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**Can regenerated inner-city areas remain sites of public-place sociability? Psycho-social processes predicting public sociability in a changing neighbourhood**

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**Ethics Statement**

The authors declare that this research was conducted ethically, the results are reported honestly, the submitted work is original and not (self-)plagiarized, and authorship reflects individuals' contributions.

**Data Archiving and Sharing Statement**

Given that the questionnaire data may be used in further studies, data were not made available online.

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## Abstract

The processes of urban regeneration of long-disinvested inner-city neighbourhoods today happening in many European cities sometimes dramatically transform residents' traditional uses of their public places. Focusing on a neighbourhood renowned for its traditional public place sociability – Mouraria, in Lisbon - this study explored the psychosocial processes that may shape the maintenance of that sociability in the face of increasing social diversification and small-scale gentrification brought about by a mixed/bottom-up regeneration plan. A questionnaire survey (n=201) with two types of residents ('traditional residents' and 'new gentrifiers') indicated that: a) both types report using Mouraria's public places for socializing, although traditional residents do so to a greater degree; b) perceived cultural continuity of the neighbourhood is positively related to public place sociability for both groups; and c) this relationship is mediated by both place identification and place knowledge; but d) it is not moderated by type of resident. By implication, we argue that regenerated inner-city neighbourhoods may remain as places of lively public sociability and companionship if residents are able to forge and/or retain a sense of identification with, and intimate knowledge of, the neighbourhood, and view it as maintaining continuity with the past.

**Keywords:** public place sociability; inner-city neighbourhood; regeneration; perceived cultural continuity; place identification; place knowledge

The present paper examines social psychological processes that may contribute to the maintenance of public-place sociability in regenerated inner-city areas where it was a traditional feature. Many inner-city neighbourhoods of major European cities are today undergoing processes of urban regeneration (Freeman, Cassola, & Cai, 2016; Lees, 2008; Van Kempen & Murie, 2009). In southern European cities, specifically, many such interventions are happening in historical inner-city areas where public-place sociability was prominent (Tulumello, 2015; Zoppi & Mereu, 2015). Traditionally home to working-class tenants, and long-disinvested and in dire need of regeneration (Gainza, 2016; Lees, 2008;

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Rodrigues, 2010), these areas have lately been the object of interventions guided by different policy models: top-down, bottom-up or mixed (Pissourios, 2014). Through the former central and/or local authorities enforce expert-led change to the areas, assuring their “middle-class upgrading” (Lees, 2008) by the partial replacement of extant public housing by new market properties (Davison, Dovey, & Woodcock, 2012), or the *a priori* definition of quotas for different socio-economic groups (Lelévrier, 2013). This model thus brings social diversity by imposed gentrification (Bailey, Miles, & Stark, 2004; Freeman et al., 2016; Heath, Rabinovich, & Barreto, 2017; Pissourios, 2014). In contrast, in bottom-up/mixed models, authorities directly assure the regeneration of public places and buildings (Gainza, 2016; Padilla, Azevedo, & Olmos-Alcaraz, 2014), but offer subsidies and/or fiscal incentives to owners assuring renewal of their decaying properties, and implement community consultation for supporting the creation of local jobs, helping fight poverty and stigmatization (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015; Oliveira & Padilla, 2017; Pissourios, 2014; Tulumello, 2015). This brings diversity by initiating small-scale gentrification, i.e., influxes of new residents of low-medium income but higher academic qualifications than long-time ones (Davison et al., 2012; Malheiros, Carvalho, & Mendes, 2012; Oliveira & Padilla, 2017).

From a psycho-social and socio-political perspective, it is important to understand how these macro-level transformations under different policy models are associated to the micro-level of social relations *in place* and relations *to place* (Di Masso, 2015). It is especially relevant to understand whether in historical inner-city areas being regenerated the use of public places for everyday sociability is being maintained, and what may favour its preservation. In many such areas, an intense public-place sociability was a prominent feature, especially in southern cities, where the habit of meeting friends, relatives and neighbours in streets and squares has helped to sustain close-knit communities and inter-generational attachment to place (Di Masso, 2015; Mendes, 2012; Tulumello, 2015). It is thus important to

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understand how the uses of public places are evolving, and perhaps changing, in the context of the specific regeneration models – top-down or bottom up - implemented and which psycho-social aspects are involved. This has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of policy questions central in our time: Do the regeneration and transformation of inner-city areas inevitably come at the cost of diminished forms of public sociability and weakened community ties, leading to emptier or perhaps soulless areas, as well as to more atomized relations, and loneliness for dwellers? And, alternatively, what social-psychological dynamics – examined in the context of the specific policy models adopted - can offer hope that a simultaneously renewed and sociable inner-city can be preserved for both dwellers and all citizens?

Addressing such questions, the present paper aimed to understand resident's experiences in place within the context of a recent regeneration program of an inner-city neighbourhood located in the heart of Lisbon: Mouraria. This is a traditionally working-class area where a lively public place sociability has long been a striking characteristic, and where a regeneration program of bottom-up/mixed-strategy started in 2010 (CML, 2010), increasingly attracting new small-scale gentrifiers (Oliveira & Padilla, 2017). Building on a questionnaire survey, we investigated if public place sociability is maintained by both traditional and new gentrifiers and explored the role played in this maintenance by three social psychological processes: the sense that the neighbourhood has retained collective cultural continuity (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014) in the face of the transformations; place identification, i.e. the feeling of belonging to, fitting in and being attached to the neighbourhood (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010); and place knowledge (Naess, 2013), i.e. the extent to which residents feel they know the place and its history.

To clarify further the context of the study, we first outline previous research on regeneration in inner-city areas and present the context of this study. We then review how

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residents' uses of public places for socializing may be affected by perceived collective cultural continuity, place identification, and place knowledge. Finally, we propose a model to test - under a specific regeneration policy, a bottom-up/mixed model - to what extent these three variables can predict public-place sociability and whether they work differently for different types of residents (traditional residents and new gentrifiers).

