



European tourist cities in transformation: constructing age-friendly tourism mobilities

Wilbert den Hoed

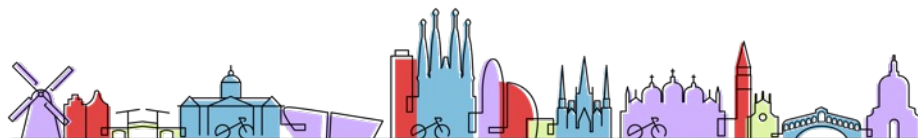
Departament de Geografia, Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV)
Grup de Recerca d'Anàlisi Territorial i Estudis Turístics (GRATET)

ENTOURAGE Seminar
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Content



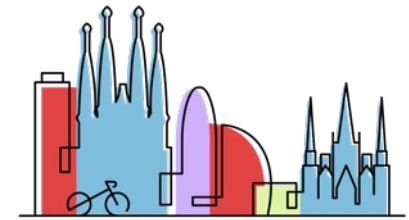
- 1) Introduction to the ENTOURAGE project**
- 2) Concepts, literature, and research methods**
- 3) Results I: Tourism impacts on later life mobilities**
- 4) Results II: Cycling mobility in Barcelona**
- 5) Conclusions and reflections**



Point of departure

ENTOURAGE: “European tourist cities in transformation: constructing age-friendly tourism mobilities”

- Tourism cities and mobilities inclusive of people of all ages
- Applying the Age-Friendly City model to tourist cities and sustainable urban mobility interventions (2021-2023)



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SMARTDEST

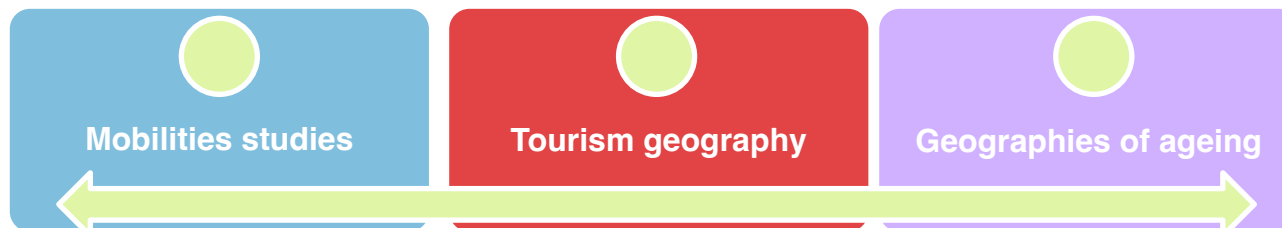


CITIES AS MOBILITY HUBS:
TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION THROUGH
"SMART" CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing

GRATET
RESEARCH GROUP ON TOURISM, AGEING, SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STUDIES



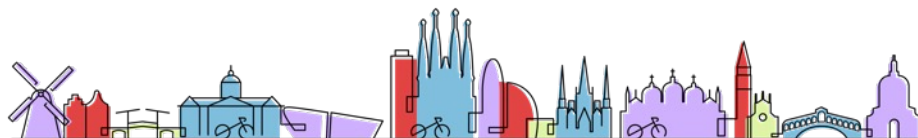
Introduction



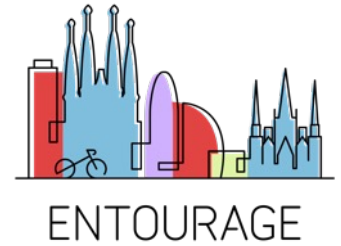
Aims of the project

Examine the prospects of an ‘age-friendly’ urban mobility in cities with high tourism attraction, addressing:

- 1) practices of **negotiation of urban space**: how older visitors and residents in tourist cities negotiate tourism spaces and engage in sustainable urban mobility
- 2) the **production of urban space** through the perspective of mobile and less mobile communities, to understand mobilities’ potentially marginalising role
- 3) the **discourses around social inclusion and age diversity** that underpin strategies for urban transformation and sustainable mobility

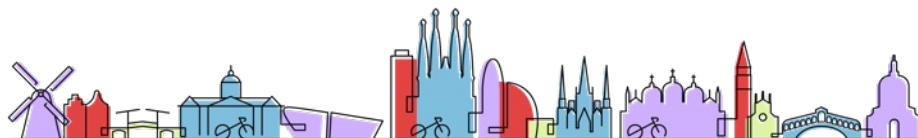


Introduction



Aims of the project (TL;DR)

What can we learn from older adults' active mobility practices and experiences?



Introduction



Aims of the project (TL;DR)

What can we learn from older adults' active mobility practices and experiences?



What can we learn from older adults' active mobility practices and experiences **in the tourist city**?

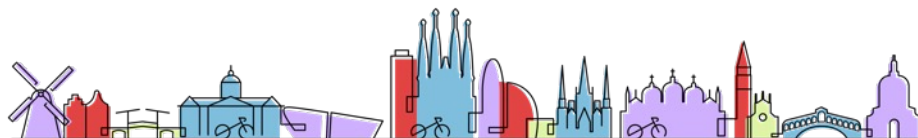
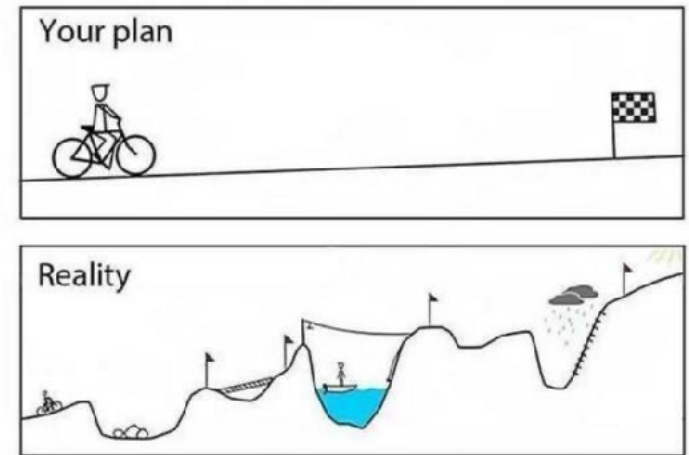


Introduction



From initial aims to the research reality

- 1) The embodied experience of active mobility in tourist places: negotiations, exclusions and stuckness (walking and cycling in Barcelona and Venice)
- 2) The 'unfinished' cycling city: how to include cycling in age-inclusive urban mobility futures? (cycling in Barcelona)
- 3) The cycling visitor? Users, motivations and barriers for wheeled tourist mobilities



