Arts and Culture in Lisbon's Recent Revitalization : Observing Mouraria and Intendente Square through Alternative Local Initiatives as Drivers of Marginal Gentrification

Les arts et la culture dans la revitalisation récente de Lisbonne : les cas de Mouraria et de la Place Intendente en tant que moteurs d'une gentrification marginale

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1. Introduction

1   Local authorities have notably relied on the arts and culture as engines of urban revitalization. In this paper we intend to stress the dichotomies and tensions between different political and social uses of the arts. Although not an original model, applied in several European and North American cities with serious negative social and economic consequences (promotion of real estate and housing dynamics, gentrification and concomitant displacement of disadvantaged classes, touristification, commodification and securitization of urban spaces, for example, [Zukin, 1995]), it is still used in Lisbon. On the one hand, local governments typically follow neoliberal principles and implement urban policies anchored in culture aiming at attracting tourism and the creative class. Thus, artistic and cultural creativity serves as an essential element for urban policies and as a means of boosting competition and economic growth. On the other hand, artists and social movements use arts and culture as an instrument of resistance, change and transformation of social relations, implementing in their practices the criticism of the neoliberal city. Bottom-up movements and organizations emerge with the aim of empowering the local community and constructing alternative

spaces. In this context, we point essentially to the fact that neoliberal public policies are using arts and culture as a panacea for urban decay, and alternative dynamics are using artistic practices and culture as a form of social innovation. Considering this evident tension, we suggest that, despite trying to criticize and confront this dynamic, alternative artistic practices ironically contribute to market-led urban revitalization, whereby gentrification processes are stimulated.

2   In recent years, especially after the 2008 economic and financial crisis, new challenges have been posed to the city of Lisbon: rising unemployment and rising inequalities, new housing market pressures driven by the liberalization of private rental market, and urban tourism boom, for example. The City Council reacted to these challenges through urban public policies that transformed the territory. Urban policies implemented in Lisbon and in particular in the case presented in this article (the neighborhood of Mouraria and Intendente Square) fit perfectly in the dynamics mentioned above: public policies are using arts and culture as a panacea for urban decay. No more than a decade ago, this neighborhood was a degraded, poor and marginal area of the city center that underwent a process of revitalization based on top-down culture-led initiatives. As a consequence, this marginal neighborhood considered miserable and unhealthy has been experiencing a profound process of change and is attracting visitors, middle-class users and investors. Interestingly, public policies stimulated the arrival of 'alternative' and artistic communities to contribute to a new image and new uses to the 'decadent' area. Although we consider that the logic of public policies implemented in this territory is based on a neoliberal basis, where profit is privileged over social rights, we agree that a series of improvements were made that benefited the quality of life and well-being in the neighborhood. In particular, we refer to improvements in public space that allowed the neighborhood to be opened to new users. Artists, students, and young populations with high cultural capital (potential marginal gentrifiers) were also attracted by the authenticity of the environment as well as by low rents. In this context, this paper discusses the links between (i) neoliberal culture-led revitalization strategies; (ii) artists and community groups; and (iii) gentrification. We show that in a free-market context, bottom up artistic initiatives revalorize areas and the resulting increase in property values are appropriated by private investors, accelerating processes of gentrification.

2. Artists, Market-Led Revitalization and Gentrification

3   In the contemporary city, there is an increased dichotomy and tension between the social and political uses of art and culture. Firstly, and following the principles of neoliberal ideology, local authorities have implemented culture-led urban revitalization policies aimed at attracting tourists and middle-class residents. These users are usually employed as white-collar workers in the service and knowledge economy (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). For them, choosing a neighborhood to live in permanently, to consume during a weekend escapade or to go out at night is a key feature of identity construction (in the context of contemporary urban lifestyles (Costa and Lopes, 2015[1]; Malet Calvo, 2018). There is a close connection between demand for urban land and subjective experiences, between socio-spatial capitalization and the joyfulness of consumers that feel comfortable and self-identified in a place. Although the rise of young professionals who tend to be attracted to the amenities and cultural

lifestyles that urban centers can offer have been noted since the 1980s (Harvey, 1989; Ley 1996), Florida describes them as a 'creative class' that, apparently, do not look for jobs but for 'trendy neighborhoods' (Florida, 2002, p. 227), cultural services and distinctive consumption landscapes. In free market thinking, the tendency has been the promotion of creative cities as a hegemonic narrative, assuming a pivotal role in current public policies even if Florida recognizes that the most creative places also tend to exhibit the most extensive forms of socio-economic inequality and gentrification (Peck, 2005). Thus, artistic and cultural creativity has become an underlying element to many urban policies and an instrument for interurban competition and economic growth. It has on multiple occasions been considered as a miracle cure to urban decay deriving from deindustrialization and, more recently, from the 2008 economic and financial crisis (André, 2008; Carmo, 2012; Cocola-Gant, 2009; Estevens, 2017).

