Networked Hospitality and Placemaking in the Sharing Economy: examining Airbnb

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Abstract

This article investigates the similarities and differences for tangible and intangible elements (factors and language use) contributing to placemaking in Airbnb English language reviews in Paris (59,057 reviews), Barcelona (19,291 reviews) and London (30,403 reviews). This paper contributes to provide new insights on the narrative construction of reputational capital which is connected to placemaking strategies. A combined quantitative approach using large scale text analysis enabled the analysis of review content and style. Patterns in the words usage were identified. Findings suggest that tangible and intangible elements work together in the discourse, contributing to the place-narrative built on the host's reputational capital. The host-guest interaction is the main aspect of the reviews, followed by the importance of transport and local amenities. Cities have different profiles in the composition of the word clusters which indicates differences in the guests' perceived experience.

Keywords: Hospitality; Sharing economy; Placemaking; Airbnb, Narrative, Reputational capital.

Resumo

A Rede de Hospedagem e o *Placemaking* na Economia Compartilhada: examinando o Airbnb

Este artigo investiga as semelhanças e diferenças de elementos tangíveis e intangíveis (fatores e uso da linguagem) que contribuem para *placemaking* nos comentários em inglês do Airbnb em Paris (59.057 avaliações), Barcelona (19.291 avaliações) e Londres (30.403 avaliações). Este artigo contribui para o estudo da narrativa em torno do capital reputacional ligado às estratégias de *placemaking*. Uma abordagem quantitativa usando análise de texto em larga escala permitiu a análise das avaliações em conteúdo e estilo de escrita, levando à identificação de padrões no uso da linguagem. Os resultados sugerem que elementos tangíveis e intangíveis atuam no discurso de forma concertada, contribuindo para a narrativa do lugar construída a partir do capital reputacional do anfitrião. A interação anfitrião-hóspede surge como o principal fator nas avaliações, seguido do transporte e das comodidades locais. As cidades têm perfis diferentes na composição dos *clusters* de palavras, o que indica diferenças na experiência percecionada pelos hóspedes.

Palavras-chave: Hospitalidade; Economia compartilhada; *Placemaking*; Airbnb, Narrativa; Capital reputacional.

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Resumen

La Red de Alojamiento y los Placemaking en la Economía Compartida: examinar Airbnb

Este artículo investiga las similitudes y diferencias de elementos tangibles e intangibles que contribuyen al *placemaking* en las reseñas en inglés de Airbnb en París (59,057 reseñas), Barcelona (19,291 reseñas) y Londres (30,403 reseñas). Este artículo contribuye al estudio de la narrativa en torno al capital reputacional vinculado a las estrategias de *placemaking*. Un enfoque cuantitativo que utiliza análisis de texto a gran escala permitió el análisis de las reseñas en términos de contenido y estilo de escritura, lo que permitió la identificación de patrones en el uso del lenguaje. Los resultados indican que los elementos tangibles e intangibles actúan juntos en el discurso, contribuyendo a la narrativa del lugar construida a partir del capital reputacional del anfitrión. La interacción entre el anfitrión-huésped surge como el factor principal en las evaluaciones, seguido del transporte y las comodidades locales. Las ciudades tienen diferentes perfiles en la composición de los grupos de palabras, lo que indica diferencias en la experiencia percibida de los huéspedes.

Palabra clave: Hospitalidad; Economía compartida; *Placemaking*; Airbnb; Narrativa; Capital reputacional.

INTRODUCTION

Sharing economy and collaborative economy both relate to the idea that one good can be used by more people, who share it or make available. There is sometimes a monetised exchange enabled by the wide use of internet. This type of economy with its different expressions has been flourishing in the last decade. Heated debates on the "sharing economy" are occurring as organizations in the hospitality sector have created internet abled business models based on an interpretation of the concept "sharing economy" or "collaborative consumption". Organizations such as Airbnb (Airbnb.com) allow monetised or non-monetised exchanges in which users can play both the roles of consumers or users (Gomezelj, 2016). It is therefore a mediated C2C (consumer to consumer) type of model. This horizontal exchange came to challenge the traditional business models and value chains, introducing new markets and new dynamics. In the hospitality sector, Airbnb has been one global major player (Oskam & Boswijk, 2016).

In network hospitality platforms such as Airbnb or CouchSurfing, both hosts and guests are in a horizontal situation – not necessarily equal (Chen, Phang, & Zhang, 2017) –in terms of knowledge, risk, and trust (Molz, 2014). These interactions constitute also part of the host's experience, as well as they set the boundaries and the background of the guest's experience. Among the elements of the experience, location and the emotional and symbolic meanings established there can play an important role in the choice of the guest (Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2017), influencing the design of the overall hospitality experience.

As cities move on from place marketing into placemaking (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Richards, 2017), the guest's experience has moved on beyond a pure geographical, urban or even heritage motivation. Beyond – or behind – these elements, there are intangible elements which come into place such the human interaction (Marques & Richards, 2014). The reviews and exchanges left by hosts and guests provide significant insights on the elements which make accommodation

part of a positive or negative overall experience (Tussyadiah, 2015). However, to date, little research has been attempted to examine which elements of the guest's experience are important in terms of placemaking through a discursive analysis based on the text of reviews. Since reviews can provide an empirical illustration of how a place is represented (Keskitalo & Schilar, 2016), they can provide valuable insights to decision-makers, planners and hosts to be able to understand which elements of placemaking are viewed as important to guests.

This article examines tangible and intangible placemaking elements by analysing Airbnb guest reviews of rooms at three European locations (Paris, Barcelona and London). Ultimately the results can be a development of a coherent place narrative, which can contribute to further attraction of visitors, economic development and positive collective identity reinforcement.