### **Changing Inner-cities and Relations through Urban Regeneration**

In the inner-city neighbourhoods of many European cities, particularly southern cities, public places are central to the daily lives and relationships of their residents – as illustrated, for example, by research conducted in Barcelona (Di Masso, 2015), Granada (Padilla et al., 2014), Cagliari (Zoppi & Mereu, 2015), or Lisbon (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015; Malheiros et al., 2012; Tulumello, 2015). As places of sociability and identity, the streets and squares of these areas traditionally served as extensions of the dwelling, acting as transitional or secondary spaces where borders between private and public are porous (Korosec-Serfaty, 1990; Rapoport, 1985). The lively street life - fostered by architectural features that include small dwellings, inner squares and narrow streets (Tulumello, 2015) – helped to construct close-knit communities and shore up inter-generational social support networks, crucial for compensating for the needs (e.g., grand-parent support in after-school hours) associated with the hardship also characterizing working-class tenants' lives (Di Masso, 2015; Mendes, 2012).

At the same time, many such neighbourhoods endured the stigma of poverty, urban decay and marginalization (Blanco, Bonet, & Walliser, 2011), and many have lately been targeted for programs of urban regeneration (Lees, 2008). Research on the sociological (Blanco et al., 2011; Lees, 2008), geographical (Tulumello, 2015) and urban planning (Davison et al., 2012; Freeman et al., 2016) dimensions and consequences of these inner-

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cities transformations and the models they follow – top-down or bottom-up – is now abundant. The social-psychological literature is, however, scarce. Nevertheless, some pioneer studies show that the type of regeneration model followed indeed matters: bottom-up strategies were shown to lead to higher levels of community identification, which in turn predicts individual well-being (Heath et al., 2017). Other studies showed how attachment to more socially diverse neighbourhoods was mediated by the emotion of excitement (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Lewicka, 2016); and how the convergence of identity goals between long-time residents and newcomers was important for more positive intergroup perceptions (Stevenson et al., 2018).

However, these pioneer analyses have so far focused on individual-level psychological aspects (self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotions), and/or on identification with the *community* (Heath et al., 2017; Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Lewicka, 2016; Stevenson et al., 2018), and do not study people-place bonds as such: they do not examine how place identification (e.g. viewing the place as part of the self; Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010) or place knowledge (e.g. knowing the history and features of the place; Benages-Albert, Di Masso, Porcel, Pol, & Vall-Casas, 2015) may impact social uses of the place – e.g., public sociability. They do not, moreover, compare the role of such people-place bonds for long-time residents *and* new dwellers, living under one or more types of regeneration models. In sum, no studies have thus far explored the relational level, i.e., whether people's bonds (identification, knowledge) to urban places that were regenerated and became different and more socially diverse can help predict public-place sociability and whether there are different predictive patterns for different types of residents.

It is thus important to focus on this relational level, under a particular regeneration model, exploring if older residents feel that the neighbourhood - architecturally changed and more diverse – no longer reflects their values and history, i.e., is now seen as discontinuous

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with the past (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014), and whether these transformations, in turn, may lead to their de-identification and retreat into more private routines, with the costs of solitude this may entail. It is important to know, too, more about the experiences of more recent residents: Do they see the areas as retaining continuity with past characteristics, how does this affect their bonds to place, and their social uses of place?

Following this, the present research focuses on understanding the social psychological dynamics of a particular mixed/bottom-up regeneration program, exploring them for two different groups – long-time residents and new gentrifiers – and with relational-level variables that previous studies have not analyzed. Specifically, whereas previous research offers important insights on predictors of place attachment under diversity (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Lewicka, 2016), or well-being in regenerated areas (Heath et al., 2017), the present research attempts to clarify how social psychological processes may be associated to the maintenance of relational engagement in regenerated public places, under a specific mixed/bottom-up program.

### **The Present Research**

The present paper takes *Mouraria*, an inner-city neighbourhood in Lisbon, as a case study through which to analyse the above processes. *Mouraria* was chosen because of its traditionally lively public place sociability (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015), and because it has undergone a program with a mixed/bottom-up regeneration strategy since 2010 (CML, 2010). The program - conceived “under the overarching slogan of ‘*requalify the past to build the future*’” (Oliveira & Padilla, 2017; p. 5) – has involved both the direct intervention of the municipality, community consultation and the active participation of local organizations (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015; Tulumello, 2015). Local organizations have offered, for instance, input for developing local jobs and legal support for preventing tenant displacement (Tulumello, 2015). The regeneration policy also explicitly sought to de-stigmatize the area by

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constructing an image of it as renewed but still traditional - attempting to break the associations with negative dimensions of poverty, but keeping those with positive ones (e.g., an authentic community; see Bettencourt & Castro, 2015; Tulumello, 2015). For many years, due to this stigmatized image of poverty and insecurity, the neighbourhood did not come up as a choice for new residents to settle in, namely young people of medium or high academic qualifications (Malheiros et al., 2012). *Mouraria* became an area of residence for various generations of the same working class families (Mendes, 2012). Only recently 'new gentrifiers', Portuguese and European, have gradually started to enter the neighbourhood (Malheiros et al., 2012) without – at least initially - much competition with long-time residents (Tulumello, 2015). In turn, these new or first stage gentrifiers (Davison et al., 2012; Freeman et al., 2016) seemed attracted not just by the still comparatively low rents, but also by psycho-social aspects: interview studies identify their desire to live in a place of 'authentic' community life and public sociability, adjusted to their values and needs (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015; Malheiros et al., 2012; Mendes, 2012).

It is now important to comprehend if, in the context of this bottom-up/mixed-model of regeneration oriented to attract rather than impose gentrification, both traditional residents and new gentrifiers maintain the traditional place sociability, and what psycho-social processes better help explain this. In the next section, we will review the literature on a relevant subset of such psycho-social processes, focusing on the role of perceived cultural continuity, place identity and place knowledge.

