

Tourism Gentrification as a Symptom of an Unsustainable Tourism Development

Submitted: 04.02.18 | Accepted: 26.04.18

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The aim of the article is to present the reasons, causes and effects of tourism gentrification in the context of spontaneous development of the sharing economy in the tourism sector. As an example, Barcelona was selected where the changes taking place in the tourist accommodation sector were analysed under the influence of the Airbnb platform and their spatial and socio-economic effects. The analysis was based on data from domestic and foreign publications, public statistics data of the city of Barcelona and official Airbnb data. The research results indicate an uncontrolled development of the accommodation sector in the gentrified city districts, the displacement of residents and the lack of legal regulations enabling the functioning of the sharing economy entities in a way that generates benefits for city residents.

Keywords: tourism, sharing economy, tourism gentrification, Barcelona.

Gentryfikacja turystyczna jako przejaw niezrównoważonego rozwoju turystyki

Nadesłany: 04.02.18 | Zaakceptowany do druku: 26.04.18

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie istoty, przyczyn oraz skutków gentryfikacji turystycznej w kontekście żywiołowego rozwoju gospodarki współdzielenia w sektorze turystyki. Jako przykład aplikacyjny wybrano Barcelonę, gdzie przeanalizowano zmiany zachodzące w sektorze zakwaterowania turystycznego pod wpływem funkcjonowania platformy Airbnb oraz ich skutki przestrzenne i społeczno-ekonomiczne. Analizę przeprowadzono w oparciu o dane pochodzące z publikacji krajowych i zagranicznych, dane statystyki publicznej miasta Barcelony oraz oficjalne dane Airbnb. Wyniki badań wskazują na niekontrolowany rozwój bazy noclegowej w zgentryfikowanych dzielnicach miasta, wyprowadzanie się stałych mieszkańców oraz brak jednolitych regulacji prawnych, umożliwiających funkcjonowanie podmiotów gospodarki współdzielenia w sposób generujący korzyści dla mieszkańców miasta.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, gospodarka współdzielenia, gentryfikacja turystyczna, Barcelona.

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1. Introduction

Tourist services are traditionally provided by hotel and transport enterprises as well as tour operators (travel agencies). Recently, however, an increasing number of private persons offer tourists an opportunity to temporarily share their property (e.g. a house or a car) or perform some activities (e.g. prepare meals or go on trips). This type of economic activity referred to as the “sharing economy”, determined by the dynamic development of information and communication technologies, is manifested in tourism in the provision of private accommodation and transport services, leading to an uncontrolled development of tourism, especially in historic city districts.

The development of the sharing economy in the provision of tourist services and the related process of expansion of specialist online platforms (e.g. Airbnb, Uber), has in practice positive and negative socio-economic effects. One of the negative consequences of the sharing economy with regard to the tourism sector is tourism gentrification that is becoming a serious problem for an increasing number of European metropolitan areas – most popular destinations for mass tourism. The essence of tourism gentrification is the outflow of residents from city districts dominated by tourism caused, on the one hand, by the permanent presence of tourists and, on the other hand, by a high concentration of living space intended for short-term rental to tourists.

The process of tourism gentrification is intensified by the operation of the global platform that facilitates sharing accommodation (Airbnb). The online platform offers individuals an opportunity to rent their houses as accommodation for guests. The external effects of the unregulated, widespread short-term rentals available through the Airbnb website are numerous and significant, and their elimination is currently the biggest challenge for modern tourist cities.

2. Purpose and Methods

The aim of the article is to present the essence, main causes and consequences of tourism gentrification. As the initial assumption of research, the thesis was adopted that tourism gentrification testifies to an unsustainable nature of tourism development. It concerns in particular the most popular tourist cities with an evident market expansion of the tourist accommodation offer based on sharing provided through technology platforms (including Airbnb).

The article consists of the theoretical and analytical parts. The theoretical part reviews the literature on tourism gentrification, discusses the reasons and consequences of gentrification, while distinguishing two types of gentrification, i.e. residential gentrification and commercial gentrification.