4   Secondly, artists and social movements have used art and culture in a rather different way, stressing the role of the arts as an instrument of resistance, change, and transformation of social relations (Marcuse, 2007), and thus implementing artistic practices that compose an evident critique to the neoliberal city. In its criticism of the ways in which cities are produced, the *Situationist International* emphasized the political potential of the arts and the relevance of understanding the diversified social and urban contexts (Debord, 2008). Within this artistic and political movement of the 1960s, the city and urban planning would be the setting for a progressive social revolution. More recently, other artistic movements and/or collectives (e.g. the British collective *Platform*, the movement associated to Claremont Road, or *Reclaim the Streets*) have drawn attention to urban dynamics that, despite being less visible, have significant social and urban impacts (Blanco, 2014; Blunt and Wills, 2016). These movements, spaces and collective artistic practices, through a wide range of ways of expression, are associated to a series of elements and factors which activate a certain political conscience regarding urban change, diverging from the hegemonic narrative of the creative city. The emergence of bottom-up movements and grassroots organizations within the cultural and artistic sectors often aims to empower the local community and build alternative spaces for social and political discussion.

5   We want to emphasize the tensions and contradictions between (i) the neoliberal use of culture and the arts as recipes for the prevention of urban decay and (ii) critical grassroots-led dynamics that use culture and artistic practices as forms of social innovation and community-making. It is worth noting that in looking for cheap rents and vacant spaces, artists and cultural to political associations usually locate in decaying central areas (Zukin, 1982) and thus coexist in time and space with the implementation of neoliberal programs of culture-led revitalization. Our argument is that the artistic practices of these collectives inevitably contribute to market-led revitalization and thus stimulate processes of gentrification even if tentatively they aim to confront to it. The gentrification literature offers several ways of understanding this dichotomy. In particular, Rose (1984) suggested the term 'marginal gentrifier' to refer to young people with fairly low economic capital but with relatively high social and cultural capital. These marginal gentrifiers tend to arrive in decaying neighborhoods at an early stage of the gentrification process and are attracted by low rent, proximity to work, social networks, and unconventional lifestyles. In relation to this, exploring the dynamics of gentrification processes within Canadian cities in the early 1960s, Ley argues that "the youth culture of the 1960s acted, in important

respects, as a location leader for subsequent gentrification" (Ley, 1996, p. 175). Authors such as Ley (1996) and Zukin (1982) highlight that artists, students and generally young users with high cultural capital are at the forefront of the reconfiguration of the symbolic values of declining urban places. It is important to notice that many neighborhoods in this situation are usually populated before the arrival of gentrifiers by ethnically-mixed, impoverished and marginalized working-classes. These students and creative workers, usually well-educated, cosmopolitan and progressive young people, are also attracted by the "diversity" and the "multicultural" ambiance of these areas, which is the first element that will be capitalized in this process of renewal. As a matter of fact, the notions of "diversity", "authenticity" and "traditional" are always present in the commercialization of these urban areas, used first by the marginal gentrifiers (and later adopted by public authorities and real estate investors) as a positive change of previous discourses of marginalization and bad reputation.
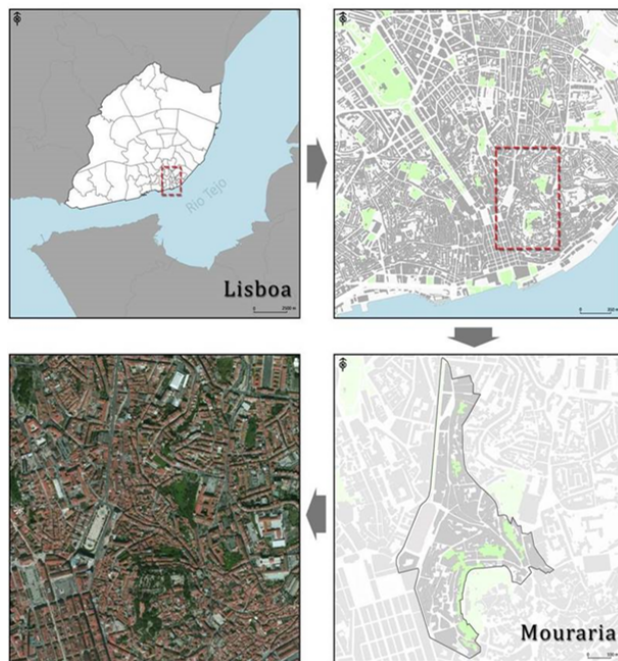
6   The important thing is that the formation of alternative cultural clusters in decaying urban areas work as magnets for tourists, students and new users that change the image of the place and stimulate both property markets and the opening of new retail services that cater to these populations. In fact, in implementing revitalization policies local authorities and property owners have intentionally stimulated the arrival of artists and community associations, offering examples of 'artistic modes of production' (Zukin, 1995). In this sense, the "marginal gentrification" phase is a period of social mixing, emancipation, creativity and even neighborhood solidarity (Caulfield, 1989). However, this is only the preliminary stage before the arrival of public-led revitalization projects and the residential and commercial enterprises developed by private funds and investors. The presence of (alternative) young populations is a necessary step to ensure the "cleansing" of an urban area, soon to be transformed from "marginal" to "diverse", from "problematic" to "vibrant", and from "chaotic" to "exciting" in the promotional brochures and in "cool" digital portals. In a way, urban capitalism needs this "cultural renaissance" to increase the value of urban properties that are sold to higher social classes. In fact, even the alternative lifestyles and cultural practices brought by these young alternative urban classes to the neighborhoods will be captured and commercialized (including parties, conscious eating practices, community-inspired decorations and so on). This appropriation often occurs when, as a way to afford the rent of the spaces that they use, artistic and cultural associations organize events such as parties, music shows, and even serve food and drinks on a regular basis, which further stimulates the arrival of young consumers to the area. Finally, the irony is that in the second stage of the gentrification of such areas, authors note that artists and other 'marginal gentrifiers' are usually displaced due to soaring rents and pressure from property owners (Ley, 1996; Zukin, 1982), thus closing the circle of urban renewal.