SHARING ECONOMY IN HOSPITALITY

The sharing or collaborative economy has been defined as both a technology facilitated social phenomenon and an economic exchange activity (Schor, 2016; Gössling & Hall, 2019). The first strand originates in non-monetary exchanges within social groupings such as family and friends and bartering within communities. Early definitions of sharing as collaborative consumption were based on coordinated consumption of goods and services (Felson & Spaeth, 1978). In this domain, sharing is an activity that facilitates the establishment and reinforcing of social bonds (Belk, 2007). In the second strand, authors have used the term to incorporate a range of market activities (Rogers & Botsman, 2010) as service, information and asset exchanges can be facilitated using monetary transfer, an economic exchange activity. These organizations have a long history such as the Local Exchange Trading System (LETS) in the 1980s (Pacione, 1998). Recent technological developments have enabled these activities to expand beyond geographical constraints with a number of product and service platforms providing "market mediated access" (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Some of these platforms in the economic exchange domain have been criticized as "pseudo sharing" (Belk, 2014) where short term rental organizations are conflated with non-commercial exchange organizations.

Tourism has long been an opportunity for short term, long term and episodic sharing economy activities (Tussyadiah, 2016). Long term activities include timesharing of rooms and apartments by families (Gregory & Weinland, 2016). Short term activities within tourism include can include room sharing, which is the focus of this paper. Finally, episodic sharing activities can include event participation, dinner sharing and guided tours by locals. Unlike information based peer to peer exchanges which may be decentralized, these activities are enabled and managed by an intermediary (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

There have been heated debates around these intermediaries such as Airbnb. These organizations apply both definitions of sharing (non-profit and for profit) as rationales for the value that they provide to potential customers (Molz, 2014; Gondim Matos & Marques, 2018). Beyond customers, there are also societal implications such as allowing homeowners to supplement their income or become tourism entrepreneurs (Ikkala & Lampinen, 2015). Collaborative

consumption platforms also enable areas of cities to develop and contribute to benefitting the local economy (directly and indirectly); encourages tourists to explore areas of a destination that may be overlooked (Gutierrez et. al, 2016) and can make the tourism experience more personalised (Oskam & Boswijk, 2016; Marques & Gondim Matos, 2019). There may be negative impacts of these platforms such as the decrease of hotel revenue which may negatively impact employment in the hospitality industry (Fang, Ye, & Law, 2016). Since many destinations are still developing legal frameworks for the sharing industry, there have been accusations of unfair and unregulated competition by existing providers (Erickson and Sørensen, 2016). A related issue is the one of risk where there is still some debate on the responsibilities for the physical and data safety of users (Franzetti, 2015). Trust is therefore a key facilitating factor for parties to sell and purchase hospitality services (McCole, 2002).

In the hospitality domain, Couchsurfing and Airbnb reflect the collaborative consumption -market mediated access dyad. Couchsurfing provides accommodation based on reciprocity while Airbnb provides access based on financial exchange (Yannopoulou, Moufahim, & Bian, 2013). For the latter platform, the organization has implemented mechanisms to reduce the risk of market mediated sharing. One of these mechanisms has been the introduction of peer-reviews, where both guests and hosts can share their experience.

REVIEWS AS A REPRESENTATION OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE

From the early era of online commerce, visible customer feedback has occupied a significant role in shaping future customer behaviour (Erickson & Kellogg, 2000). In sharing economy organizations such as Airbnb, this feedback can take the form of recommendations and reputations (Li, Wu, & Lai, 2013; Chen & Chang, 2018). Recommendations may act as a filter to reduce customer confusion which may arise from the wide range of available options (Liu et, al, 2016). Reputation systems by contrast provide an indicator of trust (Agudo, Fernandez-Gago, & Lopez, 2010; Popescu & Ciurlău, 2019) which can be conferred from past ratings by users or relational via an indicator of some type of social affinity (Ziegler & Golbeck, 2007).

Accommodation reviews from previous guests can serve multiple purposes including raising awareness, supporting evaluation and encouraging final purchases (Kim, Chung, & Lee, 2011). Review content has been found to be influential in customer evaluation of service quality (Browning, So, & Sparks, 2013), since the content of reviews can highlight features including service provider characteristics that can encourage or discourage potential visitors.

Language can provide an illustration of representations and relationships in hospitality that can encourage purchase (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2015). Analysis of the language used by tourists has been used to examine the impact of tourists on host communities (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003) and the attitude of residents (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). Representations presented via reviews may be powerful if an individual has limited direct experience with a domain of activity and relies on word of mouth to support decision making for products that are difficult to evaluate in advance such as tourism (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

These reviews can be seen as having source and content credibility. The first dimension is based on the perception that tourists/users do not have a commercial incentive and should provide an unbiased opinion. The second is that the content of these reviews may provide details that are more useful to tourists as they are developed by people who may have used the product before. In the case of Airbnb, they are particularly valuable as these reviews are hosted on the platform, not on social media. As a result, both the source and content can be independently verified, increasing their credibility (Cheng, 2016).

Existing research on guests using Airbnb has taken a cross-sectional approach in which surveys have been used to examine motivation or evaluation factors (Guttentag, 2015). An emerging stream of research has begun to examine reviews left by guests directly. While this research has begun to identify rationales and motivations for using the service using the content of reviews (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015), scarce research has compared guest perspectives across locations. Doing so can provide new insights as, while Airbnb is a global organizations, there are variations in user and destination's perceptions of the organization in different destinations (Lines, 2015).

Some factors that influence customer use of the Airbnb platform have already been identified, such as sustainability, social connection and cost saving (Oskam and Boswijk, 2016). This is in contrast to evaluation of hotels where a broader range of features are examined including the room, the interaction with booking staff, service providers (Gallarza & Saura, 2006), location and security (Öğüt & Onur Taş, 2012). These factors have been identified from the terms or words frequently used by guests in reviews. Past research has found that location, room characteristics, staffing, activities, furnishing and cost were frequently mentioned for hotel rooms (Berezina et. al, 2016). Comparing hotel types (Xu & Li, 2016), the following factors were found for full service: location, staff, room characteristics, restaurants, wifi, parking and bathroom; and limited service hotels: location, staff, price, room characteristics, noise, wifi and facility conditions. The language that is used also frames the visitor's experience, connecting it to a specific location with which the visitor might establish an (emotional) connection.