The analytical part presents the consequences of tourism gentrification on the example of Barcelona. The choice of the researched city was dictated by the scale of tourist accommodation handled by technological platforms according to the sharing model. The emergence of platforms facilitating the sharing of accommodation brought about negative effects related to the high concentration of living space intended for short-term rental to tourists in historic districts of the city, causing an outflow of residents.

The following research methods were used in the article: analysis of literature on the sharing economy, gentrification and tourism gentrification of cities, and a case study method allowing for an in-depth description of gentrification in Barcelona along with its consequences. In collecting information, secondary external sources were used, including the literature on spatial transformation of the city, published studies and reports on the functioning of Airbnb and public statistics of the city of Barcelona concerning the condition of the local tourist accommodation sector and the level of tourism development in Barcelona.

3. Sharing Economy as a Factor in the Unsustainable Development of Tourism

Sharing-based economy is a relatively new economic trend that consists in the direct exchange of goods and services between consumers who communicate through special websites. In the related literature, the sharing economy is understood as an alternative business and consumption model that is based on access to a good or service without having to own it (Pietrewicz & Sobiecki, 2016, p. 12). This term is construed to mean both services provided using specialised digital platforms, supported and organised by entities such as Airbnb, BlaBlaCar or Uber, and decidedly smaller-scale initiatives such as co-participation in minor refurbishments, rental of tools or books (Kimla, 2016, p. 136).

The sharing economy model is widely used in many areas of social and economic activities, including the tourism sector. This applies in particular to individuals who offer their houses or apartments for rent to tourists (e.g. couchsurfing, Airbnb), cars as transport (Uber, BlaBlaCar) and time and knowledge as local tourist guides (e.g. Greeters). The growing availability of IT technologies makes travel services widely available via numerous peer-to-peer exchange platforms (Table 1).

The dynamic development of this phenomenon is favoured by changes in the behaviour of consumers of tourist services. A tourist of the post-industrial era (the so-called “post-tourist”) prefers self-organised holiday trips and is increasingly looking for recommendations among friends, family or anonymous tourists posting reviews on the Internet, eagerly uses digital technologies and social networks to plan trips, make purchases or review travel experiences (Niezgoda & Markiewicz, 2014).

Platform	Number of users	Value	Range
Accommodation			
Airbnb (2008)	2.5 million offers, 10 million guests since the creation of the platform (data from January 2017)	USD 30 billion (data from August 2016)	Presence in over 191 countries
Homeaway (2005)	1.2 million offers (data from January 2017)	USD 3.9 billion (data from November 2015)	Presence in 190 countries
Transport			
Uber	40 million active users per month (data from October 2016)	USD 68 billion (data from August 2016)	Presence in over 70 countries
BlaBlaCar	35 million users, 12 million travellers per quarter (data from January 2017)	USD 1.6 billion (data from September 2015)	Presence in 22 countries
Food & beverage			
VizEat	Over 120 thousand members (data from January 2017)	USD 3.8 billion (data from September 2016)	Presence in 110 countries
EatWith	650 hosts, 80 thousand seats at tables used since the creation of the platform (data from January 2017)	Valuation not available	Presence in 50 countries
Tourist services			
Vayable	<i>data on the total number of users unavailable</i>	Valuation not available	International range (does not reveal the total number of countries where it operates)
ToursByLocals	1905 tour guides (data from January 2017)	Valuation not available	Presence in 155 countries (data from January 2017)

Tab. 1. Online platforms in the tourism sector. Source: Juul M. (2017), *Tourism and the sharing economy*, EPRS – European Parliamentary Research Service. Retrieved from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/595897/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)595897_PL.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/595897/EPRS_BRI(2017)595897_PL.pdf)

The sharing economy is a relatively new phenomenon; hence, it is difficult to clearly determine its impact on socio-economic development, including the development of tourism. Despite the gap in the scientific research, the literature provides arguments concerning both positive and negative effects of the sharing economy.

Supporters of the sharing economy underline the contribution of this phenomenon to the processes of sustainable development, which is manifested, among others, in reducing the use of resources (especially energy and water), limiting waste generation or creating new jobs (Juul, 2017; Ayscue & Boley, 2016). However, it is debatable whether the sharing economy is a potential path to a more sustainable form of tourism consumption, leading to a just and sustainable economy, or just a negative expression of neoliberalism (Martin, 2016).