### **Perceiving Continuity in Changed Places**

The urban and social transformations brought by regeneration programs make it relevant to ask to what extent the *collective* cultural continuity of the neighbourhood –, i.e., the continuity its core values, norms and traditions transmitted over generations (Sani et al.,

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2007; 2008; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014) - is perceived by residents as threatened, and whether this matters for their use of public places for meeting friends, relatives and neighbours. In this regard, the literature suggests that perceiving a community as retaining cultural continuity with the past (Sani et al., 2008) fosters both emotional connectivity and identification with place (Main & Sandoval, 2015) and knowledge about the place (Benages-Albert et al., 2015). Thus, it is also reasonable to expect this to lead people to also preserve public “*place encounters*” (Viola, 2012; p.143). Research also suggests that, in contexts undergoing change or social diversification, if a sense of collective continuity of the community’s core elements is assured, then changes may be constructed as non-threatening (Obradović & Howarth, 2018), lessening the rejection of those seen as different (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014).

It is nevertheless important to acknowledge that perceiving a neighbourhood as maintaining (*collective*) continuity with the past may affect long-time residents’ and gentrifiers’ uses of public places for somewhat different reasons. Regarding long-time residents, the literature suggests that the arrival of newcomers with new lifestyles may make them feel that their own past values, traditions and lifestyles are threatened (Stevenson et al., 2018). This may lead to retreat from public conviviality (Buchecker, 2009; Rapoport, 1985). In *Mouraria*, for example, a recent interview study showed that some long-time residents express some loss of continuity (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015) – so it is now important not just to understand if this feeling is generalized in this group, but also if it predicts public place encounters.

With respect to new residents, the literature shows that when moving to new places they often seek out neighbourhoods that are continuous with those of their past and with values they favoured (Rishbeth & Powell, 2012), or they may remake new places to better reflect past significant ones (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004; Manzo, 2005) and better fit in their

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new locale (Stevenson et al., 2018). These strategies facilitate the rapid development of identification to the new places (Buchecker, 2009; Main & Sandoval, 2015; Manzo, 2005; Rishbeth & Powell, 2012). However, some studies also suggest that the desire that some gentrifiers express for living in ‘authentic’ traditional environments does not necessarily lead them to actually engage with the lifestyle of the neighbourhood when there (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015; Malheiros et al., 2012). It is thus important to ascertain the extent to which a sense of continuity might lead new residents to actually adopt the habits of using public places for engaging with the community.

In sum, the literature suggests that perceiving the neighbourhood as retaining cultural continuity with the past may affect differently different groups’ use of public places as sites of social interaction. The present research will thus seek to ascertain whether this is the case. We will now consider the relationship between continuity and place identification, linking it to urban regeneration and diversification.

### **People-place Bonds: Place and Identity**

The role of place identity relations in shaping behaviour in public urban environments has been evidenced by environmental psychological research (e.g. Di Mazzo, 2015; Gustafson, 2001; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010). The current research draws from psychosocial and environmental psychological literature that theorizes place identity, highlighting the bonds between people and place. In this literature, Identity Process Theory (Breakwell, 2014) theorizes the link between continuity and identity at the individual level, suggesting that identity processes are guided by four principles – distinctiveness, self-esteem, efficacy and continuity and Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) show how these principles help explain place identification, but in particular, how the principle of (self) continuity is a direct predictor of place identification (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010). Other studies also corroborate

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that individual continuity may predict place identification (Main & Sandoval, 2015; Rishbeth & Powell, 2012). For instance, in the context of regenerated neighbourhoods, some studies show that identification with the community - which includes feelings of connection with co-residents - fosters positive psychological outcomes, such as resilience and well-being, as well as higher levels of willingness to pay back to the community (Heath et al., 2017). Other studies demonstrate that perceiving higher diversity in neighbourhoods may strengthen attachment to place, particularly if diversity does not interfere with previous social norms of coexistence (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Lewicka, 2016), i.e., with collective continuity.

In sum, research shows how place identification is predicted by individual continuity (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010), and how a sense of community contributes to individual well-being (Heath et al., 2017), and how diversity does not necessarily weaken people-place bonds (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Lewicka, 2016). However, this research has remained focused on the individual level, and has not yet clarified whether a sense of continuity at a *collective* level – i.e. perceived cultural continuity, or the sense that the core shared elements of a community are maintained (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014) – plays a role in predicting more place related bonds – such as place identification. Neither has it explored whether place identification can predict self-reported public-place behaviour, and more specifically the public forms of social interaction that have for long defined relations in inner-city neighbourhoods in many (Southern) European cities, or even whether identification is a stronger predictor of these uses of place in a changing neighbourhood than the perception that changes have not erased its continuity with the past.

Extending this previous research, we propose that – in a context where the regeneration program did not force gentrification but allowed newcomers to seek the area because they identified with its value and attempts to retain some continuity were made (Oliveira & Padilla, 2017; Tulumello, 2015) - place identification will be central to residents' self-

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reported use of public spaces as sites to socialize, even in the face of transformations. In this sense, we expect the effect of cultural continuity on public place sociability to be partially mediated by place identification.

*Mouraria* is known as a historical neighbourhood – thus, knowledge of its histories and shared memories are a crucial feature for its residents. We will hence now consider the literature on place knowledge and how it connects to people-place relations.