LOCATIONS AND PLACEMAKING

Networked accommodation platforms offer spaces at locations in which there is a set of physical and virtual interactions, which are constituents of the overall experience (Jones & Woods, 2013). Some location attractions, for example, are part of these features and constitute a tourism attractor device, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the London Eye in the English capital. Cities have long used different images and means to put themselves on the map and work towards tourism development or simply towards a certain strategic direction (Marques, 2013; Richards & Duif, 2018). Regarding tourism specifically, studies on destination marketing, place branding, or place marketing are not new (Anholt, 2005; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008). These have however been developing towards a more holistic perspective which includes not only the physical attributes of a location and the top-down perspectives about this specific location, but also inhabitants (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Richards, 2017). Specific cultural aspects, such as gastronomy, may also

contribute to place branding or reputation (Nelson, 2015). Other researchers go even further when putting focus on place narrative, made also by the voice of citizens, as an important process for cities to consider in their action and planning (Lichrou, O'Malley, & Patterson, 2014; Marques & Richards, 2014).

Linguistic descriptions and interactions left in the reviews build up an idea of not only what the accommodation itself is, but of the surroundings and the context of where the accommodation is located. In this sense, the concept of "new localities", in an absolute sense as defined by Jones and Woods (2013) embraces these developments which go beyond territorial or physical boundaries and include a network of relationships and connections which make that location – and more specifically locality –more than a means for planning. From another perspective, this is also the idea behind placemaking, where the people play a central role and city strategy, including marketing, are parts of a more holistic concept involving a series of stakeholders (McCann, 2002). It is therefore at the intersection of these different elements that this paper uses Airbnb reviews to examine how these place narratives may vary by location.

METHODOLOGY

The more tangible elements pinpointed by Xu & Li (2016) and the placemaking aspects pointed out by previous studies can be grouped in order to bring together the contents from the reviews. Those elements were organised around the focus point of the location to operationalise its underlying concepts, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Tangible and Intangible elements of location

Location's tangible elements	Location's intangible elements
Accommodation and characteristics (room/house, breakfast, cleanness)	1. Emotional attributes of the accommodation (atmosphere, feelings, relationship with host)
Characteristics of the city / area (beauty, modern/antique, historical, reference to specific sites, agenda)	2. Emotional attributes of the city / area (atmosphere, lifestyle, memory, involvement, familiar, novelty)
Connection to the surroundings (accessibility, transportations, services, amenities such as restaurants, and shops)	3. Other meaningful and symbolical elements (welcoming, new identities, finding themselves, lifestyle, engaging activities, sharing with host, feeling like a local, feeling in family)

Source – Own elaboration

Being an exploratory study, the decision to focus on major European tourism destinations was made. Paris, Barcelona and London were chosen due to their different type of tourism as well as their different territorial and socio-cultural characteristics.

The research method in this paper deploys a combined quantitative text analysis approach. While manual content analysis has been previously used in hospitality research to examine reviews (Xu & Li, 2016), the scale of data available from Airbnb can encourage the use of an automated approach (Berezina et al., 2016). The steps followed are below:

1) Reviews from three destinations (Paris, Barcelona and London) were obtained from the aggregator InsideAirbnb.com for the summer period of June to August 2015.

2) All non-English language reviews were removed, which resulted in a total of 59,057 reviews for Paris, 19,291 reviews for Barcelona and 30,403 reviews for London.

3) Pragmatic text analysis was then conducted for each destination for all reviews.

Pragmatic text analysis can be used to identify statistical characteristics of words to discern underlying patterns of language use (Flick, Foster, & Caillaud, 2015). The advantage of this approach is that it provides an assessment of the contents of the reviews that will not be influenced by the biases of the reviewers (Jacobi, van Atteveldt, & Welbers, 2016). In this study, the focus is specifically on the words used. IRaMuTeQ software (iramuteq.org) was used to identify patterns of word co-occurrence in Airbnb reviews. The process enabled the understanding of the words and terms that indicate how the Airbnb experience was defined and evaluated by past users. In this way, the formal content terms that can help describe the use of tangible and intangible elements of placemaking in the Airbnb experience could be identified and compared across destinations.

Text was formatted into the lemmized forms of words such as replacing plural forms with singular, verbal by infinitive and segmented into sentences (van Meter & Saint Léger, 2008). Hierarchical classification (Reinert, 1983) was then used to generate clusters of words that had a minimum of variation within the cluster but maximum variation across clusters. The hierarchical clustering approach works by decomposing the classes of words in an iterative manner until no further significant divisions are possible. The output is a descending hierarchy of classes which can be represented as a tree diagram (Reinert, 1983) showing the forms involved. Each cluster represents a "lexical world" of reviews that can then be interpreted by the types of words that appear in each cluster (Sbalchiero & Tuzzi, 2016). As the study follows an interpretivist approach, there is a recognition of the subjective character of the analysis involved. The findings were interpreted inductively and compared across locations (Barcelona, London and Paris) based on the elements describe above, in Table 1. This allowed to understand the elements of location and accommodation features in reviews that were important to guests in Airbnb, indicating the content aspect for placemaking.
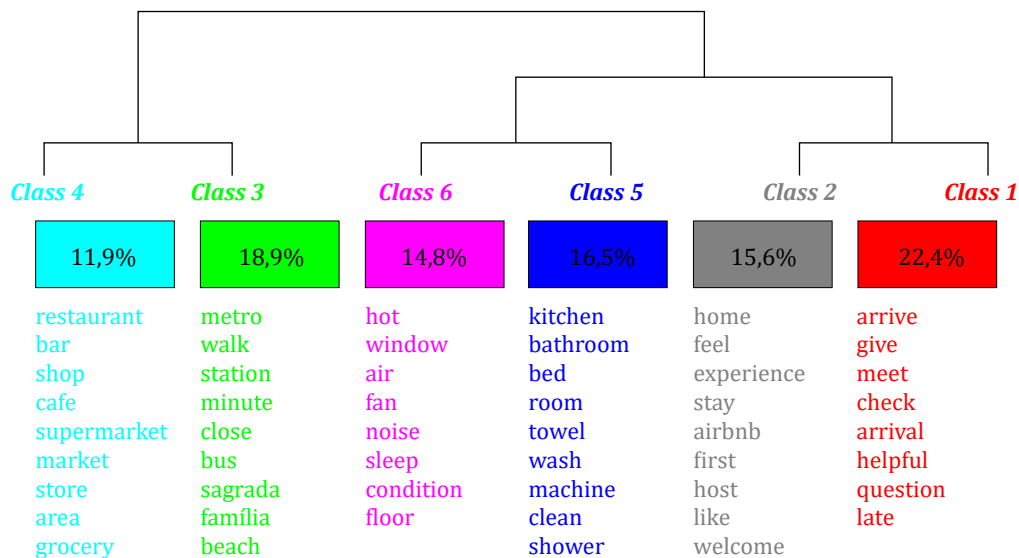
FINDINGS

