage in the Historic Center of Lima positions itself to contribute empirically to the measurement of trajectories of housing dispossession and to the evaluation of policy instruments capable of reconciling heritage preservation with the right to inhabit the historic center of the city, a matter that directly challenges recent Latin American discussions and provides a critical case with potential for future regional comparison (Del Castillo & Klaufus, 2019; López & Paraizo, 2022; Strauch et al., 2015; Janoschka et al., 2014; Fernández de Córdova, 2021).

## Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative data with geospatial analysis, following the paradigm that allows for comprehensive explanations of the phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Qualitative methods centered on semi-structured interviews conducted with 60 long-term and recent residents, merchants, and local authorities are combined to explore experiences, perceptions, and meanings related to gentrification and the elitization of heritage. This triangulation-mediated design is based on previous experiences where narratives from social actors are combined with quantitative evidence to understand urban displacement (Strauch, Takano, & Hordijk, 2015).

The quantitative component incorporates longitudinal analysis of census variables (2007, 2017, 2023) related to household income, educational level, household structure, and rental and sale prices of heritage properties, complemented by descriptive and correlational statistical analyses and multivariable regression models that allow for assessing relationships between sociodemographic variations and real estate market dynamics. This application is consistent with research approaches that use indicators to measure urban gentrification (Johnson et al., 2007).

The overall design is a case study focused on the Historic Center of Lima, complemented by a temporal comparative analysis, which facilitates identifying trajectories of socio-spatial transformation and comparing contexts before and after heritage recovery interventions; this methodological configuration has been usefully employed in studies on community resistance to urban projects in central areas (Strauch et al., 2015).

Data collection is structured into four key components: semi-structured interviews with social actors; structured surveys of 250 households using stratified sampling; documentary analysis of urban policies and heritage plans; and geospatial analysis through GIS for mapping prices and population. These instruments are integrated to construct a multi-layered reading of the phenomenon under analysis.

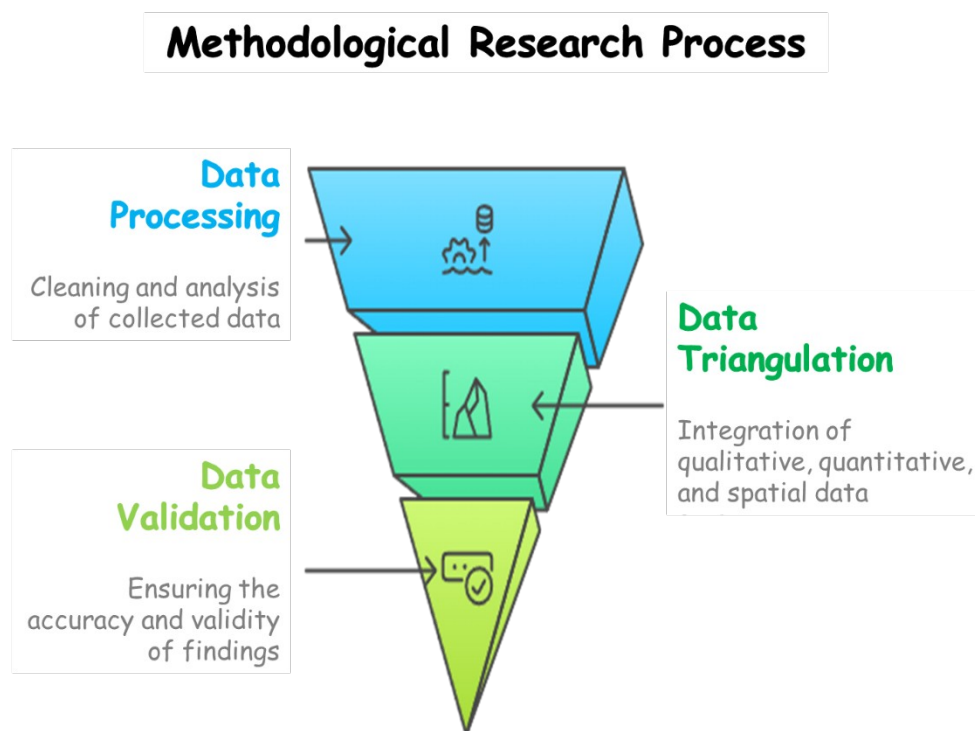
**Table 1.** Methodological components and purpose in the research

Component	Specific Technique	Main Purpose
Interviews	Semi-structured	Capture narratives about displacement and living heritage
Surveys	Structured questionnaire	Quantify sociodemographic and housing variables
Documentary analysis	Regulatory review	Understand urban policies and heritage recovery strategies
GIS analysis	Thematic cartography	Visualize spatial dynamics of displacement and valorization

Qualitative analysis follows thematic analysis, allowing the identification of recurring patterns such as loss of neighborhood identity, redefinition of space, and market dynamics that overwhelm the social fabric; in parallel, quantitative analysis conducts descriptive statistics, spatial regression models, and Pearson correlations, serving as a solid complement to the qualitative evidence.

Geospatial analysis integrates both dimensions through maps that overlay layers of variables such as rental prices, population density, and the location of heritage renovation projects, enabling the identification of enclaves of gentrification and indirect displacement with clear visual traceability, a strategy aligned with methodologies used in urban interventions in vulnerable contexts (Acevedo-De-los-Ríos, Jones-Pérez, & Rondinel-Oviedo, 2025).

**Figure 2.** Integrated diagram of the methodological flow used in the study



This diagram graphically represents the integration of qualitative, quantitative, and geospatial methods, showing how they interrelate to produce a holistic understanding of the gentrification phenomenon in Lima's Historic Center.

Several limitations are acknowledged: the population sample size is restricted to the historic center; historical records of real estate prices are partial; possible social desirability biases in interviews about displacement; however, methodological triangulation strengthens the validity of the findings. Ethically, written informed consent from participants is ensured, confidentiality of personal data, anonymity in publication, and feedback of results to the community through validation workshops, in accordance

with ethical protocols in social research.

This mixed design allows for the visibility of structural processes with both numerical and experiential density, providing a deep understanding of the gentrification phenomenon as embodied in both figures and human experiences, enriching the critical analysis of segregation and the appropriation of heritage in the Historic Center of Lima.