### **People-place Bonds: the Importance of Knowing the Neighbourhood**

One expression of people-place bonds still neglected in the literature is place knowledge. Some authors conceptualize it as a sub-dimension of place identity and/or attachment (e.g. Lewicka, 2008), constructed through (individual) everyday experiences and familiarity, bringing a sense of efficacy in place (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010). Others accentuate how it is linked to shared memories and historical, collective, knowledge (Berkes, 2004; Castro & Mouro, 2016; Naess, 2013). Place knowledge thus seems potentially central for people-place relations. To date, however, no studies have treated such knowledge as a variable that may predict how people use public places in urban contexts. Yet socializing in place is also a way of hearing and sharing stories, memories, knowledge of past events, helping develop bonds to place over time (Benages-Albert et al., 2015). In *Mouraria*, with its close social relationships and public place sociability (Malheiros et al., 2012), knowledge about the memories and history of the neighbourhood has, for generations, been a central feature for residents. We thus explore the potential role of this type of (historical) place knowledge in predicting residents' use of public places for social interaction, expecting it to be positively associated with engagement in public place sociability independent of, and in addition to, the effects of place identification. We also expect the type of resident (long-time

PREDICTING PUBLIC-SOCIABILITY IN A REGENERATED NEIGHBOURHOOD and gentrifiers) to moderate the predictive capacity of place knowledge on public place sociability.

### **Research Questions and Aims**

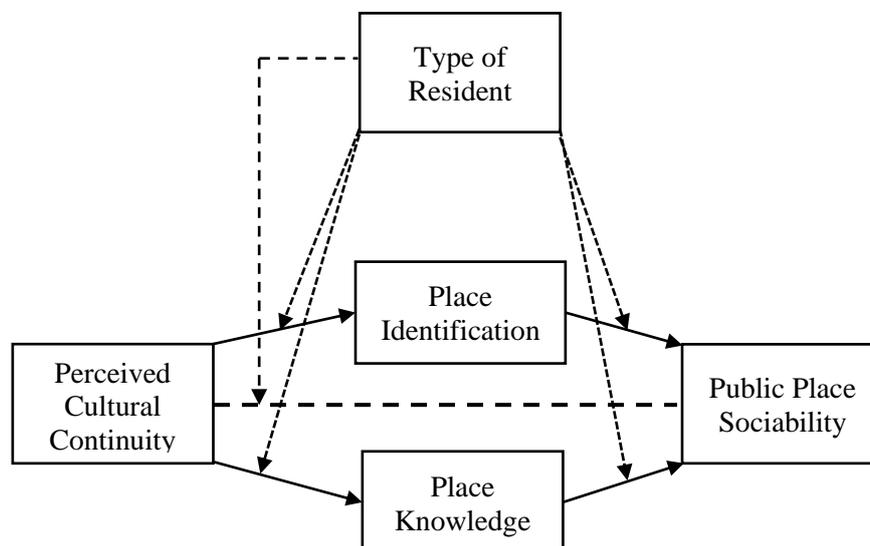
To summarize, the main questions that guided this research were formulated as follows. In the context of an urban regeneration program that sought to attract rather than impose new residents:

- (1) Do long-time residents and new gentrifiers maintain the public sociability that is traditional in *Mouraria*?
- (2) Do both groups do so to a similar extent?
- (3) Do both groups perceive cultural continuity in the neighbourhood, express place identification and place knowledge to similar extents?
- (4) Do these psychosocial processes help predict public place sociability?

To address these questions a questionnaire survey was conducted in *Mouraria*. Regarding the first question, we tested if participants report using the public places of the neighbourhood for socializing with others. To answer questions 2 and 3 we tested, through a MANOVA followed by t-test analyses, whether both groups socialize in place, perceive neighbourhood's cultural continuity, identify with it and know it to a similar extent by comparing their mean scores concerning the following variables: (a) public place sociability; (b) perceived cultural continuity; (c) place identification; and (d) place knowledge. Finally, to answer question 4 a moderated parallel mediation model was tested that examined if: (a) perceived cultural continuity predicts directly public place sociability; (b) this relationship is mediated by both place identification and place knowledge; (c) the latter two variables offer independent contributions to the prediction of place sociability; and (d) type of resident (traditional versus new gentrifier) moderated these relationships (see Figure 1). Importantly,

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the model presented in Figure 1 is an integrated model that combines four different sub-models, in order to test the mediation role of two variables - *place identification* and *place knowledge* – as well as the moderating role of the variable *type of residents*. As traditional residents live for a longer time in the neighbourhood, it is expected that they report a higher sense of identification with the neighbourhood and higher levels of knowledge about its history and people than new gentrifiers. Consequently, we expect this difference between both types of residents to have an effect on the predictive capacity of place identification and place knowledge on public place sociability, with this effect being stronger for traditional residents.



*Figure 1.* Theoretical moderated parallel-mediation model of the relationship between perceived cultural continuity and public place sociability, with type of resident as moderator, and place identification and place knowledge as mediators.

Given that research on person-place relations highlights the connection between use of place and the construction of collective memories (Benages-Albert et al., 2015), suggesting a strong link - that could be bi-directional - between place identification and people's behaviour in place (Di Masso, 2015), we also tested two *reverse* mediation models that

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examined: 1) if public place sociability predicts perceived cultural continuity and this relationship is mediated by place identification and place knowledge; and 2) if place identification predicts public place sociability and this relationship is mediated by perceived cultural continuity and place knowledge.

### **Methodology**

#### **Procedure and Participants**

Data collection occurred between April 2015 and October 2016. A sample (N=201) of two types of residents - traditional residents and new gentrifiers - completed a questionnaire in the neighbourhood. Based on the methodology previously used in the neighbourhood (see Malheiros et al., 2012), respondents were considered traditional residents if they declared Portuguese nationality and more than ten years of residence in the neighbourhood. They were included as new gentrifiers if they had Portuguese or other European nationalities and had lived in the neighbourhood for a maximum of nine years. Residents were approached in four different places in the neighbourhood - two central inner squares and two transition places (long streets interspersed with small squares that serve as entry and exit points for the neighbourhood). The choice of these places – two located in the interior of the area and two located at its two main borders – assured access to a diversity of residents and residents' trajectories in the neighbourhood, since most residents have to pass by them in order to reach their homes.

