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Whose right to the city? An analysis of the mediatized politics of place surrounding *alojamento local* issues in Lisbon and Porto

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ABSTRACT

In view of the proliferation of *alojamento local* (short-term vacation rentals) in the major Portuguese cities of Lisbon and Porto, along with the recent transformation of the historic city centre neighbourhoods, this study explores the mediatized politics of place by analysing data sets resulting from different, but interconnected, discursive practices. At the level of governance, we examine how legislation has enabled and facilitated this transformation. We then explore the media coverage of the issues surrounding these recent changes. Finally, we focus on individual and collective stakeholder voices by analysing the various rights claims and arguments found in social media communication channels. Framing our analysis initially in Lefebvre's concept of 'the right to the city', often invoked as an argument for the promotion of justice, inclusion and sustainability in the face of urbanisation policies, we argue that a 'rights *in* the city' approach is better suited to gaining insight into the multiple tensions and conflicts brought about through the interlinking processes of regeneration, gentrification and touristification that affect neighbourhoods with high proportions of short-term rental accommodation, and conclude that there are many rights claimants within a seemingly unified group of stakeholders, invoking rights claims which are sometimes overlapping, but often conflicting.

Introduction

Short-term urban vacation rentals have witnessed staggering levels of growth in major cities around the world in recent years. Whilst the demand for and expansion of this type of tourist accommodation in cities is leading to the revitalisation of certain urban areas, it is also clear that there is a direct association in many urban neighbourhoods between an excessive supply of short-term vacation rentals and processes of tourism-driven gentrification, as well as leading to situations of 'overtourism' (González-Pérez, 2020; Ioannides et al., 2019; Peeters et al., 2018). This then puts into question both the sustainability of residential zones in city centres and the future sustainability of tourism in urban spaces, until recently generally considered as one of the more 'sustainable' economic growth strategies for cities (Koens et al., 2018). This is certainly the case in the two major Portuguese cities, Lisbon and Porto, which are the focus of this study. Following the downturn of the global economic crisis, both these cities have recently seen

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massive increases in both tourist numbers and peer-to-peer (e.g. Airbnb) listings. Mendes (2016) has described the tourist gentrification currently being witnessed in Lisbon as the transformation of the *bairros populares* (traditional, working-class inner-city neighbourhoods) into places of tourism-led consumption and where new types of accommodation and entertainment are replacing the residential and traditional commercial functions and leading to a population exodus. These neighbourhoods are therefore the focus of increasing 'touristification', driven in large part by the "Airbnb-ization" which is "allowing the cobbled streets [of Lisbon] (…) to become a Disneyland for Creative tourists" (Muzergues, 2020, p. 22).

Online platforms such as Airbnb, which have facilitated the exponential growth of short-term tourism rentals were, until very recently, widely regarded as "the most emblematic manifestation of the 'sharing economy'" (Oskam, 2019, p. 7). The sharing economy was initially seen not only as a 'disruptive innovation' (Guttentag, 2015) in the traditional accommodation market, but also as a positive development in the trend towards a more sustainable type of tourism (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015), with proponents flagging its potential for positive environmental, economic and social contributions and benefits (Gössling & Hall, 2019). However, others have been questioning the extent to which it can and will ultimately lead to a more equitable and sustainable development of tourism (Leung et al., 2019; Martin, 2016). It is by now becoming clear that the majority of practices of such platforms are not complying with any real definition of 'sharing', and in many instances - such as the case of 'multi-listers' who offer multiple units for rental - can even be said to be in opposition to the essential principles of 'sharing'(Oskam, 2019, p. 14).

In some cities, the emerging social problems associated with the concentration of large numbers of short-term vacation rentals are leading to restrictive measures being taken. In the case of Portugal, the possibility of placing restrictions on the licencing of short-term rental units has recently been put in place by new legislation, passed in August 2018, giving Municipal Councils the power to designate geographical 'areas of contention' within their municipalities, where restrictions on vacation rental accommodation (known in Portugal as '*Alojamento Local' (local accommodation)* or simply 'AL') can then be enforced. Lisbon Municipal Council immediately identified 'areas of contention' in the historic central district, setting the parameter used to define these areas at 25% or more of housing stock being used as AL. In fact, in some of these neighbourhoods, short-term rentals were already thought to occupy over 40% of housing stock. In November 2018, shortly after the legislation came into effect, Airbnb listed over 3,000 properties in the historic centre of Lisbon, of which 87.7% were 'entire homes/apartments', and 77% belonged to multi-listers (*Inside Airbnb*, 2018). The situation in the historic centre of Porto, the second largest Portuguese city, is similar, although the Municipal Council of Porto has yet to designate any 'areas of contention'.

However, support for the legislation and its apparent aim to restrict the unchecked growth of AL in Lisbon and Porto has been by no means consensual. A range of different stakeholders, with sometimes competing and sometimes overlapping interests and rights claims, can be identified. Thus, the spread of Airbnb-type accommodation becomes entangled in the politics of place, in which different social actors seek to establish their own 'place frame' - or social construction of space - in order to assert and legitimise their own interests and rights claims, or to dismantle and delegitimize the claims of others.

With this context in mind, our study explores the politics of place from a discursive perspective, at distinct but interconnected levels, by analysing data from different mediated, public discursive practices. We chose to focus on this type of discourse (rather than, say, research interviews) because public discourse, as part of the public sphere (Habermas, 1962 [1994]), is a crucial part of participatory democracy, albeit certainly not of equal access to all (Modan, 2007, p. 331). It can be argued, then, that the politics of place are in large measure negotiated and enacted through different forms of public discourse at interacting levels. At the level of governance, we first examine briefly how legislation has enabled the transformation of historic residential neighbourhoods through (often conflicting) processes of rehabilitation, regeneration, and

gentrification. We then explore the recent media coverage of these processes, which is particularly focused on the reporting of the new AL legislation and its impacts, and finally, we focus on individual and collective voices by analysing the various positions and tensions found in public posts and comments in online digital news media and social media channels. In this way, we aim to unpack some of the process of the mediatization of the politics of place, broadly understood as a social change process driven by the increasing importance and influence of media channels, including social media (Strömback & Esser, 2014).

We frame our analysis in the theoretical concept of 'the right to the city', originally formulated by Lefebvre (1968 [1970]) and increasingly invoked in recent years as an argument for the promotion of justice, inclusion and sustainability in the face of urbanisation policies and processes governed by the exchange value of real estate. Following Pierce et al. (2016), however, we seek to extend this framework analytically by applying an approach that these authors designated as rights *in* places. As such, the research questions that guided the study are related to the uncovering of the different perspectives on the recent proliferation of short-term vacation rentals in the major Portuguese cities by asking: who are the different stakeholders (or, more specifically, 'rights claimants') involved; what are their rights claims and goals; and what are the relationships among them. We also explore the place-frames that are articulated, either explicitly or implicitly, in order to advance particular rights claims and/or dismantle the claims of others.

