



Overtourism: Creative Solutions by Creative Residents

Ana Cláudia Campos, Sofia Almeida, and Noel Scott

Introduction

Residents and those running businesses directly and indirectly related to tourism experience positive as well as negative impacts of tourism. Numerous studies and reports have examined the impacts of tourism on the local community, with one stream of literature specifically focusing on resident attitudes to tourism (Andereck et al. 2005; Faulkner and Tideswell 1997; Harrill 2004; Postma 2013; Vargas-Sánchez et al. 2010; Zhang and Ma 2006). This stream of literature discusses community and

A. C. Campos (✉)

Universidade Europeia, Lisbon, Portugal

e-mail: ana.campos@universidadeeuropeia.pt

S. Almeida

Universidade Europeia, Lisbon, Portugal

e-mail: salmeida@universidadeeuropeia.pt

N. Scott

University of the Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast, QLD, Australia

e-mail: nscott1@usc.edu.au

resident characteristics that influence reaction to tourism development, changes in community structure, or conflict between residents and visitors as a result of tourism growth. A recent report by UNWTO emphasises negative impacts of overtourism such as gentrification, declining population, and resident liveability, particularly in urban areas (UNWTO 2019a).

However, much of this literature discusses the impact as tourism is developing—prior to reaching its limits (Hadinejad et al. 2019). Instead, this chapter focuses on how to tackle issues emerging from locations already affected by significant flows of tourists. This study considers that residents and local communities should be involved in the planning, management and monitoring of tourism development (UNWTO 2019a), therefore becoming agents of change. Accordingly, the study approaches overtourism by analysing how residents are affected by it. The problems of overtourism are equally a policy and a day-to-day management concern, and at both these dimensions residents and local communities are considered key stakeholders and participants.

This chapter instead discusses creative tourism as a solution for local communities and residents to explore, and to reduce negative effects from overtourism, while at the same time creating new social and business dynamics. Creative tourism is linked to a vision of responsible tourism that, by encompassing the creative potential of communities and making better use of endogenous resources, may reduce overtourism in urban areas. This approach follows discussion of overtourism led by WTO at *UNWTO Mayors Forum for Sustainable Urban Tourism ‘Cities for all: building cities for citizens and visitors’*, held in Lisbon in April 2019. At this event, key concerns addressed issues such as community engagement and empowerment in tourism sustainable projects, safeguarding of residents’ quality of life, in addition to big data and innovative solutions, new business models, creative cities and events, infrastructure, resources and planning.

The following three sections of this chapter present the concept of overtourism, review residents’ perceptions and reactions towards tourism, and address creative tourism as a sustainable type of tourism. The subsequent section describes the case of Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal, examining the positive and negative tourism impacts for residents, policy

constraints and problems identified. Creative tourism initiatives that may reduce overtourism impacts are described. The way residents are integrated in the development and management process of creative tourism initiatives are presented to inspire further reflection and action by other communities. The chapter ends with discussion and main conclusions of the study.

The Concept of Overtourism

Overtourism refers to “destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably” (Goodwin 2017: 1). Recently, it has been defined as “the situation in which the impact of tourism, at certain times and in certain locations, exceeds physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political capacity thresholds” (Peeters et al. 2018: 15). Overtourism today is a concern of public bodies, businesses, residents and tourists alike, and transcends the limited perspectives of planners and marketers in charge of the management and promotion of destinations (UNWTO 2019b). Many cases around the world are reported to experience overtourism, ranging from Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro, Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Malta, to Venice (Boissevain 1996; Novy and Colomb 2016; Milano and Mansilla 2018).

From an academic perspective, overtourism is a complex phenomenon that encompasses previous research on tourist flows, numbers and destination’s carrying capacity, but which is more complex and broader in scope by integrating social-psychological effects on communities in addition to those observed in the physical environment (Russo 2002). Research findings, reports and discussions in the media are currently accessible to readers of a vast audience (e.g. Cheer et al. 2019; Coalu 2014; Koens et al. 2018; Milano et al. 2018). Different perspectives can be chosen for analysis of overtourism as there are different groups of stakeholders affected by it—tourists, business owners and residents. Often overtourism studies focus on residents’ perceptions, feelings and behaviours regarding pressures and constraints on their social system,

tangible and intangible culture, and natural environment (Peeters et al. 2018).