With respect to the tourist services market, the sharing economy provides new accommodation and mobility opportunities. Travel availability is increasing for many people, making it easier to discover new places, outside the hotel base, and to provide visitors with a more personalised service than in hotel chains. Online platforms ensure easy access to a wide range of products and services at an affordable price, allow authentic meetings between tourists and residents, and contribute to increasing employment and income of residents. Beneficial effects of the sharing economy comprise also more flexibility in planning a trip.

The sharing economy brings measurable benefits not only by providing substitutes for existing products, but also – through the use of Say's Law – generating demand that did not exist before thanks to the supply of new products and services (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). The provision of unused rooms, bikes, cars, etc. through online platforms for free or against a fee stimulates entrepreneurship among residents and the development of local trade, contributes to the creation of new jobs and sources of income.

However, a question arises about the impact of new entities on traditional providers of tourist services. Its negative effects include, above all, unfair competition, avoiding government regulations and taxes, and reducing employment security (Young, 2015).

As an effect of strong interest in online platforms offering accommodation, transport or other tourist services, the tourist traffic is growing dynamically in the most attractive cities (including Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon, Venice, Berlin), which exerts a strong pressure on the local infrastructure, contributes to the degradation of the urban tissue and is a nuisance for residents.

4. Tourism Gentrification – Genesis and Essence of the Process

The spontaneous and uncontrolled development of the sharing economy in the tourism sector is the source of tourism gentrification of city districts and the associated “touristification”, which means total subordination of urban space to tourism and its dominance by tourists.

The concept of gentrification, used for the first time in 1964 by the sociologist R. Glass, originally meant taking over and revitalizing housing

resources in degraded city districts by the middle class and displacing the lower class living there to other parts of the city (Glass, 1964). The positive consequences ensuing from this process comprised the improvement of the condition of housing resources and public infrastructure, increased public safety, with a simultaneous rise in housing prices and rental rates (Pięta-Kanurska, 2015, p. 208). Contemporary gentrification is a much more complex process because it affects many different participants (residents, investors, tourists) and covers not only cities but also more and more frequently suburban and rural areas (Janoschka, Sequera, & Salinas, 2014). However, the greatest potential for gentrification processes is found in central districts of cities inhabited by people with low socio-economic status, affected by labour instability, unemployment, stigmatisation (Slater, 2010).

Karwińska points to three types of changes taking place in gentrified districts, which makes it possible to distinguish economic, social and symbolic (cultural) gentrification (Karwińska, 2008, p. 258). Economic gentrification is associated with an increase in rents and the cost of living. Social gentrification means a change of the social structure of the district to younger people, with higher education, employed primarily in the services sector. By contrast, symbolic gentrification is associated with the prestige of a given area and occurs in the minds of city residents. Important is also the architectural dimension of gentrification which includes the processes of refurbishment and increasing the value of existing buildings through modernisation, and the functional dimension that refers to the change in the structure of economic activity (Döring & Ulbricht, 2014; Krajewski, 2013; Holm, 2010).

The process of gentrification is not a one-off phenomenon but comprises several phases during which buildings are gradually taken over by new residents. The first phase means the appearance of artists, students (the so-called pioneers of gentrification) in the gentrified district. They transform existing buildings (cultural capital) into lofts, studios, galleries, apartments, etc., for the purposes of personal consumption. These are usually people with a higher social status compared to the original inhabitants of the area. They are attracted by low rents and costs of living, as well as the proximity of the city centre. Gentrification has a nature of an occasional residential rehabilitation and can be co-financed by the state. In the next phase, representatives of the middle class (young people, singles, childless couples) appear; they are interested in working in the city (media, IT, culture) and want to live in a place that suits their lifestyle. This group of newcomers is called gentrifiers. This group is replaced in the next phase by super-gentrifiers, often referred to as the “new global elite” (advanced stage of gentrification), for whom the economic capital (investments) is more important than the cultural capital (Jadach-Sepiolo, 2009, p.132). The role of space organisers is taken over by development compa-

nies that cooperate with local authorities in rehabilitating living space for wealthy users.