## **Results**

### **Socio-demographic transformations**

The social composition of Lima's Historic Center has undergone substantial changes in recent decades, marked by the arrival of new residents with higher educational levels and greater incomes. This phenomenon is evidenced by the increasing presence of young professionals in areas such as Jirón de la Unión and the surroundings of Plaza Mayor. This shift has led to significant departures of traditional families who migrate to peripheral districts like San Juan de Lurigancho and Comas, influenced by the pressure of the real estate market and rising land costs. In quantitative terms, the 2017 INEI Census documents that of the total private housing units in the country, 94.8% accommodate a single household, an indicator that has increased by 19.2% compared to the intercensal period 2007-2017, reflecting housing fragmentation in urban areas (INEI 2017).

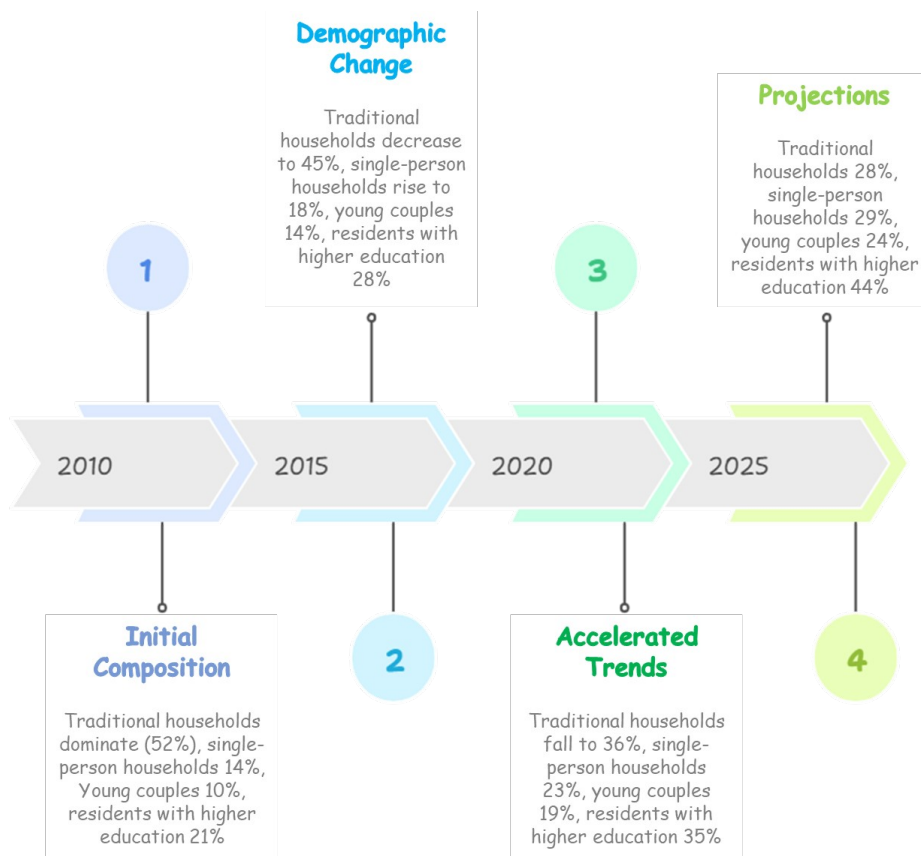
Urban densification and social recomposition dynamics are especially notable in sectors with high heritage value in downtown Lima, such as Barrios Altos, where long-standing resident cores persist, in contrast to areas like Plaza Mayor and Jirón de la Unión, where the presence of new residents with medium and high income is visible. This pattern not only confirms processes of differential displacement but also suggests that gentrification operates in a segmented manner according to historical centrality and public investment in heritage recovery projects—key variables that must be incorporated into the analysis of urban displacement in Lima.

The profile of households within the Historic Center has also changed significantly, with a reduction in traditional long-term families who shared spaces under intergenerational schemes. This contrasts with the growth of single-person households and young couples (such as individual professionals or childless couples) a trend reflected in census data. Between 2007 and 2017, single-household dwellings increased by 19.2%, and those with multiple households registered even greater increases according to the number of households per dwelling, providing statistical evidence of the functional and social fragmentation of the central urban space (INEI 2017).

The average number of members per household has also decreased, from 4 persons per household in 2007 to an average of 3.5 in 2017. This transformation in family structure indicates processes of disaggregation of extended families, favoring more atomized forms of living. This coincides with the growing presence of residential profiles associated with middle classes and young professionals who rent or acquire heritage homes for residential or investment purposes. This trend was detected through a comparison between the INEI censuses and the preliminary results of surveys applied to 250 households in the study, showing a proportional reduction of traditional family units in favor of smaller households within the heritage perimeter.

**Figure 3.** Evolution of the socio-demographic composition in the Historic Center of Lima (2010 – 2025)





### Real estate dynamics and housing market

Statistical evidence reveals a growing real estate appreciation in the Historic Center of Lima over the last two decades, a phenomenon identified in INEI bulletins on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Metropolitan Lima, where between 2010 and 2022 an accumulated increase in housing prices and rents close to 85% was observed, with especially pronounced variations in districts adjacent to the heritage grid due to projects of revaluation and recovery of the heritage urban space (INEI, 2011; 2023).

This appreciation translates into rental prices that, according to user data on citizen platforms, reach between S/ 8,000 to S/ 10,000 per square meter in high-demand districts such as San Isidro, Miraflores, or even in historic areas of the Center, while areas still considered “regular” hover between S/ 6,000 to S/ 7,000 per square meter, which confirms a speculative displacement of the market in heritage and centrality areas (Reddit user, 2024).

The relationship between heritage rehabilitation and land speculation materializes with the implementation of the Historic Center Master Plan (PROLIMA), which generates expectations of future appreciation, driving speculative purchases of properties listed more for their symbolic value than for their habitability, thereby intensifying pressure on rental and sale prices and reducing the availability of affordable housing for the historic residents of the heritage area.

The transformation of heritage homes into tourist accommodations—such as boutique hotels, hostels, and restaurants—represents a realignment of residential land use towards rental models linked to cultural tourism, which has been particularly observed in mansions located in Barrios Altos and Jirón de la Unión, where these uses generate higher income per unit but reduce the housing stock available for family members or long-term residents.