7   Finally, we suggest the need to distinguish between two diverse social groups of producers and consumers that populate these urban landscapes in transformation, according to their differentiated patterns of consumption, socialization habits and subcultural lifestyles (although the border between them is sometimes blurry). On the one side, we have well-educated and progressive students with low-capital and creative classes that move to certain neighborhoods attracted by "diversity", "tradition" and "authenticity", rejecting what they consider the "vulgarity" of massive consumption and commercialized leisure. They are labelled "alternative consumers" in this article. On the other side, we have young consumers that feel attracted by modern and

renovated neighborhoods, trendy huge venues and pacified crowded areas, rejecting marginal places that they consider "filthy", "disgusting" and "shabby". They are identified as "mainstream consumers". Additionally, these groups also represent two moments in the time-space of a gentrified landscape: if "alternative consumers" can be considered the marginal gentrifiers that bring value to a marginalized area and then are evicted from it, the "mainstream consumers" are those that feel attracted to these areas when they are renewed by various processes of gentrification and commercialization.

3. Case Study and Methodology

8   Mouraria is located in the city center of Lisbon and is one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city (Figure 1). It dates back to the Middle Ages and was an extension beyond the margins of the original city to provide a space for the Moors after the Christian conquest of Lisbon. Since its early beginnings, Mouraria was associated with poverty, stigma and marginality.

Figure 1. Mouraria Neighborhood

Source: image elaborated by Leandro Gabriel (2014).

9   Mouraria is a complex socio-geographical context, imbedded with stigmatization and segregationist prejudices. This situation has remained to this day because during recent decades the area was home to prostitution, poverty, drug addiction and alcoholism. As a result, the neighborhood became synonymous with marginality, dangerousness and unhealthy living conditions.

10   Other features of the neighborhood help us to understand the Mouraria context within the city of Lisbon: precarious housing conditions and the presence of an elderly and poorly-educated population (25% of the population has received only primary education). In addition, the 2011 census shows a significant decrease in the number of residents between 1981 and 2011 (an overall loss of -53%). In other words, the

neighborhood was experiencing a process of abandonment and was at a pre-gentrification stage: low-income and elderly residents living in a stigmatized area and in degraded housing conditions.

11   One of the main areas of Mouraria is Intendente Square (officially known as Intendente Pina Manique Square). In the last three decades, it has been the most marginalized space in the neighborhood. Drug use and trafficking as well as prostitution were common place in the square. In the late 1990s, the demolition of a neighborhood in the periphery of the city (a place known for the sale and trafficking of drugs) brought many of its illegal activities to Mouraria. Drug trafficking reinforced the area's poor image and affected the daily lives of its inhabitants. Intendente Square was known for the intensity of these activities and for having a bad reputation. Many people were afraid to frequent or cross through the place.

