

## Article

# Perceptions about Tourism and Tourists in Historic Neighborhoods: The Case of Alfama

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**Abstract:** Tourism makes destinations adapt to receive those who visit them, with a great impact among traditional residents. Overtourism affects picturesque places, and these areas end up losing their authenticity, submitting themselves to the consumption needs of tourists. Neighborhoods' traditional residents also see their routine completely changed due to the different habits of tourists, and displacement rates rise. This study aims to understand how local people perceive tourism in Alfama, one of the most unique and tourist-oriented neighborhoods of Lisbon. Our study involves a questionnaire to old long-term residents and content analysis of their responses. We used Leximancer software to create categories of analysis depending on frequency of mentions and the way themes are related. Our interviewees testified that overtourism in Alfama generates perceptions that range from a generalized acceptance for the benefits that an improved safety associated to an increased street-life and a cleaner neighborhood generate, and on the other hand the grievance for the loss of a pre-existing community. We also conclude that the benefits of tourist-led gentrification are relevant for the gentrification analysis because they show the contradictions that the remaining residential community experience as tourist-led gentrification unfolds.

**Keywords:** gentrification; historic neighborhoods residents; social sustainability; tourism benefits; tourism impacts



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## 1. Introduction

Tourism in historical cities often leads to gentrification processes [1]—a phenomenon that affects places and the life of local low-income inhabitants due to the valorization of space and the consequent increase in their costs of life, leading to dissatisfaction with their places [2] and ultimately their displacement (Lees et al., 2016). Tourism-related gentrification, or tourist-led gentrification, refers to the socio-spatial transformations that occur due to the intense appropriation of a place for tourism purposes, in which there is a physical and socioeconomic restructuring of the urban environment [3].

In Lisbon, Portugal, tourism has deeply changed the city's age distribution. Between 2001 and 2011, Lisbon experienced an average of population rejuvenation, with an increase of the group between 25 and 39 years of +5% in contrast with the total population decrease of −3% and further population decrease in Alfama, during the same period, of −21%, except for the group between 25 and 39 years, whose share rose 12% [4].

Although it is not certain that by 2011 Alfama had already undergone a gentrification process, its population was quite elderly by then. In 2001, the Ageing Index—namely, the number of people aged 65 and over per 100 people under 15 years old—in Alfama was

315. Additionally, in the parish of Santa Maria Maior, where Alfama is located, the Ageing Index was 286, above Lisbon's index of 186. By 2001, low-income and low-educational levels were predominant in Alfama, as the neighborhood's houses and buildings were also degraded [5]. For the following two decades, there was a progressive de-population in Alfama, explained by the natural death of the senior residents, the outmigration of residents, and the general decrease of immigrations experienced in Portugal, different to the strong population growth due to immigration during the first half of the 20th century in other countries.

However, recently, Alfama, the so-called 'oldest neighborhood in Europe', has been rediscovered not only as a place to visit, but also as a place where accommodation can be found for tourists. This new context has drastically changed the social panorama of Alfama [6]. For most authors, the main problem in Alfama is the growing supply of short-term rental accommodation [4,7,8]. The second related problem is the extended presence of tourists that seemingly undermines the sense of community based on social relationships, which long-term residents consider essential to reproduce their quality of life and which may lead them to leave the neighborhood, even if not for purely economic reasons [9], there is a cultural nerve that somehow aggressive tourist development hurts, a comparable nostalgia found by Fullilove [10] in black neighborhoods in the US threatened by state-led urban renewal.

The aim of this article is to describe and analyze the perception of a sample of Alfama's long-term residents regarding the positive and negative impacts of tourism in their everyday experience in the neighborhood and compare these two apparently opposed perspectives. We observe the contradiction people have between acknowledging the material benefits gentrification has brought to their neighborhood and grieving for the loss of the community. We conducted structured interviews and collected data that helps us to increase the understanding of the perceived changes that have been occurring due to the growth in tourism demand in this area, and the contradictory narratives these changes generate. Finally, as an empirical contribution to theoretical debates on gentrification, we not only concur with Atkinson and Bridge's [11] idea that contrasting both the acceptance- and rejection-sides of gentrification is theoretically valid, but also, we conjecture whether the temporalities of gentrification affect the residents who remain, particularly after intensive processes of outmigration have already occurred and vacuumed a neighborhood. We therefore claim that gentrification needs to be understood in a temporal evolutionary way, as the perceptions of Alfama's original residents seem otherwise inexplicable. The research questions are: What do Alfama residents think about the increase in tourist activity in this neighborhood? Can gentrification have a positive side?