Impacts on Residents and Touristification

The effects of touristic activity on tourism destinations and tourism growth and development are well-documented topics in tourism studies (Butler 2015). Tourist activities affect residents of the destination (Cocola-Gant 2018) and can lead to *touristification*, where an area transforms into a commodity as a result of unplanned development (Renau 2018). *Touristification* leads to enclavic spaces dominated by tourism businesses, activities, venues, and attractions, devoid of authentic meaning in the lives of residents. *Tourism gentrification* within urban touristic enclaves leads to displacement of residents and traditional family-owned businesses, and change in land-use for touristic purposes (Gotham 2018). *Touristification* and *gentrification* are related to the increase in number of tourists visiting an area, and exacerbate risks of overcrowding.

A number of studies have addressed the social and human dimensions of perverse transformations brought by tourism by focusing on the urban changes effected by tourism business growth (Butler 2015; McKercher 1993). Studies of tourism impacts on residents have demonstrated negative effects on a community's quality of life and recommend planning and controlling tourism growth (Andereck et al. 2005). These impacts occur at both community and individual levels. For example, labour market reshaping or community restructuring generates individual and family disruption (Postma 2013).

Tourism can lead to conflict between residents and tourists, motivated by perception of too many visitors or of improper behaviour (Postma and Schmuecker 2017). Conflicts may also arise within the community itself, when residents and businesses support different interests regarding tourism. Hostility of residents towards business owners may arise as quality of life means different things for residents seeking a peaceful environment and businesses that need tourists to make a profit (Pearce 2018). The "Irridex" model examines social antagonism towards tourism, and is a tool to measure the level of community tolerance to it (Doxey 1975).

According to this model, host community reactions to tourism vary with the stage of tourism growth in the destination. The model describes four stages of reactions from euphoria to antagonism, considering apathy and annoyance as intermediate stages. Each stage may be associated with different responses from entities in charge of the destination planning: from little or no planning whatsoever to development of touristic infrastructures and promotion. The model is simplistic in its approach to communities as homogeneous entities (Canavan 2014) but it acknowledges that tourism growth may be examined by analysing resident's perceptions and attitudes to it. Resident attitudes are reflected in social movements, associations and campaigns throughout the world that are voicing anti-tourism feelings. Europe is being particularly affected by it, as the continent is the world's top international tourism area (Peeters et al. 2018).

Various theoretical frameworks are used to study resident attitudes (Postma and Schmuecker 2017) and residents' characteristics influence the type of response to tourism (Andereck et al. 2005; Faulkner and Tideswell 1997; Harrill 2004; Vargas-Sánchez et al. 2010; Zhang and Ma 2006). Demographic characteristics, lifestyle, economic dynamics and dependence on tourism determine the degree of receptivity to visitors and their inclusion in local activities and experiences. Resident knowledge of the positive effects from tourism such as employment, destination identity and image, and social cohesion increase the community's support of tourism. Residents' attitudes concerning tourism are demographically, culturally and economically shaped, thus community responses to overtourism may vary accordingly.

Overtourism and Creative Tourism

Creativity has become a top priority in the policy agenda of many countries around the world as a means to boost economies and industries through innovation, social capital and cohesion (Richards and Marques 2012). The ideas of a creative class that delivers economic wealth through new ideas, technology or content (Tung et al. 2009) is appealing to cities wanting to redesign themselves around profitable businesses, affluent consumers and lifestyle activities. Cities viewed as trendy see potential to

invest in tourism, and in particular the tourism industry in gradually embracing this ‘creative turn’. However, they face a challenge in gathering the people and social actors required to meet the needs of more engaged and responsible societies (Richards 2011).

Creative tourism is a new type of tourism, based on urban appeal and highly committed to interaction between actors (Tung et al. 2009). It is a type of tourism in which visitors have an educational, emotional, social, and participative interaction with the place, its living culture, and the people who live there (UNESCO 2006). Richards and Raymond’s seminal definition (2000: 19) considers it as “tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences, which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken”. Creative tourism is a sustainable type of tourism, as it uses the creative potential of local businesses and residents, their traditions and cultural knowledge to cater to tourists interested in learning about the destination by adopting a hands-on approach to tourism.