Regarding the traditional residents (N=137), their mean age was M=59.8 years; (SD=16.4); 74 were female (54%) and 63 were male (46%); the majority had the primary or high school level (87.6%) and were employed (46.3%) or retired (40.4%). Regarding new gentrifiers (N=64), their mean age was M=31 years (SD=8.9), 34 were female (53.1%) and 30 were male (46.9%); 59 were Portuguese and 5 were from other European countries; the

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majority had undergraduate or masters level education (50%) or a high school educational level (39.1%) and were employed (83.9%). Importantly, the average time of residence of traditional residents was 45.3 years (SD=19.8) whereas the average time of residence of new gentrifiers was 4.1 years (SD=4.7), in stark contrast with the first group. Also in contrast with the first group, their qualifications were higher, and they were younger.

### Variables

The questionnaire operationalized the variables described below. All variables were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Do Not Agree at All) to 7 (Totally Agree).

*Perceived cultural continuity.* This variable was assessed with the subscale of *Cultural Continuity* of the *Perceived Cultural Continuity Scale* (Sani et al. 2007) as adapted by Smeekes and Verkuyten (2014). It tapped residents' evaluations of two statements ( $r = .49$ ): 1) '*Mouraria* has maintained its own customs and traditions over time'; and 2) 'The neighbourhood has been able to preserve its identity over time, even with the arrival of new residents'.

*Place identification.* This variable was assessed with an adaptation of *Place Identification Scale* developed by Droseltis and Vignoles (2010), tapping responses to 6 items ( $\alpha = .88$ ): 1) 'I feel *Mouraria* is part of who I am'; 2) 'I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this neighbourhood'; 3) If *Mouraria* no longer existed, I would feel I had lost a part of myself; 4) I feel this is the neighbourhood where I fit; 5) This neighbourhood reflects the type of person I am; and 6) This neighbourhood reflects my personal values. Although Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) proposed a three-dimensional (self-extension/attachment, environmental fit, and place-self congruity) concept of place identification, in this study we treated it as unidimensional, as an exploratory factor analysis (using Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization) identified a single factor that explained 62,05% of total variance.

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*Place knowledge.* The 4 items ( $\alpha = .79$ ) used to assess this variable were created by the first two authors and were based on previous interviews with the residents (see Bettencourt & Castro, 2015): 1) 'I know many stories about this neighbourhood'; 2) 'I know what are the main historical places in the neighbourhood'; 3) 'I know the past of this neighbourhood'; and 4) 'I know people from all groups living in the neighbourhood'.

*Public place sociability.* This variable was assessed with 3 items ( $\alpha = .72$ ) based on the previous interviews undertaken in the neighbourhood: 1) 'I use this place for socialising (with neighbours, other residents, friends, family)'; 2) 'I use this place as a meeting point with other people'; and 3) 'I usually stop and stay in here to talk to my neighbors'.

### Results

#### **Continuity, People-place Bonds and Sociability: Comparing Long-time Residents and New Gentrifiers**

Results indicated that the pattern of people-place relations within the neighbourhood differed between the two types of residents (see Tables 1 and 2). As Table 1 shows, there is a significant multivariate effect of the type of residents on the group of dependent variables ( $\lambda = .889$ ,  $F(4, 163) = 5.089$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Thus, type of residents has a significant impact on the results obtained for the variables analysed. Further analysis shows that traditional residents showed stronger place bonds and a higher perception of cultural continuity, and they also reported using more the public places to socialize with other residents, family and friends, than new gentrifiers. In sum, traditional residents perceived more that the neighbourhood has been able to maintain its traditions and identity ( $t(198) = 2.13$ ;  $p = 0.035$ ,  $d = 0.37$ ), identified more with the neighbourhood ( $t(183) = 5.08$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 0.92$ ), displayed more knowledge about its history, memories and people ( $t(184) = 2.68$ ;  $p = 0.009$ ,  $d = 0.46$ ) and reported using more frequently its public places to socialize ( $t(182) = 3.68$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 0.64$ ), when

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compared to new gentrifiers (see Table 2). However, it should also be pointed out that new gentrifiers also showed significant high levels of people-place bonds and public place use, despite living in the neighbourhood for a shorter time than traditional residents (see Table 2).

**Table 1***Traditional residents and new gentrifiers: Multivariate tests*

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Type of Residents	Pillai's Trace	.111	5.089 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	163.000	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.889	5.089 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	163.000	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	.125	5.089 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	163.000	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	.125	5.089 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	163.000	.001

<sup>b</sup> Exact statistic.**Table 2***Traditional residents and new gentrifiers: Descriptive statistics and t tests for main variables*

Outcome	Type of Residents						95% CI for Mean Difference	t-test	df
	Traditional Residents			New Gentrifiers					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Perceived									
Cultural Continuity	5.28	1.367	136	4.85	1.246	64	.03; .80	2.13*	198
Place Identification	5.63	1.345	131	4.58	1.197	54	.63; 1.43	5.08****	183
Place Knowledge	5.54	1.218	133	4.93	1.418	53	.15; 1.03	2.68**	184
Public Place Sociability	5.46	1.322	126	4.63	1.445	58	.38; 1.27	3.68****	182

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*\*  $p < .001$

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**Correlations between Place Continuity, Identification and Knowledge and Public Place Sociability**

The pattern of correlations presented in Table 3 shows that public place sociability was positively and significantly associated with perceived cultural continuity, place identification and local knowledge, for both types of residents. Regarding traditional residents, the variable most strongly associated with public place sociability is place identification, and for new gentrifiers it was local knowledge.