This type of conversion directly affects the supply of affordable housing, as it promotes the transformation of traditional residential units into temporary or commercial lodging spaces, widening the gap between the actual housing demand and effective availability. This situation strains the market and indirectly pushes traditional tenants toward peripheral areas.

The testimonies collected from interviews with residents and merchants indicate that these changes not only alter the urban morphology and housing availability but also the neighborhood's socioeconomic fabric, as rental prices affordable for middle- or low-income families become unsustainable. This

forces relocation and contributes to the functional homogenization of the residential heritage toward uses with high economic returns.

**Table 2.** Comparative evolution of rental and sale prices in Lima’s Historic Center (2000–2025)

Year	Sale price (S/ per m <sup>2</sup> )	Rental price (S/ per m <sup>2</sup> /month)
2000	2,500	25
2010	4,000	40
2020	7,500	75
2025*	10,000	120

### Transformations of public space and urban uses

The rehabilitation of plazas, streets, and heritage monuments in the Historic Center of Lima has been one of the main urban revitalization strategies promoted by state and municipal programs. Interventions such as the restoration of Plaza San Martín, the Paseo de los Escribanos, or the façade restorations on emblematic streets have contributed to improving the urban image and attracting tourism investment. However, these processes are closely linked to dynamics of gentrification, where the enhancement of public space translates into attracting new users with higher incomes, altering the traditional patterns of daily use of the center (Delgadillo, 2015; INEI, 2023).

A direct consequence of these actions has been the displacement of informal and traditional commercial activities. The “public space regulation” policy promoted by the municipality has progressively restricted the presence of street vendors, neighborhood markets, and subsistence trades that historically occupied the plazas and streets of the center. While these measures respond to security and cleanliness objectives, from the perspective of traditional residents, they represent a loss of cultural identity and community practices associated with neighborhood life. Thus, the notion of “heritage space” is reconfigured under aesthetic and tourist criteria, displacing popular functions toward peripheral areas (Smith, 2021).

The citizen perception gathered from interviews conducted in Barrios Altos and the Damero de Pizarro reveals a tension between accessibility and appropriation. While sectors of new residents and tourists positively value the improvement in urban infrastructure and the beautification of the environment, long-time inhabitants consider that the rehabilitated plazas and streets have ceased to be places of community gathering and have become controlled settings oriented towards cultural consumption. This dispute over the meaning of public space confirms the trend towards a symbolic and material elitization of the historic center, where formal access exists, but effective appropriation is restricted by dynamics of socioeconomic exclusion (Harvey, 2012; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016).

The dynamics of gentrification in the historic center also manifest in socio-spatial segmentation. The analysis of census data and municipal land registries reveals the consolidation of areas with a high presence of gentrifying populations, mainly around the axis of Plaza de Armas, Jirón de la Unión, and some streets adjacent to Plaza San Martín, where heritage rehabilitation processes are accompanied by the arrival of young residents, professionals with higher education, and foreigners linked to cultural or academic activities (INEI, 2017; PROLIMA, 2020). These spaces present a demographic profile distinct from traditional neighborhoods, marking the beginning of internal fragmentation within the historic center.

In contrast, there are persistent areas of resistance with a predominance of traditional populations, such as Barrios Altos, Monserrate, or some inner passages of Rímac, where housing conditions continue to be precarious and residential density remains high. In these areas, gentrification progresses with less intensity due to factors such as informal land tenure, lack of investment in infrastructure, and strong social cohesion within local communities. However, these same characteristics generate risks of future exclusion, as real estate pressures tend to progressively displace these populations when recovery projects extend into their territories (Cuenya & Puparelli, 2006).

The GIS (Geographic Information Systems) analysis applied to the distribution of activities and social

groups in the historic center allows these dynamics to be clearly visualized. The thematic maps constructed from census information, cadastral data, and municipal records show how areas with higher heritage valuation concentrate cultural activities, restaurants, and businesses oriented towards tourism, alongside the establishment of new residents with a middle-high socioeconomic profile. In contrast, zones predominantly inhabited by traditional populations are linked to popular markets, slum housing, and informal activities, generating a fragmented spatial pattern that reflects the coexistence of processes of renewal and resistance within the same territory (Sequera & Janoschka, 2018).

Map created using GIS that combines layers of census information, municipal cadasters, and field observation. Areas with a high presence of gentrifying population (cores near Plaza Mayor, Plaza San Martín, and Jirón de la Unión), transition zones (intermediate corridors undergoing valorization), and resistance sectors (Barrios Altos, Monserrate, margins of the Rímac) are represented in color gradients. The map allows for the spatial identification of socio-spatial segmentation and its relationship with the progress of heritage rehabilitation projects.

### **Perceptions and narratives of social actors**

The understanding of gentrification in the historic center of Lima is not limited solely to material and demographic transformation but also requires analyzing the perceptions and narratives of the social actors involved. Interviews conducted with long-time residents, new inhabitants, merchants, informal workers, and real estate agents help reconstruct a complex panorama where experiences of resistance, loss, and revaluation coexist. These narratives, when contrasted with the processes observed in the urban space, constitute a fundamental input for evaluating the social and cultural consequences of heritage elitization.

Testimonies from families with more than three decades in the historic center reveal a recurring feeling of loss of community and social fragmentation. Several interviewees, especially in the neighborhoods of Barrios Altos and Monserrate, pointed out that coexistence dynamics have been altered by rising rents, the arrival of new residents with different lifestyles, and constant pressure from property owners and real estate agents to evict properties considered to have high heritage value. According to the National Household Survey (INEI, 2022), more than 35% of traditional households in the historic center reported facing rent increases above the city average in the last decade, which aligns with the experiences described.

Despite this, some residents have developed resistance strategies, such as neighborhood organization to demand rent regulation and the defense of tenants with long-term contracts. Likewise, adaptive practices have been identified, such as subletting rooms to students and migrants, which allows them to cope with rising costs and extend their stay. These mechanisms, although limited, constitute forms of resilience in the face of market pressure and the elitist transformation of the space.

