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Tourism Gentrification

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Abstract. This article intent is to analyse the recent phenomenon of tourism gentrification in the city of Lisbon, Portugal. This reality has been affecting some European cities and, in recent years, has gradually become more present in Lisbon's historic neighbourhoods. Gentrification is a phenomenon that has been identified more than half a century ago. This denomination arose in 1964, when sociologist Ruth Glass, while analysing some of London's neighbourhoods, identified an influx of a population segment, descendants of the rural aristocracy, who bought and renovated old buildings. Although initially this has been almost exclusively a social phenomenon, it has recently included the physical transformation of certain areas through its urban rehabilitation. This phenomenon has therefore undergone an evolution, and although it retains many identical social characteristics, it has, nowadays, different contours in some cases. This is the case of tourism gentrification. Lisbon has progressively been receiving more and more tourists, and the sought for accommodation has been increasingly diversified, requiring a market's adaptation in order to respond to this reality. As a result of this demand, there is an increase in the offer of local lodging in the city of Lisbon. This type of accommodation presents its very own challenges, assuming clear advantages and disadvantages for both the neighbourhoods and cities. Gentrification can be seen as one of its disadvantages. A study carried out in Portugal in 2016 regarding the Lisbon region revealed that, before being converted into local lodging establishments, 59% of the properties were vacant. Although this is a significant value, it also indicates that about 40% of the remaining properties were destined for housing, thus suggesting a significant loss of local population, in favour of tourist occupation. This implies a loss of the neighbourhood's identity leading to the loss of their characteristics, also devaluing them at a cultural level. Such condition may even become detrimental to tourism itself, since tourists who usually look for local lodging seek an immersive experience, meaning they want to live like the locals. Local lodging has strengthened the tourism sector by generating significant revenues and has also boosted rehabilitation works in the city of Lisbon. However, it is necessary to define specific regulations, in order to keep the residents in their historic neighbourhoods, while making sure the local tourist carrying capacity is not exceeded. Local lodging can generate important benefits for cities, but it is necessary to ensure that the negative externalities generated are minimalized. This article is intended as a contribution to the discussion of the consequences of tourism gentrification, but also of the possible strategies that the city of Lisbon could implement, in the future, in order to minimize its disadvantages.

1. Introduction

European historical city districts are important elements of Europe's cultural heritage, which has led to a growth in the number of tourists [1]. But this increase in urban tourism has impacts in the cities and its inhabitants [2]. Tourism gentrification is a phenomenon that nowadays affects many European cities.

Considering this framework, this article proposes to analyse the recent phenomenon of tourism gentrification, pinpointing the city of Lisbon, in Portugal. It is, therefore, intended to contribute to the discussion of the consequences of tourism gentrification. Another objective of this work is to provide possible strategies, which could be accessed by Lisbon's political decision-makers, to minimize the disadvantages of tourism gentrification.

The methodology followed in this paper was based on a sequence of actions that allowed the definition of the consequences derived from local lodging. The bibliographic research and the study of different reports were indispensable. This led to some conclusions, duly framed in the theme, which synthesize the result of the analysis carried out.

2. Gentrification

Gentrification is a well-documented phenomenon with decades of existence. This denomination arose in 1964, when sociologist Ruth Glass, while analysing some of London's neighbourhoods, identified an affluence of a population segment, which the author identified as descendants of the rural aristocracy (composed of individuals more wealthy and better educated than their working class neighbours) who bought and renovated old stables and houses [3].

> "One by one, many of the working class quarters have been invaded by the middle class - upper and lowe. Once this process of "gentrification" starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed." [3]

Nowadays, the rehabilitation actions carried out in the historic centres of several cities have led to the emergence of the phenomenon of gentrification. Porter and Shaw (2013) draw attention to this issue, pointing out that the improvements achieved with rehabilitation, both at the building level and at the urban level, with its consequent activities and jobs generated by it, increase the value of the properties [4]. This may lead to the displacement or exclusion of populations with lower incomes [3]. Recently, gentrification has seen its definition somewhat altered, as it ceased to be an exclusively social phenomenon now implying an urban regeneration, encompassing the physical transformation of certain urban areas, usually central areas. This transformation arises through the rehabilitation of the housing stock, causing the displacement of its population, then replaced by members of more affluent social classes [5]. Although gentrification began with a specific social segment, it underwent a transformation over time. Its definition implies, nowadays, the passage of the neighbourhoods located in the centre of the city, of a state of relative poverty, with limited real estate investments, to a reinvestment with social and urban mutation [6]. There is now a new reality in many cities with the emergence of tourism gentrification. The city of Lisbon is one of these cities that has been affected by this phenomenon. In fact, tourism gentrification has gradually become increasingly present in Lisbon's historic districts.

