

## Rediscovering the Mediterranean Urban Identity: Introducing Recently Launched Academic Journal

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### ABSTRACT

The Mediterranean region, known for its history and diverse cultures has shaped a unique urban landscape influenced by geography, weather and traditions. Surprisingly there has been limited exploration into this special urban environment. The recent launch of the Journal of Mediterranean Cities marks a step in addressing this oversight. By focusing on five themes—Water and Land, Housing and Communities, Heritage & Traditional Studies, Environment and Sustainability and Education—the journal provides a thorough platform for exploring the intricacies of Mediterranean urban planning. This article highlights the journal's role, in Undertaking issues faced by Mediterranean cities promoting interdisciplinary studies and contributing to sustainable urban development solutions.

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### 1. Introduction

The Mediterranean region, known for its historical heritage showcases a blend of diverse cultural, social and environmental factors (Altman & Portilla 2014). Despite its importance scholarly focus on Mediterranean cities has been fragmented in the past lacking an approach to address the specific challenges and opportunities they offer (Holfelder, R. L., & Malkin, I. 2015). The establishment of the Journal of Mediterranean Cities signifies a step towards bridging this gap by providing a platform for, in-depth academic exploration. The urban identity of Mediterranean cities is multi-faceted encompassing their roots architectural significance, socio-economic frameworks and environmental landscapes

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(Hastaoglou-Martinidis, 2011). Each city narrates a tale of human settlement, adaptation and resilience; however, these narratives have often been ignored or insufficiently examined in scholarly works. The Journal of Mediterranean Cities seeks to address this lacuna by promoting an understanding of these urban settings.



Figure 1. Map of the Mediterranean Sea and the Major cities around it.

This article discusses the themes covered by the journal showing how it can fill existing gaps and inspire research. By exploring topics like interactions between water and land communities and dwellings heritage and vernacular studies, environment and sustainability as well as the education we emphasize the importance of focused academic attention in these areas. This approach will lead to an understanding and more informed actions within the urban context of the Mediterranean.

## 2. The Importance of the “Journal of Mediterranean Cities”

The “Journal of Mediterranean Cities” will play an important role in academia by providing a dedicated platform for research solely focused methodologically on urban life and heritage preservation in the “Mediterranean region”. This specialized focus allows for a more nuanced comprehension of the unique challenges and opportunities present in this area by referring to the fact that it often gets ignored in broader urban studies.

Furthermore, the journal will ensure that high-quality research is published to advance knowledge in this context. This severe evaluation process enhances the credibility and impact of the journal establishing it as an authority on studies related to urban life. The journal will play a role in advancing evidence-based policies and practices to tackle urban challenges in the region.

## 3. The Journal's Thematic Scope

### 3.1. Water and Land

#### 3.1.1. Port-Cities

“Port cities” have always been crucial to the Mediterranean region. It acts as centre for trade, cultural interactions and economic activities. These urban hubs have not just facilitated the movement of goods and people it also been hotspots for the sharing of cultures and creativity. Undertaking challenges such as erosion, marine pollution and economic differences is essential for ensuring the lasting wealth of port

cities (Fameli et al., 2020). Moreover, exploring port cities in the Mediterranean setting can offer insights into coastal areas globally. By examining examples and classifying best practices researchers can contribute to a broader knowledge of how to sustainably manage and grow these vital urban spaces. Therefore, this thematic emphasis is vital for developing strategies that support these cities in thriving among contemporary problems.

### 3.1.2. Coastlines Revitalization

The Mediterranean coast well known for its natural beauty is under threat from urban growth, pollution, rising sea levels, etc (Catalán, Saurí, & Serra, 2008). These issues are deteriorated by the region's popularity as a tourist hotspot often leading to development and harm to the environment. To revitalize these coastlines innovative eco-political governance is needed, incorporating studies on blue initiatives to support sustainable coastal communities in Mediterranean regions (Trombadore, 2020).



**Figure 2.** Barcelona's revitalized coastline.

A vital focus area is the preservation and rehabilitation of habitats like wetlands that play a vital role in the protection of the coastal regions from erosion and floods. Understanding the functions of these environments through research can guide strategies for their protection and refurbishment. Moreover, promoting tourism practices can help balance economic advantages and environmental conservation.

### 3.1.3. Eco-Political Studies and Governance in Littoral Territories

These regions often encounter challenges such as conflicting interests among stakeholders, fragmented regulations and environmental vulnerabilities. Effective governance models are crucial, for harmonizing conservation with economic development by ensuring fair resource allocation. Studying this field can offer insights into the instruments and methods that support effective governance.