**Table 3**

*Pearson correlations between public place sociability and its predictors included in the moderated mediation model*

	Perceived Cultural Continuity	Place Identification	Place Knowledge	Public Place Sociability
Traditional Residents				
Perceived Cultural Continuity	-	.47**	.24**	.33**
Place Identification		-	.49**	.64**
Place Knowledge			-	.61**
Public Place Sociability				-
New Gentrifiers				
Perceived Cultural Continuity	-	.58**	.46**	.41**
Place Identification		-	.37**	.51**
Place Knowledge			-	.64**
Public Place Sociability				-

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

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**Predicting Public Place Sociability**

The above analysis suggests that perceived cultural continuity, place identification and place knowledge are positively correlated with residents' self-reported use of public places to socialize with others. To develop this analysis, we initially tested the mediation model presented in Figure 1, using PROCESS – a path analysis tool for mediation, moderation and conditional process for statistical software package SPSS 20.0 and SAS (Hayes, 2017). In the first step of the analysis, both *place identification* and *place knowledge* were entered as parallel mediators of the relationship between *perceived cultural continuity* and *public place sociability* (see Figure 2 and Table 4), using Model 4 of PROCESS. A bootstrapping approach was used to test the indirect effects from a 5000 estimate and 95% bias corrected confidence intervals, using the cut-offs for the 2.5% highest and lowest scores of the empirical distribution. The indirect effects were considered significant when the confidence interval did not include zero. The overall mediating effect in models with two mediators is significant if two conditions are met (Hayes, 2017): 1) the effect of the independent variable on both mediators is significant; and 2) the effect of each mediator on the dependent variable is significant when the independent variable is controlled for.

As both Figure 2 and Table 4 show, our analysis met both conditions for both types of residents. Specifically, *place identification* ( $b = .51, t(166) = 7.52, p < .001$ ) and *place knowledge* ( $b = .32, t(166) = 4.83, p < .001$ ) were predicted by *perceived cultural continuity*; and *public place sociability* was predicted by *place identification* ( $b = .62, t(167) = 10.21, p < .001$ ) and *place knowledge* ( $b = .64, t(169) = 10.43, p < .001$ ). The analysis provided evidence that the effects of *perceived cultural continuity* on *public space sociability* is mediated by both *place identification* and *place knowledge*, as shown by the decrease in the unstandardized regression coefficients and the loss of significance of the direct effect of *perceived cultural continuity* on *public place sociability* ( $b = .36, p < .01$  to  $b = .007, p = .906$ ;

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see Figure 2). The indirect effects of *perceived cultural continuity* on *public place sociability* through *place identification* ( $b = .365$ ,  $SE = .063$ , 95% CI = .241, .489) and *place knowledge* ( $b = .446$ ,  $SE = .064$ , 95% CI = .319, .573) are statistically different from zero, as revealed by the 95% bias corrected confidence intervals that are entirely above zero (see Table 4). The analysis also suggested that *place identification* and *place knowledge* make independent contributions to explaining *public place sociability*. Even though mediators may be correlated, no mediator formally and causally influences the other mediator in the model.

In the second step of the analysis, we tested the moderating role of *type of resident*, in order to analyse if being a traditional resident or a new gentrifier moderates the explaining capacity of *perceived cultural continuity*, *place identification* and *place knowledge* regarding *public place sociability*. For this we conducted in PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) three moderated mediation models: i) Model 5; ii) Model 7; and iii) Model 14 (see Figures 1 and 2). For each both *place identification* and *place knowledge* were entered as mediators of the relationship between *perceived cultural continuity* on *public place sociability*, and *type of residents* (traditional resident or new gentrifier) entered as a moderator, following Hayes's (2017) recommendations. First, we tested if the variable *type of resident* moderated the relationship between *perceived cultural continuity* and *public place sociability* (using Model 5 of PROCESS). Second, we tested if *type of resident* moderated the relationship between *perceived cultural continuity* and both *place identification* and *place knowledge* (using Model 7 of PROCESS). Third, we tested if *type of resident* moderated the relationship between both *place identification* and *place knowledge* and *public place sociability* (using Model 14 of PROCESS). All three models revealed that belonging to one specific type of residents does not moderate the capacity of perceived cultural continuity, place identification and place knowledge for predicting public place sociability (Model 5:  $b = -.060$ ,  $SE = .116$ , ns.; Model

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7:  $b = .051$ ,  $SE = .147$ , ns. |  $b = .255$ ,  $SE = .149$ , ns.; Model 14:  $b = -.110$ ,  $SE = .136$ , ns. |  $b = .013$ ,  $SE = .132$ , ns.; see Figure 2).

**Table 4**

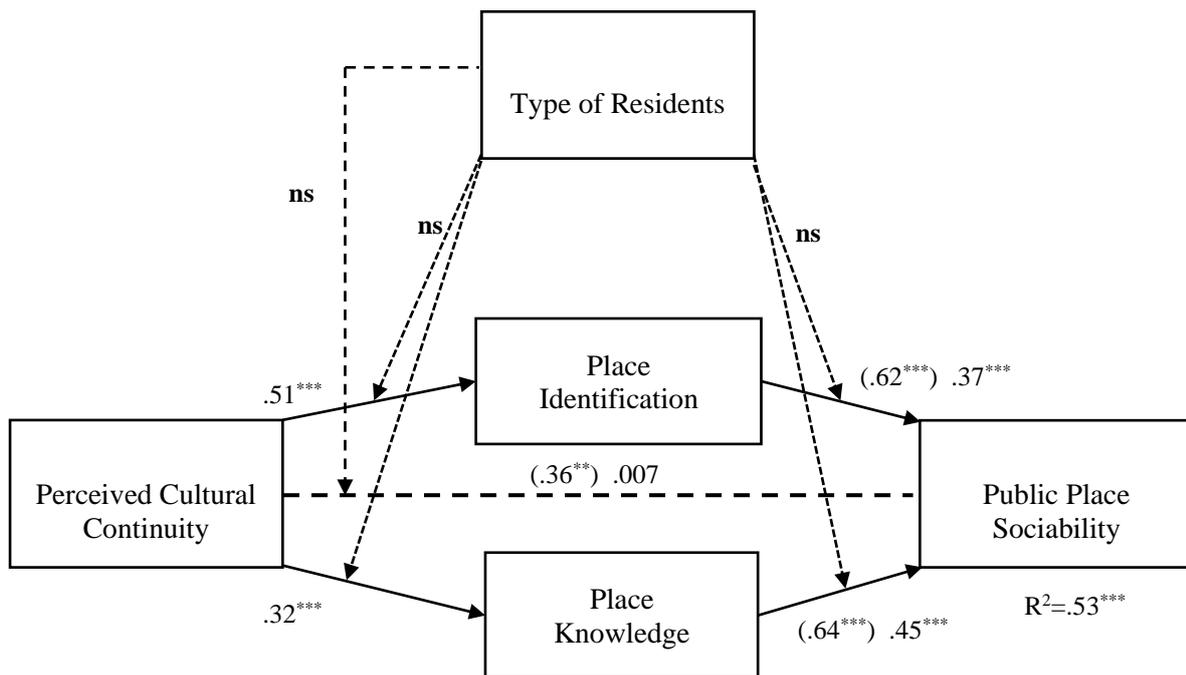
*Mediation model for the effect of perceived cultural continuity on public place sociability, with place identification and place knowledge as mediators*