The right to the city/rights in the city and the politics of place

Since the phrase was first coined in the writings of the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in the late 1960s, the 'right to the city' has become a widely-used, 'fashionable' slogan (De Souza, 2010) or a "rallying cry" (Attoh, 2011, p. 678), in many cities around the world where social groups feel they are being in some respect disenfranchised, or where highly-charged issues of urban justice and the erosion of long-standing rights are at stake (Borja, 2011; Mayer, 2009).

As proposed by Lefebvre, the right to the city is not simply the right to what already exists in urban spaces, but a right to *transform* the city, to make it a better place to live in. In his book *Le Droit à la Ville (The Right to the City)*, Lefebvre (1968) discussed the negative impacts of the capitalist economy on cities, arguing that the commodification of cities serves only the interest of capital accumulation (Marcuse, 2009; Mathinet, 2011), and making the case for a more just society based on urban occupancy and, importantly, participation, which is necessarily divorced from land ownership (Pierce et al., 2016). Lefebvre (1996, p. 158) saw the right to the city as being "like a cry and a demand", with the cry coming from present need, and the demand from future aspirations (Marcuse, 2009). The context in which Lefebvre wrote involved campaigns to stop the destruction of 'traditional' neighbourhoods in Paris by the encroaching and dehumanising high-rise tower blocks (Harvey, 2008). Ultimately, as Purcell (2014, p. 150) points out, Lefebvre conceived of the right to the city not as users "claiming more access to and control over the existing capitalist city, a bigger slice of the existing pie", but rather as a movement aiming to "go beyond the existing city, to cultivate the urban so that it can grow and spread". For Lefebvre, then, 'the urban' referred to "a society beyond capitalism, one characterized by meaningful engagement among inhabitants embedded in a web of social connections"; in other words, a 'possible world' for the future (*ibid*.: 151).

The right to the city is still, as Marcuse (2009, p. 189) observes, "an immediately understandable and intuitively compelling slogan", despite the fact that it is, at the same time, "a theoretically complex and provocative formulation and that nowadays, its invocation comes from a variety of distinct social groups with differing ideological stances and a wide range of causes (Schmid, 2012), leading to inevitable differences as to what the right to the city entails. However, there seems to be a general agreement that the overall goal is to promote justice, sustainability and inclusion in cities, and that this involves prioritizing the use-value of urban space over its

exchange value (Purcell, 2014). Since it has become commonplace in cities that the exchange value of real estate determines how it is used, the idea of the right to the city has come to be understood as a struggle over conflicting rights between city-users and inhabitants on the one hand, and property owners and developers on the other (*ibid*.).

Besides being invoked by social movements and organisations, the idea of the right to the city is also increasingly featuring in urban policy debates as well as in academic discussions. The original formulation of the concept by Lefebvre has subsequently been developed by theorists such as Harvey (2008), Marcuse (2009) and Attoh (2011) to situate it in the context of globalisation and neoliberalism, which has contributed to the global spread and 'discursive success' of the concept (Domaradzska, 2018). Although for some, it is a right primarily ascribed to the impoverished, deprived, exploited and discontented (Marcuse, 2009) and the working classes (e.g. Soja, 2010), many scholars foreground the notion of the collective right to the democratic, participatory management of urban resources (e.g. Harvey, 2008; McCann, 2002; Purcell, 2003; cf. also Busa, 2009), thus reflecting Lefebvre's original proposal for an alternative to the primacy of property rights.

The struggles in cities around the world resulting from the profit-oriented logic of 'property development' - the increasing privatisation of space and services, processes of gentrification, an ever-increasing gap between the wealthy urban elite and the poor, and a lack of affordable housing in city centres - are becoming progressively more visible through discursive practices that report or opine on them. Moreover, there is now an additional dimension of tourism-driven gentrification in city centres, where tourism plays a vital role in developing possibilities for leisure and entertainment that contribute to the attractiveness of central urban areas to an increasingly young, cosmopolitan crowd (Cocola-Gant, 2018). The concept of the right to the city therefore seems to serve well as a framework for unpacking the urban politics underlying the short-term vacation rentals issue that has become so prominent in many city neighbourhoods which traditionally have been residential and are now becoming simultaneously 'touristified' and gentrified, as is the case in many central neighbourhoods in Lisbon and Porto.

However, despite its obvious appeal as motivating discourse, the notion of the right to the city is not without its limitations. Besides the criticism often put forward that it is too 'utopian' to be of practical use (Purcell, 2014), the main analytical problem is its universalist tendencies, which tend to group urban inhabitants together as an "amorphous entity" (Mayer, 2009, p. 368), whilst it is clear that in the 21st century the social relations and social identities that characterise urban settings are far more complex and go beyond social class. Marcuse (2011) has argued that the usefulness of the right to the city banner is rooted in the bringing together of diverse rights claims and claimants into one unified movement with a common 'enemy', thus serving as a unifying discourse for different groups of city-users with distinct ideological and identity positionings. However, this is also problematic, in that many urban issues are not always clear-cut enough to be able to identify common enemies.

Such collective approaches may therefore, according to Pierce et al. (2016, p. 80), "obscure ongoing processes of negotiation between various *competing rights claims* and overlapping, *simultaneous claimants*" (original emphasis). These authors therefore argue for an approach which is able to take into account the "multiple, overlapping, fractured and contentious, constantly (re)negotiated" (*ibid*.) nature of contemporary urban rights and the socio-political processes in which they are invoked, or contested. This approach is better called 'rights in places', to underscore both the plurality of rights claims and claimants, and the versions of place(s) that they are seeking to construct or defend. Drawing on Massey's (1994; 2005) relational conception of place, which highlights the on-going negotiations among overlapping discursive representations of places, it is argued that when different stakeholders (both individuals and collectives) are in contestation, they articulate different place-frames (Martin, 2003; 2013) to argue for different rights to/in places. Following Goffman (1974), the idea of 'framing' refers to the way in which social actors organise and make sense of their experiences in the social world. A place-frame is thus

considered to be a shared representation of a place toward specific ends, based on material experience of the place and drawing on a set of goals, values and beliefs, and which is articulated through discourse (Martin, 2003). The discursive practice of place-framing, then, involves positioning a particular representation of place towards social and/or political ends (Pierce et al., 2011).

In this way, the concept of place-framing fits within the view of the politics of place taken by this research. We see the politics of place as encompassing: (1) the ways in which social (power) relations and social hierarchies are both constituted and legitimated (or contested, or marginalised) through 'representations' (Rose, 1994); (2) the ways in which community members, or stakeholders, create and contest versions and visions of localities (neighbourhoods) and how discursive constructions of both place and of personal identity are key elements in struggles over rights to spatial resources and authority over which kinds of practices or activities are permissible in particular localities (Modan, 2007); (3) a relational politics of place that combines both the "politics of propinquity" (in everyday negotiations of local spatial relations and diversity) and the "politics of connectivity", which necessarily reaches out to other places and also brings in people, and investments, from the 'outside' (Amin, 2004, p. 38); and (4) the fact that the ubiquity of both mass media and new (social) media mean that the political arena is increasingly mediatized (Thimm et al., 2014).