## 3.2. Infrastructure and Mobility

Infrastructure and transportation play crucial roles in the lives of cities in the Mediterranean region especially concerning connectivity and accessibility. The unique “geographical characteristics” of the region like its landscapes and extensive coastlines pose both challenges and opportunities for infrastructure advancement. One significant area, for investigation is establishing transportation systems that prioritize sustainability and accessibility. This journal by studying environmentally friendly modes of transport in cities can improve understanding of traffic congestion enhance air quality and elevate residents' overall quality of life.

### **3.3. Local and Global Migrations in Mediterranean Cities**

The presence of “immigrants” has had an impact on the cultural diversity and vibrancy of Mediterranean cities. Throughout history, these cities have been influenced by factors such as economic breaks, political tensions and environmental conditions (Kebsi, 2019). It is essential to understand how both local and international migrations affect development to create inclusive policies that promote social cohesion economic growth and housing solutions. Research into immigration can investigate the economic dynamics of migrant communities and their roles in city life (Salvati, 2021). This Journal aimed to include aspects like employment, education, housing availability and community unity. By recognizing the obstacles as well as the advantages linked to migration experts can shape policies that facilitate the integration of migrants, into their new communities.

## **4. Dwelling and Communities**

### **4.1. Housing and Population Crisis**

The housing problem in the Mediterranean region is deteriorated due to population growth, economic uncertainty, migration trends, etc., (Cividino Egidi, & Salvati, 2020). This challenge is marked by a lack of housing, overcrowding and unsatisfactory living conditions. To tackle this issue effectively we need housing solutions that, are budget-friendly eco friendly and provide to the diverse needs of communities. It is important to see research, on the housing crisis should investigate its root causes and potential remedies. This involves studying how government policies, market forces and socio-economic aspects influence housing outcomes. By analytical approaches to boost housing accessibility and improve affordability, researchers can contribute to creating more inclusive housing strategies.

### **4.2. Adaptive and Responsive Housing**

In urban development, it's crucial to have housing models that can adapt to changing demographic and environmental factors. These models could focus on flexibility, resilience and user-centred design to meet the growing needs and challenges of housing. Research in this field can guide the creation of housing solutions that cater to altering community needs and climate conditions. An important feature is developing housing units that are easy to modify or expand. This involves exploring construction methods, multipurpose spaces and innovative building materials.

### **4.3. Gentrification Strategies**

Exploring strategies for handling gentrification can help strike a balance, between progress and social fairness which have already been highlighted in the scope of this journal. Even though gentrification is often linked to renewal, it can also result in social inequalities and displacement. Gentrification typically involves residents moving into lower-income neighbourhoods leading to increased property values and living expenses (Hayes & Zaban 2020) resulting in weakening the social cohesion of communities.