## 2. Literature Review

Glass [12] introduced the idea of gentrification based on her observations of the mass middle-class incursion in London's neighborhoods, which led to the displacement of the working class and original inhabitants, altering the whole social character of the neighborhood. More than half a century later, we attempt to understand if this negative perception of gentrification is unanimous among contemporary scholars; however, it can be stated that gentrification is both a process of spatial change and a process of social change [7].

Short-term residents have the power to impose spatial changes in a neighborhood, in a current, more travelling global society than the 1960s', as affluent European, North American and Asian middle-classes massively consume new places and experiences, so this activity reflects residents' values and norms and induces residents' pride in their neighborhoods [13].

A rapid tourist development can sometimes mean a non-sustained growth lacking measures and regulations and originating dissatisfaction in destination local inhabitants. The touristification of historic neighborhoods in cities of Central America and the Caribbean, Middle East, Southern Europe, as in many other places, has a determining factor: the

approval of a broad legal framework for the conversion of these neighborhoods into urban theme parks of a touristic nature and the rapid purchase of many properties for short-term renting purposes [14]. Short-term rentals through Airbnb have accelerated the growth of low-priced real estate sets and, as a consequence, European and American global cities have undergone a long-term process of replacing the working and lower-middle classes, thus depriving them of the opportunities and amenities that these cities offer [15–17].

Gentrification can be understood as a process where a population of lower socio-economic status is replaced by a population of higher socio-economic status. The process is invariably accompanied by speculation, but also by reinvestment and improvements in the built environment, always because of the logic inherent to the way the market operates in a capitalist city [18]. Gentrification cannot be reduced to a concept based on capitalist development, being a process that results from substantially different urban dynamics that incorporate distinct ideological and ontological assumptions in a socio-spatial way [19].

This connection makes sense within the framework of theories of planetary gentrification because the social injustices it spawns have a global pattern [18]. According to López-Morales [20–22] the increasing number of cases of state-led gentrification in the world shows how the phenomenon is growing in scale and scope under state power and gentrification is also a much richer narrative than simply discussing it locally as if it was detached from global economic and cultural flows and waves. Already in the early 2000s, Hackworth and Smith [23], claimed that gentrification changed due to economic and political restructuring and made state intervention over gentrification quite decisive. We concur with Smith [24] that gentrification has gone global by the hand of the blueprints of neoliberal urban governance [25] that nevertheless not always end up the same way.

Aalbers [26] calls a fifth-wave gentrification as the urban materialization of finance-led capitalism as a complement to the also leading role of the state and comprises corporate landlords and real estate as an asset class. However, a salient feature of fifth-wave gentrification is investment by transnational wealth elites and middle classes, platform capitalism and touristification, global mortgage debt, lack of housing affordability, the role of the state and the subsumption of alternatives.

Global tourist-led gentrification transforms popular neighborhoods into places of consumption and tourism, and expanding the recreational and leisure function to tourist accommodation or short-term rental can exacerbate tendencies of displacement and residential segregation. Neighborhoods can be drained of their original population, blocking lower socio-economic level people to access habitation, and putting at risk the social sustainability of the historic center [27]. A place is considered sociocultural sustainable, in sociocultural terms, taking into account the level of support and satisfaction of local needs, namely: meaningful sets, sense of belonging, sense of place, and memories, as well as the feeling of a physical environment [28].