The findings are shown as a hierarchal diagram of word clusters with words more frequently mentioned as larger text while smaller words indicate less frequently mentioned in reviews. The percentage figure next to subthemes for example, in Figure 1, "Class 1 - 22.4%" indicates the relative percentage of keywords in the analysis that the subtheme occupies. These clusters were then classified inductively into categories to facilitate comparison across locations

and which are related to Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 in the Appendix where location elements are identified. For each city, a specific analysis was made (see details in the Appendix).

Barcelona

From the 19,291 reviews collected between June and August 2015, three double clusters were identified, being that two of them (classes 6 and 5 plus classes 2 and 1) are connected (see Figure 1). Class 1 is, together with class 2, the most important cluster (38%). These two classes relate to the host-guest interaction and include several intangible elements, as, for example, hospitality, or enjoyment. The third cluster, composed of class 6 and 5 (just over 31%), relates also to the accommodation experience, focusing on the conditions of the room/ flat, but also surrounding elements, such as noise. Class 6 for Barcelona has a range of negative elements, mostly connected to noise. Forming one cluster, classes 3 and 4 account for just over 30% of the words in the reviews. In this cluster, class 3, which relates mostly to transportation, location and accessibility, is the most significant (18.9%). In fact, for Barcelona, this class is the second most important overall, just after class 1 (22.4%).

Figure 1 – Barcelona – Excerpt of all reviews clustered into themes by IRaMuTeQ

Class 4	Class 3	Class 6	Class 5	Class 2	Class 1
11,9%	18,9%	14,8%	16,5%	15,6%	22,4%
restaurant	metro	hot	kitchen	home	arrive
bar	walk	window	bathroom	feel	give
shop	station	air	bed	experience	meet
cafe	minute	fan	room	stay	check
supermarket	close	noise	towel	airbnb	arrival
market	bus	sleep	wash	first	helpful
store	sagrada	condition	machine	host	question
area	família	floor	clean	like	late
grocery	beach		shower	welcome	

Source – Own elaboration

Therefore, for Barcelona, the entire group of reviews were categorised into:

1) Tangible place characteristics, consisting of the themes of Transport (Class 3) and Dining and Entertainment (Class 4)

2) Tangible Room characteristics consisting of the subthemes of Visible Room features (Class 5) and Evaluation of room characteristics (Class 6)

3) Intangible characteristics consisting of the subthemes of Intangible Room Characteristics (Host-Guest emotional interaction, Class 1) and (Intangible place perceptions Class 2).
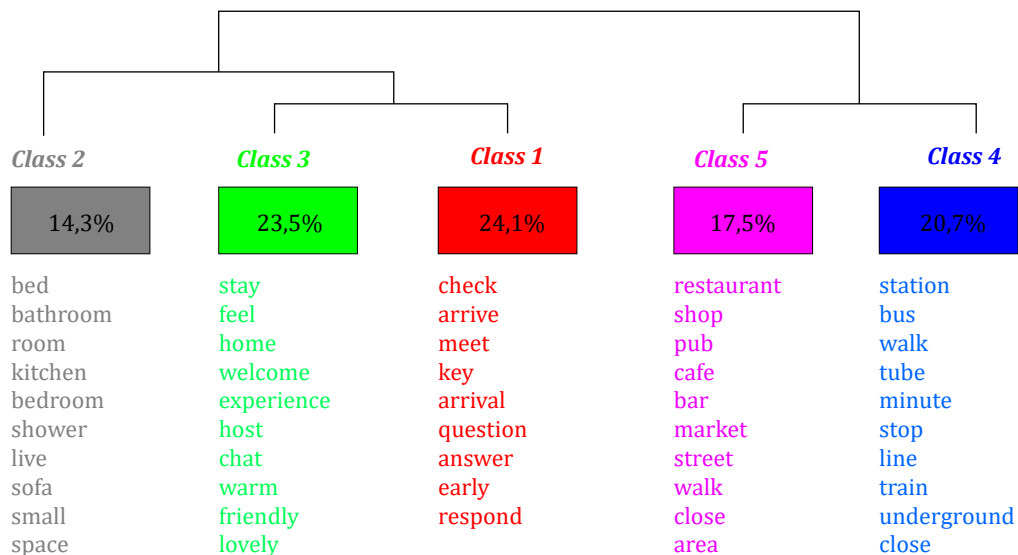
It is in the cluster composed by classes 1 and 2 that reviews contain discussions about intangible and meaningful elements, related to the host as well as to the atmosphere of what guests lived and their overall experience (see Appendix, Table 1).

The discourse about the tangible elements and conditions is very often permeated with intangible elements which frame and put things together (these intangible elements "glue" the bits of the experience together, make sense of it and provide meaning). This is mostly clear in the cluster formed by classes 1 and 2.