12   It is worth noting that since the 1980s the neighborhood has attracted immigrants of various nationalities (for example, Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa, as well as India and later Pakistan, Bangladesh and China). A perspective addressed in several papers on immigration (Mapril, 2010; Malheiros, 2008; Malheiros *et al.* 2012) is that the 'entrepreneurial' migrants proved to be a key aspect of modern life in Mouraria. The Census 2011 estimated that around 16% of the resident population in Mouraria were foreign nationals. Notably, this diversity is visible in terms of retail. The new stores opened by immigrants have replaced the traditional street traders. As a member of a local association says, "the old and traditional shops have been transformed into jewelry shops, butchers have been transformed into halal butchers, and everything has changed a lot here" (Estevens, 2017, p. 237). However, this diverse environment added its weigh to the stigmatization and bad image of an area that was far from being a standard landscape for middle-class consumption. Despite this image, alternative groups of young and tolerant middle-class people started to view this area as an attractive place with low rents where they could develop their leisure and cultural activities, progressively moving their associations from the city center to Mouraria and Intendente.

13   Since the mid-2000s, a central aim of the City Council was to revitalize and 'bring life' to this area. After organizing the 1998 International Expo, Lisbon decisively opted to plan a transition toward a post-industrial economy based on tourism and leisure activities. As a result, historic central areas such as Mouraria and Intendente, both of which suffered from poor physical and social conditions, needed to be redeveloped to achieve such goals. The strategy of the City Council focused on bringing new cultural and artistic activities to the area as well as the creation of sanitized public spaces (Veiga Gomes, 2017). The implementation of the projects started in 2009 in the middle of an intense media campaign aimed at changing the image of the place, which also involved the Mayor of Lisbon moving his office to Intendente Square. As we explore below, one of the strategies of the City Council was to subsidize the arrival of artists and cultural groups into the area.

14   The marketization of "diversity" and "cosmopolitanism" was marked by revitalization discourses, urban renewal projects and city festivals sponsored by the City Council since the mid-2000s. For instance, the rehabilitation of Martim Moniz square, a large area that connects the city center with Avenida Almirante Reis (the Avenue that crosses Mouraria and its surroundings) was done in a way which represents the "diversity" of its inhabitants: for example, many permanent food stands were opened

representing cuisine from many parts of the world, decorated with large multi-cultural images of landscapes and ethnically inspired murals. This was called the *Mercado de Fusão* ('Fusion Market'). Also, from 2009 onward, the City Council supported the *Festival Todos* ('Everyone Festival'), a cultural and musical festival featuring exhibits and works of art from a variety of cultures present in the city. It is interesting to see how the festival went through the exact areas that were previously considered problematic but now just a couple of years later show signs of revitalization and renovated interest, both from the public and the private sectors. Notably, for the first three years, the festival was focused in the area between Intendente, Mouraria and Martim Moniz.

15 In addition, the private rental market was liberalized in 2012 after a new urban lease law was approved[2]. This reform received a lot of criticism from tenants, associations and movements for the right to housing and the city, some of which chose to protest. The new law allows landlords to end tenancy agreements much more easily, including the termination of old rental agreements signed prior to 1990 that were protected by open-ended leases. The law also stimulates the proliferation of short-term rentals because it legalized one day rentals. Furthermore, the state implemented additional policies to make the local real estate market more attractive to foreign investors, for instance, by offering both fiscal incentives to real estate investment funds and speeding-up licensing proceedings.

16 As a result, conditions were created to stimulate the arrival of both new middle-class users and private investment in the real estate market. In fact, at present there is intense rehabilitation activity in the area. New retail services that cater to visitors and young users opened. In fact, it could be argued that Intendente Square is now the trendiest and must-see alternative place in Lisbon. In such a context, we were interested in exploring the role of art and culture in this state-led gentrification process. We depart from the previous work undertaken by Ana Estevens as part of her PhD thesis (2014) in which she explored the culture-led policies implemented by the City Council in this area between 2009 and 2014. In this work, critical policy analysis and in-depth interviews with policy makers, representatives of cultural groups as well as with residents were undertaken. Additionally, we conducted regular field observations in Intendente Square between 2015 and 2018, as well as in several of the cultural groups and associations presented in the area. Finally, we conducted three in-depth interviews with representatives of cultural groups in 2018 and several informal interviews with users in the area.

4. Revitalization Strategies in the Mouraria Neighborhood and Intendente Square

17 Over the years this territory underwent through several stages of revitalization. Regularly it was considered a marginal neighborhood of the city and the projects were always complex and lengthy. Several projects sought to change the 'bad name' of the neighborhood: during the dictatorship period (between 1928 and 1974), from a hygienist perspective, several blocks of the neighborhood were demolished aiming to "kill" the street and ordering chaos; between the Carnation Revolution (1974) and the beginning of the 21st century, urban rehabilitation became very popular. However, they never applied concretely in the neighborhood. In the late 1990s, trafficking and drug use in the neighborhood increased (Chaves, 1999).