However, gentrification should have a plural sense. Local places' trajectories or socio-spatial relations are reflected in the debates on gentrification, but the shape of gentrification may differ from one place to another [29]. In a few words, neoliberal gentrification reflects the variegated complexity and somehow unexpected outcomes of actually existing neoliberalism [30], as local gentrification is the global economy's spatial form [31]. Policy-led gentrification processes can result from land valuation policies, projects designed to promote the opening of economic opportunities to produce higher-income housing, or even the direct application of social relocation policies in originally low-income residential areas or public spaces [22]. The real meaning of sustainable growth comes from the fact that most residents should benefit from the anticipated prosperity and the improved environment [32]. Sustainable development must consider strategic planning for heritage protection, the definition of community building structures and tools that respect urban memory and the social needs of the inhabitants [33]. As we see, the majority of Alfama's residents did not enjoyed the areas' improved as they earlier moved away.

In Portugal, by 2012, a New Urban Rental Regime policy was incepted, negatively affecting the rental market and boosting residential displacement rates and given rise

to other forms of tourist accommodation and to new luxury real estate projects [16]. In 2019, Alfama was Lisbon's neighborhood with the highest number of Airbnb apartments working. At the time, Alfama had around 3300 permanent inhabitants and 35% of the existing properties were exclusively for tourist accommodation [4]. Tourist accommodation units coexisting with long-term or permanent residents is considered among the main cause of gentrification and involuntary displacement [34]. International investments and tourism have redefined the urban culture of the city, promoting a gentrification process that has resulted, in the past, in the relegation of old residents to the suburbs or other cities [33].

Holgersen [35] states that the middle class has become both the cause and the result of gentrification by being its storyline, its main actor, its beneficiary, and the end point. We believe that fifth-wave gentrification now might be fracturing the middle-class concept in two halves; one is the low and lower-local middle class old time residents, the other are the travelling middle class mainly from the richest regions of the world representing short-time rental platform capitalism's users and investors [4]. Gentrification in a geography like Alfama, brings the class-dispute on local space into a global level.

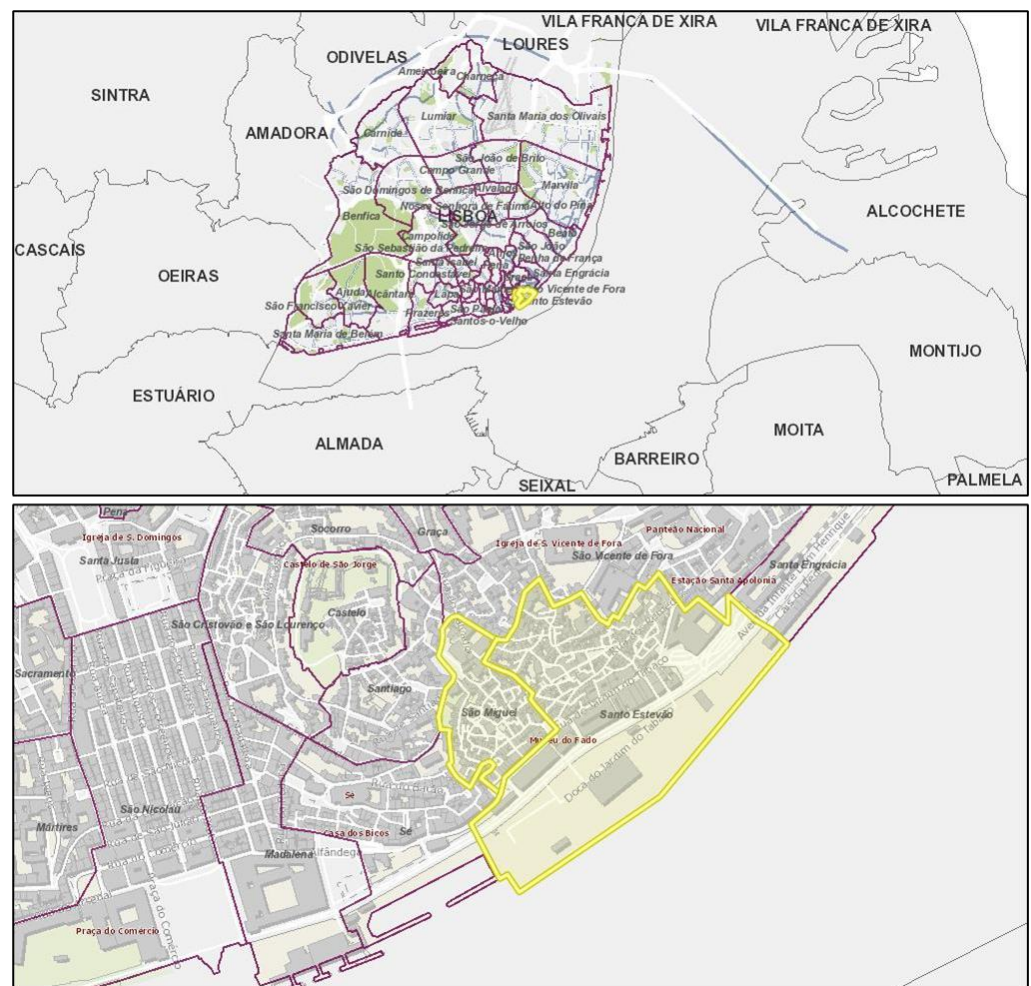
Gago and Cocola-Gant [7] argue that the development and success of platforms such as Airbnb, as well as tourism promotion carried out by public institutions, have created additional incentives to the financing process, with a special focus on short-term accommodation. Sequera and Nofre [4] have analyzed the transformations and negative impacts affected by gentrification and the quality of life of the community, mentioning that Alfama, has been transformed by tourism, both by local and transnational real estate investors, through touristification and airbnbization processes, transforming the whole neighborhood into an open-air hotel.