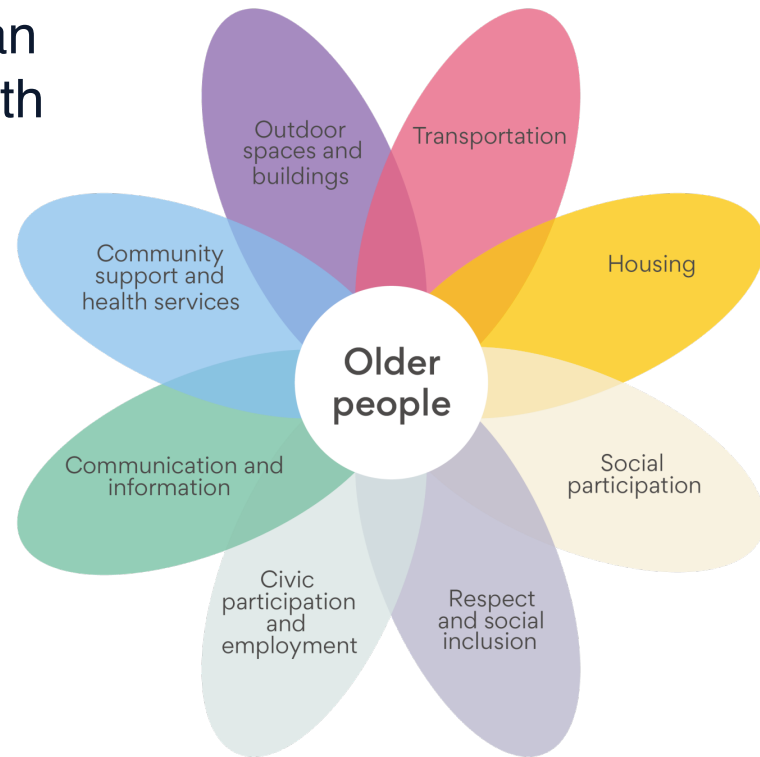
Ageing and urban change



Why “Age-friendly” active mobility?

An **integrative framework** to address the urban changes that resident populations are faced with in an era of population ageing:

- Exclusionary mobilities that compromise accessibility and (older) residents’ participation opportunities
- Invisibility in research on urban change (Buffel & Phillipson, 2019) and on active mobility needs (Musselwhite et al., 2015)
- Mobility opportunities depend on the lifecourse & the ability to sustain behaviour into later life (Nordbakke & Schwanen, 2014; Berg et al., 2014)



Source: Centre for Ageing Better, 2021



Ageing and urban change



Why “Age-friendly” active mobility?

Walking, cycling and wheeling are **green, clean, and crucial to access** functional activities, other travel modes, leisure, creates health and well-being benefits & provides a sense of freedom, independence and relaxation (Luiu et al., 2017)

Untapped potential of **social, mental and physical health benefits** of cycling for transportation by older adults (Tsonuda et al., 2015; Van Cauwenberg et al., 2018)

Particularly **cycling has a narrow older age demographic** while:

- Health benefits of taking up cycling are higher among older adults, e.g. cognitive functions, ill-health prevention (Götschi et al., 2016)
- Only increasing cycling’s modal share does not lead to a more inclusive cycling culture (Aldred et al., 2015)
- Indications of **low priority for older people** in existing planning approaches to cycling equity (Cunha et al., 2023)



Ageing and urban change



Why “Age-friendly” active mobility?

Beyond infrastructure: a modal shift to active mobility depends on people’s mobile biography & the ability to sustain behaviour into later life

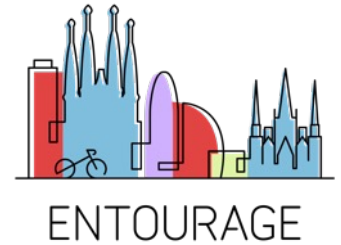
“Build it and who comes?”

“[a] good quality cycling environment may be a necessary but not sufficient condition” (Aldred, 2015: 93)

“The high cycling rate in the Netherlands is not a result of a large number of people having chosen to give up their cars and start cycling instead, but rather the result of people who grew up cycling and who continue to do so” (Bruno & Nikolaeva, 2020: 8)

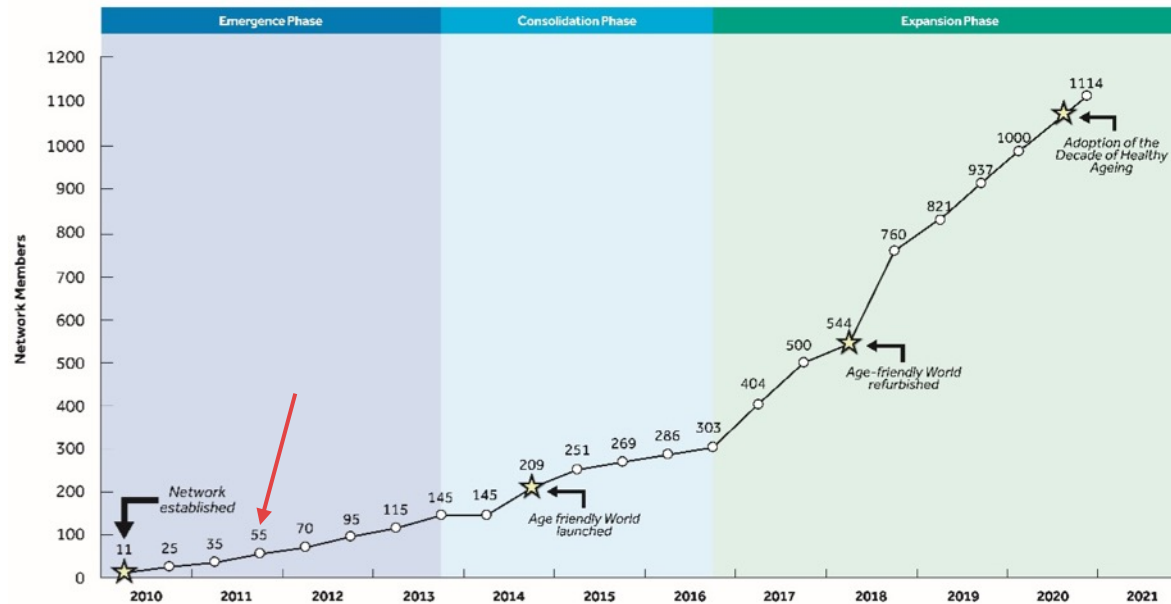


Ageing and urban change

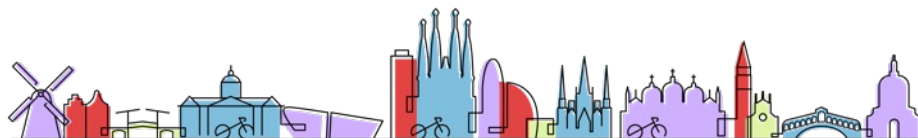


Age-friendly Cities (AFC)

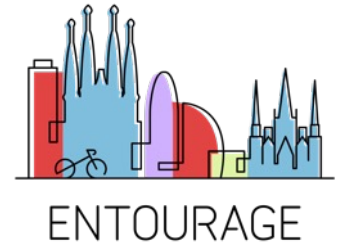
- Network of cities founded in 2007 (World Health Organisation)
- 2020: 1100 cities in 44 countries



