

Heritage Site and Property Values in Marseille. A Hedonic Study.

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Heritage buildings often show up in the development plans of planners, government officials, community and private investors. The question of whether to make room for the new development or to conserve and protect these heritage infrastructures often leads to conflicts of interest. The main objective of this Honour Thesis is to examine, on the examples of Southern France, whether heritage buildings may have a role, depending on places, context and history, in shaping the economic value of their neighborhood. Indeed, a number of recent researches have found that “proximity to heritage buildings” can have a positive impact on the value of surrounding land, following closely the concept of Hedonic Pricing. I applied GIS and statistical tools to estimate a hedonic price model. A positive association was found, indicating that proximity to Heritage does indeed influence apartment values, even when the surface of the apartment sold, local transportation factors, and socio-demographic variables are taken into account. A more detailed analysis indicated that, of all the types of Heritage site, the ‘Hotel’ type (i.e. mid-Nineteenth Century ‘hotels’, five-storey high apartment blocks with a Hausmann-style façade) is the only specific Heritage category that has a significant impact on apartment prices. Thus, the answer to the initial question is that Heritage Sites have indeed a positive effect on surrounding property values, even if socio-demographic characteristics seem to be more influential predictors.