Creative tourism is not based on iconic, high profile tourist attractions that mobilize a great amount of people, through this creating flow constraints in the territory. It is not about Eiffel Tower or the Louvre (Paris), The Houses of Parliament (London), The Brandenburg Gate (Berlin), The Great Canyon (USA) or Torre de Belém (Lisbon), that tangible man-made or natural heritage which can be seen in worldwide known monuments, buildings and sceneries. Creative tourism is about the living, vibrant culture that lived through time in the lives of thousands of inhabitants of territories and that together have built social cultures made of traditions, practices, expertise based on experimentation and passed through generations, a testimony of human ingenuity and victory over the adversity of the natural environment.

Creative tourism is not cultural tourism because it is not about colossal or awe-inspiring material productions or natural assets that survived through the passing of time, but instead about the current producers that carry with them the knowledge created by former generations and creatively still use it in contemporary life. It dynamizes social capital, supporting the assumption that thriving social systems are able to stimulate people resourcefulness, by creating the adequate environments for them

to develop capabilities (e.g. knowledge, expertise, technological skills, and so on) and build their sense of personal identity (Morgan and Pritchard 2005) through a dialogue with their ancestors and past history.

Creative tourism is meant to respect the natural and cultural environment and making the visitor part of this complex web of actors and elements of human societies. At the same time, it allows residents and communities to interact with tourists at a deeper level (i.e. as citizens) by combining entertainment with learning and people interaction (Richards 2010). For some, these new creativity-based forms of relating with people and social cultures lead to emergent meanings of tourism experience authenticity, which emphasize direct and contextualized negotiation between host and visitor (Richards 2011). Moreover, the inclusiveness focus requires joint participation and involvement of all parties in all stages of production to consumption.

According to Tung et al. (2009: 92), in creative tourism, “residents need to be involved to invest in and communicate what is happening in the place and what are the things done to develop it in line with an agreed, shared, vision”. As it does not exploit the environment or overuse natural resources and misrepresent local cultures, the sustainable focus of creative tourism can be proposed as a solution to reduce overtourism at urban destinations with strong, diverse historical and cultural heritage and in need of boosting their local dynamics in a sustainable way. The proposition argued here understands creative tourism as the type of tourism that needs to be developed when territories need to reshape their attractions not around artefacts but socially and culturally embedded practices, not around monuments or architectures but living humans that are the bearers of past traditions, skills and techniques. This change allows businesses, communities and public bodies to reshape the territory’s areas according to spots of attractive “authenticities” of places. Creative tourism emphasizes mobility and reshaping of social cultures through dialogue, and *scapes* become as dynamic as their people. From the above, the remaining of the chapter develops with the following question in mind: can creative tourism help to minimize overtourism in Lisbon and why?

A Creative Mind-Set to Manage Overtourism at Destinations: The Case of Lisbon

Lisbon in the Spotlight

For the third year in a row, the World Travel Awards (2019) rated Portugal “Europe’s Leading Destination” and Lisbon “Europe’s Leading City Break Destination”. Lisbon is Portugal’s capital city with 2.8 million inhabitants. It is characterized by its luminosity, weather, vibrancy, hospitality and gastronomy. This combination of factors makes it one of the most sought-after cities for new technology companies and creatives. It is described as a “big little city” (Moore 2017) currently experiencing a creative turn (Connelly 2017; Santos 2018). Lisbon ranks 37th in the list of the top 50 cities in the world with the best quality of life, ahead of Madrid and London. It is considered the 31st safest city in the world (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2018). The Global Talent Competitiveness Report of the Institut Européen d’Administration des Affaires, INSEAD (2019) highlights the growing importance of cities as talent attractors due to their greater flexibility and adaptability to new trends and patterns.