Source: Rémillard-Boilard, Buffel & Phillipson, 2019

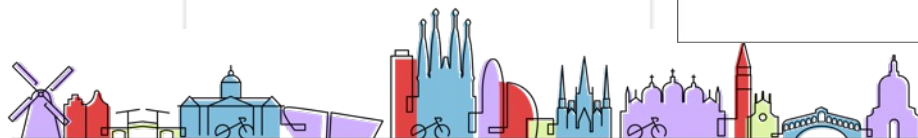


Ageing and urban change

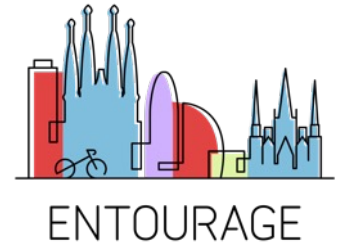


AFC Barcelona

- 2011 – : commitment to horizontal integration of age-friendliness (*amigabilitat*) in municipal policies



Ageing & tourist mobilities



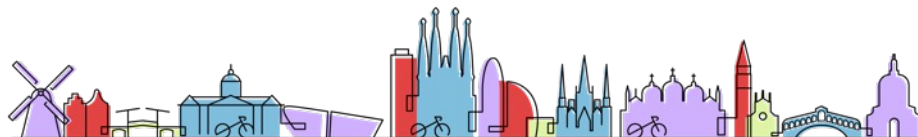
Backdrop: the tourist city

Intense concentrations of visitor flows and economies, possibly culminating into overtourism (Milano, Cheer & Novelli, 2019)

- 1) Struggle for public space and exclusionary tourist mobilities, reducing residents' accessibility and quality of life
- 2) Related excesses: noise, dirtiness, air pollution, loss of local services, labour market precarity, lack of affordable housing,

E.g. Barcelona: 11-14% of daily trips are done by tourists

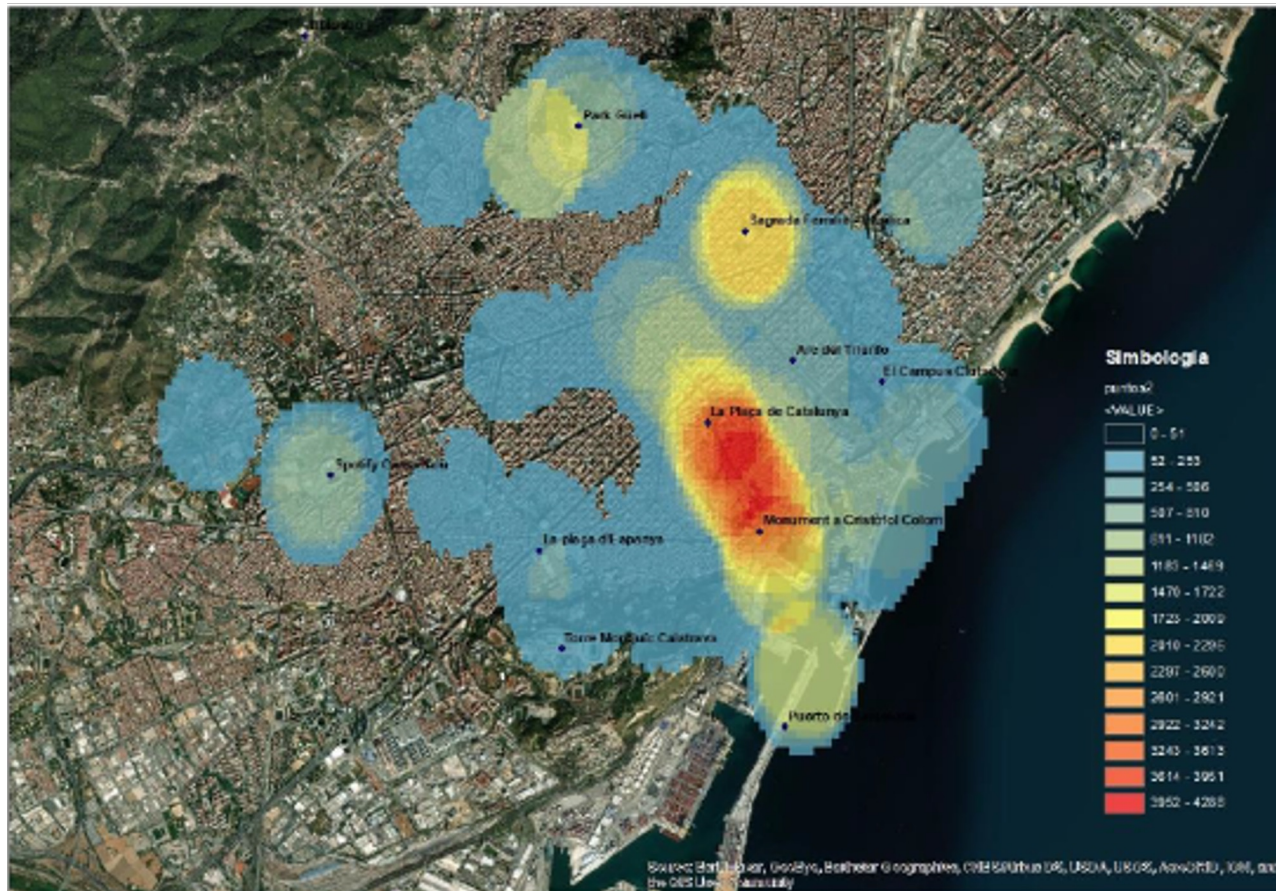
(Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2020)