London

From the 30,403 reviews, the hierarchical clustering resulted as shown in Figure 2. In contrast to Barcelona, London reviews all reflected the themes of Airbnb Host Service consisting of the subthemes of Intangible Room Characteristics (Host-Guest emotional interaction, Class 1), Visible Room features (Class 2) and Evaluation of room characteristics (Class 3) and Location Features, which consist of consisting of the subthemes of Transport (Class 4) and Dining and Entertainment (Class 5). Contrarily to Barcelona and Paris, London only presents two clusters instead of three.

Figure 2 – London – Excerpt of all reviews clustered into themes by IRaMuTeQ

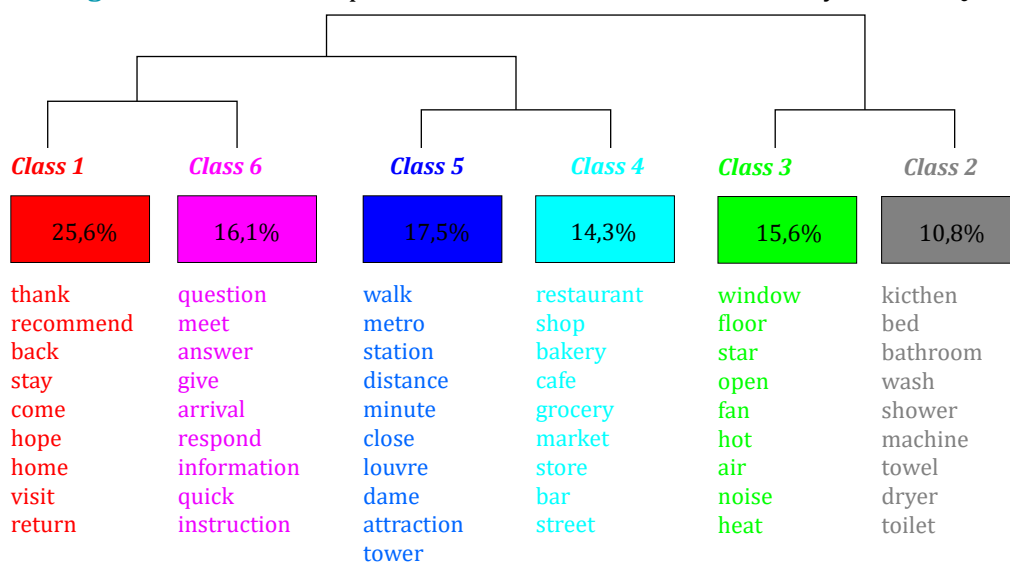| Class 2	Class 3	Class 1	Class 5	Class 4
14,3%	23,5%	24,1%	17,5%	20,7%
bed	stay	check	restaurant	station
bathroom	feel	arrive	shop	bus
room	home	meet	pub	walk
kitchen	welcome	key	cafe	tube
bedroom	experience	arrival	bar	minute
shower	host	question	market	stop
live	chat	answer	street	line
sofa	warm	early	walk	train
small	friendly	respond	close	underground
space	lovely		area	close

Source – Own elaboration

For London, findings suggest that the reviews posit a stronger relationship between the tangible elements of the room (physical space) with the intangible, emotional and subjective aspects of welcoming, feelings and emotions. Host interaction and guests' feelings are the most relevant categories (see Table 2, Appendix). This different relationship could be explored in further studies,

since it could simply be a matter of language (writing in English in an English-speaking destination) or it could be a feature of this particular destination and the relationship to place it establishes with its Airbnb visitors.

Paris

The hierarchical clustering of the 59,057 English language reviews on Paris indicates some differences. While Paris reviewers indicated that the Airbnb experience and local amenities are important, a new subtheme of recommendation for future visits was visible. Figure 3 presents an overview of all reviews, and Class 1 is the new subtheme.

Figure 3 – Paris – Excerpt of all reviews clustered into themes by IRaMuTeQ

Class 1	Class 6	Class 5	Class 4	Class 3	Class 2
25,6%	16,1%	17,5%	14,3%	15,6%	10,8%
thank	question	walk	restaurant	window	kicthen
recommend	meet	metro	shop	floor	bed
back	answer	station	bakery	star	bathroom
stay	give	distance	cafe	open	wash
come	arrival	minute	grocery	fan	shower
hope	respond	close	market	hot	machine
home	information	louvre	store	air	towel
visit	quick	dame	bar	noise	dryer
return	instruction	attraction	street	heat	toilet
		tower			

Source – Own elaboration

As with Barcelona, the clustering of Paris reviews also presents with six classes, organised by pairs to make 3 clusters, two of which are related. However, the contents of these clusters and their importance per class are different from Barcelona. Class 1, a new subtheme, is the strongest accounting for 25,6% of the words. This class includes gratitude ("thanks") and intention of return / recommendation, which are connected to class 6 (16.1%), where welcoming, communication and information are important.

The second cluster which is connected to this first one, includes class 5 and 4, which, as in Barcelona, it relates to transportation, accessibility, location, distance and local amenities. The third cluster relates to the conditions of the room/ flat, being class 2 mainly tangible elements such as household amenities, and class 3 representing tangible elements interpreted through various adjectives and adverbs which describe the accommodation experience (see Table 3, Appendix).

The reviews for Paris were categorised into:

1) Visit evaluation of the subthemes of Event Recommendations (Guests evaluation of stay, Class 1) and Host-guest formal interaction (Class 6)

2) Tangible place characteristics, consisting of the subthemes of Transport (Class 4) and Dining and Entertainment (Class 5)

3) Room characteristics consisting of the subthemes of Visible Room features (Class 2) and (Intangible place perceptions Class 3).

Again, the narrative of the place (accommodation, neighbourhood and city) seems to be often permeate with intangible elements related mainly to the interaction with a host: "amazing host".

Findings Summary

An analysis by location and room type has identified tangible and intangible components. Tangible characteristics include the accommodation characteristics (inside – room, facilities), the connection to the surroundings (such as amenities, transportation, restaurants) and characteristics of the area / city (physical and emotional). Intangible characteristics include (emotional) attributes ascribed to the accommodation, atmosphere, attributes of the city/ area, and meaningful elements. The hosts' relationship facilitate interactions with the tangible and intangible components of the destination via practical aspects such as communication and logistics as well as relational issues such as facilitating, building up, trust, local experience, emotions, feeling special.