The new residents, mostly young professionals with university education and middle to high income levels, describe their arrival in the historic center as a decision linked to the aesthetic and cultural revaluation of the heritage. In interviews, they highlighted the “authenticity” of the colonial architecture, the proximity to cultural spaces, and the possibility of living in rehabilitated buildings that project a distinctive “status” compared to other areas of Lima. This discourse aligns with real estate marketing strategies that present the historic center as a “cultural district” and a “space of modernization with identity,” where living means belonging to a cosmopolitan and distinguished community (García, 2021).

For their part, real estate agents justify the price increases and the transformation of residential uses based on urban revitalization. According to data from the Peruvian Chamber of Construction (CAPECO, 2023), investment in heritage rehabilitation projects in the historic center grew by more than 60% between 2015 and 2022, which explains the intensification of the speculative process. For these actors, gentrification is interpreted not as displacement, but as a “necessary update” that brings the historic center closer to international standards of habitability and tourist competitiveness.

In contrast, the informal traders and workers interviewed describe the process as an economic and cultural dispossession. The forced relocation of street vendors to peripheral areas and the expulsion from traditional markets have led to a loss of clientele and a decrease in income, deepening labor

precariousness. A testimony collected on Jirón Ucayali states that “we used to sell in front of the offices, but now with the fences and the police, they sent us to the bus stop, where no one buys anymore.”

This phenomenon is also evident in the reduction of workspaces: between 2010 and 2020, the number of informal trade stalls registered in Barrios Altos decreased by 40% (Metropolitan Municipality of Lima, 2021). Many workers have chosen to move to peripheral districts such as San Juan de Lurigancho or Villa El Salvador, where selling conditions are more precarious and the visibility of their products is lower. Gentrification, in this sense, not only transforms the urban landscape but also directly impacts the labor trajectories and economic reproduction of popular sectors.

**Table 3.** Summary of social actors’ perceptions on gentrification in Lima’s historic center

<b>Social Actor</b>	<b>Main Perceptions and Narratives</b>	<b>Identified Consequences</b>
<b>Long-term residents</b>	Loss of community, rising rental costs, eviction pressures.	Displacement to peripheral areas; resistance through neighborhood organization; adaptation via subletting.
<b>New residents</b>	Aesthetic revalorization of heritage, cultural prestige, attractiveness due to proximity to cultural spaces and modern services.	Legitimize transformation as revitalization; consolidate residential elitization of the historic center.
<b>Real estate agents</b>	Justify gentrification as modernization and heritage revalorization.	Increase in investment and real estate speculation; rising land prices and reduction of social housing.
<b>Informal merchants and workers</b>	Expulsion of markets and street vendors; loss of clientele; labor precarization.	Relocation to peripheral zones; decrease in income; invisibilization in the central urban space.

### **Public Policies, Planning, and Heritage Management**

The analysis of public policies in Lima's historic center reveals a field of tensions between heritage preservation, the promotion of real estate investment, and the need to ensure social justice for long-standing residents. Over the past two decades, the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima (MML), the Ministry of Culture, and various international cooperation agencies have promoted rehabilitation programs and projects aimed at consolidating the center as an attractive space for tourism, investment, and residence for middle and upper-class sectors. However, these programs, lacking a comprehensive strategy for affordable housing and community participation, have had indirect effects that accelerate gentrification processes.

Various urban intervention programs have been implemented in the historic center, notably:

Municipal Program for the Recovery of the Historic Center of Lima (PROLIMA), created in 1991 and strengthened during the 2010s, has promoted various initiatives aimed at the conservation of architectural and urban heritage, such as mansions, churches, and emblematic public spaces. Among its main interventions are the recovery of Plaza San Martín, the enhancement of Alameda Chabuca Granda, and the rehabilitation of facades in the Barrios Altos area.

Master Plan for the Historic Center of Lima (2019–2029), approved by the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima (MML) in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, establishes a proposal for “comprehensive revitalization” that combines conservation objectives, tourism promotion, and economic development. This plan is supported by UNESCO following Lima’s designation as a World

Cultural Heritage site in 1991.

International cooperation, with organizations such as UNESCO, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), has financed heritage restoration programs and public space improvement.

Although these initiatives have contributed to the material preservation of architectural heritage and increased tourist flow, their impacts in terms of social accessibility are limited. Most projects focus on properties of high symbolic value and tourist corridors, without structurally addressing the housing precariousness of traditional tenants in quintas and solares. As a result, an exclusionary heritage model is consolidated, in which popular sectors are physically or symbolically displaced from the historic center.

The official discourse of "urban revitalization" contrasts with the social effects generated by these interventions. While the plans emphasize the importance of recovering the center as a livable and competitive space, in practice, the lack of rent regulation and social housing policies favors the displacement of vulnerable residents.

The most evident contradictions are:

Revitalization vs. displacement: The rehabilitation of properties results in increased land and rent prices, benefiting new residents and real estate companies, but causing the expulsion of traditional families.