In short, the politics of place refers to how individuals and groups engage in meaning-making processes – or 'place-making' processes – through both discursive and other forms of spatialised social practices.

Methodology and data

We situate this research in critical discourse studies (CDS), which take a problem-oriented, interdisciplinary and qualitatively-driven methodological approach, characterized by an interest in demystifying ideologies and power relations through discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Discourse is seen as a social practice, which simultaneously shapes and is shaped by other social practices (Unger et al., 2016). Both discourse and discursive practices therefore need to be examined within the socio-political contexts in which they are embedded, and as such, discourse analysis should take into account the interactions among the macro-, meso- and micro-levels of practice which mediate the dialectical relationship between social structures and individual agency.

Our data consist of texts arising from three distinct, but interconnected, types of discursive practices in the public sphere. Firstly, at governance level, after a brief description of how legislation and public policies have had profound effects on the historic central neighbourhoods of the two major Portuguese cities, opening them up to processes of gentrification, we examined recent (2018) legislation which has provided a national legal framework for short-term vacation rentals (AL) in Portugal, as well as empowering local government agents with the responsibility for licencing, monitoring and regulating this type of tourist accommodation.

Secondly, we draw on a corpus of media texts from a variety of Portuguese digital news sources from the period immediately before and after the enactment of this recent AL legislation (i.e. published online during the year 2018). The texts were collected in two ways; firstly by a Google search online using the key words 'alojamento local' (local accommodation) at the end of December 2018, selecting particularly texts which had comments posted by readers, and secondly by adding any texts which were shared on the Facebook pages used for the social media analysis (see below), and whose main topic was alojamento local. A total of 60 texts were eventually selected, having verified their relevance to the study, from 18 different sources (see Table 1).[1] Besides news items, informative articles and in-depth feature reports, a number of opinion pieces, were collected.

Table 1. Digital news media texts collected.

Media site/Genre	News/ Information	Feature/ In-depth report	Opinion piece	Total texts
Diário de Notícias	4	1	2	7
Dinheiro Vivo	3			3
ECO- Economia online	1		1	2
Expresso	2			2
Idealista	1			1
Jornal de Madeira			1	1
Jornal de Notícias	3	1		4
Jornal de Negócios	4		4	8
NIT	1			1
Observador	1		5	6
O Corvo		3		3
O Jornal Económico			1	1
Público	4	5	5	14
Sábado	1			1
Sapo24	3			3
Sol			1	1
TSF	1			1
Visão	1			1
Total	30	10	20	60

The third type of textual data can be categorised as social media communication (SMC). We consider SMC to be conducted on any electronic platform where users can co-produce content, perform interpersonal and mass communication simultaneously or separately, and have access to see and respond to institutionally- or user-generated texts (KhosraviNik, 2017). As a new communicative paradigm, SMC has entailed a break from the traditional, unidirectional linear flow of mass media content from powerful producers to relatively passive and powerless consumers, since it potentially enables a more participatory, interactive and co-creative means of production and dissemination of content (KhosraviNik, 2019; KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016).

For the purposes of this study, we collected texts which appeared either in comment threads following the digital texts used in the corpus of news media texts, or as posts or comments on Facebook pages, selected according to the following criteria: a) based in Portugal; b) 'Community' pages that are open to the public (i.e. not 'closed' groups); c) with posts and/or comments relating to AL issues; and d) with a relatively large number of 'followers'. Four pages corresponding to these parameters were selected, which are briefly described below, using the information on their social media profile available at the time of the study.

Alojamento Local – Esclarecimentos (Local Accommodation – Clarifications) has a Community page aimed at owner-operators of AL in Portugal. At the time of the study, around 4700 people were following the Facebook page.[2] According to information available on the page, the aim of the group is to "promote the sharing and joining of efforts around common priorities, with a view to encouraging a collaborative and sharing economy (…) and supporting those who host tourists by providing clarifications and information exchange and encouraging community participation".[3]

Morar em Lisboa (Living in Lisbon) considers itself to be a 'citizens' platform' whose main aim, according to its Community page (created in January 2017 and with around 4800 Facebook followers at the time of the study), is "to defend a living, participatory city that belongs to everyone". In an Open Letter published on the Facebook profile, it is made clear that the issue of the right to decent and affordable housing for all is at the heart of the movement. It is argued that housing in Lisbon has become "a privilege of the few and an almost inaccessible right for Portuguese families in general", due to "gentrification associated with and accelerated by (…) the greater intensification of tourism and accommodation for tourism purposes that Lisbon is experiencing".

O Porto não se vende (Porto is not for sale) is a similar social movement, based in the city of Porto. Its Community page was originally created as *Turismo Precário* (Precarious Tourism) in

Table 2. Social media communication data.

		No. of Comments
Digital news media	60 articles	395
Social media	155 posts	535
Total		**930**

December 2016, changing its name to the current one in August 2017. It had around 3000 followers at the time of the study. It also considers itself to be an advocate for participatory democracy, at the same time as defending the rights of people in the lower income brackets who are being pushed "towards the periphery of the city, with the centre becoming progressively elitist", as a direct result of gentrification processes.

Direito à Cidade (Right to the City) is a social movement based in the city of Porto. Its Facebook page was created in November 2017. At the time of the study, it had around 2200 followers. In comparison to the other social movement pages under study, it has very little information about its origins and aims, except to rally around the slogan of "*Mais Habitação, Não à Especulação*!" (More Housing, No to Speculation!).

From these Facebook pages, we collected posts which made some mention of AL and the comment threads attached to these posts in 2018. The total number of comments collected from both the digital news media and the social media pages is shown in Table 2 below.

Analysis of media and social media texts

From an initial reading of the corpus of media texts, we firstly noted the contextual information given relating to the AL situation in the cities under study and categorised this information into topics. We then sought to identify the different stakeholders involved, with a particular focus on: 1) who are the different rights claimants? 2) what are the relationships among them? 3) what are their goals? 4) which rights claims are invoked (explicitly or implicitly)?

The next stage of the analysis involved exploring social media communication (SMC), firstly by revisiting the four questions outlined above and then by investigating how SMC is used to discursively invoke and promote individual and/or collective rights claims, to attempt to enrol others in support for social action to this end, and to dismantle and/or deny the right claims of other actors. Finally, we sought to unpack how the rights claims involve competing place-frames, and the consequences of this in terms of the current politics of place in Lisbon and Porto.