Ageing & tourist mobilities



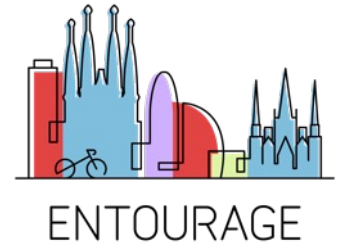
Research context: the tourist city



Concentration example:
Spaces used by
independent cruise
passengers



Ageing & tourist mobilities



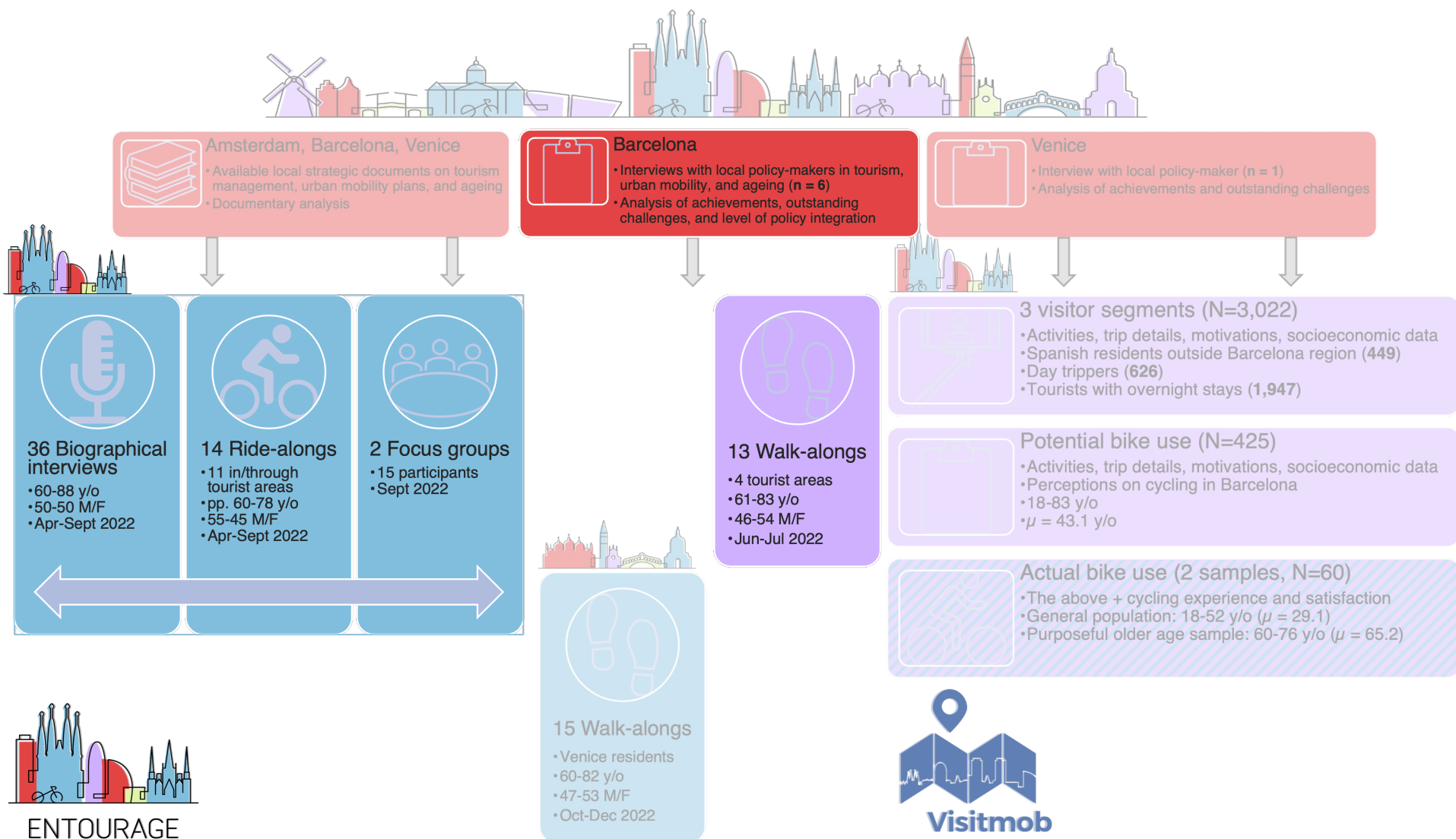
Why are they combined challenges?

Tourist-oriented economies may put pressure on:

- Sense of belonging and local familiarity (Sánchez-Ledesma et al., 2020)
- Levels of environmental press (Lager et al., 2013)
- Housing and intergenerational living (Cocola-Gant & López-Gay, 2020)
- Older residents staying behind in gentrified areas (Buffel & Phillipson, 2019)
- Emotional state and physical exclusion (Quinn, 2007)



Research design



Research design

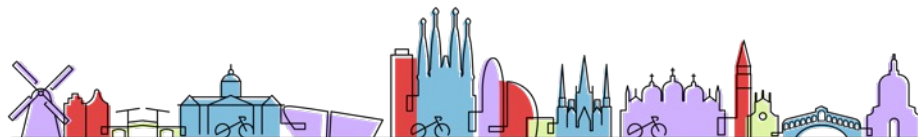


Data collection techniques

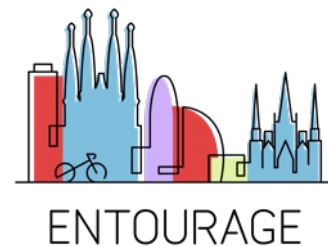
- Analysis of policy documents and expert interviews
- In-depth biographical interviews with people over 60 who cycle: lifecourse approach to (active) mobility behaviour
- Go-along interviews (walking and cycling): mobility interactions with the built environment and visitor pressures
- GPS-tracking, photo and video as support and elicitation tools
- Focus group sessions to confirm results



Source: Centre for Ageing Better



Research design



Data collection techniques

Go-along interviews (walking and cycling)



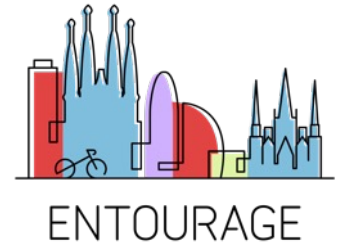
Cycling in Barcelona



Walking in Venice



Research context



Ageing, tourism & urban mobility transitions in Barcelona

- Promotion of active/sustainable urban mobility
- City-wide street transformations
- High level of tourist inflow, swift return to 2019 levels
- Strict regulations to non-residents' use of cycling and micro-mobilities
- Continuing centrality of automobility in most zones