18   More recently, the Programme of Action of the National Strategic Framework (PA-QREN Mouraria) program was approved in 2009 and officially started in September 2012. The project had four main elements: 1) the transformation of the public space and the urban environment; 2) the rehabilitation of a degraded housing block to create a creative hub called 'Mouraria Innovation Centre'; 3) the valorization of arts and crafts; and 4) the revalorization of the socio-cultural environment with a special emphasis on the attraction of tourism. PA-QREN emphasized the role of culture and new public spaces as a means of stimulating the revitalization of the area. For instance, the reinvention of the traditional memory of the neighborhood centered on Fado music was a key strategy. Fado music has a long tradition in Mouraria but is also a cultural symbol of Lisbon and a key tourist attraction. The reinvention of a Fado tradition in Mouraria (Menezes, 2012), together with popular street carnivals (*Marchas Populares*), was adopted as a cultural policy to change the image of this stigmatized place. In fact, in 2011, UNESCO recognized the intangible cultural heritage of Fado. Such policies ought to be seen as part of a broader strategy of Lisbon's city-branding. The 'Lisbon brand', like the 'Barcelona model', has objectives that go beyond the plans for each of their neighborhoods. It is focused on identity, tradition, diversity, cosmopolitan life, modernity and celebration of the city. This marketing strategy agrees with what Peck (2012) refers to as strong symbolic resonance initiatives, market-oriented and based on creativity, sustainability or livability. In this sense, it is part of a global perspective of creating a competitive and efficient city that attracts investment, thus creating the image of an ideal and safe city. This idea as a political strategy has worked. At the moment, Fado attracts tourists to the neighborhood and its "bad image" has also changed because of this.

19   In Intendente Square, the interventions were composed mainly of two parts: the transformation of the public space and the urban environment (Axis 1) and the revalorization of the socio-cultural context and tourism (Axis 4). The first point is justified by what has already been mentioned above. The bad image associated with drug use and prostitution kept people away from the place. Thus, it was a space in urgent need of redevelopment. The square was transformed from a car park into a pedestrian space with public benches. Following the public space transformation, a music festival highlighted the inauguration of PA-QREN. Also, in March 2011, Mayor António Costa moved his office to the Intendente Square, as mentioned previously. For the then Mayor, "people need to feel that there is a real commitment on behalf of the municipality and the authorities to change this area and its stigma" (Boaventura, 2011). These were symbolic measures had a lot of mediatism and helped to change the image of the neighborhood.

20   The implementation of Axis 4 in the Square ought to be seen in relation to other municipal initiatives. In particular, the BIP-ZIP program (*Bairros e Zonas de Intervenção Prioritária*, Priority Intervention Neighborhoods and Zones) deserves special attention. This initiative aims to stimulate the creation of associations and small local interventions for social innovation. By subsidizing projects carried out by community and non-governmental organizations (such as the *Festival Todos* mentioned before), the official rhetoric was to contribute toward the strengthening of socio-territorial cohesion in the municipality. However, the projects that were subsidized had an emphasis on arts, culture and the creation of 'creative' spaces and were located only in degraded areas of Lisbon. In other words, they were part of a broader strategy of

culture-led revitalization. In Intendente square, two artistic projects were funded by the City Council. Considering the results of PA-QREN and BIP-ZIP together, the area surrounding Intendente Square experienced a profound regeneration of public spaces and the arrival of artists and creative people. In addition, the City Council has been supporting music festivals and all sorts of spectacles in the square, such as "*Bairro Intendente em Festa*" (Intendente Neighborhood Party) as a way of opening the place to consumption and leisure activities. As one of its participants' states, "*if you want to organize a spectacle in the square, the municipality supports you immediately*". Following such physical and symbolic transformations, the neighborhood has grown to become the new festive, alternative and trendy area of Lisbon. Since 2012, the state-led initiatives mentioned previously were followed by the arrival of private-led investment, particularly the creation of bars and restaurants. In addition, several artistic organizations that were subsidized to settle in the area also opened bars and music cafés to help them afford the rent. At the same time, the transformation of the area is related to securitization policies aimed at controlling drug trafficking and consumption as well as prostitution (Tulumello 2016). Currently, Intendente Square is guarded by police 24 hours a day, although there are still drug addicts and prostitutes in the surrounding streets. Rapidly, public discourses were reframed: the "dangerous" Mouraria neighborhood and Intendente Square suddenly became "cool" places.