The positive effects of gentrification are revival of investments, improvement of the residents' quality of life (i.e. safety, access to shops, restaurants, parks), increase in income, economic activity, higher local tax revenues and upgrade of technical infrastructure (Geloso & Guénette, 2016). However, this process is accompanied by numerous negative effects, among which the following are mentioned in particular:

- social displacement of permanent residents (displacement effect) through direct coercion (the so-called direct displacement) in the form of evictions, or indirect actions (the so-called indirect displacement), most often systematic increases in rents or real estate prices (Grzeszczak, 2016),
- ghettoisation, i.e. the formation of closed, guarded housing estates and the progressing degradation of old, mainly industrial estates (Jałowicki & Łukowski, 2007),
- elitisation of districts and housing estates (symbolic gentrification).

The most often discussed negative effect of gentrification is that residents are being systematically pushed out of gentrified districts (displacement effect) because most often they cannot afford to pay higher and higher rents, and sooner or later new residents occupy their place.

If the source of gentrification processes are tourists considered to be relatively wealthy users of urban space, we can speak about tourism gentrification or gentrification caused by the influx of tourists. Compared to economic, social or symbolic gentrification, tourism gentrification is a new concept. The first research which referred to the impact of tourist traffic on spatial and demographic changes in urban districts was published in the 1990s (Mullins, 1991). One of the landmark works related to tourism gentrification was the analysis of the oldest and the most famous district (French Quarter) of New Orleans (Gotham, 2005). In 2005, Gotham described tourism gentrification as the process of transforming a city district into an exclusive enclave dominated by entertainment and tourist establishments, i.e. hotels, galleries, shops, clubs, casinos, amusement parks. This transformation of space is associated with the resettlement of indigenous people, which is why tourism is considered a form of gentrification. Other studies on tourism gentrification can be found in the work of Zhao et al., where the authors described the concept, type and mechanism of gentrification using Shanghai as a case study and followed the process in other historic cities in China (Zhao, Gu, Li, & Huang, 2006).

A review of literature on tourism development and gentrification processes shows that both processes are the result of neoliberal strategies of local authorities used to attract capital and consumers of urban public goods and services (Miró, 2011). Inhabitants experience tourism gentrification in advanced capitalist economies (New York, London, Berlin, Amsterdam, Barcelona) and in developing countries (Asia-Pacific region, Caribbean,

Latin America). Gentrification and tourism processes are closely related and overlap in time and space. Their co-occurrence may have two different sources. In the first case, gentrified districts inhabited by the cosmopolitan middle class become tourist districts dominated by entertainment and tourist establishments, i.e. hotels, galleries, shops, clubs, casinos, bars, souvenirs. On the other hand, in the second case, the actions of local authorities focused on tourism help attract tourists to little-visited districts of the city. However, in both cases, we are dealing with tourism gentrification, which results in the emergence of urban districts transformed into exclusive places, dominated by entertainment and tourist establishments (entertainment industry).

A positive aspect of tourism gentrification, which creates tourist-friendly spaces, providing visitors with revitalised areas, new consumption options and a sense of belonging to the middle class is, according to many authors, the improvement of the image of the district and the entire city (Terhorst, van de Ven, & Deben, 2003).

Depending on the local context, tourism gentrification usually has the nature of residential or commercial gentrification and is part of a wider process of symbolic gentrification of the city (Cocola-Gant, 2015). Residential gentrification leads to the loss of a part of housing resources by long-term urban residents. Its causes are: growth and spatial expansion of the tourist accommodation sector (hotels, hostels, guest houses, apartments), increase in the number of second homes and flats, increase in property prices and rental costs (Kowalczyk-Anioł & Zmysłony, 2017, p. 29). In turn, commercial gentrification can lead to such consequences as:

- change in the demand for goods and services (from meeting local residents' needs to handling tourist traffic – e.g. the expansion of souvenir shops and street quasi-artists),
- disappearance of small, independent stores, growth of networked and franchised establishments,
- growing range of space rental for commercial purposes and rising consumption costs.

The contemporary tourism gentrification is usually a type of commercial gentrification. Its effect are districts dominated by commercial and entertainment establishments, where souvenir shops, restaurants, antique shops, art galleries have replaced local grocery stores, cafes and bars. The area is distinguished by the lack of basic services, limited access to public space, and day and night noise. The displacement of permanent residents to another neighbourhood is just a matter of time.