Lisbon ranks 45th (4 positions above Barcelona) as a city that attracts and retains skilled workers. Lisbon’s quality of life is related to the effort shown in planning and safeguarding affordable housing. Investment and business is stimulating the creation and redesigning of urban spaces based on compelling experiential and sensory content (Santos 2018). Lisbon is perceived as hip, cheap and innovative, a cosmopolitan city (Moore 2017). Tourism is a growing economic activity in Portugal, which receives 4.5 million tourists a year and 10 million visitor nights in Lisbon in 2016 (Turismo de Portugal 2017). In the first two months of 2017, bookings have increased by 14.3% relative to previous year.

The Residents’ Perspective

Lisbon received nine tourists per resident, while London received four visitors per resident and Barcelona five (IPDT 2019). This leads to

pressures on residents, as the numbers of temporary residents and the creative class made of international students, tech professionals and artists shape new tastes and demands (Barata-Salgueiro et al. 2017; Mendes 2016; Moore 2017). The new inhabitants stimulate modernized facilities, new business concepts, and new urban designs. There is price speculation in the housing market leading to displacement of aged locals and small family-owned businesses, and consequently loss of character (Moore 2017). The Portuguese resident population of Lisbon has declined by 240,000 inhabitants (Mendes 2013), leading to gentrification (Ascensão 2015).

A number of media reports have indicated residents' complaints about overcrowding, improper behaviour and noise from bars and discos. Public authorities expressed concern about the negative perceptions of residents towards tourism but have been criticised for not doing enough to meet residents' expectations. One problem is the use of public areas, as customers of bars and discos gather outside establishments for socializing and drinking. Uncontrolled use of public spaces for nightlife and entertainment leads to degradation of these areas and accumulation of street litter that is highly visible to residents. These issues reflect an underlying concern for wellbeing, safety and security, and care for public assets and heritage.

Public authorities' response, at various levels, has been criticised for being against communities' interests and serving the stakes of tourism-based businesses. Residents resent the elimination of green areas and streets closed to create more accessible tourism areas. These streets then became spots of high tourist concentration and congestion. Residents' associations are also concerned about short-term accommodation rental. The increase in the cost of housing has led to the desertification of the city centre as residents are being forced to move to the suburbs. This affects local economic activity and also represents a problem for tourists who go downtown looking for the destination's authenticity through observing and interacting with natives and their habits, rituals or gastronomy. Instead they find a touristic, artificially transformed landscape devoid of local authenticity. Cruise ships stopping in the

Port of Lisbon also cause overcrowding without residents receiving adequate revenue. Cruise ships already have their business operations negotiated and supported by commissions, which aren't shared with residents. The air and noise pollution from cruise ships also annoy residents. The use of gasoline-powered Tuk-tuks by tourists visiting Lisbon is popular but generate high levels of air and noise pollution. Tourism-based shops are replacing typical grocery stores and increasing the price of goods.

A boom of bars that sell alcohol at low prices until four in the morning (Jornal SOL 2014) led the *Cais do Sodré* Association to appeal to silence and tranquillity: "Have fun but no noise. People live here" (Justo and Amado 2015). The need to integrate and accommodate the competing interests of stakeholders presents challenges to all involved. Different social movements, such as "Live in Lisbon" (*Morar em Lisboa*) or community groups like "People live here" (*Aqui Mora Gente*) are protesting against the urban tourism trend in the city and the growing 'party tourism' phenomenon (Novy and Colomb 2016). These movements are advocating a new type of urban governance. The platform lisboa-does-not-love.com was created by Lisbon residents to tell tourists and local authorities what residents do not like, hoping that suggested and recommended alternatives will be regulated, approved and implemented.

Local Commerce Perspective

Destination stakeholders include various groups of people, often with contrary interests (Komppula 2016; Scott et al. 2000). These stakeholder groups include local businesses, the majority of which are inherited from past generations, but now operate under new business conditions. More recent business entrepreneurs hope to attract a high-income clientele and their aesthetic tastes. Thus, small owners with traditional businesses feel the need to adapt and convert their orientation. Regardless this, there is evidence of concern about the competitiveness of businesses in face of tourist misbehaviour (Jornal SOL 2012).