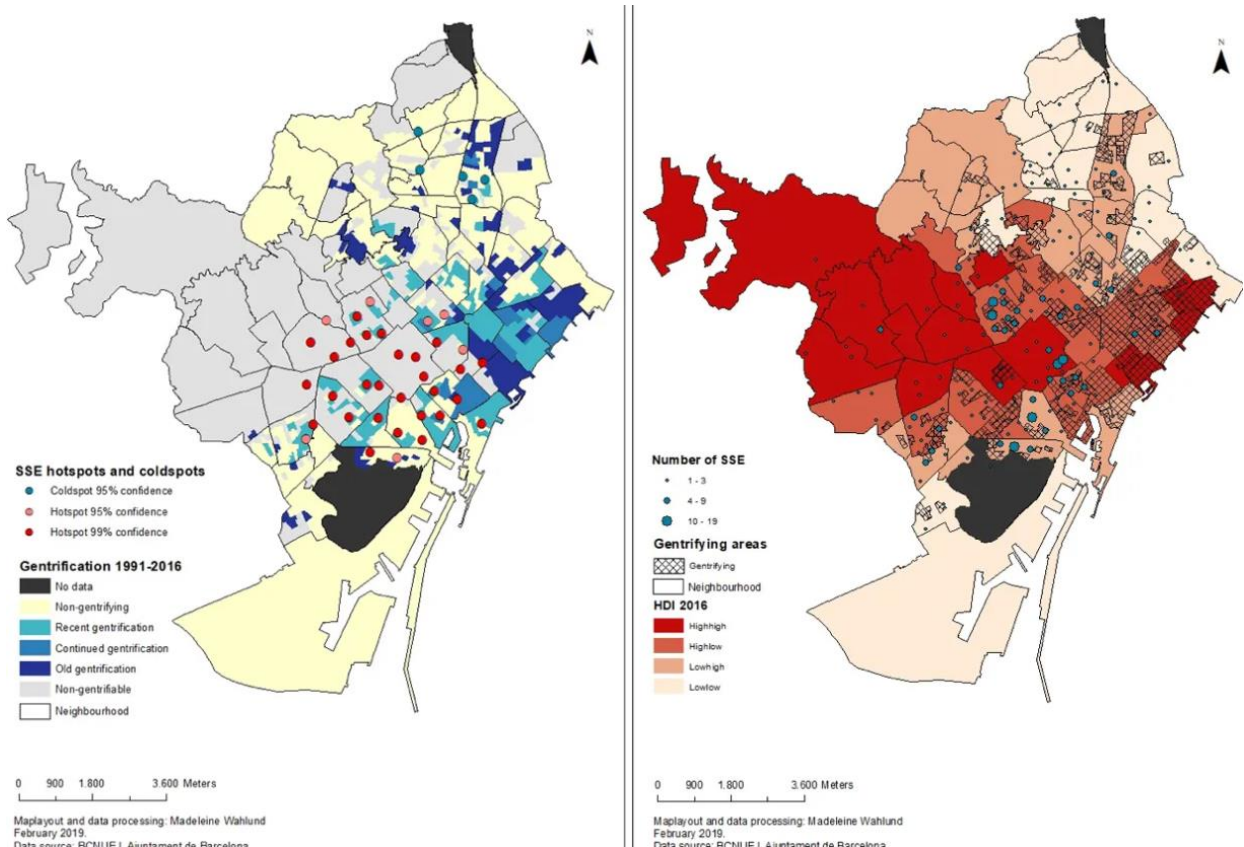


Figure 3. Gentrification in Barcelona.

#### 4.4. Social Housing and Affordability

Social housing initiatives are vital for providing suitable housing for marginalized communities. These efforts aim to tackle housing disparities by offering subsidized housing choices for those with low incomes. This journal aimed to assess social housing models to develop policy and action towards creating more diverse urban spaces. As promised in the journal studies on housing can explore various methods of delivering affordable housing, including public housing, and non-profit organizations. By highlighting social housing researchers this journal would influence the formulation of policies that enhance “affordability” and “equality” in housing.

#### 4.5. Formal and Informal Development

It is vital to comprehend the relationship between Informal growth to craft urban policies that are both inclusive and sustainable. Investigations into settlements can investigate the socioeconomic factors driving unstructured growth as well as the problems faced by residents. This involves examining issues like land ownership, access to services and public integration. By publishing studies to enhance informal settlements and integrate them into the wider urban landscape researchers can contribute to the understanding of policies that increase inclusive urban progress in the Mediterranean context.

### 5. Heritage & Vernacular Studies

#### 5.1. Heritage and Architecture

Studying heritage and architecture as it has been highlighted here can investigate the challenges and prospects of safeguarding structures and locations. This involves exploring preservation methods,

strategies for reuse and the significance of heritage in revitalizing areas. By analytical approaches to conserving heritage researchers can propose policies, outlines and methods that strike a balance, between preservation and present-day needs.

### **5.2. Heritage and the City**

The connection, between heritage and urban growth is intricate involving preservation, adjustment and rejuvenation. Urban heritage doesn't just refer to structures. Also includes historical context, public areas and cultural environments. Research by publishing articles in this field can provide insights into methods that respect past traditions while meeting present-day requirements. Studies on heritage and urban areas can explore how historical sites can be integrated into city planning. This could involve considering ways to protect neighbourhoods improve access to heritage sites and encourage urban regeneration motivated by heritage (Leontidou, 2020). By identifying strategies, for preserving heritage authors can contribute to the creation of policies that back the growth of urban heritage.

### **5.3. Regeneration and Restoration**

Reviving infrastructure and neglected areas, through renewal and restoration projects is crucial. These endeavours play a role in boosting growth improving quality of life and preserving cultural heritage (.Such projects often entail renovating structures enhancing spaces and creating new facilities. Studies on regeneration investigate the processes and results of these initiatives García Ruiz et al., 2020). This involves analyzing the economic and environmental effects of regeneration schemes along with the obstacles and opportunities they present. By pinpointing strategies, for revitalization researchers can shape policies that foster sustainable and inclusive urban progress.

### **5.4. Vernacular Concepts**

Traditional architecture, influenced by customs and materials holds valuable insights, for eco-friendly design. Buildings constructed in styles often blend seamlessly with their surroundings showcasing a profound grasp of local climate and culture. Studying architectural approaches can inspire modern building methods that prioritize environmental and cultural considerations (Philokyrou, Michael, & Malaktou, 2021). Exploring architecture involves exploring the fundamental principles and methods that drive age-old construction techniques. This includes examining the use of materials, passive design tactics and community-centered building practices.