Post-1974 legislation affecting the Portuguese inner-cities

Before examining the recent *Alojamento Local* legislation and its potential effects, we deemed it necessary to briefly summarise the legislation which has opened up the potential for gentrification processes. Over the past decades, Lisbon and Porto have witnessed a range of national and local government measures and programmes aimed at rehabilitating the historic central neighbourhoods, particularly in terms of housing and basic infrastructures. Before the democratic revolution of 1974, restoring built heritage in cities had been limited to monuments and buildings of historic national interest (Mendes, 2013). By the mid-1970s, the so-called 'fixed-rent laws' of Salazar's *Estado Novo* regime[4] which had kept extremely low residential rents from increasing since the 1950s (Balsas, 2007) meant that many of the ancient residential tenement buildings in the city centres were falling into serious disrepair as landlords refused to renovate, or even properly maintain, buildings from which they received very little income.

The first national programmes aimed at providing financial incentives and aid to repair, recuperate and improve both state- and privately-owned city centre housing dated from 1976[5] and 1985.[6] The discourse underpinning these early initiatives was clearly geared towards preserving

the social fabric of the neighbourhoods (Mendes, 2013). Throughout the 1990s and into the turn of the century, various extensions of these programmes continued with a two-fold focus; both aiming to recuperate old buildings and to increase the supply of affordable rented housing for the lower income groups that had traditionally inhabited these areas (*ibid*.).

The success of these programmes was limited, however. Much of the rehabilitation work carried out was no more than a partial facelift, especially since the housing stock in these areas was characterised by small rooms, no bathroom, no lifts or garages, and therefore not considered 'suitable' for modern lifestyles (Balsas, 2007). The population exodus away from the city centres towards newly-built, affordable housing in the peripheries continued, and the number of empty, uninhabited buildings in bad states of disrepair hardly seemed to decrease. At the time of the 2001 national population census, it was found that over 60% of buildings in Lisbon needed repair work, with 5% being seriously dilapidated (Mendes, 2013). This paved the way for a new law in 2004,[7] which opened up the possibility of public-private partnerships by allowing local governments to form 'Urban Rehabilitation Companies', responsible for attracting investment and with executive powers for policy making and decisions. In this way, the hitherto publicly-governed rehabilitation processes were in effect handed over to the logic of market-oriented, private investment 'regeneration' projects, and the rapid gentrification processes of the city centres began. The new discourse of 'regeneration', or 'renovation' - the preferred term in Portugal, according to Balsas (2007) - hinged more on the need to re-populate these areas, by attracting 'new' residents, and the construction of modern, global, vibrant city centres (Tulumello, 2016).

At the same time, legislation (initially from 2006) began to remove the rent control mechanisms which were still in place in Lisbon and Porto, despite having been phased out in the rest of the country several decades previously (Lestegás, 2019).This process gained a further boost from legislation in 2012 which further liberalised the housing market, imposed as a condition of the IMF-EC-European Bank bailout for Portugal at the height of the economic crisis (Tulumello, 2019). Whilst the 2006 law enabled rental contracts of between 5 and 30 years, and also allowed landlords to update the rent, the 2012 law allowed leases of just 6 months, effectively leading to an increase in the number of tenants being forced to move out of their buildings due to non-renewal of rental contracts or sudden and unaffordable rises in rent.

Alojamento local (AL) legislation in Portugal

In Portugal, short-term vacation rentals are covered by recent legislation relating to *Alojamento Local* (AL). This is a category of tourist accommodation which has formally existed only since 2008, covering a range of accommodation types - privately-owned rooms, apartments and houses, as well as small guesthouses or hostels - which were seen to be previously operating outside the 'official' categories of tourist accommodation in Portugal. Until then, privately-owned rented accommodation had generally been disparagingly referred to within the tourism industry and governance as 'illegal' accommodation, or 'parallel beds', but had been long tolerated in tourist regions (such as the Algarve) as a means for people to supplement their income.

In 2014, a new law was created to give 'autonomy' to AL, separating it from the legislation governing other types of tourist accommodation. The preamble to this law[8] explains that privately-owned apartments are "a type of accommodation found more and more frequently in the world tourism market (…) especially due to the advent of digital marketing", and therefore the new legislation is intended to "give an important margin of freedom" to those offering this type of service, whilst at the same time aiming "to impede the development of this activity in a context of tax evasion", which was widely supposed to be the case among many AL operators.

An AL unit is defined by the law as having a maximum capacity of 9 rooms and 30 guests. Landlords may own and operate up to 9 units in the same building. Units must be registered with the local municipal council, whose responsibility it is to issue a licence. This new legislation

made it relatively easy and cheap to obtain a licence, and initially very low tax rates were set on the income obtained from operating an AL unit in order to encourage owners to legalise their unit(s).

It is important to note that most AL units in cities, like the majority of housing stock, are essentially apartments in buildings which have Condominium Associations composed of the apartment owners and which are responsible for the management and maintenance of the building and its communal spaces. To this end, annual condominium fees are set for each owner. In Lisbon and Porto, several widely publicised cases of Condominium Associations going to court to try to prevent individual owners from using their apartments as AL units were instrumental in the creation of new legislation, in 2018,[9] which crucially altered some aspects of the 2014 law.

Firstly, it extended the powers of municipal councils by introducing measures to "preserve the social fabric of neighbourhoods", thus discursively resonating with the early urban rehabilitation programmes noted above. Specifically, these measures entail the power to designate "areas of contention" where limits to the amount of AL units can be imposed. Secondly, it allowed for the possibility of objecting to "nuisance behaviour" emanating from AL units in a building which also contains residential apartments; the other residents can now oppose the AL licence, via the Condominium Association. Condominiums were also given the right to apply an additional quota on AL proprietors, to "cover the costs of the extra use of communal areas" of the building. Both of these aspects of the new legislation have been focal points for public debates centred on the rights, powers and privileges of various stakeholders. Before analysing this in more detail, we next explore the coverage of the AL situation in Lisbon and Porto, around the time of the new legislation, as reported in the media.

Media coverage of AL in Lisbon and Porto

This part of the analysis sought firstly to explore what kind of contextual information about the AL situation in Lisbon and Porto was being transmitted by the media in the period surrounding the passing of the new legislation, and secondly to identify possible rights claims and the claimants who were given voice either directly or indirectly via the media texts. It should be noted that the aim of this was not to conduct a comparative discourse analysis of the various different sources, but simply to ascertain what kind of information, arguments and opinions were being put into the public domain by the media coverage. This also provided the context for the next and most important stage of our analysis, which involved exploring how SMC texts invoke and promote, or contest, individual and/or collective rights claims.

The contextualisation of AL by the media texts can be categorised into four main topics: the increase in AL; the housing crisis; the regeneration of the city centres, and the legal issues surrounding AL.