The Government Perspective

Lisbon's tourism boom has been accompanied by a structural transformation of the city with emergence of new business models, new actors and changes in the patterns and modes of consumption. These transformations have led to changes in the speed of decision making in the sector and the knowledge required to ensure successful public policy making and business strategies, as well as the correct balance between the performance of tourism and the quality of life of residents. However, the *Strategic Tourism Plan for the Lisbon Region 2015–2019* is concerned with developing key products and rehabilitating major attractions rather than solving urban and tourism related issues of direct interest to residents.

In 2017, Lisbon City Council developed projects and programs in order to help residents and small business owners jointly work on their problems. The *Affordable Income Plan (Plano de Renda Acessível)*, the *National Building Rehabilitation Fund (Fundo Nacional de Reabilitação do Edificado)*, and the programme *Historical Shops (Lojas com História)* address local community needs and concerns and attempt at giving them an answer.

Creative Tourism in Lisbon

As the number of visitors increase, previously unexplored areas are becoming highly appealing to tourists interested in Portuguese heritage as well as living history and culture. These tourists go beyond most known attraction sites linked to Lisbon's history of the Discovery Age, during the Renaissance period, to experience residential neighbourhoods such as Alfama, Chiado, Mouraria, and Bairro Alto located in Lisbon's city centre which are inhabited by locals, living the traditional Portuguese way of life and character.

The creative turn has seized the spirit of Lisbon. Many creative initiatives emphasise the local culture and enhance its identity to the eyes of visitors and intensify the interaction between locals and visitors (Richards and Raymond 2000). Creative tourism is socially and culturally based on performative exploration of intangible heritage, so this type of tourism

emphasizes hands-on experiences, learning-by-doing, as well as learning-through-interaction. These experiential propositions present characteristics that potentially help minimize overtourism constraints to residents and the destination, as they are not based on passive visits to heritage iconic places and landmarks. Moreover, residents wanting to support their life based on tourism are finding new ways to facilitate visitors' access to low profile facets of the destination.

Examples of creative tourism propositions based on Richards and Wilson (2006) and Duxbury et al. (2019) currently found in Lisbon include *crafts, street art, photography, video and digital arts, gastronomy and wine workshops, language courses, and creative and interpretative activities*. Textile and ceramic craft workshops are usually linked to Portuguese traditional materials and productions where tourists learn about and create their own artefacts, thus temporarily becoming craft producers. *Street art workshops* connect visitors to the history of Lisbon through involvement with varied styles and techniques of painting. Tours around the city also offer interpretations of socially contextualized history and are opportunities to have fun while learning about embodied local culture.

Photography, video and digital arts workshops are based on shared learning experiences with locals who are skilled in these techniques and are willing to share them with visitors. They involve not only the learning experience but also the practice of some type of technique; the practice of photography, for example, is undertaken through a personalized journey around the city and is meant to immerse the visitor in the life of the city according to particular interests. *Gastronomy and wine workshops* are rooted in Portuguese tradition as they offer learning experiences of local cuisine with a focus on visitor active participation; visitors are invited to join local experts on production of distinctive products. *Language courses* provide access to a key cultural asset and particular to social or regional cultures. *Creative and interpretative activities* involve asking visitors to become acquainted with the atmospheres of the city through the hands of individual locals interested in interacting with visitors in a personalized way: these interactions are focused on meeting the specific interests of visitors and tours are adapted to this purpose. This allows visitors to experience the destination first-hand, to immerse listeners and participants through direct communication and storytelling.

Analysis of Creative Tourism Developments in Lisbon

The above analysis of current tourism products and activities shows a growing awareness of urban areas potential to develop tourism around intangible heritage deeply rooted in communities' distinctive strengths and appeals. Such tourism is not so much focused on national symbols and commoditized identities promoted to international audiences, instead it is developing according to the perceptions of producers' views about cultural values that extend beyond iconic buildings, historic personalities and big historical facts. It instead highlights the living culture of residents and communities. Lisbon has been designing and developing tourist activities, many of them under residents' initiative and management within an authenticity mind-set, in this way dispersing tourists in the territory and concurrently alleviating areas perceived as most affect by overcrowding.