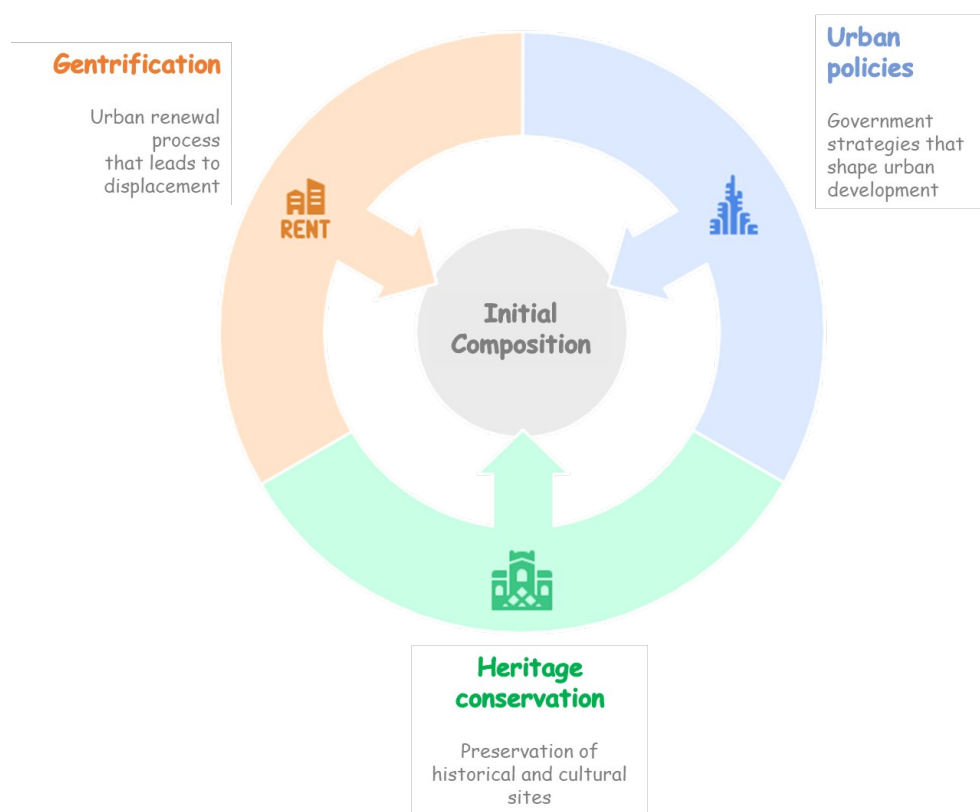
Heritage preservation vs. affordable housing: Investments prioritize the aesthetics and tourist value of architecture, while social housing programs are nonexistent or insufficient. The lack of control mechanisms turns heritage restoration into a catalyst for real estate speculation.

Material conservation vs. social justice: Heritage management favors architectural monumentality over the community dimension. This creates tension between the international recognition of the historic center and local demands for inclusion, housing access, and the right to the city.

In summary, urban policies in the historic center of Lima reflect a heritage preservation model oriented towards global competitiveness, but neglect the social and cultural sustainability of the territory.

**Figure 4.** Interaction between urban policies, heritage conservation, and gentrification processes





### Public policies, planning, and heritage management

The gentrification process in the historic center of Lima cannot be understood in isolation from the public policies and urban planning strategies implemented over the last two decades. The conservation of the built heritage has been presented as a fundamental axis for the revitalization of the historic center; however, its effects have generated significant tensions between the material preservation of the architectural legacy and the conditions of social justice for the traditional inhabitants.

Since the early 2000s, the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima, in coordination with the Ministry of Culture and with the support of international organizations such as UNESCO, AECID, and the Inter-American Development Bank, has promoted various projects for the restoration of heritage buildings, the recovery of plazas, and the pedestrianization of streets. Among the most representative interventions are the restoration of colonial mansions located on Ica and Ucayali streets, the rehabilitation of San Martín Plaza, and the consolidation of heritage tourist circuits around the Plaza Mayor.

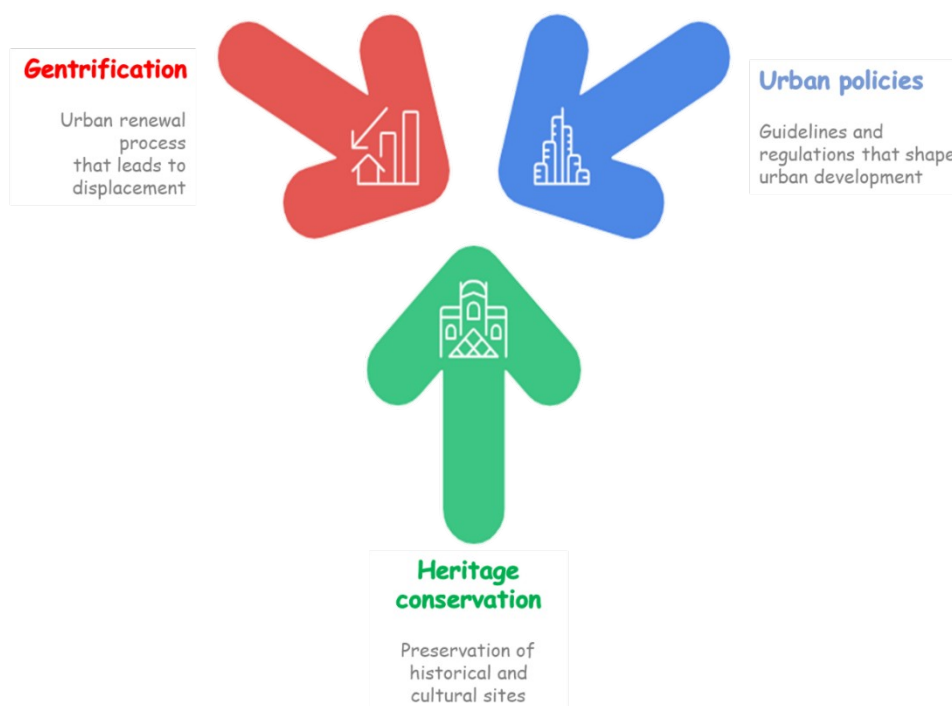
These initiatives have generated a positive impact in terms of symbolic and tourist valorization of the historic center, strengthening its positioning as a space of cultural relevance. However, from a social perspective, the benefits have been uneven. The sustained increase in housing and rental prices in the intervened areas has restricted access for popular sectors to the heritage, consolidating a process of socio-demographic replacement. Consequently, although heritage recovery has improved urban quality, it has not been accompanied by effective mechanisms that guarantee the permanence of historic residents or access to affordable housing.

Urban policy focused on the historic center of Lima has been constructed around a revitalization discourse that prioritizes the city's international projection and the attraction of real estate and tourism investments. However, this discourse comes into tension with the observed social effects: displacement of traditional communities, elitization of public space, and weakening of historical social networks.

Despite the existence of various plans and regulations, the measures adopted have proven insufficient to regulate real estate markets and promote inclusive housing strategies. Thus, rehabilitation projects, mainly guided by economic valuation criteria, have favored speculation on urban land rather than fulfilling its social function.

Ultimately, the main tension lies in reconciling the material preservation of architectural heritage with the need to guarantee urban justice. The absence of comprehensive policies that integrate conservation and social housing creates a scenario in which conservation becomes a catalyst for gentrification, rather than a resource to strengthen social cohesion.