Firstly, the massive increase in this type of tourist accommodation is flagged. According to one report, it has "more than quadrupled" since 2014. In Lisbon, AL is said by some sources to represent "around a third" of all tourist accommodation, and by others to represent closer to one half. One source notes that whilst there were only around 100 registered units in Lisbon in 2010, now there are over **15,000,** with 50% of these concentrated in five historic central neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are now said to have up to 40% of all available housing units given over to AL. Furthermore, 14 of the neighbourhoods which make up the downtown area of Lisbon are now said to have more AL users than residents (assuming that the AL units are fully occupied), with, in some cases, a ratio of somewhere between 200% and 400% more AL users to residents. In Porto, the situation is similar. One text reports on a study which found that the majority (over 70%) of the 6,198 officially registered AL units in the city were in the historic centre neighbourhoods. Since the majority of AL units are apartments, this means that over

5,000 apartments in the city centre are currently being used as tourist accommodation. In some neighbourhoods, the capacity for AL users has "overtaken the number of residents".

Whilst the numbers and figures differ slightly among the different sources and studies cited, excessive AL is seen as a driver of the dual processes of 'touristification' and 'gentrification', and the intense pressure on these neighbourhoods, particularly in terms of housing, is made clear. The in-depth articles and opinion pieces, in particular, highlight the growing housing crisis. One source argues that AL in the centre of Porto is "occupying apartments and buildings that could and should be made available for long-term housing". It is also noted that current tenants, particularly the elderly, are the victims of "harassment and threats" by landlords eager to remove them from their long-term residences. Another source laments the lack of stability for tenants and argues for the urgent need "to stop the voracity of real estate speculation which is killing Lisbon".

However, it is far from consensual in these media texts that AL is directly to blame for the exacerbation of the housing crisis which has seen many people evicted or forced from their homes. The fact that so many apartments in the historic city centre neighbourhoods were allowed to reach (and remain in) an extremely degraded state is most often blamed on bad urban planning and management policies, at both national and local governance levels, and going back several decades since the democratisation of Portuguese politics in the 1970s. It is noted in some texts that the population exodus from Lisbon city centre began in earnest in the 1980s, with around 30% of downtown housing units unoccupied by the beginning of the 21st century. The 2011 population census is quoted as revealing **185,000** empty housing units across the city, with only 20% of those available for renting at the time. The present electoral register for the city centre is cited as showing just 45% of the number of registered voters in the mid-1990s, bearing witness to a steady decline in permanent residence in this area. One source claims that around one third of the apartments currently used for AL in the historic central neighbourhoods of Lisbon were standing empty 10 years ago. Another source quotes the results of a study which found that 44% of AL owners said they were occupying spaces that had "previously been unoccupied". The argument that conversion into AL units has saved many buildings from abandonment and falling into ruin is often voiced, as is the role of AL in urban regeneration: one source notes "the extremely positive effect that local accommodation has brought by rehabilitating hundreds, or even thousands, of buildings that were degraded and unoccupied", whilst another argues that "if it's true that AL has taken some units out of the housing market, it is no less true that it has given many abandoned units back to the city, bringing new life to the neighbourhood, the street and the building".

The fourth main topic concerns the legal issues surrounding the explosion of short-term vacation rentals. Several articles published around the time of the legislation provide explanations of what will change, and what new rights, obligations and powers have been set out. Others serve to highlight the tensions among the different possible rights claims and indeed the different types of rights at stake, for example. This will be further explored in the following sections.

Stakeholders in AL identified in the media

The media coverage of AL in the cities of Lisbon and Porto makes it evident that there are a number of stakeholders with differing positionings regarding the AL situation and the recent (2018) legislation.

At the individual level, the rights claimants identified are primarily apartment owners and tenants. The apartment owners may or may not be AL operators, and may or may not reside in the apartment in question. There are clearly two types of AL owner-operator: on the one hand, there are those whose goal is to make extra income through renting part or the whole of their apartment to tourists, in some cases to be able to afford their own housing costs in the city. Indeed,

in some cases, this may be the only source of income. In Portuguese, there is a specific nomination for these stakeholders which is often employed in the media texts: '*pequenos proprietários*', or literally 'small owners'. The right claims invoked here are the right to own property, the right to do what one wants with one's property, and sometimes the right to live in a certain part of the city (which wouldn't be possible without the extra income from rentals). On the other hand, there are those who have taken an investment opportunity, which may have required significant financial outlay in the renovation of a building or part of a building. These owners (who may be individual operators, micro-companies or part of larger business operations) therefore claim the right to a return on their investment which has, as is often alleged, contributed to the general level of "improvement" of the neighbourhood and therefore to the common good.

At the same time, the right to equal treatment within a condominium building may be invoked. Many see the power invested in condominiums to determine higher fees for AL operators as unjust, since they claim that many apartment buildings have long had commercial businesses operating in them (for example, medical or dental clinics, legal practices, hairdressing salons, etc.) which pay the same fees as the residents. Collectively, AL owners and operators are represented by a not-for-profit Association (ALEP – Local Accommodation in Portugal), which has a vocal President who is often quoted in the media coverage, and a strong social media presence (see below).

Then there are the apartment owners (and tenants) who are not involved in AL practices themselves, but whose neighbours are operating AL units. These people may invoke the right to live in peace and safety, which they see as being put in jeopardy by the constant flows of strangers through the building, and their sometimes anti-social practices. Whereas this was once a primarily social right, it has now become somewhat more 'official' through the recent addition to the legislation discussed above. Collectively, these people may be represented by their condominium associations, and as noted above, the media cite several court rulings in this matter. Interestingly, the legal discussions surrounding these cases hinged on whether or not AL can be considered as '*habitação*' (housing), since in theory Portuguese law forbids the use of apartments in condominiums for any other purpose. Cases are cited where the ruling went in favour of those wishing to force the closure of an AL unit which was causing anti-social behaviour, whilst other ruled against this.

Finally, there are the tenants who have either been evicted or forced from their home by rental increases they can no longer afford or the termination of their contracts, as well as those who feel that they are at risk of this happening to them. It is reported that many landlords have taken advantage of the 2012 legislation which liberalised the housing market to either convert long-term rentals into the seemingly more profitable AL model, or to sell to private investors who intend to do this. These tenants are represented collectively by several social movements which have put the right to decent and affordable housing at the centre of their manifestos, notably *Direito à Cidade* (Right to the City), *O Porto não se Vende* (Porto is not for Sale), and *Morar em Lisboa* (Living in Lisbon). Although there is some coverage of these movements in the media texts, it is mainly through the social media channels that their voices are heard (see below).

As for public sector stakeholders, the most important rights and powers regarding AL have been handed to the Municipal Councils by national government. As already noted above, the Lisbon Municipal Council was quick to act on this, declaring two central districts as 'areas of contention'. This action provoked a lot of media and social media response; on the one hand, some AL owners complained of being "persecuted" and of having their rights curtailed. AL, it is argued, is being made a scapegoat for a problem that is rooted in other causes. It is also pointed out that collective entities such as the Lisbon Municipal Council and the Catholic Church own plenty of properties in the city that could be given over to social housing projects. On the other hand, those against the expansion of AL in the city bemoan the fact that not enough is being done to limit AL and that the actions of the City Hall are merely 'token gestures' which will have no obvious effect. In Porto, where the Municipal Council has yet to act in this matter, there have been

vociferous demands from activists for drastic measures, including the complete "outlawing" of Airbnb.