The processes termed “tourism gentrification” are very diverse and depend on the local context. They differ between global and smaller cities, yet the effects of gentrification are quite similar. This phenomenon always has a negative impact on the community, social cohesion and access to affordable housing for residents.

5. Tourism Gentrification in Barcelona – The Role of the Airbnb Platform

The history of tourism in Barcelona is relatively short. In the 1960s, tourist traffic concentrated only on the Costa Brava coastline. In the 1970s, Barcelona was considered a post-industrial, grey and neglected port city with degraded buildings in the old town, underdeveloped technical infrastructure and social problems. In the 1980s, the city authorities prepared a revitalization plan (Maragall plan), implemented by creating new public spaces, reviving and increasing the availability of isolated embankments, strengthening the cultural identity and introducing greenery to the degraded urban tissue. The plan was implemented on a pointwise basis.

However, the organisation of the Summer Olympics in 1992 was crucial as it offered an opportunity for the city to emerge from the urban, social and economic crisis. Entrusting the function of the Olympic Games host stimulated the preparation of a comprehensive renovation program for degraded post-industrial areas and the implementation of the “seafront city” concept with a new urban structure of the city. Streets were redeveloped and reconstructed, public parks were revitalised, which resulted in, among others, 200 city parks and squares newly created or deeply modernised for the Games (Gadomska, 2016, p. 275). The main assumption of the town planners was to make the degraded and peripheral districts more attractive (including the Poblenou district, Montjuïc hill and the coastal zone of the city and the Mediterranean Sea) so that they were self-sufficient, independent of the city centre and attractive to both residents and visitors (Janik, 2013, p. 124). The processes of transformation of the urban tissue were accompanied by social gentrification, making Barcelona one of the fastest gentrifying cities in Europe. Historic tenement houses were replaced by apartment buildings, and the inhabitants moved to the city outskirts.

As a result of all the projects carried out in connection with the Summer Olympic Games, the city created a rich tourist offer, turning itself into one of the top fifteen most visited destinations in the world. The organisation of the Olympic Games in Barcelona is often cited as an example of a good use of the potential for the development of tourism, which lies in international sporting events and is described by economists as the Barcelona effect (Borzyszkowski, 2014).

The last decade of the twentieth century was the period of restructuring of the old town, consisting in the renovation of historic buildings and enriching the historical tissue with modern architectural structures, i.e. Torre Agbar (Nouvel tower), Edifici Forum, Torre de Comunicacions, Torre Mare Nostrum, Torre Mare Rostrum, City of Justice. The construction of the neomodern Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) designed by R. Meier (1995) initiated the process of tourism gentrification. The neglected district

of El Raval in the historic part of the city became fashionable and visited by tourists.

Following the 2008 global crisis, the municipal authorities eased all restrictions that would prevent the construction of hotels in the historic part of the city, adjusted the regulations for planning tourist investments, introduced tax incentives for investors and accepted all forms of commercial tourist activities (Cocola-Gant & Pardo, 2017). Tourism has become one of the most important sectors of the economy, and Barcelona – a city of production of tourist attractions and entertainment, attracting tourists from around the world.

In 2008, the largest global Airbnb platform was launched in Barcelona, complementing the activities of local companies representing the sharing economy in tourism. Airbnb describes itself as “a trusted community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodation around the world” (Airbnb.com). In fact, it is an online platform via which residents offer tourists free living spaces, from luxury apartments through modest rooms to unique forms of accommodation, such as villas or tree houses. The accommodation offer may include: renting the whole house or apartment, a private room or sharing a room with the host (Airbnb, 2018). As stated by B. Sztokfisz (Sztokfisz, 2017, p. 96), only the last service fulfils the criteria of the sharing economy (for the remaining services, the company provides an intermediary platform to conclude transactions). The data presented on the *insideairbnb.com* website show that 64% of Airbnb offers (data for 32 cities) are entire houses, 34% – private rooms, and only 2% – shared rooms (InsideAirbnb, 2018). AirBnb promotes a sense of community, the idea of an AirBnb citizen within this community and supports the concept of sharing free assets; however, Barcelona figures show a completely different situation.