21   Prior to the beginning of this process, when the City Council was not actively engaged in transforming the area, some associations were already working in Intendente and Mouraria. At the time, their intervention programs focused not only on cultural activities, but on the most pressing problems in the area, including housing conditions, poverty and marginalized inhabitants. When these state-led programs of intervention were announced, some of these associations (that worked in direct contact with the community) left the territory, refusing to collaborate with a strategy that they (accurately) understood as an ineffective way of resolving the structural problems in the neighborhood. However, other associations remained in the area and new ones arrived, opening collaborations with the City Council and hoping that cultural activities and urban rehabilitation could solve the area's marginalization.

22   In the meantime, these artistic and cultural projects emerged as alternative spaces for social innovation and at least one of the spaces that operates in the Intendente Square implements continuous projects that cater to the community. The head of this cooperative said in an interview (2013) that "*We felt that we could also be a tool to help with an integrated transition process. That is, trying to row against the natural movement of the processes of socio-urbanist change that is what everyone talks about gentrification*". Nonetheless, while their activities actively contributed toward bringing younger and middle-class users to the area, new retail spaces opened, both contributing to change the symbolic image of the neighborhood. Interestingly, the result is an apparent bottom-up culture-led regeneration scheme that is actually a top-down public policy aiming to the revitalization of declining neighborhoods, through the influx of wealthier people with high cultural capital. In other words, if the starting goal of these alternative and cultural associations was to embrace "diversity" and "multi-cultural" manifestations already taking place in the neighborhood, they were in fact unintentionally collaborating with a state-led project that sought to expel the real diversity in the area. The most striking manifestation of this program of ideas by the City Council is the promotion, sponsorship and commodification of diversity-branded projects such as *Mercado de Fusão*, which was an ethnic cooking festival in Martim

Moniz, or the annual performance of world cultures in the street organized by the *Festival Todos* (Oliveira, 2013). Paradoxically, an urban reform which aimed for "diversity" and the sponsorship of organizations and individuals who support diversity, led to the culturally homogeneous (in ethnic and social terms) commercialized and policed urban spaces in the entire city – Intendente Square.

23 So far we have described the programs implemented by the City Council and how they subsidized artistic groups so that they could settle in the area. In the transformation of the place, we want to emphasize two additional points. First, other artistic groups and associations of all types also moved to the area, attracted by low rents and the availability of space. Indeed, some spaces have been rented by radical social movements and alternative groups. Like the artistic associations promoted by the City Council, these groups organize music events, parties and serve food to raise money so that they can cover the rent. The result is the formation of a cluster of artistic and 'underground' spaces that ironically offer an intense cultural agenda for what we termed as alternative consumers of the city. Second, it is worth noting (i) that Lisbon is experiencing a tourism boom that has been particularly strong and rapid since 2014; and (ii) that this boom is increasingly driven by the arrival of young visitors attracted by the image of the city as a place to have fun, including Erasmus students (Malet Calvo, 2018). Consequently, since 2014 the alternative cultural agenda provided by these organizations has been increasingly appropriated by young visitors that prefer to avoid the mainstream nightlife of Lisbon and instead experience more authentic and alternative leisure spaces in the city. For instance, a political organization in the area that serves cheap pizza once a week has become a new meeting point for Erasmus students and, indeed, the place has been mentioned in international travel magazines as a must visit place for those who want to experience the 'cool' areas of Lisbon.

24 As a consequence, it is possible to distinguish today two differentiated urban axes where cultural and nightlife activities occur in Lisbon, based on the consumption patterns of young locals and visitors that look for specific urban ambiances. On one side, the districts of Bairro Alto, Santos and Cais do Sodré offer commercialized and often overcrowded bars and clubs in the most central parts of the city, welcoming young locals, foreign students and weekend tourists in search of a cheap "crazy" night. These formerly deprived and troublesome areas are now highly specialized in nightlife and partying (after a process of commercial and residential gentrification during the last two decades) and are promoted internationally by the City Council in order to attract both foreign visitors and new middle-class residents in its brand-new sanitized and secure landscape for leisure (Malet Calvo *et al.*, 2017). On the other side, the area between Intendente and Mouraria (along Avenida Almirante Reis) has a disperse presence of several associations, bars and public spaces where alternative, counter-cultural and young hipsters from Portugal and overseas look for a distinct urban ambiance characterized by a more diverse, cultural-oriented and locally-influenced nightlife. Attracted by this offer, alternative populations of tourists and foreign residents with more purchasing power are present in these areas, thus participating in price increases, the internationalization of the ambiance and finally the marketization of these spaces. There is a concern among some of these associations about their role in this process, while others prefer not to think about it too much – the preoccupation for many is avoiding eviction from the very landscape they helped to transform. This is a great irony of post-industrial urban capitalism.