Outcome (O)	Predictor (P)	Mediators (M)	Effect of P on M (a)	Effect of M on O (b)	Direct Effect (c')	Indirect Effect ab 95%CI	Total Effects (c)
Public place sociability	Perceived cultural continuity	Place Identification	.514***	.619***	.007 ns	<b>.365</b> .241;.489	.360
		Place Knowledge	.324***	.638***		<b>.446</b> .319;.573	
					$R^2 = .53^{***}$		$R^2 = .13^{***}$

Note. ns – non-significant; figures in bold are significant indirect effects (mediators)

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

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Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; ns – non-significant. Unstandardised regression coefficients for the relationship between perceived cultural continuity and public place sociability as mediated by identifying and knowing the neighbourhood. The unstandardised regression coefficient controlling for the two mediators is in parentheses. Type of residents as moderator (non-significant).

Figure 2. Effect of perceived cultural continuity on public place sociability, through place identification and place knowledge.

Finally, in order to validate our initial model by excluding other potential relationships between the main variables, we conducted in PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) two reverse mediation models. These tested: 1) if public place sociability predicts perceived cultural continuity and if this relationship is mediated by place identification and place knowledge; and 2) if place identification predicts public place sociability and this relationship is mediated by perceived cultural continuity and place knowledge. Both models suggested that neither the relationship

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between public place sociability and perceived cultural continuity, nor between place identification and public place sociability are mediated by the remaining variables<sup>1</sup>.

### Discussion

This article investigated the levels and the predictive capacity of some psychosocial factors that may be associated to residents' readiness to maintain the vibrant public space sociability of a traditional 'inner city' neighbourhood in a southern European city in the face of considerable social and environmental change, including urban regeneration and the influx of new residents bringing increased social diversity. We specifically explored three social psychological processes - the perceived cultural continuity of the place, place identification, and place knowledge – and how they helped predict public-place sociability in the context of a neighbourhood changed by a bottom-up/mixed model of regeneration. The study thus extends the analysis of the consequences of urban regeneration to the relational level, exploring associated place-related social-psychological processes. Our overall aim has been to clarify the nature of residents' responses to the dynamics of urban regeneration today transforming so many neighbourhoods of European cities. These are dramatically impacting on the everyday lives of their residents (Heath et al., 2017), displacing some of them (Davison et al., 2012; Lees, 2008), increasing local diversity and potentially eroding historically valued forms of a sociability shared in public - a sociability that both safeguards

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the first model, only the indirect effect via place identification is significant ( $b = .427$ ,  $SE = .085$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI} = .2584, .5947$ ), thus the results do not support the parallel mediational hypothesis (indirect effect via place knowledge:  $b = .142$ ,  $SE = .097$ , ns.). Regarding the second model, only the indirect effect via place knowledge is significant ( $b = .449$ ,  $SE = .065$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI} = .3208, .5777$ ), thus the results do not support the parallel mediational hypothesis (indirect effect via perceived cultural continuity:  $b = .008$ ,  $SE = .060$ , ns.).

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the city's public places as arenas of encounter amongst citizens (Viola, 2012) and serves as an antidote to loneliness (Buchecker, 2009) for many residents. More specifically, we sought to explore these responses in the context of a program conducted with a mixed/bottom-up regeneration policy, which sought to attract rather than impose diversity and gentrification, as the literature shows that the model used impacts psycho-social aspects (Heath et al., 2017).

First, our findings show that the pattern of people-place relations within the neighbourhood differs between the two types of residents compared, i.e. traditional and new gentrifiers: two groups of contrasting residence length (an average of 45 years *versus* 4 years). Even though both types of residents identified with the neighbourhood, know its history, and perceive some level of continuity of the neighbourhood's culture and traditions, the long-term residents show stronger place bonds and a higher perception of cultural continuity than new gentrifiers. Both types of residents also report using the public places to socialize, but once again the traditional residents report doing it more frequently.

These differences corroborate previous literature showing that living for a longer time in a neighbourhood leads to stronger people-place bonds (e.g. Lewicka, 2008). However, it should be highlighted that new gentrifiers also show significant levels of people-place bonds (place identification and knowledge), although living in the neighbourhood for a shorter time: as mentioned, an average of four years. These new dwellers seem to have a clear connection with the neighbourhood: and this connection from new gentrifiers and its reasons are a less studied issue in the literature. Given that the regeneration program of *Mouraria* has followed a mixed/bottom-up strategy that allowed social diversification through gentrification to happen in a gradual way (Malheiros et al., 2012; Tulumello, 2015), the presence of identification corroborates previous interview studies suggesting that these residents were attracted to the traditional lifestyle of the neighbourhood (Blanco et al., 2011; Oliveira & Padilla, 2017). They had the opportunity to hear about, and/or know and appreciate the area

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even before living there: as is the privilege and hall-mark of city life, where no impermeable borders prevent the citizen - dedicated *flaneur* or just casual passer-by -, to discover and explore different city areas of different reputations. This acquaintance with the area might have led them to assume that it reflected the type of person they were and that its public life expressed values and aspirations they shared.