The content of the reviews can in fact be divided in two major groups of reference. The first relates to the practical aspect of the exchange, such as handing in of the keys, the easiness of contact, communication (including languages spoken, in particular English, if the accommodation is non-Anglophone countries), as well as type of facilities in the accommodation (breakfast, bedrooms, toilets, amenities, among others). The second group of content relates to the host-guest relationship which expands into a series of dimensions, which can be from simple tips to shared experiences in the surroundings of the accommodation. This latter group focuses on the facilitation of the host-guest relationship, which builds-up on trust mechanisms (Ert, Fleischer, & Magen, 2016). It includes an expansion of the experience beyond the accommodation including the place experience, with tips or experiences together, in which positive emotions and a feeling of being "special" (as in opposite to just another tourist) come into consideration.

These seem to make the guests' experience positively meaningful and the overall narratives which build around the reviews create a certain imaginary, not only about the specifics of the accommodation (the practical and logistic side), but also in terms of the social and collective experience linked or even anchored to a certain geographical space.

For Barcelona and Paris, there was some variation in the tangible subcomponents and order of these themes. This suggests that users perceive cities in different ways. Both destinations had transport as a separate theme, unlike London. Further, Paris had an additional component of "Future visit" that was not present in other destinations' reviews. These findings may be as a result of the reviewers' relative unfamiliarity with the city so there was a need to

remark on transport. In contrast for London reviews, while the order of theme changed, but the composition did not.

DISCUSSION

When the clusters are compared, it is evident that that are similarities and differences in the perception and evaluation of the experience according to place. The majority of reviews relate to tangible and practical elements of i) the room/apartment; ii) the neighbourhood; iii) the transportation and access to amenities and attractions.

The host-guest interaction is the most important feature to come out of the data, and the tangible and intangible elements are mixed in the discourse construction, which are also reflected in the words clustering. In all of them, with less emphasis in the London cluster, communication and relevant information seem to be an important aspect related to the host-guest interaction, even if making a class of its own, as it is the case of Barcelona (Fig. 1). This is not only important from a business perspective, but also to minimise or maybe reframe the perception of the impact of tourism development in host communities (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003).

The fact that communication and interaction with host rates consistently so highly reflects the importance of the interaction and communication in the overall Airbnb experience (Oskam & Boswijk, 2016). Therefore the reference to "clear" language (for example, in Paris, Class 6) is also important for this reason, being a facilitator for guest-host interaction and, for example, providing tips, which can contribute to a better overall experience.

From the data, the strongest and more symbolical discourses are found in the reviews of Paris, where the subtheme of recommendation and returning emerges, in contrast with Barcelona and London. It is also in the Paris' reviews that the most intangible and more emotionally bonded words surface, making a very strong case for the host-guest interaction in this city (with this cluster representing over 40% of the words used in the reviews).

In the three cities, an important and clearly steady cluster relates to the transportation, accessibilities, amenities (some main attraction included) and the characteristics of the neighbourhood / place. For Barcelona, transportation-related words alone accounts for nearly 19% of the words. The cluster transportation / amenities is just over 30% for Barcelona, 31% for Paris and 29% for London.

This points to different elements of the experience of the place and that guest-host interaction is the first most important, however the tangible conditions will also dictate if the experience is positive or negative. For all cities, there are important discursive elements expressing both negative and positive experiences. However a lexicological analysis points out that Barcelona tends to gather the most negative remarks (class 6), with words such as *noise / noisy, sleep, earplugs, hot, negative* and *downside* showing up very clearly.

Often the guests' reviews include adjectives and verbs to express how they feel or what their experience was. This relates to the intangible and sometimes

symbolic dimension of the location dimensions, although often they are based upon a specific feature, object (like windows or bed) or attraction.

Besides these clusters, from a touristic point of view, it is important to highlight that for the three cities, main stream attractions such as Louvre, Notre Dame, Las Ramblas or Sagrada Familia are often referred to by guests within their reviews (showing up therefore in the clusters). Well-known touristic attractions play therefore a role both in the decision-making and in the Airbnb experience (Oskam & Boswijk, 2016). Despite the fact that Airbnb is aiming at a "live like a local" type of experience, guests still value accessibility to or visit of main attraction points. Transport, distance and accessibility build on the reputational capital of the host, and contribute ultimately to encourage purchase on the Airbnb platform for a specific host rather than another. City branding and place marketing are therefore playing a role (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). This dimension therefore is not only part of the experience, but it might even serve as an anchor (as traditional as that might sound).

However, more than a paradoxical choice, this seems indeed to be combined with the "feeling at home" and "living like a local" feel, since often some local amenities such as bakeries or local markets - which are not in themselves traditional attractions – come up as an important part of the Airbnb experience, contributing to the other dimension of the cluster (see class 4 in Fig. 1 for Barcelona, and class 4 in Fig. 2, for Paris).

The representation and perception of the Airbnb experience, which is part of the experience of the place, consists of multiple dimensions. The first is the Actor dimension based on the host-guest interaction composed of the areas of Host guest formal interaction and host guest emotional interaction. This research extends the dimensions identified in previous research of engagement with the owner and personalization or adaptation of the service with the client (Lichrou, O'Malley, & Patterson, 2008). The location component shows similar interests to hotel room characteristics (Xu & Li, 2016) such as place facilitating infrastructure and location amenities. The specific accommodation amenities and perceptions are the final component of the Airbnb representation.

The other issues which are consistent relate to transportation, local amenities, food and access to food and beverages. Distance is therefore an important semantic family used in the reviews (words such as distant, central or nearby are often used). This suggests that if Airbnb has the benefit to expand the touristic use of the city towards unusually touristic areas, such as residential neighbourhoods, accessibility and basic amenities are of foremost importance to provide a positive experience, ultimately influencing the decision-making process when choosing the accommodation.