The first negative external effect of the dynamic development of the sharing economy is an uncontrolled development of the accommodation base in the gentrified city districts. Barcelona offers a wide range of tourist accommodation establishments, making the city attractive and accessible to many different market segments. The official statistics on the capacity of the accommodation base in Barcelona indicate that in 2014 there were 10 065 licensed tourist establishments, offering 115.7 thousand beds, including 9 606 licensed private accommodation establishments with 40 thousand beds (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2016).

In addition to traditional accommodation establishments, concentrated in the historic district of the city (Ciutat Vella, Eixample Sant Marti and Montjuic), there is a large offer of private apartments available on digital platforms. In this sector AirBnb plays the biggest role: the platform offers 17 370 accommodation establishments (ABTS), turning Barcelona into the fifth AirBnb market. However, only 9 606 establishments are licensed, while the operation of the remaining ones is considered illegal.

Despite the Catalan Tourism Act which requires all tourist establishments to be registered in the Catalonia Tourism Register (Registro de Turismo de Cataluña), as much as 60% of the Airbnb accommodation establishments in Barcelona do not have a tourist license to operate (ABTS) and evade paying local taxes, both income tax and tourist fees. In 2015, the municipal authorities suspended the consideration of applications for new permits for running new accommodation establishments, and in 2016 the authorities introduced a complex set of license restrictions differentiated by districts (the city was divided into 4 zones). In July 2016, an inspection plan was launched against illegal tourist apartments, the aim of which was to eliminate existing illegal accommodation in the city. Efforts were also taken to punish Airbnb for unlicensed offers posted on the website (His, 2016).

The AirBnb market of accommodation establishments in Barcelona is dominated by several entities. The tourist accommodation offering is represented by persons who offer several apartments, and the first thirty administrators in Barcelona manage over 25 tourist establishments.¹ The data show that 50.4% of the offers are for entire apartments, 48.6% for private rooms, while shared rooms account for only 1.2% (Inside AirBnb, 2018). This means that when choosing a place to stay, most consumers decide to occupy the entire place themselves and are not interested in sharing the place with the owner at all.

The percentage of tourist apartments offered by AirBnb in some districts is very high: in the historic city centre (Ciutat Vella) one out of ten apartments belongs to Airbnb, and in the Gòtic quarter – one in six. This means that AirBnb offers 16.8% of all apartments in the Gòtic district and 9.6% in Ciutat Vella, while in other districts this percentage is lower, but it is significant and growing (Table 2). The Gòtic district is occupied in 50% by residents and in the remaining half by tourists (Cocola-Gant, 2016).

District	Number of offers (thous.)	Number of households (thous.)	% share of households providing Airbnb services
Ciutat Vella, of which:	3 845	39 926	9.6%
Raval	1 340	16 776	7.9%
Gòtic	1 091	6 461	16.8%
S Pere, S Cat, Ribera	1 111	9 869	11.2%
Barcelonetta	303	6 821	4.4%
Barcelona	14 539	655 175	2.2%

Tab. 2. Number of Airbnb offers and households in tourist districts of Barcelona (2015). Source: Inside Airbnb.

Visible changes in the real estate market lead to the city being dominated by owners offering short-term tourist accommodation. Tourist apartments appeared in Barcelona in the 90s, especially in Ciutat Vella, the historic centre of Barcelona. With the emergence of AirBnb in 2008 and its market success in Barcelona, tourist apartments experienced a rapid and strong development which, on the one hand, enhanced the possibilities for investors, companies and private owners to boost their income and, on the other hand, increased the visibility of landlords on the Internet. Growth and spatial expansion of tourist accommodation (hotels, hostels, boarding houses, apartments) as well as an increase in the number of second homes and apartments pushed up property prices and rental costs. In this way, AirBnb accelerated the outflow of inhabitants from the areas of mass tourist traffic (Segú, 2018).