**Figure 5.** Interaction between urban policies, heritage conservation, and gentrification processes



(The figure represents a triangular diagram in which urban policies, heritage conservation, and gentrification mutually reinforce each other, generating an unresolved central tension between social accessibility, the right to housing, and urban justice.)

### Summary of results and identified patterns

The comprehensive analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information obtained throughout the research allows for the recognition of a set of dynamics shaping the gentrification process in the historic center of Lima. On one hand, statistical evidence shows a sustained increase in land and housing prices over the past two decades, accompanied by a progressive decrease in the availability of affordable housing for popular sectors. The comparison between historical and current records reveals a growing gap between rental and sale values, directly linked to heritage rehabilitation interventions and the tourism-driven valorization of the central area.

At the qualitative level, the testimonies of traditional inhabitants, merchants, and informal workers reveal the social effects of these transformations. Their accounts refer to the loss of community life, pressure from evictions, and the reduction of job opportunities, in contrast to the perspective of new residents and real estate actors, who interpret these processes as indicators of modernization and urban revitalization. This tension reveals a fracture in the way space is perceived and appropriated, where cultural heritage tends to be valued more as an economic asset than as a shared social good.

The incorporation of these viewpoints allows for a clear recognition of the existence of socio-spatial segregation dynamics. The formation of new centralities characterized by a cultural and tourist offer aimed at higher-income sectors is confirmed, while zones of resistance consolidate in peripheral neighborhoods of the historic center, where traditional activities and long-standing populations persist. Spatial analysis using GIS tools confirms this segmentation, showing a progressive displacement of

popular residential uses toward increasingly reduced sectors.

Consequently, the critical areas where gentrification threatens the social sustainability of the historic center are concentrated in the immediate surroundings of renovated plazas and streets, as well as in strategic corridors linked to tourist activity. These spaces, which should play an integrative role, become scenes of exclusion and elitism.

The results obtained therefore establish the basis for the discussion section, where the articulation between public policies, real estate dynamics, and sociocultural transformations will be explored in depth, with the aim of reflecting on the viability of a heritage conservation model compatible with social equity and the right to the city.

### **Discussion of results**

The results obtained show that the historic center of Lima exhibits a socio-demographic recomposition marked by the influx of households with higher educational levels, skilled occupations, and greater payment capacity, along with an increase in single-person households and young couples. These traits align with patterns described for gentrification processes in Latin America when symbolic revaluation of heritage, rental expectations, and revitalization policies converge. In this convergence, the local evidence dialogues with the comparative framework that highlights the centrality of the "rent gap," the aestheticization of the environment, and urban governmentality aimed at attracting investment—findings consistent with regional diagnoses concerning displacement due to market pressure and the mutation of the social fabric in central neighborhoods, as documented for Santiago de Chile and Mexico. The literature conceptualizes this as a combination of rent-based dispossession and direct and indirect displacements over time (Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; López-Morales, 2013; Janoschka, Sequera, & Salinas, 2013).

The observation of a sustained increase in rental and sale prices in heritage axes of the foundational grid, accompanied by intensified investments in the rehabilitation of listed buildings, replicates the value capture mechanism documented for Latin American historic centers, where heritage valorization operates as an anchor to reshape expectations of real estate returns. In Lima, the replacement of old tenants by temporary leases or tourist uses refers to a hybrid process between "conservation-driven gentrification" and "selective densification gentrification," whereas in Santiago, more intense trajectories of "demolition-driven gentrification" were observed in large-scale renewal projects. This difference helps explain why in Lima the turnover may be more gradual but no less exclusionary, combining price increases with changes in the rules of use, management, and maintenance of the built stock (López-Morales, 2013; Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2013; Richmond & Garmany, 2023).

Residential displacement, captured in our census cross-sections and long-term household narratives, occurs through subtle modalities: first through staggered increases in rent and service costs, then through market reorientation towards short-term contracts and higher guarantee requirements. This strategy reduces the permanence of households with volatile incomes or informal economies. This pattern aligns with comparative evidence of indirect and exclusionary displacements in central neighborhoods of the region, where lower-income households do not necessarily leave due to immediate eviction but because they cannot sustain the new pricing regime and due to the loss of community services. In Lima, chains of legal eviction due to structural risk or property litigation overlap with this gradual pressure, replicating dispossession mechanisms described in Latin American literature (Dammert, 2018; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; López-Morales, 2013).

The expansion of tourist accommodations, high-end restaurants, and businesses aimed at international visitors in areas such as Jirón de la Unión and the surroundings of Plaza Mayor reinforces dynamics of touristification already identified in historic centers with a strong heritage presence. Our findings regarding the increase in the proportion of units designated for short-term lodging and the change in commercial mix align with evidence from Cuenca and San Miguel de Allende, where the arrival of foreign residents and tourism capital disrupts the balance between permanent residential use and heritage consumption. In the case of Lima, the growth of the platform economy and short-term rentals appears as an accelerator of the income gap and reconfigures property owners' incentives, a situation

widely debated in the literature on tourist gentrification (Hayes, 2020; Navarrete-Escobedo, 2020; Cócola-Gant, 2016).

In parallel, the reorganization of public space through selective pedestrianization, control of street vending, and strengthening of monumental landscaping has generated new centers of high urban standard, but has compressed the socioeconomic reproduction margins of vendors and traditional trades. The consistency between our interviews and the comparative literature is notable, as trajectories of displacement of popular commerce from historic streets to peripheral spaces or enclosed markets are repeated, resulting in loss of visibility and income decline. Lima reproduces patterns already recorded for Andean and Mexican cities, where the instrumentalization of public space for urban competitiveness objectives coexists with coercive or fiscal management of informal workers (Bromley & Mackie, 2009; González & Waley, 2013; Dammert, 2018).

When comparing neighborhoods with high heritage value, our data reveals internal differentiation, with highly elitized sections and others under tension or resistance. Barrios Altos shows a greater persistence of traditional households and community networks despite market pressures, whereas corridors like Jirón de la Unión exhibit a faster turnover. These intra-central variations resemble the "mosaics" of gentrification described for Santiago and Buenos Aires, where the juxtaposition of heritage-protected blocks and pockets of precarious housing reflects selective investment decisions and the sequence of policies. These differences require a nuanced reading of urban micro-markets and the rhythms of public intervention (Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2013; López-Morales, 2013; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016).