Communication is also a revealing aspect, not only towards accessibility and speed of response, for simple actions such as key delivering, but also in deeper aspects such as English speaking. The language is not the only means of communication, but findings suggest having a common language as a platform is important for the experience and is part of the Airbnb experience. This can also explain and contribute to the "home feel" which comes out quite importantly in the findings. This corroborates the ethnographic approach by Bialski (2017), which refers to the feeling of authenticity. The "home feel", which is also how Airbnb tries to position themselves, comes out as an important part of the social

and emotional positive experience. Often this is connected to the host who has a role of mediator and facilitator of this "home feeling".

Although there was some variation in relative importance among the themes in the three cities, which can be explained also by the use of English language as a (native) language, another common feature across the cities relates to the overall keywords used by reviewers which are similar across the three markets examined. This only reinforces the idea of a sharing platform open to everybody, as a part of a global market with "mediated access" (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

The role of reviews and descriptions in these platforms are extremely important since they change and try to compensate the information asymmetry (Stiglitz, 2002) which exists in both sides. At the same time, the narrative construction, less directly commercial, which relates to the interaction and how language - and discourse by extension - can be either an enabler or constrainer of social relationships (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2015). The place becomes therefore not only the geographical location where the main part of the experience occurs, but it becomes the *leit-motif* and setting of a series of interactions where different types of relationships evolve and become part of the new "locality". This new locality is in turn emotionally and meaningfully interpreted, integrating therefore tangible and intangible characteristics (Jones & Woods, 2013) in the weaving of the place narrative (Lichrou et al., 2008; 2014; Marques & Richards, 2014).

FINAL REMARKS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

The rapid developments in the hospitality businesses are asking for new approaches to research their contexts, impacts and developments. This is important not only for the businesses themselves and local development, but also as a general context for the touristic experience to occur. Very often, the research is limited to a quantitative approach or to a small qualitative research, given the characteristics of the types of approach themselves. In this study, by using IRaMuTeQ, which is a cluster analysis of words having into account also the context, new insights emerge related to the tangible and intangible elements of placemaking present in Airbnb guests reviews.

As previous studies had highlighted, the reviews and the guest-host interaction plays an important role. The present article corroborates that and adds in the understanding of the communication: what can be considered a matching process goes both ways as both hosts and guests have access to reviews and profiles. Understanding this process and how language is used to contribute to the narrative as well as to reflect the lived experience, is important on a micro-level for hosts, and at a more strategic level, for destination management. Both hosts and destination may wish to understand the number and nature of Airbnb users around them. As the location features and also accessibility are present in a significant part of the reviews, hosts could consider providing more details to improve the accommodation profile on the website, and destinations might map the areas for development and the needs they have (for example, for transportation options).

From the reviews, one can conclude that attractions are still anchors, but they are increasingly filtered and interpreted within the overall experience in which

the host-guest interaction is fundamental. It is also clear that traditional touristic amenities as well more local ones, such as markets, are important. Hence it suggests that more work between local amenities organizations and Airbnb hosts can be developed to enhance the experience and expand the economic and social benefits. The downside is that often, instead of working together towards a more sustainable form of accommodation and tourist experience, gentrification and irritation in the population might arise (Sans and Quaglieri, 2016). However, these alternate accommodation options could provide a sense of independence or freedom to guests (Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013), enabling the development of new market segments.

These findings could also be important in terms of hotel management and marketing, since Airbnb has been presenting different challenges by introducing a new global business model. It is arguable if hotels and Airbnb should be responding to the same needs and the same type of client, Further research could investigate, for example, if developing the same type of interaction would be relevant. However, it is clear that the narrative, and in particular reviews, are used to respond to certain markets. Hotels could also aim at using certain type of language to build their reputational capital towards multifamily/group bookings, where, for example, they should emphasise social terms in their language.

Further research is also needed in the reviews for hotels and how these would compare with Airbnb reviews. At the same time, it could also be valuable exploring and understanding better the role that narrative and discursive elements play in reputational capital and, eventually, at some point, in the decision making process for purchase.

This study has limitations, related for example with the number of cities observed. As with other exploratory studies, the objective is to open new avenues for further research, such as delving in the overview of tangible and intangible elements which are common and distinct of different cities and understand more in depth the reasons why these are different, if it relates to the city placemaking, the tourist positioning (city branding) or in an certain co-created narrative which builds on reputational capital and provides a symbolic frame for the Airbnb (accommodation) experience. As this study uses only English reviews, both from natives and non-natives, using one English-speaking location (London), further research could be done in other languages trying to understand if the relationship between reputational capital and discursive elements is equivalent or is shaped differently. An analysis of the profiles of hosts and guests could also be useful as it would then be possible to compare the narratives of hosts and guests and their reviews.

Finally, some of the implications of this study lead to a call for more involvement in terms of destination management, where policy makers are regulators but also facilitators of the experience. Having an overview and understanding these needs and important location features, can contribute to a more balanced development and also more regulated expansion of Airbnb global influence. This can also be part of the placemaking strategy for cities, in particular with a high flow of tourists. Local amenities are important, not just the traditional tourist attractions, but also the day to day ones, such as local businesses and other organizations.

Management / academic implications

Regulators may consider adoption of an appropriate taxation scheme (such as in recent years in some countries like Portugal where the host needs a license) or limiting usage to geographic areas or specific times in which additional capacity is required (which has also somehow been developed in Amsterdam with a limitation of time for Airbnb rental). Airbnb accommodation could also be used on a temporary or episodic basis to reduce peak load challenges such as the shortage of rooms in circumstances such as events or festivals. In that way, the perception of unfair competition with existing accommodation could be reduced. Organizations can seek to partner with Airbnb in developing these initiatives (Oskam and Boswijk, 2016) in order to minimize impact and maximize benefit to destinations. In this way, destinations can leverage Airbnb's reputational capital for development of new geographic regions or attractions. While traditional accommodation can perceive Airbnb as an unregulated competitor, understanding the nature of reputational capital as identified in this paper could help promotion of hotel rooms and traditional Bed & Breakfasts. Therefore hosts, guests, other hospitality actors (such as hotels, or B&B) and policy makers related to tourism destination management could use this information to increase the value of these hospitality options in the value chain. Local amenities can also benefit from using this information and implementing strategies to reinforce synergies which could contribute to local development.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Lénia Marques: Definition of the research problem and objectives, development of the theoretical proposition, realization of the bibliographic review and theoretical foundation, choice of methodological procedures, data analysis, preparation of tables, graphs and figures, critical revision, write and adaptation of the manuscript to RTA rules.