3. Tourism Gentrification – Lisbon's Case Study

The historical city centres of European cities are vital elements of its cultural heritage. This leads to the attraction of a growing number of visitors. This increase in tourist flows constitutes, however, a real threat to the conservation of their values [1].

Also, the expansion of urban tourism in the historic centres of European cities is increasingly hampering the lives of its inhabitants [2]. The tourism industry, driven by economic, financial and cultural globalization, is redefining the historic cities centres as objects of cultural consumption [7].

Lisbon is no exception and tourism is a growing sector in the city. As a result, this city has progressively received more and more tourists, and the sought for accommodation has been increasingly

diversified, requiring a market's adaptation to respond to this reality. Because of this demand, there is an increase in the offer of local lodging in the city of Lisbon.

This type of accommodation presents its very own challenges, assuming clear advantages and disadvantages for both the neighbourhoods and cities. Gentrification is one of its disadvantages. A study carried out in Portugal in 2016 regarding the Lisbon region revealed that, before being converted into local lodging establishments, 59% of the properties were vacant, [8]. Although this is a significant value, it also indicates that about 40% of the remaining properties were destined for housing, thus suggesting a significant loss of local population, in favour of tourist occupation. This implies a loss of the neighbourhood's identity leading to the loss of their main characteristics, also devaluing them at a cultural level. Such condition may even become detrimental to tourism itself, since tourists who usually search for local lodging seek an immersive experience, meaning they want to live like the locals.

In Lisbon's historical centre the concept of gentrification is now well known by locals. The increase of hotels, hostels and local lodging establishments has pushed the locals out of the city centre [9].

According to Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) data, Portugal was visited, in 2016, by approximately 21 million tourists [10]. Comparing the proportion of visitors and residents there are about 2/1 visitors per residents. This may lead to the loss of authenticity and tradition, while displacing residents [9]. INE also estimates that Lisbon's region alone has received more than 6 million tourists in 2016 [10]. Although this influx has somehow contributed to Lisbon's urban regeneration it is, on the other hand, responsible for a new conflict between tourists and residents [9]. This kind of conflict is well known and studied in several other European cities [11]. It is, however, relatively new in Lisbon. As a result of this increase in tourism the market has recently changed with a rapid growth of the number of local lodging establishments [9].

Nevertheless, there are still few studies on local lodging in Portugal. Using the Registo Nacional de Alojamento Local [12], it can be concluded that the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (AML) concentrates a very important percentage of the local lodging existing in Portugal. In this paper we analyse the records between the years 2015-2017. In this period the AML represents 31.5% of the total of local lodging in Portugal, as can be seen in Table 1.

The Lisbon Municipality represents circa 74% of the local lodging of AML. Extending the analysis to the number of rooms and beds available, it is possible to verify that, in all factors, the AML region accounts for about 30% of the total local lodging offer in Portugal.

Table 1. Local accommodations in Portugal and the weight of AML region and Lisbon Municipality, between the years 2015-2017, Data source: [12]

		Portugal	AML	%	Lisbon Municipality	%
Accommodations	**2015**	10403	2916	28.0	2146	73.6
	2016	11515	4064	35.3	3161	77.8
	2017	19629	6090	31.0	4294	70.5
Total	-	*41547*	*13070*	*31.5*	*9601*	*73.5*
Beds		158071	48701	30.8	34266	70.4
Guests		236089	73256	31.0	52328	71.4
Rooms		93841	28730	30.6	20178	70.2

Table 2. Number of properties built before and after 1951, registered as local lodging between the years 2015-2017, Data source: [12]