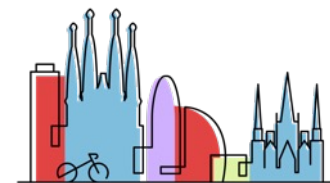
Source: El Periódico, 2019



Source: Author, 2022

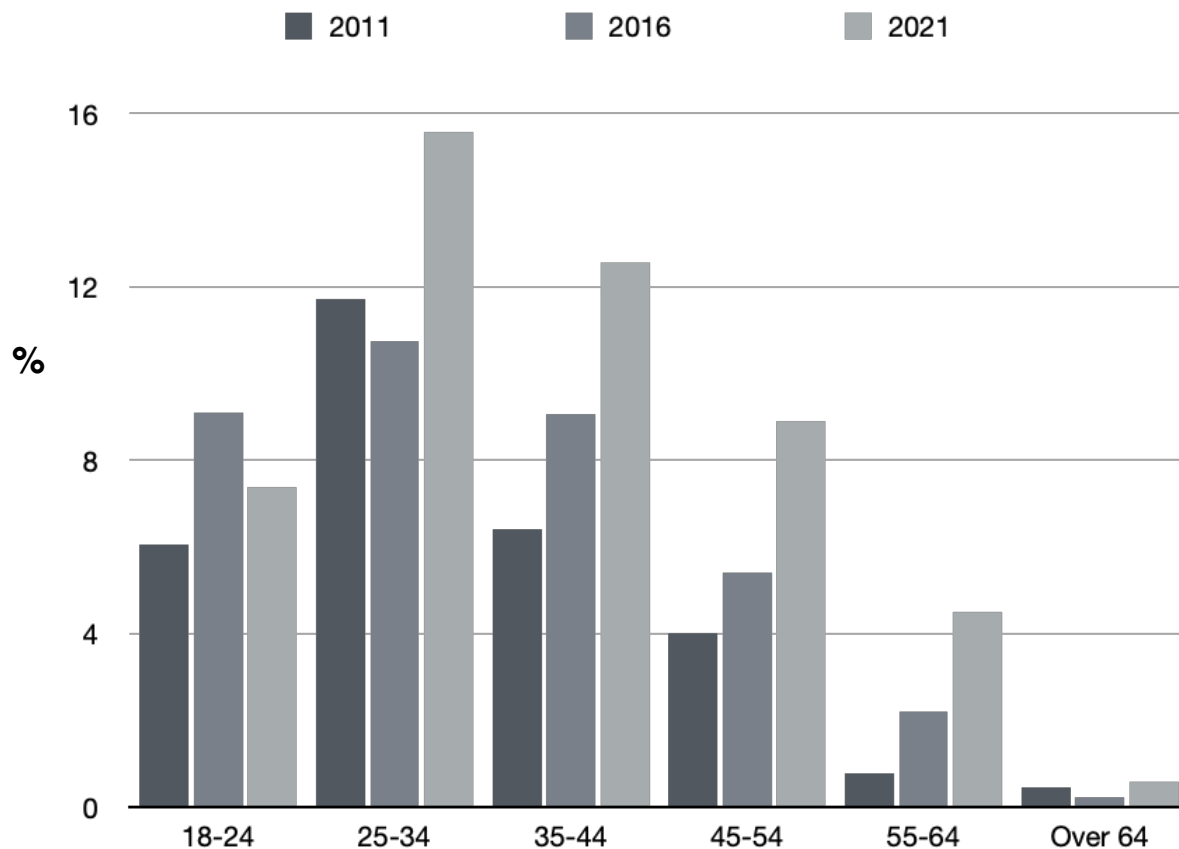


Research context



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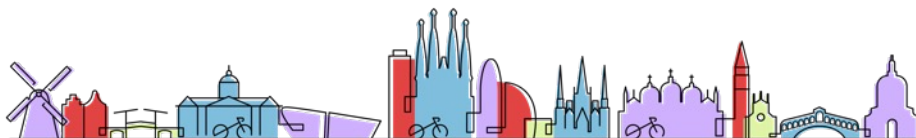
Case Barcelona: the cycling demographic



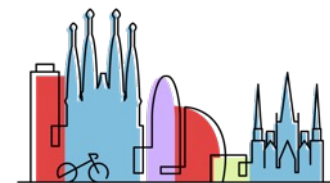
Q: Which transport mode do you use most often to go to your principal activities

A: Bicycle (own or shared)

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona 2022



Research context



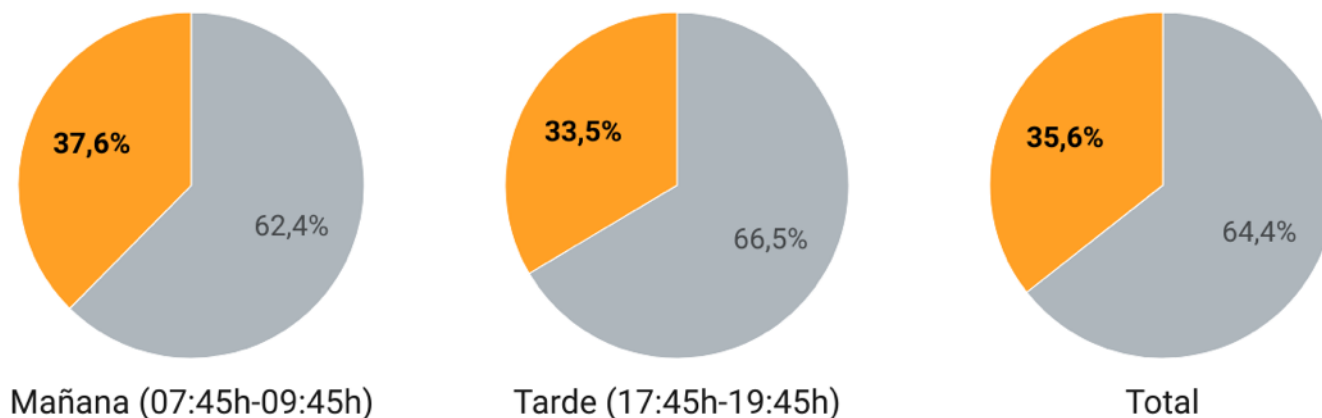
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Case Barcelona: the cycling demographic