The evolution of household structure, with growth in single-person households and young couples with higher education, fits the regional pattern of "selective rejuvenation" of central areas, associated with creative economies, proximity to tertiary employment, and the appreciation of cultural amenities. Our findings, which show a reduction in extended families with long-term residence and fragmentation of networks, align with studies that link demographic recomposition to changes in the urban function of the center, where residential use comes to coexist with intensive tourist and cultural consumption, reconfiguring daily practices and demands for urban services (Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; Navarrete-Escobedo, 2020; Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2013).

The GIS analysis used to map gradients of gentrification and socio-spatial segmentation revealed clusters of high probability of turnover and valorization, overlapping with heritage axes and areas intervened by rehabilitation programs. This geography of value approximates the logic of "two circuits" proposed for Latin America, where formal and informal capitals coexist and adapt to differential opportunities for rent capture. In Lima, the persistence of precarious tenure and the fragmentation of ownership in old properties produces a particular temporality of the process, with sequences of micro-rehabilitation that do not prevent the general trajectory of social recomposition. This phenomenon that our results share with cities that have combined targeted rehabilitation and selective densification (Richmond & Garmany, 2023; López-Morales, 2013; Janoschka, Sequera, & Salinas, 2013).

From the perspective of urban policy, the comparison of our findings with the regional balance indicates that heritage conservation programs, without robust affordable housing instruments and tenant protections, tend to produce unequal public benefits. The literature documents that revitalization discourses often render the social costs of displacement invisible and naturalize the transition towards regimes of intensive heritage consumption. In Lima, the testimonies of residents and merchants reveal tensions between the opening of new tourist centralities and effective access to the historic city as a space of everyday life, a tension that reflects what has been observed in other Latin American centers with trajectories of heritage commodification (Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2013; Dammert, 2018; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016).

In terms of mechanisms, our data support the validity of the "rent gap" theory but also suggest nuances, as the increase in value does not come solely from the difference between current and potential capitalized rent but from the integration with tourist flows, short-stay platforms, and heritage branding. This broadens the sources of demand and diversifies the agents who internalize the rent. This interpretation complicates the linear relationship between rent gap and displacement and aligns with recent contributions for Latin America that differentiate between gaps due to density, changes in use,

and symbolic reconversion—nuances that help explain why in Lima segments with very high appreciation coexist with others experiencing relative stagnation despite their morphological proximity (Richmond & Garmany, 2023; López-Morales, 2013; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016).

The tourism dimension appears in Lima as a selective accelerator, not with the massiveness of Mediterranean cases, but with enough power to redirect investment portfolios and owners' expectations. Comparative evidence suggests that when heritage functions as a global consumption resource, specific forms of displacement emerge due to "use conversion" and "neighborhood stress," with a progressive loss of local services and an increase in the cost of living in the neighborhood. Our qualitative accounts replicate this pattern by pointing out the reduction of traditional businesses and the emergence of daily frictions derived from nighttime activities and visitor turnover, features widely discussed in the literature on tourist gentrification (Cócola-Gant, 2016; Navarrete-Escobedo, 2020; Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2013).

The critical examination of perceptions reveals a polarization in judgments about the transformation: new residents and real estate agents emphasize improvements in security, public space, and cultural offerings, while long-standing households and informal merchants highlight loss of community, rising costs, and regulatory hostility. This counterpoint aligns with the repertoire of justifications and resistances documented in regional experiences and suggests that the governance of the historic center requires deliberative forums and benefit-sharing mechanisms that currently appear weak. The case of Lima confirms that the legitimacy of revitalization depends on its ability to sustain rootedness and affordability without hindering heritage conservation (Dammert, 2018; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; Bromley & Mackie, 2009).

Comparing the intensity and pace of the process, Lima exhibits a less abrupt trajectory than the large-scale renewal observed in parts of Santiago or Buenos Aires, but shares the outcome of socio-spatial recomposition and the consolidation of enclaves of high cultural consumption. Our data on single-person households and young professionals converge with the pattern described for other heritage cities, and the differences seem to be explained more by the mix of public instruments and the property structure than by the absence of market pressures. In fact, the most emblematic corridors, where public and private investment converge, clearly replicate the sequence of revaluation-reconversion-exclusion (López-Morales, 2013; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2013).

The role of informal commerce in Lima, particularly in its relationship with the public space of the historic center, represents a critical node where the objectives of regulation and conservation clash with the social reproduction of thousands of households. Our evidence on the displacement of activities towards peripheral areas and loss of income reflects patterns reported by comparative studies and analyses of informality governance. International discussion warns that without transition policies and accommodation spaces, the "cleansing" of the center produces negative externalities on employment and daily mobility, with effects that also erode the urban diversity celebrated by the heritage itself (Bromley & Mackie, 2009; González & Waley, 2013; Dammert, 2018).

In an interpretative summary, the results confirm that housing gentrification in the historic center of Lima is a multi-scalar and multi-actor process that combines heritage valorization, investment strategies aimed at rent capture, and governance mechanisms of public space that favor high-value uses. The quantitative patterns of demographic turnover and the qualitative narratives of community loss and eviction pressure are consistent with the regional corpus, although the specificity of Lima is manifested in the persistence of precarious tenures, property fragmentation, and the coexistence of heterogeneous economic circuits. From this comparison, it follows that policy responses must combine conservation with spatial justice to prevent revitalization from resulting in a socially thinned and increasingly exclusive historic center (Janoschka, Sequera, & Salinas, 2013; Richmond & Garmany, 2023; Dammert, 2018).

## Conclusions

The analysis of housing gentrification in the Historic Center of Lima shows that this phenomenon does



not arise in isolation or spontaneously, but rather responds to the interplay of multiple factors: socio-demographic transformations, real estate market dynamics, public policy interventions, and processes of heritage re-signification. Throughout this study, it has been demonstrated that the reconfiguration of the central space follows a pattern combining the gradual displacement of traditional residents with the arrival of new social groups endowed with greater economic and cultural capital. This highlights that gentrification, far from being a linear process, manifests as a complex web of expulsions, resistances, and adaptations that together redefine the social and urban character of the historic center.