Few authors advocate some positive impacts of tourism on the perception of communities' residents. Although cultural tourism plays an important role in economic development, tourism's success can be a double-edged sword, because it causes a strong impact exposing the quality of life of residents to both benefits and costs [36]. For this study, current resident's responses in Alfama shows they constantly evaluate the positive and negative sides of neighborhood change, and consider its economic, symbolic, and psychological components [10,37,38]. Many studies confirm that residents who can benefit from a tourism activity tend to support its development [39–41]. The liberalization of the rental law, the incentives for the expansion of cultural facilities in the center of Lisbon, municipal investments in mobility, and the rehabilitation projects for specific areas, in combination with the growing number of tourists, have created the necessary conditions for the area to be considered attractive to private investors, overcoming the gap caused by years of abandonment [42]. The urban regeneration of these cultural neighborhoods has also brought social benefits, since the space used by tourists is the center of life for remaining residents, and improvement in their quality of life help solve several problems of the local community [43]. On the other hand, many grieve for the diminished sense of community among neighbors.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Data and Single Case Study-Approach

Our information was obtained from 50 informal interviews not allowing conclusions based on statistical representativeness, being an exploratory study, whose results should be interpreted with caution and related to Alfama exclusively. The interviews were conducted from February to April 2020, and the sociodemographic characterization of the sample was made according to age, nationality, occupation, and educational qualification, among residents living inside Alfama's boundaries (Figure 1). The interviews were conducted by one of the authors on residents approached in the neighborhood, and in addition to the socio-demographic characteristics, the questions asked are described in the results analysis.



**Figure 1.** Lisbon and Alfama. Source: Lisboa interativa. Available online <https://bityli.com/S4fvz> (accessed on 24 April 2021).

This research uses a qualitative descriptive, non-comparative, single case study design under recommendation by Harding et al. [44] and Yin [45]. We define the neighborhood area and its inhabitants as our ‘rare case’ [44] and we do not claim statistical representativeness, as we accept a low degree of freedom. In order to triangulate the information, additionally, we made four in-depth interviews with representatives of the most relevant stakeholders in Alfama, including a representative of the Parish Council of Santa Maria Maior, a representative of the Heritage and People’s Association of Alfama, a representative of the Alfama Merchants’ Association and a representative of the Cultural Centre Magalhães Lima. The interviews with these local organizations included the same non-demographic questions applied to residents.

### 3.2. Concept Analysis

We conducted content analysis following Bardin’s [46] consecutive steps of: pre-analysis of the interviews, exploration of the answers, processing of results and, finally, inferences and interpretation of findings. The summative approach to qualitative content analysis should begin with an analysis of word frequencies to identify patterns, complemented by an analysis of their use in the context of the responses [47].

We mapped concepts of information through a simultaneously quantitative and qualitative analysis that allowed us to transform large amounts of information according to semantic patterns, and group them via related concepts [48,49].