In the following section, we further explore the tensions and discords among the various stakeholder positionings and rights claims by examining the voices heard through the social media communication channels outlined above. In the final section, we discuss the conflicting place-frames that emerge from the data, and examine the effect of this on contemporary urban politics of place.

Alojamento local *issues in social media communication*

Unsurprisingly, all the Community pages studied had a strong element of invoking collective rights and incentivising others to take action in support of these rights. The social movements *Morar em Lisboa*, *Direito à Cidade* and *O Porto não se vende* are all concerned with a perceived collective 'right to the city' of local people whose access to decent and affordable housing is under threat. These pages therefore promote and encourage participation in public events such as meetings, demonstrations, seminars, debates, book launches and fund raisers which are geared towards the social cause of housing, as well as providing links to public petitions, open letters and polls. Posts around these topics tend to be rallying calls for collective rights, signalled by the inclusive pronoun *we*, including the right to live in the city centres (particularly for those who were "born and raised" there), along with calls for the State to fulfil its corresponding duties in terms of providing adequate housing options, as the following extracts illustrate:

> "We are here to say loud and clear that the inhabitants of Porto are in the streets, in the neighbourhoods, to fight for the right to live in Porto. Porto is not for sale. Full stop!"

> "We need to denounce this scandal of *Portuenses* [people from Porto] being expelled from the city where they were born and raised to make room for foreign real estate speculators. The City of Porto belongs to the *Portuenses* and the people who work there. Tourists yes, but *Portuenses* Always! !!"

> "It is up to the State to solve part of the housing problem. There are hundreds of vacant properties belonging to the State that are abandoned in the Greater Lisbon region. Why not renovate them and rent them to those who need them most? (…) The State is not fulfilling its duty and it is a pity that people in Portugal do not understand this."

In a similar fashion, the *AL-Esclarecimentos* page seeks to promote activities in defence of the collective right of citizens to operate AL units in the face of external threats from 'them', who seek to curtail this right (such as a public petition entitled "Don't Let Them Kill AL") as well as social get-togethers designed to enhance solidarity and information sharing amongst individual AL operators. Interestingly, in view of the accusations that AL is leading to forced evictions and increased rates of homelessness, this Community page strongly promotes a crowdfunding project initiated by the founder of *AL-Esclarecimentos*, aimed at helping homeless people.

However, also of interest to this study are the individual comments posted in response to the sharing of media articles, infographics and other texts which provide support for the various underlying rights claims and arguments, as well as the comments threads posted directly following the online publication of the articles used in our media corpus. It is here that the interactive aspect of SMC comes into play, and where the multiple and often conflicting rights claims become most visible.

A great deal of the comments are from individuals who make rights claims as AL operators. These claims tend to focus on the right to do what one wants with one's property, often framed in a discourse of freedom and Constitutional rights, and even suggesting that the renouncing of these rights will lead back to constraints suffered under Salazar's dictatorship:

> "Well unfortunately, a ban on AL ban would run into a document called "The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic" since it means a restriction on private property and private enterprise".

> "Since when can a person not manage his property as he sees fit? Will we be going back to a dictatorial regime where there is no freedom of action?"

On the other hand, such arguments are often countered by those who summon up the "Constitutional right of property" to defend the claim that condominium buildings are solely for the purpose of housing, and that AL does not comply with either the legal or the functional definition of 'housing':

> "the content of Decree-Law 128/2014 (29-August)[10] seriously contravenes the RIGHT OF PROPERTY of those who previously acquired a residential unit in a building whose Licence for Use (issued by the City Council) (…) determines that all the autonomous fractions of that building are "destined for HOUSING". Thus, Decree-Law 128/2014 (29-August) must be declared INCONSTITUTIONAL."

> "How ridiculous! Visiting is different from living. Does any entity recognise someone with a contract for one day as an inhabitant of that city or country? No."

> "Of course AL is not housing. It is a service, a business, a commercial activity. Or will you say that a hotel is also housing? The only way that AL differs from hotels is that it meets fewer criteria for cleanliness, safety, certifications and inspections, etc. In addition to the fact that many avoid paying tax…"

Another frequent comments thread is around the issue of the right to supplement incomes via AL rentals. Many AL operators feel that they are being "unfairly attacked" or even "persecuted" for simply trying to "survive":

> "I have full respect for housing rights concerns. But I would be grateful if I was given the same respect for my livelihood, which is the result of my honest work."

> "Some people think this is the goose that lays the golden eggs, but for most of us, it's our way of surviving. We end up working long hours and do not save very much."

> "I have a friend who was unemployed for years, meanwhile she returned (in her 40s) to her mother's house and transformed the apartment where she lived and which she owns into AL and this is the only income she has (…) We are talking about survival and not about running a business. The persecution of AL does not take into account how many people survive thanks to it. "

Once again, the framing of such "persecution" as a throwback to the days of the restricted freedoms, harassment and intimidation of the Salazar regime is also present:

> "This looks like PIDE.[11] So a few hundred people have seen here a way of living or increasing their income, they bought an apartment, invested in remodeling it, opened a business, pay taxes and now are being persecuted like criminals??"

However, this type of argument is then offset by dismantling the rights claims of the few in favour of the 'common good' of "the majority of city dwellers", with the argument that AL is socially prejudicial and is "destroying" the city:

> "to talk about the rights of those who saved up "a little bit of money" and bought a "little house" to get "income" and now want to protect their "investment" (which is actually not in question, as they could always rent it out as permanent housing or sell it when the price is right!) from risk is simply ridiculous, as they are involved in an activity that is socially detrimental to the vast majority of city dwellers".

> "Housing is not just a business for a few people, it is first and foremost a resource that enables balanced and functional cities to exist. That enables the development of healthy communities. Because Lisbon or Porto are much more than houses. And it is not only homeowners who have the right to do whatever they want with the city, including destroying it".

Furthermore, many comments are targeted at condominium neighbours who operate AL units, or absentee landlords, invoking the right to live in "peace and privacy" and to defend one's home from "the daily insecurity" arising from the tourists/strangers who are "invading" their living space and causing both material and psychological damage with their anti-social behaviour:

> "It's about co-ownership of a building, but some owners are getting profits while the others are being harmed by frequent habitual damage [to common spaces in the building] as well as the insecurity and risks due to the presence of unknown strangers"

"These tourists come and go as they please, drink until dawn and couldn't care less about the buildings' common spaces"

Not everyone concurs with these arguments, however. Some AL operators see fit to counter-argue that AL guests are no worse than other types of neighbours:

"I can assure you that there are no more comings-and-goings in my AL apartment than in the neighbouring apartments - most of them illegally rented out to students."