Firstly, regarding the socio-demographic composition, there is a significant decrease in traditional households, generally composed of more than four members, contrasted with the constant increase of single-person households and young couples with higher education levels. This finding corroborates the hypothesis proposed in previous research, such as that of Janoschka and Sequera (2016), who emphasize that the incorporation of new residents with high cultural capital acts as a central factor in the processes of elitization in central neighborhoods. In the case of Lima, this demographic shift is accompanied by an increase in the average purchasing power of the new households, which directly pressures the housing market and favors the appreciation of land value.

The study of real estate dynamics confirms that the appreciation of land and heritage buildings has followed an upward curve since the early 2000s, intensifying over the last ten years. The historical comparison between rental and sale prices shows that the increase exceeds the metropolitan average, reproducing a pattern already identified in historic centers of other Latin American cities such as Mexico City (Delgadillo, 2016) and Quito (Kingman, 2019). In Lima, this process is closely linked to heritage rehabilitation programs which, while improving the material conditions of buildings and public spaces, also open the door to speculative phenomena. Thus, rehabilitation ceases to be exclusively a cultural conservation strategy and becomes a lever for real estate appreciation that does not guarantee the permanence of the original inhabitants.

The expansion of real estate projects for tourism purposes reinforces this logic of exclusion. The rise of boutique hotels, hostels, and restaurants established in heritage homes shows a clear trend towards the commodification of architectural heritage. This phenomenon has been documented in comparable contexts, such as the historic center of Havana (Scarpaci, 2000) or Cartagena de Indias (Salazar, 2020), where cultural tourism becomes the dominant narrative to justify the transformation of residential spaces into consumption enclaves. In Lima, the conversion of residential uses into tourism uses has had a direct effect on reducing the supply of affordable housing, which intensifies the displacement of low-income residents to peripheral areas of the metropolitan region.

The transformations of public space reveal another key dimension of the gentrification process. The rehabilitation of squares, streets, and heritage monuments has improved the urban and aesthetic conditions of the city center, but at the same time has led to the expulsion of informal and traditional activities that historically characterized urban life in Lima. The evidence gathered from interviews shows conflicting perceptions: while new residents value the "cleanliness" and "order" of the restored spaces, informal merchants and long-term residents perceive these interventions as mechanisms of symbolic and material exclusion. This finding aligns with Harvey's (2012) arguments about the production of urban spaces as commodities, where accessibility and the right to the city are subordinated to logics of economic profitability.

Spatial analysis using GIS allowed the identification of critical areas of socio-spatial segmentation in the historic center. The concentration of gentrifying population in specific sectors, such as the vicinity of Plaza Mayor and the axis of Jirón de la Unión, contrasts with the persistence of resistance zones in more distant and less valued areas. This distribution pattern reinforces the hypothesis that gentrification does not operate homogeneously, but rather in a fragmented and selective manner, producing micro-territories of exclusion and enclaves of elitization. Comparisons with studies in Santiago de Chile (López-Morales, 2015) and Buenos Aires (Cuenya & Thuillier, 2006) show that intra-center segmentation is a recurring characteristic in gentrification processes in Latin America, although with varying intensities and rhythms.

The testimonies of social actors gathered in the research reinforce the multifaceted nature of the

process. Long-term residents recount the progressive loss of the sense of community and the pressure of evictions, although they also highlight adaptation strategies, such as partial subletting of homes or organizing in neighborhood resistance networks. On the other hand, new residents and real estate agents frame the phenomenon within the discourse of “urban revitalization,” legitimizing elitization through narratives of modernization and aesthetic revaluation of heritage. Finally, informal merchants and workers are those who experience the negative effects of gentrification most intensely, which are reflected in the loss of workspaces and the need to move to peripheral areas with fewer economic opportunities. This contrast in perceptions highlights that gentrification goes beyond the urban realm to also become a field of symbolic dispute, where narratives of progress and dynamics of exclusion clash. The examination of public policies and heritage conservation programs reveals a series of structural contradictions. While the projects promoted by the Municipality of Lima, the Ministry of Culture, and international cooperation have succeeded in rescuing emblematic buildings and improving infrastructure, their design lacks a comprehensive approach that ensures the permanence of the most vulnerable social groups. The absence of effective mechanisms to guarantee affordable housing and protect long-term tenants highlights the gap between revitalization rhetoric and the realities of displacement. This tension aligns with the warnings made by Smith (2002) and Zukin (2010), who point out that contemporary gentrification is closely linked to public policies that prioritize global competitiveness and cultural tourism at the expense of social justice.

The interplay between urban policies, heritage conservation, and gentrification dynamics creates a governance scenario where architectural preservation is instrumentalized as a strategy for economic and tourism projection. Heritage thus becomes a market resource rather than a collective good, reproducing preexisting socio-spatial inequalities. This finding is especially relevant in the case of Lima, as it calls into question the social sustainability of the intervention model applied to its historic center.

In summary, the results of this research confirm that residential gentrification in the Historic Center of Lima shares traits with processes observed in other urban centers in Latin America and worldwide. However, it presents particularities associated with the specificity of the Lima context: the political centrality of its historic district, the magnitude of urban informality, and the weak implementation of social housing policies in heritage areas. These conditions have given rise to a hybrid process, where global dynamics of elitization converge with local forms of resistance and adaptation.

Recognizing these dynamics highlights the urgent need to rethink management policies for the historic center under a spatial justice approach that guarantees equitable access to heritage and prevents its consolidation as an exclusive center for elites and tourists. The articulation between heritage conservation, the right to housing, and community participation emerges as an essential condition to sustain the social and cultural viability of this space. Without these measures, the gentrification process risks deepening urban inequalities and irreversibly fragmenting the social fabric that has given identity to the historic center for centuries.

Finally, the patterns identified throughout this research open new possibilities for comparative studies on the interrelations between gentrification, heritage, and tourism in other historic centers of Peru, such as Cusco or Arequipa. At the same time, it is pertinent to deepen longitudinal studies that allow for the evaluation of the evolution of displacement processes over time, as well as participatory research that gives centrality to the voices of the most vulnerable actors. Thus, only through a comprehensive and critical perspective will it be possible to face the challenges posed by gentrification in heritage cities and move towards more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable urban management models..

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