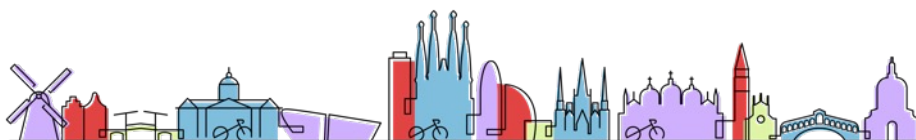
Brecha de género en los carriles bici

En porcentaje (%) sobre el total de usuarios

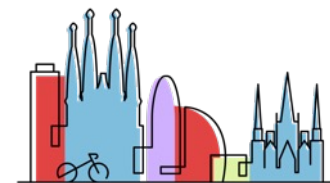
■ Hombre
■ Mujer



Source: Bicicleta Club de Catalunya, 2022

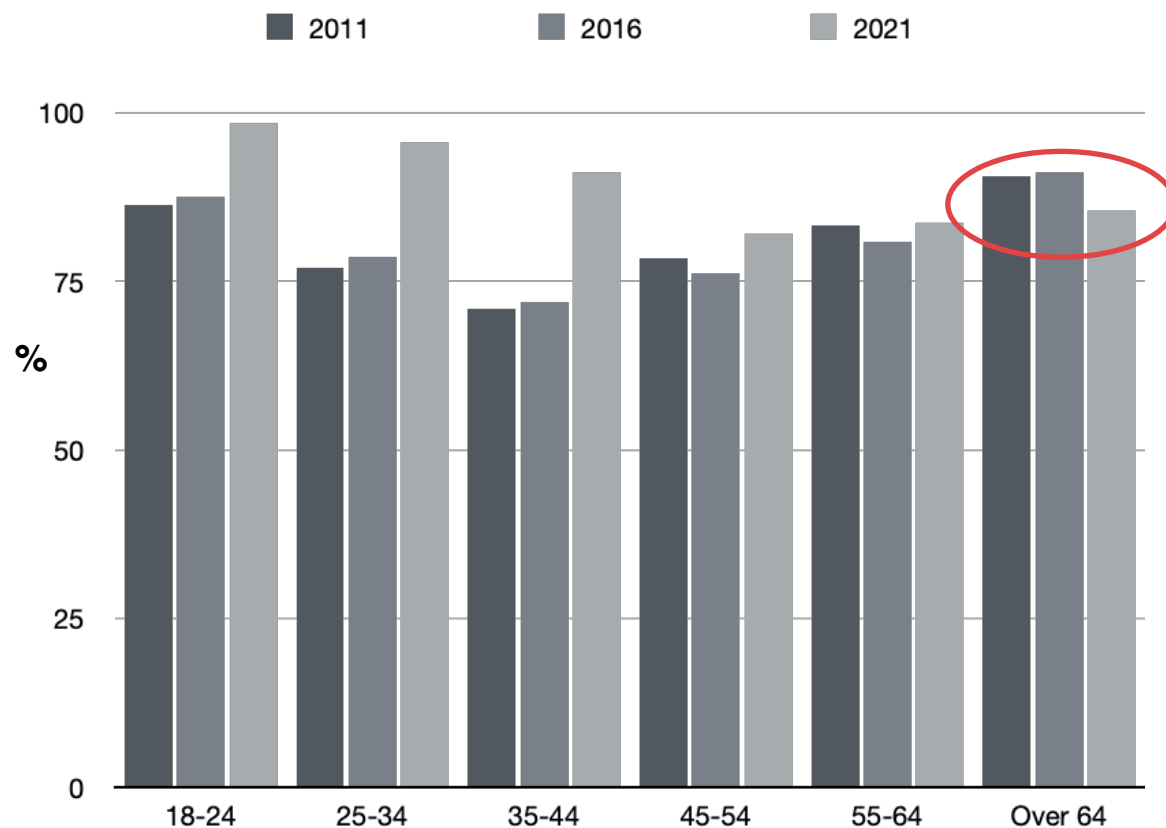


Research context



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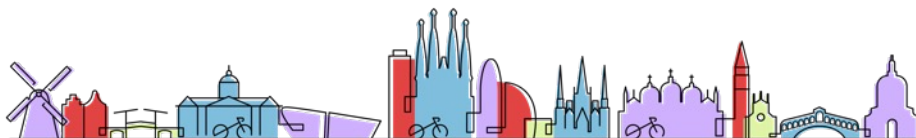
Case Barcelona: Sustainable urban mobility promotion



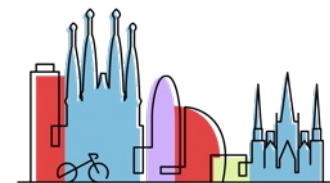
Q: Which transport mode do you use most often to go to your principal activities

A: Sustainable transport (i.e. walking, cycling, PT)

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona 2022



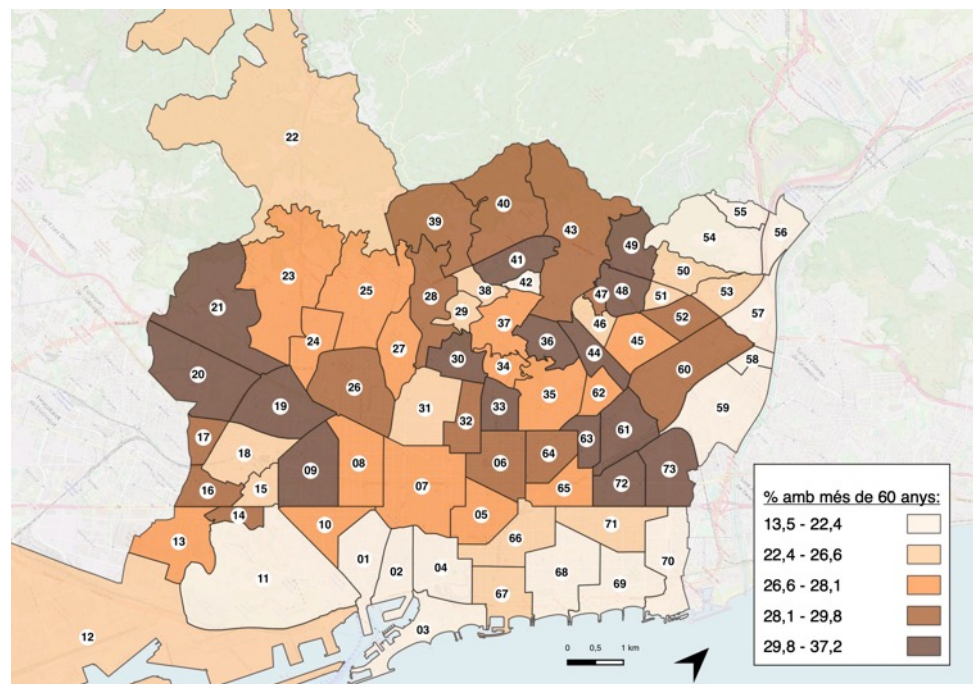
Research context



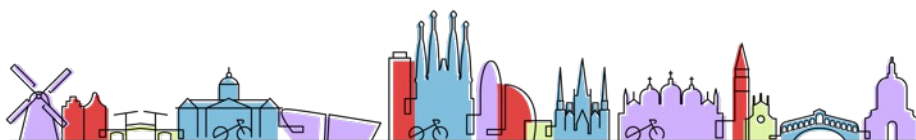
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Case Barcelona: a young and vibrant city?

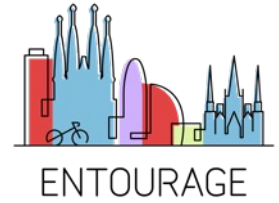
- **2018:** 21% older than 65
- **2030:** 32% older than 65
- Large neighbourhood differences (2021 data)



Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona (2022)



Results



I. The embodied experience of active mobility in tourist places



Results

I. Active mobility in tourist places



Results

I. Active mobility in tourist places



**Interactions with tourist
collectives**



Results

I. Active mobility in tourist places



Interactions with tourist collectives (when cycling)

"This is a street for pedestrians [10 km/h zone, ed.]. In fact, there are a lot of people stepping down from the pavement. (...) Las Ramblas is something else. It's a 30 [km/h] street. Here you can't go very fast either. You can get a scare and you have to watch out. You have to be very attentive to everything."

Lluís (67), El Raval



Results

I. Active mobility in tourist places



**Interactions
with
automobility
infrastructures**

Carles (72), Portal de la Pau / La Rambla



Results

I. Active mobility in tourist places



Simón (64), La Rambla



Vera (78), Plaça Catalunya

Embodied responses:

- Adaptation
- Avoidance
- Suffering
- Physical negotiations: swerving, dismounting, joining pedestrian or car traffic

Dependency:

- Physical capability
- Immobility and avoidance



Results



I. Active mobility in tourist places

"Since a while I'm no longer going through the Old Town, the last time I fell due to tourists who hit me. I rode on the cycle lane when a tourist crossed and hit my back wheel from the side and let me fall. They just passed and kept pedalling. Other cyclists helped me, it was a hit to my knee that took me a few days to recover from."