These emergent initiatives have a number of advantages:

- (i) Most tourism development attracts particular tourist segments to urban areas and concentrates them in specific neighbourhoods (Peeters et al. 2018). Creative experiences, on the contrary, are being designed and marketed with a focus on different target markets. Figure 1 shows the location of some businesses currently operating which offer visitors a vision of Lisbon and its social and cultural substance.
- (ii) Creative tourism is small-scale and based on individual entrepreneurs. It requires a new profile of visitor who seeks immersive experiences and personal interaction. Creative tourism producers are looking for creative tourists who want a memorable destination experience lived through a personal interaction. As visitors become temporary residents by the hand of committed inhabitants, tourism becomes increasingly the driver of emergent segments focused on alternative points of attraction, diverging from mainstream tourism attractors (Richards and Marques 2018; Peeters et al. 2018).
- (iii) Many creative tourism businesses do not require large venues or lots of infrastructure (Duxbury et al. 2019; Ramos et al. 2019). Storytelling-based walks, for instance, or photography shootings



Fig. 1 Location of creative tourism initiatives in Lisbon. (Source: The authors)

stimulate dispersion dependent on tourist highly personalized interests. Residents with qualification and expertise, but mostly with the experience of being a local, facilitate the visitor access to areas and create meanings otherwise unapproachable to outsiders. This means creative tourism has the potential to become an agent of visitor dispersal (Goodwin 2017; Peeters et al. 2018). New digital technologies can provide a communication channel that allows direct interaction between parties.

- (iv) A new generation of entrepreneurs can create new bridges between visitors and residents, thereby increasing the sharing of benefits that may be brought by tourism. This will ease potential conflicts between parties and promote better understanding. Tourism destinations are composed of multiple generations of people, and younger professionals, that share new visitors' lifestyles, values and expectations (Iunius et al. 2015) play an important role in intermediating dialogue with older residents and traditional business owners, which may still look at tourists as undesirable on their territory. Intolerance to visitors is due to their excessive numbers but is also dependent on their quality as individuals. Thus, targeting at new segments which value social and cultural values and the contribution of tourism to a

positive appraisal of cultures, is more easily promoted by new tourism professionals that have a deeper understanding of both groups of stakeholders, residents and tourists (Musikyan 2016).

Discussion and Conclusion

Some cities including Lisbon are experiencing excessive carrying capacity and claim to have reached high pressure levels, a phenomenon termed overtourism. This is leading to growing interest by the national and international media, as overtourism describes the social unrest and turbulence observed in many destinations around the world. While not an exclusively urban phenomenon, overtourism is mostly identified in many cities popular with tourists (Milano et al. 2019), especially in European countries. Overtourism is linked to broader than earlier concepts such as carrying capacity (Milano et al. 2019), and related to certain types of visitors, their numbers and concentration in specific destination areas, and the perceptions of residents about them. Residents and local communities may benefit from tourism growth but also suffer from it. From a policy and agenda setting point of view, Peeters et al. (2018) model is a tool that facilitates integration of dimensions to be examined and managed. Residents are a key party of the tourism system, and local community empowerment is vital. A policy response to overtourism is to involve residents (Peeters et al. 2018: 23). So how can public bodies and other stakeholders in charge of policy and decision making include them and let them know about the contributions they can make to a more sustainable destination? Are public authorities making the most of communities' creativity and proactiveness? What are residents doing to become more involved in the building of a more sustainable destination for them and visitors alike?

In this chapter, the case of Lisbon is discussed. Lisbon is one among many European cities identified as being affected by overtourism. One problem faced by Lisbon's residents is gentrification due to conversion of traditional housing into tourist accommodation (Peeters et al. 2018). Based on Doxey's Irridex model, Lisbon residents are responding to tourism growth varying between annoyance and antagonism, with local groups and associations voicing protests and counter measures being

taken by public authorities. Conflict between parties is due to negotiation power and different interests at stake. According to residents and community-based groups, public action is insufficient or inadequate, and although tourism is a cherished activity, the type of visitors and the activities undertaken are under severe criticism. Nightlife, hooliganism, noise and urban pollution are problems which public authorities are not addressing sufficiently, compromising Lisbon's quality of life. However, creative tourism initiatives, as found in Lisbon, carry potential to mitigate negative effects of visitor concentration and behaviour.

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