25   The important point for us is that the artistic and cultural groups established in the area, both those subsidized by the City Council and those not, are the actors on the ground who revitalize the place and, as a result, should be seen as drivers of a process of marginal gentrification. The leisure activities that these groups provide attract young users, change the image of the place and, importantly, have stimulated the arrival of private investors that are changing both commercial services and the housing market. In the last three years, Intendente Square has seen upmarket retail services open and the rehabilitation of housing stock. Crucially, rehabilitated housing is leading to hotels, short-term rentals, accommodation for international students and luxury apartments, turning the place into an example of tourism gentrification (Cocola-Gant, 2018). As noted in other cases (Zukin, 1982), the irony of this process is that the activities which arrived originally and helped to change the image of stigmatization and abandonment are now at risk of displacement. First, the two cultural activities subsidized by the City Council in the Square have expressed concerns about their ability to remain and will probably move out in the near future. Second, the first wave of retail services that settled in the Square between 2011 and 2013 are also at risk of displacement. If in 2011 new bars were established by local entrepreneurs and catered to low-income users (marginal gentrifiers), nowadays the area is experiencing the opening of upmarket and trendy cafes and wine stores owned by corporations and catering to middle and upper-class users, particularly tourists. As suggested above, activities for "alternative consumers" helped to renew the symbolic value of the place and in a second round of the process the initial marginal gentrifiers are displaced by "mainstream consumers" after the consumption landscape has been sanitized.

26   Certainly, the area was revitalized and its inhabitants were pleased with some changes: "*It is a completely safe neighborhood. I can walk down the street at night without any problem. I close the association and go home alone, and have no problems. So for me this change is positive. The only change I do not agree with, but that is another matter, are the rents. And we will also be victims of it*", said the head of one of the cultural associations in the neighborhood.

27   Despite the positive aspects that arose from this process – rehabilitation of buildings and public space, revitalization of a deprived and stigmatized area – we consider that the City Coucil's strategy was never to support the struggle for better quality of life or better housing conditions, but rather "cleaning" the neighborhood of problematic inhabitants (namely poor people, drug users and prostitutes) and attracting new populations of alternative middle-class people (such as artists and cultural workers) in order to attract private investment. In the last years, as Lisbon positioned itself as a global-scale destination for both tourism and temporary residency, housing has become a growing pressing issue for local inhabitants (Cocola-Gant and Gago, 2019). As in other areas of the city, Intendente's housing rehabilitation, which was an old vindication of local population and grassroots organizations, has been promoted and driven by real estate groups and private interests, causing the eviction of many inhabitants from their homes, adding this problem to all the others previously existing. Social movements and local grassroots organizations have recently reacted directly to this growing problem, oftentimes through artistic expressions. It is the case of "Rock in Riot"[3] a "*huge street party demonstration ending in Intendente Square to show we totally disagree with these displacements*", as one of the organizers presented. Taking place in late 2018, this demonstration, organized by local collectives, brought together several local artists who performed while in a walking parade, aiming to bring attention on the

topic, and also to directly claim the right to the city, by occupying the public space in a celebratory way.

Figure 2. Rock in Riot Parade. Posters State "Occupy the Streets, Reclaim the City" and "Tourists Are Not Inhabitants. Respect Housing Permits"

Sources: photographs from Mafalda Gomes, journalist from Journal i.

28 Activists from local organizations are aware of their paradoxical situation in the gentrification process of this territory: "*It is obvious we bring value to this area. It's not worth denying it just because we resist and rebel. We do bring value. At in some ways it is a positive value: people who felt insecure in the streets now feel comfortable. As much as we want to contest and contradict the dynamics of this way of developing the city, we are part of them*" (interview in 2019).

5. Conclusion

29 Lisbon is an increasingly popular and trendy destination. The city is one of the most relevant European cities when we think about tourism. Like the 'Barcelona model', the 'Lisbon brand' focuses on cosmopolitan life, diversity, and celebrating the city's tradition and memory – "symbolically resonant, market-oriented and low-cost initiatives that marry aspirational goals (creativity, sustainability, livability, etc.) with projects that work with the grain of localized incentives and business-as-usual interests" (Peck, 2012, p. 648). Today, the urban space of Lisbon has been profoundly shaped by a neoliberal urbanism strategy that guarantees a favorable climate to private capital. Lisbon has changed its urban development model in favour of a neoliberal approach.

30 In Mouraria, during the last few years public policies have favored dynamics of segregation and the expulsion of certain populations. The strategies used to change the image of these stigmatized areas is significant as they allow investors to capture new real estate values that exclude low-income residents. Such strategies are related to cultural events of various types aimed at transforming these marginal areas into new spectacles for young middle-class people. However, the neighborhood's change of image did not alter its structural problems, rather, it has merely displaced drug users and prostitutes.