Importantly, it has to be remarked that there were no moderation effects of type of resident on the parallel mediation model proposed and tested. The type of resident did not moderate the capacity of perceived cultural continuity, place identification and place knowledge regarding the prediction of public place sociability. The same predictive pattern was valid for both traditional residents and new gentrifiers, showing that the same psychosocial processes are similarly important for the two groups in explaining the decision to use the public places of the neighbourhood to socialize, and we view this as suggesting that these are strong processes. Even though the two groups differed regarding the self-reported strength of people-place bonds, new gentrifiers nevertheless reported a clear connection with the neighbourhood. Their acquaintance with the neighbourhood might have led them to perceive that it reflected the type of person they were and that its public life expressed values and aspirations they shared. In other words, feeling connected with the neighbourhood proved to be important for all residents, traditional and new gentrifiers, and, arguably for this reason, was predictive of both groups of residents' decision to socialize in public places. Reinforcing this conclusion, our regression model explained a substantive amount of variance in participants' self-reported place sociability behaviours.

Second, our findings provide some insights into the psychosocial processes that predict residents' use of public places to socialize. Perceiving the neighbourhood as retaining cultural continuity with the past predicts public place sociability, but this relationship is mediated by place identification and place knowledge. This shows how, although perceiving continuity

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may help *per se* to maintain old habits and encourage residents to perceive change as less threatening (Obradović & Howarth, 2018), residents may also actively create and sustain bonds to place through the appropriation and use of places and of their shared stories and memories, developing place identification and knowledge (Benages-Albert et al., 2015). These findings thus contribute to current understanding of the relationship between continuity and place identification. Extending previous research showing that (individual) sense of continuity predicts place identification (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010), our study demonstrates that a sense of collective continuity (i.e. perceiving a cultural continuity with the past of the community) fosters place identification, and this in turn mediates the relationship between continuity and reports of behaviour in place (e.g. use of public spaces for social interaction): it therefore suggests that collective continuity matters for the maintenance of previous traditional ways of socializing in changed places, but if people-place bonds are assured, this matters more.

The paper also contributes to research on place knowledge. Our findings show that place knowledge plays an important role in residents' use of public places to socialize, as a factor independent of place identity. They also reveal how the perception of collective continuity is associated with a better knowledge of the history and residents of a neighbourhood, which in turn help predict sociability in its public places. In sum, it highlights how familiarity with place developed by connecting with it through action and *relation* (Benages-Albert et al., 2015) leads to increasing appropriation and, by implication, may help to maintain the vibrant sociability of public places where this was already a tradition.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Taken together, then, what do these findings suggest for understanding the maintenance of public-place sociability in inner-city neighbourhoods regenerated through mixed-bottom-

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up policy models? They reveal the centrality of place identification, and the added relevance of place knowledge, aspects that, if assured, make the role of perceived continuity less central. This suggests that urban places can accommodate some transformation without losing their vibrant social life if protective mechanisms are assured for maintaining place identification and knowledge. This leads to two main observations.

The first observation is that one such protective mechanism seems to be the capacity for regeneration models to attract (relatively slow) influxes of newcomers, rather than force their entry. One limitation of the present study, in this regard, is the fact that we did not use a comparative design, testing the model here used also in a neighbourhood that – unlike Mouraria – had undergone a top-down regeneration process with imposed gentrification, and comparing the results. In Lisbon the pure top-down model is not being implemented in historical areas, and so we did a careful analysis and characterization of the context in which the present research was conducted, helpful in contextualizing the results. These suggest, as mentioned, that the regeneration model used in Mouraria might have favoured identification from newcomers, and even relatively high levels of perceived continuity. This moreover, extends previous analyses (Heath et al., 2017) that compared the effects of the two types of regeneration models, but did not compare the two types of residents that regeneration brings. However, it would now be important to now directly compare different regeneration models *and* residents, assessing whether under top-down, forced conditions of gentrification, new gentrifiers' place identification is less clear, older residents' identification is diminished, and both engage less in public place sociability, and/or whether there are moderation effects per type of resident, unlike what was found here.

The second observation is that these findings demonstrate how, in the city, processes of place identification are not self-contained. Urban frontiers are porous, and the reputation of neighbourhoods attracts visitors who may later become residents: if they do, some level of

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bonding to the new place might already be established. This reveals how the open movements, relations and conversations through which people construct the meanings and images of the cities over time can help form bonds to places where they do not live, and this is a heritage of attachment that public authorities should not ignore when developing regeneration policies, if they wish to assure that the neighbourhood will not be transformed in an “empty” place. In this regard, it should be acknowledged that a further limitation of the present study is the fact that we did not directly investigate the reasons new gentrifiers gave for living in *Mouraria*. Even though the literature highlights the importance of “elective belonging” (Davison et al., 2012; see also Blanco et al., 2011) and a previous interview study in *Mouraria* indicates that they choose it not just for still favourable rent prices, but also from a willingness to live in a more familiar and traditional environment (Bettencourt & Castro, 2015), it would have been relevant to examine whether their answers regarding the reasons for this choice were direct predictors of their place identification and knowledge, and social behaviour in place.

To summarize, we have sought to understand how the macro-level of urban policies is linked with the micro-level context of everyday sociability in public places where people connect, relate and bring neighbourhoods to life. We explored whether or not – and why – the well-intended macro-level changes of urban regeneration might disrupt this traditional feature of inner-city neighbourhoods, so characteristic of southern European cities. Our findings suggest that urban regeneration programs following a mixed/bottom-up strategy need not lead to a reduction in public space sociability. Even in a context of rapid urban regeneration, public places may continue to be shared by all, old and new residents, and in this sense may benefit the city and all citizens. It therefore seems that when neighbourhoods are perceived as retaining cultural continuity with the past, they may still be simultaneously changed and retain past social characteristics, if people continue to feel identified to them, and feel that

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they still know them. Future research could now focus on the next question: understanding to what extent the sociability in public places includes the interaction between the two groups of traditional and new gentrifiers.

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