The identification of key concepts was performed using Leximancer software, version LexiPortal V4.5. This software automatically develops concept-maps representing the

main concepts within the text and how the themes are related, using an approach named summarized content analysis. This analysis considers the frequencies that precede the interpretation [50,51]. Leximancer was used to analyze all respondents' answers to each of the four questions, separately. It is a lexical software that maps conceptual information from large amounts of text by grouping themes according to the relationships between them [49,52]. This software starts by generating a thesaurus that, after an iterative process through a machine learning algorithm, allows reaching the optimal thesaurus that will result in a collection of themes based on the examination of these words in the context of the text and on their frequency in the text blocks. Leximancer has shown several important advantages for text data analysis, since large amounts of text can be analyzed quickly in a quantitative way, generating well-defined themes, and the machine learning eliminates much of the need to revise thesauri as the domain vocabulary evolves [53,54].

Themes are mapped in descending order of color temperature according to their importance: the most important theme appears in red, followed by orange, successively to more cold colors such as blue and green according to the color wheel. The concept map shows the themes covering the concepts that are most frequent in the text and those that are connected to more concepts on the map [54]. Concepts are formed based on the most frequently occurring words. Concepts that occur frequently concurrently in the same coding blocks are closer together on the map. The circles gather clusters of concepts and are named by the most prominent concept in the group (we chose to represent only these concepts that name the themes). Thus, the map visually represents the strength of association between concepts and a conceptual view of the semantic structure of data.

### 3.3. Local Population and Neighborhood

From the socio-demographic point of view we find that the ages of the interviewees vary between 18 and 85, with the average age being 50 and 50% of the interviewees being 50 or under. It is a bimodal sample with one of the modes in the 25 to 35 year old class and the other mode situated in the 55 to 65 year old class clearly showing two different social groups of residents, but that currently coexist in Alfama. Only 2% of respondents are foreigners (Brazilian and Spanish), and the sample is evenly distributed between the two genders (48% of respondents are female; 52% are male). Regarding occupation, 32% of the sample are public employees, 20% are retired, 18% are traders and 8% have jobs related to catering. Other reported occupations include dressmakers, musicians, actresses, barbers, economists, security guards and students. As for academic qualifications, 48% have only basic education, 40 have secondary education and 12% have higher education.

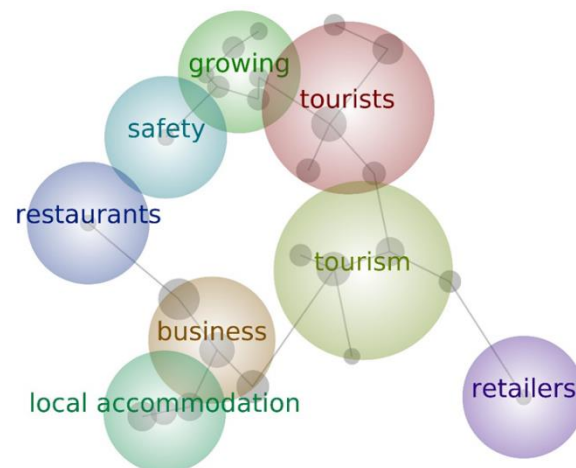
Alfama, in terms of territorial units for statistical purposes is included in LAU1 (Local Administrative Unit) Lisbon (Figure 1) and in two LAU2, namely, Santa Maria Maior and São Vicente, concentrating its largest area in Santa Maria Maior. According to the Communication and Image Office of the Parish Council of Santa Maria Maior, in 2020, it was estimated that the resident population of Alfama was, approximately 2500 inhabitants and about 1965 registered voters. Our interviewees are residents of Alfama's case-study area, namely, within the yellow area shown in Figure 1.

Lisbon experienced a severe population decrease fundamentally between 1981 and 1991 (−18%) and between 1991 and 2001 (−15%) [5]. However, from the 2000s onwards, Lisbon has seen a repopulation of some of its neighborhoods due to the arrival of young adults (liberal professionals, intellectuals, and scientists), tourists, travelers, and university students, in the revitalization processes of the historic neighborhoods in the center of the capital, such as Alfama, Baixa, Bairro Alto, Mouraria and Cais do Sodré being part of a process of population replacement and urban land revalorization known as gentrification [12–16].