## **6. Environment and Sustainability**

### **6.1. Architecture and Climate Change**

In Mediterranean cities dealing with climate change presents a challenge requiring architects to come up with "adaptive solutions". Discovering how architecture intersects with climate change could help create spaces that are both resilient and sustainable. Studying how architecture can respond to climate change involves looking into ways to design buildings that can better handle challenges. By discovering strategies for designing in response to "climate issues" researchers can propose sustainable methods for the creation of more prepared buildings to resist in front of changing climates.

### **6.2. Energy Efficiency and Thermal Studies**

Buildings are the major factor in contributing to energy usage and emissions underscoring the importance of prioritizing energy efficiency in "sustainable development" efforts (Ouazzani Chahidi et al., 2021). Exploring energy efficiency involves studying methods to lower energy usage in buildings, such as "passive design strategies", "energy-efficient technologies" and "renewable energy" systems. This journal aimed to highlight the investigative approaches, to energy-conscious design researchers can shape the construction of eco-friendlier and economically viable buildings.

### 6.3. Arid and Semi-Arid Areas

Cities in the Mediterranean located in semi-arid areas encounter distinct environmental obstacles such as lack of water, extreme heat and sparse vegetation. Dealing with these issues calls for approaches to managing “water sustainably” implementing green infrastructure to enhance resilience to climate change. Studies concentrating on these topics can disclose methods, for water management, and green infrastructure development.

### 6.4. Smart Architecture and Resilient Cities

Innovative architectural design incorporates cutting-edge technologies to develop vigorous city settings. Smart Architecture and Resilient Cities encompass automated building systems, intelligent materials and digital design resources that improve building efficiency and flexibility. Implementation of the possibilities of architecture can spark advancements that boost urban sustainability and enhance the overall quality of life in cities.

## 7. Education

### 7.1. Lifelong Learning Programs for Architecture and Urban Design

Continuing education initiatives are crucial for providing professionals with the expertise to tackle modern urban issues. These programs facilitate learning and career advancement allowing architects and urban planners to stay up-to-date on new developments and technological advancements.

### 7.2. Transformative Pedagogies and Regional Curricula

Teaching methods that bring about change and curricula tailored to the Mediterranean region can help students gain a grasp of urban planning in the area. Focusing on surroundings and a mix of subjects students can tackle the specific issues and advantages of the region. The journal aimed to explore these methods to improve the effectiveness and influence of urban studies.

## 8. Discussion

The different categories in the Journal of Mediterranean Cities offer a framework for undertaking the complex issues and opportunities in Mediterranean urban planning. Each category sheds light on research areas that have not been thoroughly explored in existing studies on the specific scientific platform as centralised content which I believe will pave the way for future investigations. The emphasis on water and land interactions, housing and communities' cultural heritage and traditional studies environmental concerns and sustainability well as education ensures a comprehensive approach to urban research.

By encouraging partnership across disciplines and incorporating viewpoints the journal aimed to spark creative ideas and contribute to the sustainable growth of Mediterranean cities. Research on housing and communities can help address housing shortages and promote fairness. Studies on heritage can enrich the preservation of cultural identity while research on environmental issues can lead to improvements in climate resilience and energy efficiency. Lastly, education-focused research can support learning initiatives and innovative teaching methods that equip professionals for modern urban challenges. I believe that the thematic range of the Journal of Mediterranean Cities is well thought out. Crucial for comprehending and Undertaking the distinct challenges of Mediterranean urban planning. By serving as a platform of publication, for academic exploration, the journal can bridge significant gaps in scholarly literature while fostering new solutions.

## 9. Conclusion

Introducing the Journal of Mediterranean Cities is considered a step forward in the field of urban studies. By exploring research areas and offering a dedicated platform for scholarly investigation, the journal fills an important void in academic literature. Its thematic focus is well thought out by the editorial team which is required to be focused in the Mediterranean context.

This piece stresses the significance of this endeavour. Encourages active involvement from researchers, professionals and policymakers to participate in the journal discourse on Mediterranean urban culture. Through incorporating diverse view points the journal has the potential to inspire creative solutions and support sustainable progress in Mediterranean cities.

To sum up, the Journal of Mediterranean Cities serves as a forum for rolling research on Mediterranean urban issues. By shining a light on research areas within its thematic scope this piece underscores the importance of addressing the varied challenges and opportunities that Mediterranean cities face. The journal's emphasis on interactions between water and land, housing and communities heritage preservation, environmental sustainability and education ensures an approach to urban studies. I believe that by contributing to this publication and engaging with its themes, researchers, professionals and policymakers can enhance their understanding of Mediterranean culture while promoting sustainable cities for future generations.

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