Properties	Portugal		AML		Lisbon Municipality	
Built after 1951	23909	57.5%	4470	34.2%	2160	22.5%
Built before 1951	17638	42.5%	8600	65.8%	7441	77.5%
Total	**41547**		**13070**		**9601**	

As can be seen in

Table 2, nearly 66% of the properties in AML are prior to 1951, which shows that this sector plays a major role in the regeneration and modernization of the real estate in this region. In the case of the Lisbon Municipality the value rises to about 78%. Manuel Salgado, a councilman of the Lisbon Municipality, points out, in October 2016, that the major advantage of local accommodation is to recover buildings for housing and estimates that local lodging invested 27 million euros in the recovery of buildings in the previous 5 years [13]. There is a great diversity in the typologies of real estate available for local lodging. In terms of the characterization of real estate in AML, the vast majority are apartments (82.5%) followed by houses (9.8%), lodging establishments (6.5%) and hostels (1.2%). In the case of Lisbon municipality the apartment's contribution to the local accommodation arise to 91.5% (Table 3).

Table 3. Local lodging typologies

	Portugal	%	AML	%	Lisbon Municipality	%
Flat	27826	67.0	10785	82.5	8785	91.5
House	11112	26.7	1279	9.8	97	1.0
Lodging establishment	2251	5.4	851	6.5	603	6.3
Lodging establishment-Hostel	358	0.9	155	1.2	116	1.2

Analysing the data available local lodging activity can be considered a source of added value, contributing in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, to increase GDP of the region. In addition to its direct impact, we can assess the indirect impact by economic activities, either through touristic activities or either by creating new jobs in related sectors. Tourism has effects on the cities, particularly in its historic centres. During the last 20 to 30 years, urban tourism flows have increased significantly [1]. The perception and intensity of the impacts depends, obviously, on the number of tourists and on what are the local characteristics. Tourism effects, on a certain territory, can be physical, economic or social. They can also be positive or negative. Ideally the positive effects of tourism should be maximized and the negative effects should be minimized [1].

Tourist gentrification is one of these negative effects. This phenomenon has social and territorial impacts. It has direct effects on housing access, commercial and service facilities, urban space, and even on the quality of life [14], [15].

4. Discussion and conclusions

Local lodging has strengthened the tourism sector by generating significant revenues and has also boosted rehabilitation works in the city of Lisbon. However, it is necessary to define specific regulations, to keep the residents in their historic neighbourhoods, while making sure the local tourist carrying capacity is not exceeded. Local lodging can generate important benefits for cities, but it is necessary to ensure that the negative externalities generated are reduced.

Tourism gentrification implies a loss of the neighbourhood's identity leading to the loss of their specific characteristics, also devaluing them at a cultural level. Such condition may even become detrimental to tourism itself, since tourists usually seek an immersive experience, meaning they want to live like the locals. And this is an important fact, the colourful and picturesque neighbourhoods that Lisbon still has, need to be preserved and this can only happen by maintaining the locals and their traditions.

The decision-makers need to regulate this sector to avoid the bleeding of neighbourhood's life, because in the future this will be counterproductive to tourism itself. Several international magazines and newspapers choose Lisbon as a top destination in the world and they presented several reasons such as being one of Europe's cheapest capital cities, a foodie heaven with multiple Michelin starred restaurants, the old town areas (such as Alfama, Castelo and Bairro Alto), the waterfront area with beautiful parks and paths, and the fine examples of architecture along the city. But best of all, these areas are all within walking distance or can be reached by traditional trams.

"Set against the ever-present backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean, this dainty sun-kissed city lives in Latin fairy-tale of timeworn manners and traditions," says the Travel's Lisbon expert, Guyan Mitra [16].

This article is intended as a contribution to the discussion of the consequences of tourism gentrification, but also of the possible strategies that the city of Lisbon could implement, in the future, to minimize its disadvantages. Keeping the inhabitants in the historic Lisbon's districts is an absolute priority. Developing tools that promote this has to be the next step. Tourism gentrification needs to be refrained, ensuring that the relationship between tourists and locals is well balanced and not conflicted.

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