The second significant external effect of Airbnb's operations in Barcelona, compounded by many illegal accommodation establishments that undermine the positive coexistence of local communities and tourists, is that residents are moving out or are being pushed out. Research carried out among the residents of the Gothic district by A. Cocola Gant in 2015 (Cocola Gant, 2015) indicates that:

- shops and services that residents need every day are being replaced by consumer services for visitors (bakeries, vegetable stores, pharmacies no longer exist, and food markets are being transformed into tourist attractions),
- the culture and new lifestyle of tourists and the new middle class are often the main reason to leave the place of residence,
- privatization of public space limits access to benches, parks and public meeting venues (this applies in particular to seniors and the youth),
- residents must share residential buildings with lessees (visitors, tourists), which for numerous persons is the main reason behind their decision to move out,
- an increased number of visitors and other users block many streets and public spaces, and the use of bicycles, segways and other rented vehicles makes it increasingly difficult for pedestrians to move around public places,
- a significant number of visitors use the public transport network, exacerbating congestion,
- noise in public places caused by the provision of services to the tourist traffic and the presence of tourists themselves is a noticeable daily disturbance,
- the pollution of air and water caused by the operation of, among others, restaurants and increase in the consumption of water and energy as well as production of waste is also a problem.

These changes have a negative impact on the quality of life of residents to such an extent that the areas most affected by tourism suffer a loss of

permanent residents. As a consequence, many people experience tourism a process of expropriation, because former residents are forced to move out, and tourists take their place. This process contributes to the erosion of interpersonal bonds, destruction of the social tissue and, as a result, impoverishes social capital resources and even leads to the disappearance of the local community (Alvarez-Sousa, 2018).

The third important aspect concerns the lack of uniform legal regulations enabling the functioning of all entities of the sharing economy in a way that brings benefits for city residents, especially for people who are not related to the concept of sharing but incur common social costs. The city authorities of Barcelona, in contrast to Amsterdam, pursue a policy focused on economic growth through tourism. However, the urban movement *Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible* (ABTS) has been operating in Barcelona since 2016. ABTS takes grassroots measures against the massive development of tourism, in particular against Barcelona's urban entrepreneurship model, which emphasises the growth of tourism as being positive by nature (Cocola-Gant & Pardo, 2017).

The main goal of ABTS is to prove that the current tourism development model is unsustainable. The organisation opposes the City Council and the proposed vision of tourism development and emphasises how important it is to reduce the number of visitors and curb commercial tourist activities if the city wants to strive for a more sustainable development, both socially and environmentally. The organisation has created the UNFairbnb social campaign against the negative impact of Airbnb on the city space, especially in connection with the emergence of housing problems, since more and more owners rent their apartments and houses at a higher price through Airbnb, which pushes general house prices up and causes dissatisfaction among residents. The ABTS members booked non-licensed holiday apartments through Airbnb, thus stirring up a media hype. These apartments were located in buildings of which all residents had been displaced. The intention of the organisers was to publicly condemn the eviction of residents and deny the social myth concerning Airbnb and the sharing economy, which in turn prompted the city authorities to take action against non-licensed owners.

The example of Barcelona shows that over the last 60 years tourism has become a key sector attracting investors and consumers, and the whole city has been organised around tourism. In a relatively short time, Barcelona became a "hostage of its own success" (Kowalczyk-Anioł & Zmyślony, 2017).

6. Conclusion

The transformation of Barcelona's local economy into the tourism economy and the migration of its inhabitants to the city outskirts are the main problems related to the neoliberal policy of municipal authorities and the mass tourism supported by AirBnb. The process of tourism gentrifica-

tion is a global problem, intensified by Airbnb, which has contributed to the massification of tourist traffic not only in Barcelona but also in other European capitals and historic cities. The appearance of tourists, first as visitors, later also as investors and residents, has led to the development of districts subordinated exclusively to tourism, as a result of which inhabitants were pushed into the outskirts and a “speculative bubble” emerged on the real estate market. The presented case study concludes with a recommendation that urban policy tools to minimise the negative effects of the sharing economy in the tourism sector be searched for and implemented.

Endnotes

- ¹ Assembla de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible (ABTS). *Desmuntant Airbnb: algunes dades a Barcelona*. Retrieved from <https://assembleabarris.wordpress.com/2017/03/29/desmuntant-airbnb-algunes-dades-a-barcelona>.

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