Nigel Williams: Definition of the research problem and objectives, development of the theoretical proposition, realization of the bibliographic review and theoretical foundation, choice of methodological procedures, data collection and analysis and preparation of tables, graphs and figures.

APPENDIX

Table 1 – Comparison of the theoretical elements that were drawn with the results by the quantitative linguistic exercise in IRaMuTeQ for Barcelona

Theme	Sub-theme	Representative Words	Text examples
1. Airbnb Host service	1. Host-guest formal Interaction (22.4%)	Arrive, give , meet, check, arrival, helpful, question, late, host, answer, wait, information, map, flight, key, delay, welcome, show, greet, early, respond, communication, contact, leave	before we arrive there X sent me all useful information and when we got there he provided us with a map and he marked lots of places that i would never experience if he hadn_t told me about them
	2. Host-guest emotional interaction (15.6%)	Home, feel, experience, stay, first, host, like, wonderful, friend, best, spend, family, happy, thank, lovely, friendly	it was our first experience using Airbnb and i would say it was successful thanks a lot to X for the warm welcome at her apartment
2. Location Features	3. Location facilitating infrastructure (18.9%)	Metro, walk, station, close, bus, beach, location, distance, attraction, subway	X's apartment was as described it was really spacious and airy with perfect facilities for two people the apartment was also in a great location in the centre of barcelona only a 5 minute walk from the metro station and walking distance to central attractions
	4. Location amenities (11.9%)	Restaurant, bar, shop, café, supermarket, store, grocery, tapa, nearby, bakery, food, touristy, local, gothic	it is also only around the corner of a metro station so very well connected and gracía is a great area to stay in barcelona as it offers loads of nice shops bars and restaurants and is way less touristy than the area around la rambla
3. Room Features	5. Room amenities (16.5%)	Kitchen, bathroom, bed, towel, wash, machine, shower, bedroom, equip, fridge, space	the apartment is really nice calm and clean so was our room we could use balcony wifi worked well washmashine email hidden d we had no problem to park in any part of day
	6. Room perceptions (14.8%)	Hot, air, noise, condition, noisy, heat, loud, bite,	1, no AC . It's the hottest year and very difficult for us to stay without AC . I never visit Barcelona before so I had no idea it could be so difficult 2, too noisy at night.

Table 2 – Comparison of the theoretical elements that were drawn with the results by the quantitative linguistic exercise in IRaMuTeQ for London

Theme	Sub-theme	Representative Words	Text examples
1. Room Characteristics	1. Host interaction (24.1%)	Arrive, meet, check, key, respond, question	we were X s first guests at his house and greeted us warmly when we arrived and showed us all the amenities. he provided us with 2 contact numbers and he was available when we needed help the garden is a nice bonus and the kitchen is very well laid out
	2. Room features and amenities (14.3%)	Bed, bathroom, bedroom, kitchen	the room is nice bright and thank god there_s not that terrible carpet that most of english apartments have the floor is made of parquet and it_s easy to clean it had everything we needed we made great use of the backyard with the ping pong table and lovely lights in the yard in the evenings
	3. Guest feelings about stay (23.5%)	Feel, home, welcome	it was also very nice that X provided us with food and drink in our room X was also an amazing host and made us feel like we were part of the family and everyone else in the family were also very welcoming and friendly
2. Local Amenities	4. Transport (17.5%)	Station, bus, tube, stop, walk	the neighbourhood is convenient to st paul s cathedral and the underground and the flat is cheery and delightful to stay in
	5. Dining and Entertainment (20.7%)	Restaurant, pub, shop, café, grocery	the neighbourhood is quiet and grocery stores are around the corner even though we weren_t that much in tooting itself it was nice there underground station and bus stops are within range we had a really great time at her s and we would definitly return to her fantastic location 2 minute walk from victoria station also nearby were sainsbury s and some good restaurants including nando s would recommend and stay again

Table 3 – Comparison of the theoretical elements that were drawn with the results by the quantitative linguistic exercise in IRaMuTeQ for Paris

Theme	Sub-theme	Representative Words	Text Examples
1. Visit evaluation	1. Positive Recommendation (25,6%)	Thank, recommend, hope, return, experience	X was an amazing host friendly and easy going her space is very charming and comfortable on a lovely street in the neighbourhood i would absolutely recommend staying here for a wonderful experience in paris
	2. Host Guest Interaction (16,1%)	Question, meet, answer, greet	X was such a gracious and welcoming hostess she was happy to answer questions throughout our stay talk to us about our plans and give us suggestions she made us feel as if we were staying in the home of a friend
2. Room Characteristics	3. Tangible room characteristics (10,8%)	Kitchen, bed, bathroom	the flat is fully equipped you can cook your meals you have a fridge microwave and an electric stove high speed internet tv only french channels the apartment handy to use some updating old windows and dirty walls
	4. Intangible Room perceptions (15,6%)	Window, floor, stair, open, issue	the home is exactly as pictured the views from every window are fantastic quintessential french home and lofted bedroom that gives a nice feeling of seclusion
3. Tangible Place Characteristics	5. Dining and Entertainment (14,3%)	Restaurant, shop, metro, distance, attraction	it was perfectly located for exploring the city close to both the north and east sncf stations as well as multiple metro lines the neighborhood was terrific filled with great restaurants and boutique shops
	6. Transport (17,5%)	Walk, metro, station, distance, minute	walking distance to the louvre and rue st honore shopping tuileries etc the host was responsive and helpful minutes from 3 supermarkets and about 10 from a street full off restaurants