"You're lucky not to have neighbours who arrive home every night drunk and shouting at their family. Tourists disturb, but neighbours don't???"

A related question that is discussed in the threads is whether condominium associations should have the right to prevent individual apartment owners from operating AL. From the perspective of actual or potential AL operators, this is usually framed in the argument that it is unfair, considering that there have long been other types of "commercial activities" operating in condominiums, as well as the fact that condominium associations do not generally have to approve tenants for long-term rentals:

"Do the condominiums have the right to decide whether or not there will be an AL in the building? I don't see why. Do they decide in the case of long-term rentals? Or if a commercial space changes business? Or if someone rents a parking space or storage rooms? Either they start authorizing everything or it doesn't make sense to me …"

Finally, there is some debate over the rights of landlords versus the rights of tenants, in view of the fact that the AL issue is said to be causing the forced "expulsion" of people from their city centre homes. Many commenters strongly defend the rights of property owners, or landlords, over those of tenants, firmly within a neoliberal capitalist framework of the right to property and free enterprise:

If you aren't the owner, how can you demand rights over the property?

The concept of a tenant is just that: a temporary occupation of someone else's property. The protectionist legislation towards tenants, at the expense of the landlords who have been forced to finance these policies since 1974, has resulted in the degradation of housing and a lack of investment, harming the cities, the country and even the tenants themselves, who have seen their homes fall into disrepair without being able to do anything about it.

I am sad for the elderly [residents who have been evicted], but I am also sad for the landlord who has been doing forced charity work for decades and decades, imagine that they were obliged to give 5 euros to each beggar they saw on the street, would you think it was fair? Many landlords lose hundreds and hundreds of euros every month because they are forced to do the charity that the State refuses to do.

To accuse the landlord of having no feelings is ridiculous. What obligation does a landlord have to be charitable? A contract is not based on sentiment, but on the interests of both parties, and not just the interests of one side. Those with no feelings are the public institutions which don't support underprivileged people, including tenants but also landlords who are impoverished due to Salazarian rent policies that are still being imposed by the left-wing troika.

Once again, we see here a discursive thread of the fear of a return to the politics and values of the Salazar regime, but this time the framing is that of the landlord as "impoverished" victim, obliged to be "charitable" towards tenants who have, according to this narrative, no rights claims since they have been living almost 'rent free' for many years, but who are also negatively affected by the policies of a democratic State which is accused of not carrying out its public duty to help the 'underprivileged' and, at the same time, as being 'protectionist' towards long-term tenants.

Emerging place-frames

Some dominant place-frames emerge from our data. Firstly, primarily in the media texts, the framing of Lisbon and Porto modern, cosmopolitan, fashionable but still "authentic" cities - with

their "traditional" neighbourhoods. This combination of apparently conflicting frames has long been used to promote Portugal as a tourist destination (cf. Santos, 2004), but has recently taken on a new dimension as processes of tourism-driven gentrification of the city centre neighbourhoods mean that Lisbon and Porto easily rival any major European city and that tourists nowadays can easily find accommodation and 'live-like-a-local' in these 'authentic' neighbourhoods which were formerly residential areas to be 'gazed' upon. Governance stakeholders and legislators, keen to pursue policies of tourism-driven gentrification, have given private investors the opportunity to further reinforce that particular place-frame, by moving away from discourses and practices of "recuperating" the old neighbourhoods towards those of "regeneration", which aim at attracting new residents into these areas.

However, by doing that, they inevitably collide with the place-framing of local residents who invoke their social right to remain in the historic neighbourhoods. In this case, the underlying place-frame is the 'nostalgic' framing of traditional, village-like socio-geographical structures, where neighbours know one another, meet and socialise in the streets and public spaces, organise their own local festivities, and often work and send their children to school in the immediate vicinity. This framing is particularly reinforced by social activists and supporters of social movements, who are given voice in both the mass media and social media. Since these neighbourhoods have traditionally been inhabited by people in low-income brackets, this place-frame relies on a supply of affordable rented housing. An excess of Airbnb-type accommodation in these neighbourhoods would therefore seem wholly at odds with this framing, and this is made evident in some of the comments, which also point to overtourism and local saturation with the numbers of tourists, as well as putting the blame on local people who operate AL units:

> "Lisbon belongs to whom? No longer to those who were born there or who have always lived there. There are too many tourists."

> "Our city is progressively becoming less authentic and it has developed with flagrant disregard for its 'native' inhabitants. The city is dirtier, more expensive and more unjust".

> "They [tourists] are destroying our city, it no longer has soul, and even worse this tourism is of low quality all dirty and it is us who pay the bill for cleaning up the city. I can understand the foreign owners, who are just taking advantage of the situation, but I don't understand local owners."

Yet this place-frame is by no means shared by all the residents of the city centres. Some seek to dismantle the "romanticised" framing of the "typical neighbourhoods", constructing an alternative framing of an "old and falling down" and "ugly" city centre. One AL operator claims that what characterised Lisbon when she arrived in 1999 was "rot", arguing that AL is making a vital contribution to the modernisation of the city. "The houses [in Alfama] were very small and inadequate for families", and the general living conditions were "unhealthy". Moreover, the younger generation in particular are now claiming, under the umbrella of constitutional law, the right to own private property and to do as they please in and/or with it, including operating short-term tourist rentals to complement their income, or as an alternative to unemployment. Many of these young AL operators claim the right to a lifestyle that is flexible and entrepreneurial in spirit, and besides the economic benefits accrued, it allows them to extend their social capital by meeting and interacting with a whole new range of people, including tourists and temporary residents.

A further rights claim focuses on the collective right to enjoy public spaces in the form of a "clean and rehabilitated" city centre, free from drugs and petty crime, with modernised infrastructures and a greater element of choice in leisure and entertainment services. This, it is claimed, is one of the benefits that comes from a type of tourism that is focused on the type of tourists who want to (rather paradoxically) enjoy the "real" Portugal, and which ensures that Portuguese cities will not return to the bad state that they were in until recently. The juxtaposing framings of the 'old' and the 'new' cities are often found in the data:

> "The cities re-made themselves and attracted more- not less – inhabitants. They pulse with life and activity. And they brought the whole Country along with them".

"Well, in the centre of Porto 6 years ago I used to see ruin and poverty and I see today cleanliness, joy, diversification … AL has saved dead city centres."

"Lisbon was like a kind of Havana in Europe, with buildings that were run down, dirty, falling apart. Great improvements have been made. Where there were chicken coops, now we have swimming pools. The displacement of people to the peripheries has been happening for decades, the city was becoming deserted, it was in absolute decay"

For this reason, it is rare to find any voicing of 'anti-tourist' sentiments. Although it is often claimed that tourism-driven gentrification threatens the right "to stay put" of existing local communities, in our data it is fairly clear that tourists themselves are not being blamed for the housing crisis in the cities. Indeed, residents often claim to welcome the presence of foreign tourists; the arguments that 'everyone is a tourist' nowadays, as well as the notion that local lives are improved by tourism are often deployed:

"What's wrong with having tourists? Aren't they people just like anyone else, who abide by laws, stimulate the local economy and help to keep the city alive."