(Olga, F, 67, Sant Antoni)

Embodied responses:

- Adaptation
- Avoidance
- Suffering
- Physical negotiations: swerving, dismounting, joining pedestrian or car traffic

Dependency:

- Physical capability
- Immobility and avoidance



Results



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The everyday urban cyclist as tourism performer

- Connecting to rural and coastal areas
- Sensory experiences, urban anecdotes
- Speed suited to traverse the city and enjoy its historical buildings, green spaces, beaches



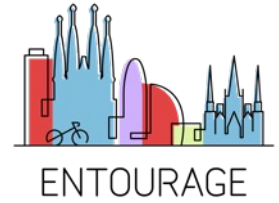
"I'm exploring to see how far I can go, also to see what mobility I have by bike. Nowadays I take the bike and go up to Montjuïc or to El Prat. There are a few wonderful paths, all the El Prat Delta area beside the airport."

Raquel (65), cycling since 2021

"The good thing about cycling is that you see the city and enjoy it in a different way. And that's very interesting, as we are so used to riding at full speed, you don't see things anymore. I always like to look. Well, look, here there is a roof patio with a parasol (*points upwards*). I'm always looking at the rooftops. They are curious places."

Sebastián (60), Central Eixample when cycling to his favourite bakery in Gràcia

Results



- I. The embodied experience of active mobility in tourist places**
- II. The ‘unfinished’ cycling city: how to include cycling in age-inclusive urban mobility futures?**



II. The ‘unfinished’ cycling city: how to include cycling in age-inclusive urban mobility futures?

Spaces for cycling (in later life)

Cycling normalisation over the lifecourse

Qualities of cycling in later life



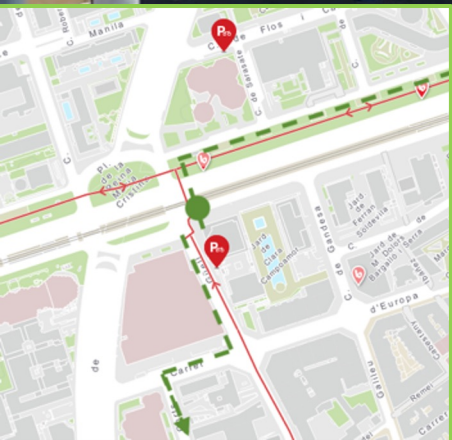
Results

Spaces for cycling in later life



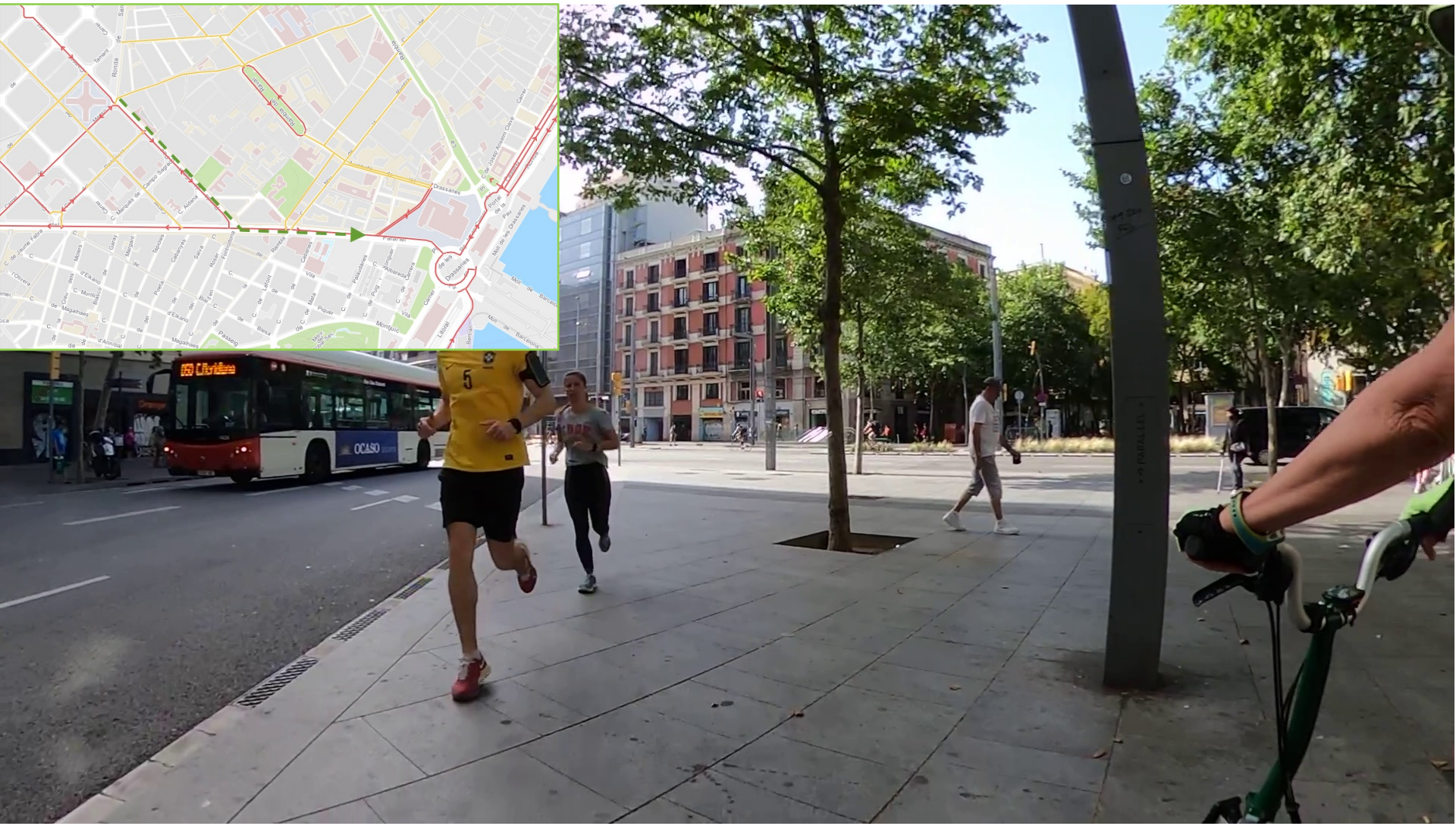
Results

Spaces for cycling in later life



Results

Spaces for cycling in later life



Results

Spaces for cycling in later life



Results

Spaces for cycling in later life



Results

Spaces for cycling in later life



Results



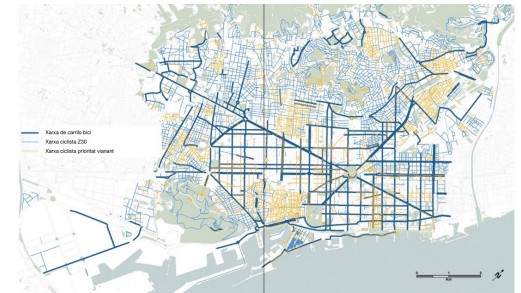
Spaces for cycling in later life

- On the road (2-5 lanes)
- On the cycle lane (different widths)
- On the cycle lane (uni- / bi-directional)
- Shared streets (/ sharrows, 30 km/h)
- Shared streets (20 km/h)
- Shared streets (10 km/h)
- Shared pavements
- Single platform streets
- Single platform streets (counterflow)
- Pedestrian crossings
- Open squares
- Superblocks

"The safety on the bike lanes partly depends on the other vehicles that get on it. Other bikes, e-scooters, skateboards and all sorts. Sometimes they provoke you, or in any case they overtake you at touching distance, at high speed."