31 Ironically, many of the projects subsidized by PA-QREN ceased to intervene or even exist after the end of the program. This happened because they opted for the valuation of the institutions and the specific project, rather than for a strategy of sustainable intervention that put the area as the central axis of the problem. The new wave of rehabilitation is resulting in the opening of hotels, short-term rental accommodation,

accommodation for international students and luxury apartments. Advertisements proclaim: "If you lovehistoric districts out of the tourist path [*sic*], visit wonderful Largo (square) do Intendente, area Mouraria [*sic*]. Formerly a place of prostitution and drugs, nowadays very popular"[4]. Or, as a new hotel mentions on its website, "It is because we appreciate the past, as well as its legacy for the present, that we have chosen to open here, in Lisbon's most recently changed neighborhood"[5]. If in 2011 the commercial establishments belonged to local entrepreneurs and low-middle income users, Intendente Square is now dominated by trendy cafes and wine stores that attract high-income users which are almost always tourists. The opening of 'alternative' spaces altered the image of the Square which aided its 'sanitization' and the creation of both symbolic and property values. The artists and artistic collectives present in this territory contributed to the process of ongoing gentrification, and were subsequently forced to leave the neighborhood. The "marginal gentrifiers" were replaced by "mainstream consumers/users" and a high social class. In short, Intendente Square is an example of how a neoliberal urban public intervention aimed at changing the image of marginality and social segregation into a new perception linked to cosmopolitan values and tourism engenders processes of inequality and exclusion.

32 As the same strategy is being applied in other areas of the city, the question that arises in the near future is "for how long will this situation be sustainable?" Being aware the central subject of the paper is not necessarily original, as it has been much debated in academia, we believe to be of utter importance to continue to register and research this subject, precisely because it is a model that, despite the criticism and recognized negative consequences, continues to be used. Thus, we intend to continue to look at this subject of study and to analyze what happens to the territories and their inhabitants when similar public policies are implemented.

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NOTES

1. See the work of Pedro Costa about the Bairro Alto neighborhood, Costa, P. and Lopes, R. (2015), for example.
2. Law n° 31/2012, 14th August.
3. The name "Rock in Riot" is a parady regarding Rock in Rio, one of the largest music festivals that regularly takes place in Lisbon.
4. https://www.thelisbonconnection.com/tag/largo-do-intendente
5. http://www.1908lisboahotel.com/hotel-overview.html

ABSTRACTS

"Creative cities" and "artistic neighborhoods" have become regular concepts within hegemonic narratives and practices related to centralized urban revitalization processes. Creativity is now sold as a symbol of status and the "creative city" has become a widespread trend common to contemporary cities. At the same time, artists and social movements use art and culture as an instrument of resistance, change and transformation of social relations, implementing in their practices the criticism of the neoliberal city. This paper discusses the links between (i) neoliberal culture-led revitalization strategies; (ii) artists and community groups; and (iii) gentrification. We show that in a free-market context, bottom-up artistic initiatives revalorize areas and the resulting increase in property values are appropriated by private investors, accelerating a process of gentrification.

Les « villes créatives » et les « quartiers artistiques » sont devenus des concepts courants au sein de récits et de pratiques hégémoniques liés aux processus de revitalisation urbaine centralisés. La créativité est maintenant vendue comme le symbole d'un statut et la « ville créative » est devenue une tendance répandue commune aux villes contemporaines. Parallèlement, les artistes et les mouvements sociaux utilisent l'art et la culture comme un instrument de résistance, de changement et de transformation des relations sociales, mettant en œuvre dans leurs pratiques la critique de la ville néolibérale. Cet article examine les liens entre (i) les stratégies de revitalisation par le biais de politiques culturelles; (ii) les artistes et groupes communautaires; et (iii) la gentrification. Nous montrons que dans un contexte de libre marché, les initiatives artistiques ascendantes (*bottom-up*) revalorisent des zones et que l'augmentation de la valeur de la propriété qui en résulte est appropriée par les investisseurs privés, ce qui accélère le processus de gentrification.

INDEX

AUTHORS

ANA ESTEVENS

Researcher, CEG-ULisboa, Lisboa, anaestevens@campus.ul.pt

AGUSTIN COCOLA-GANT

Researcher, CEG-ULisboa, Lisboa, agustincocolagant@campus.ul.pt

DANIEL MALET CALVO

Researcher, CIES-IUL, Lisboa, daniel.malet@iscte.pt

FILIPE MATOS

Researcher, CEG-ULisboa, Lisboa, filipematos@campus.ul.pt