"I don't understand the complaints about 'serving' tourists – is it better to work in a factory?"

Finally, a more balanced framing is also voiced, which suggests a type of urban development that prioritises the right to the city for local residents, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the right to visit the city, and the right of the city to be visited:

"We are not against tourists. We want a city that can be visited, but which first and foremost can be lived in".

This echoes the question posed by a Human Rights researcher, who represents the *Porto is Not for Sale* movement, which neatly summarises the issue of how AL impacts on the right the city: "What proportion between tourist accommodation and housing allows everyone to live in and enjoy the city, and to share it with visitors?" (Barbiero, 2018). On a final note, however, it should be pointed out that the question of visitor/tourist rights in the city is barely touched upon or discussed in our data. This may well signal an underlying acceptance of both the universal 'right' to travel as a tourist which has taken root in contemporary free-market, neo-liberal capitalist society (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010) and also the corresponding 'duty' of the Portuguese people to welcome tourists, since tourism is so strongly discursively framed as being a main 'driver' of the Portuguese economy (see, for example, WTTC., 2019).

Conclusions

This study highlights the multiplicities of place-making practices and the contentious nature of contemporary urban politics of place. The findings confirm the appropriateness of interpreting the multiple, disperse, overlapping, contested, and constantly (re)negotiated nature of contemporary urban rights discourses within a place-making framework that takes account of rights *in* place, wherein both individual and collective experiences, understandings, values and imaginings create different versions of the same place. As such, there is no clear, cohesive and universal 'cry and demand' for the right to the city, but rather an always ongoing and incomplete negotiation of rights (and privileges, duties, and powers) in places (Pierce et al., 2016) which can be identified in interacting discursive practices at different levels.

Moreover, it would appear that the social processes underlying these discourses are no longer entirely rooted in the traditional power struggles amongst well-defined contenders (e.g. defined by social class), or between property owners/developers and city-dwellers/city-users, but are in fact not only diffuse but also divisive. The various media and SMC platforms echo this discord, giving voice to a wide range of stakeholders, but also showing how some apparently similar stakeholders differ greatly as rights claimants. Property-owning neighbours are now pitted against each other, disputing rights claims to do with freedom of choice, property rights,

employment rights and rights to prevent others from carrying out these activities. Given that some 'small' owners claim to be from the traditional working classes and are now seeking, through AL, a novel way out of the challenge of the spiralling cost of urban living and unemployment, we might well ask if they are facing the same 'enemy' as the tenants who face displacement from their homes due to encroaching gentrification, be it tourism-driven or not. and their various and often conflicting rights claims which underlie the arguments used to advance particular place-frames.

However, the fact that rights in the city are increasingly multifaceted and often conflicting among what might appear at first glance to be a unified group of stakeholders (i.e. 'local' residents) does not mean that the urban power structures do not continue to be unequal and unjust. It is clear that the major negative impact of the gentrification and touristification (or 'airbnb-ization) of the *bairros populares* of Lisbon and Porto is the rapidly worsening housing crisis in the city centres. In the face of increasing concern, and perhaps as a conciliatory move within a counter-frame of left-wing politics, the current national government has created the possibility for local government at municipal level to create 'areas of contention' as well as governance measures at the micro-local level in the form of granting more powers to condominium associations. This move is in apparent conflict with place-making from a neo-liberal economic and individualistic perspective, as it was designed to impose limits on the 'right' to operate an AL service or business and also to curb the real estate speculation associated with AL. However, the measures did not appear to have any immediate effect, especially in Porto, where the Municipal Council did not take up their newly-granted powers. It may well be, as argued by Mendes (2016), that what is required to ensure the balance between the right to housing and the development of tourism in city centres is more 'critical innovation' in local processes and practices of urban regeneration. Although this study has a very clear geographical and socio-political context, we would argue that there is a clear need for detailed, careful, contextualised studies of the local politics of place, on an ongoing basis, in cities across the world which are experiencing similar issues, to inform eventual policies and urban planning decisions. We also note that the limitations of the study, in terms of data collection, suggests that some stakeholders and their rights claims may be missing and therefore that further research using different and/or more exhaustive data collection methods could add further dimensions to an already complex situation.

As a final comment, it should be noted that this study was carried out in a context of over-tourism-related issues in Lisbon and Porto – a context which did not foresee any drop in tourist numbers in the near future and where the success of AL ventures therefore seemed secure and almost guaranteed. The sustainability of tourism, and AL, was seen as primarily threatened by *too much* tourism – a case perhaps of 'killing the golden goose that lays the golden eggs', as well as the obvious environmental and social pressures on the neighbourhoods in question. In the current context of the global COVID-19 pandemic which, almost overnight, led to a situation of *no* tourism, the AL sector and the socio-economic context in which it is embedded could not be more different. This seismic shift, which is affecting cities worldwide, serves to reinforce the shifting, relational nature of the politics of place, and the need for rapid and flexible solutions, rather than a reliance on sets of rights and powers that are non-negotiable.

Notes

1. It should be noted that this method of selection resulted in a corpus of texts which does not include every possible news source; indeed, it may be noticeable to those familiar with the Portuguese mediascape that certain high-profile titles are missing. One obvious example is the *Correio de Manhã* newspaper, a tabloid with a high circulation. This was not a deliberate exclusion, but simply reflects the lack of articles that corresponded to our selection criteria. It is also important to note that we are not performing a comparative analysis of the different news sources; the media texts were, for the purposes of this study, collected to identify what kind of information, arguments and opinions were being put into the public domain.

2. There is also a closed group linked to this page, currently with around 65 000 members.
3. All data excerpts in this paper have been translated into English from the Portuguese original by the authors of this paper.
4. The *Estado Novo* (New State) was the official name given to the dictatorship regime established in Portugal following the coup détat in 1926 and lasting until the democratic revolution of 1974. For much of this period, the regime was headed by António Salazar.
5. *Programa de Recuperação de Imóveis Degradados (Programme of Recuperation of Degraded Buildings)*.
6. *Programa de Reabilitação Urbana (Urban Recuperation Programme)*.
7. Law n° 104/2004, 7 May - Regime Jurídico Excepcional de Reabilitação Urbana de Zonas Históricas e de Áreas Críticas de Recuperação e Reconversão Urbanística (Exceptional Legal Regime for the Urban Rehabilitation of Historical Zones and Critical Urban Recovery and Re-conversion Areas).
8. Law n° 128/2014, 29 August
9. Law n°62/2018, 22 August
10. Law governing AL operation – see above.
11. PIDE were the notorious political police during the New State dictatorship, responsible for the repression of all forms of opposition to the regime.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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