Carles* (72), Sant Antoni

*all participant names are pseudonymised



Spaces for cycling in later life

Interactions with the urban environment

- Gaps, inconsistencies and discontinuities in cycling spaces, missing connections and signage
- User behaviour (on the cycle lane and outside)
- Physical and cognitive environmental pressures
- Social, temporal, and spatial negotiations to avoid the above

Cycling normalisation over the lifecourse

Qualities of cycling in later life



II. Age-inclusive cycling

Spaces for cycling (in later life)

Cycling normalisation over the lifecourse

Qualities of cycling in later life



Cycling normalisation over the lifecycle

- Early experiences in rural and coastal areas, but initial hesitation to cycle in the city (1980s until now)
- Triggers over the lifecycle: relocation, new job, older children, health situation, (approaching) retirement, self-challenge
- Other triggers: first cycle lanes (2000s), expansion of cycle lanes, public rental system (*Bicing*) (**urban environment**); significant others (incl. grandchildren), role models (**social environment**)
- Adapting cycling practices, paces and rhythms to new capabilities as people age, ensuring continued uptake in future mobility

"I admire a couple who are very old, in their eighties, and still cycle. In some cases they are still going and I want to be like them."

Simón (64), Sant Pere about his role models



Cycling normalisation over the lifecycle

Interactions with the urban environment

Cycling normalisation over the lifecycle

Qualities of cycling in later life



Qualities of cycling in later life

- Maintaining mobility without polluting or doing harm, going “under your own steam”
- Flexibility to adapt cycles and cycling practices to health status, physical strength, openness to recreation and enjoyment
- Social and mental health benefits, intergenerational activity



Results



Qualities of cycling in later life

- Maintaining mobility without polluting or doing harm, going “under your own steam”
- Flexibility to adapt cycles and cycling practices to health status, physical strength, openness to recreation and enjoyment
- Social and mental health benefits, intergenerational activity

“I even feel young, sometimes I have to tell myself ‘hey, I’m 67 years old, I can’t do crazy things’. It must be something that makes me feel like the young girl who always rode her bicycle in the summer (...) I even had an accident because I forgot how old I am. I did a race with my grandson. And I started to race, I really wanted to win. And of course, when my granddaughter called me, I braked and fell over. I forgot that I don’t have the age to race against a ten-year-old.” – Eva (67), La Ribera



Conclusions

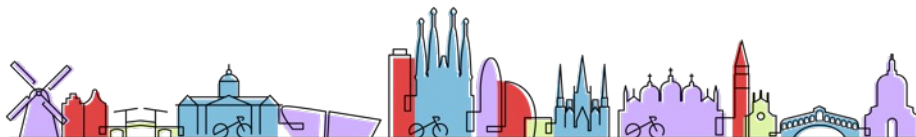


About age-friendly cycling mobility...

Learning from the cycling uses and practices of groups who are less likely to cycle for everyday mobility is essential for a **transition towards inclusive and equitable sustainable urban mobility**.

A view on cycling over the lifecourse shows **mobility as assemblage of journeys, independent functional or leisure activities**, driven by health, socialisation and positive ageing motives, and creating aspirations and intrinsic qualities to maintain later life mobility.

Approaching **mobility futures taking an age-friendly approach** offers a way to integrate healthy and environmentally friendly behaviours beyond the transport sphere, notably in public health, active ageing, social participation and economic activity.



Conclusions



About impacts of tourism mobilities...

- **Visitor mobilities have entered all spaces of everyday life:** mobility, housing, commercial activity, public space, social life, ...
- **Socio-biographical aspect:** habituation and adaptation to cope with tourism and tourist mobilities impacts; use of embodied skills and tactics, but often appealing to physical and cognitive abilities
- **Design matters!** Spatial transformations to support active mobility are not always easy to use if surrounded by overcrowding and car-centric environment (narrow pavements, noise, danger, parking space)
- **Diverse impacts between neighbourhoods and travel modes** (walking, cycling): speeds, negotiation tactics, rhythms of visitor mobilities, 'fleeing' opportunities

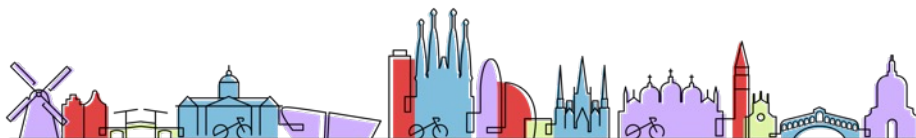


Conclusions



Research and policy questions

- How to manage/revert **the entry of tourist mobilities into new (active) mobility infrastructures**, appropriating them as tourist spaces (e.g. newly pedestrianised areas, cycle lanes)?
- How to **advance the needs and voices** of the groups affected by urban mobility transitions and visitor pressures? How to push the discourse **away from vulnerability and towards agency and inclusion?**
- Are growth trends of tourism & mobility part of **sustainable and inclusive urban development paths?**
- Role of **geographies and spatial scales**: varying scale of tourism impacts and affected daily mobilities

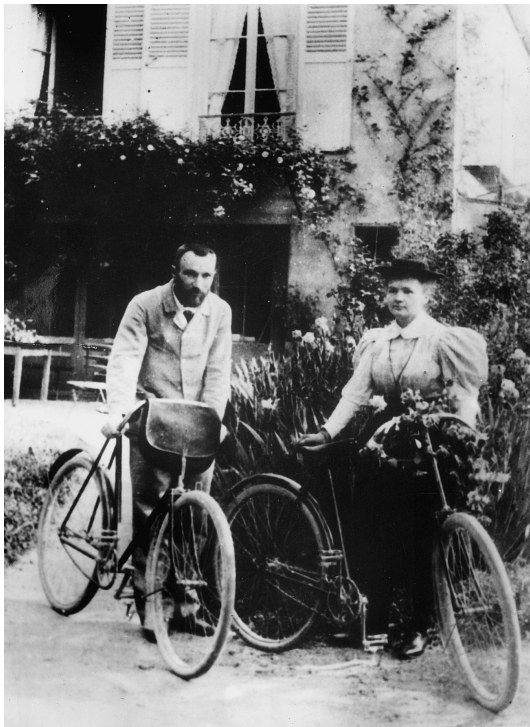


Thanks for your attention!

✉ wilbert.denhoed@urv.cat

🌐 agefriendlycycling.city

X @wilbert_dh



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