## 4. Results

One of the questions in the structured interview intended to find out if the existing residents of Alfama consider that tourism brings benefits to the neighborhood. Only 16%

of the interviewees referred that tourism does not really bring them benefits. The answers obtained about the benefits that result from the existence of tourists in Alfama (What are the main benefits that tourists have contributed to the Alfama neighborhood?), were semantically analyzed through Leximancer, and the result can be found in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Concept map for benefits.

The main benefits indicated are related to the fact that tourists (one of the most relevant themes) contribute to an increase (relevant theme) in the safety (relevant theme) of the neighborhood, contributing to a better quality of life, also associated with more street life and a cleaner neighborhood. They also state that tourism (one of the most relevant themes) has brought benefits to retail (emerging theme) and to the local accommodation business (relevant themes). Some respondents consider the local accommodation business has rehabilitated many buildings that were becoming uninhabitable, and many residents left the neighborhood because houses were too small for large families. Benefits related to local retailers and restaurants are emerging themes as they are the least relevant of the 50% most relevant (Leximancer concept maps are built on the 50% most relevant concepts). Local retail has been rehabilitated, while restaurants continue to bring many tourists to the neighborhood looking for traditional cuisine and fado music. As two interviewees stated,

*Tourism helps a lot to rehabilitate the commerce and to raise prices without interfering with the typical dishes because they like our gastronomy. More security, more police, cleaner areas.*(Source: female resident, Age: 61 years)

*The property owners started to do improvements, giving the people of the neighborhood good sales, which allowed them to inflate the prices and make more profit.*(Source: female resident, Age: 77)

Of all respondents only 12% stated that tourism does not bring any problems to the Alfama neighborhood. This indicates that 74% of the interviewees consider that tourism brings both benefits and problems. All problems (What are the main problems that tourists have brought to Alfama neighborhood?) described by 88% of respondents were semantically analyzed, and the results obtained are shown in Figure 3.

For the interviewees who indicated that the increase in tourism in Alfama neighborhood (the most relevant theme) is associated with problems, the most frequent ones are robberies and noise (both emergent problems represented with a cold color). Noise is associated above all with local accommodation (relevant theme). The problems for inhabitants (low relevant theme) are related to the fact that tourism (low relevant theme) has brought an increase in prices (low relevant theme). The interviewees also identified problems related to the use of space (relevant theme), on the one hand related to prices (low relevant theme) and, on the other hand, to real estate speculation, which is an emerging problem. As two interviewees said,

*With the increase in tourism, everything is bad for the residents: rents, rubbish, noise.*(Source: female resident, Age: 78)

*Real estate sales estate has driven away the residents, the neighborhood now has nothing, even the neighborhood commerce is dead. Tourists also like to see the typical and less tourists.*(Source: male resident, Age: 65)



**Figure 3.** Concept map for problems.

The first testimony is an example of the few interviewees who hold a completely negative approach to touristification. The second one regrets the loss of authenticity and recalls a lost past. Concerning the question related to the preference for old Alfama or Alfama nowadays, 70% of the interviewees affirmed that they prefer old Alfama, 14% said they prefer Alfama in the present and 16% could not decide. Although it was a more direct question (Do you prefer the Alfama of nowadays or the old Alfama?) the interviewees engaged in a conversation about this duality. The results of the semantic analysis of their answers are represented Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Concept map for the duality between old Alfama and Alfama nowadays.

For Figures 3–5, we enabled in the software the neighborhood theme (one of the most relevant themes) to remain as a possible output of the semantic analysis, to better understand how the different reasons were linked to the neighborhood concept. People's testimonies addressed the older (relevant theme) quarter as a place where neighbors used to talk (relevant theme), where children used to play (relevant theme) and that it was a place more traditional (relevant theme). The neighborhood is linked to tourism (one of the most relevant themes), which has brought a renewed (relevant theme) neighborhood. An emerging trend that is linked to the older Alfama is parishioner (low relevant theme) that is a spirit that is being lost. The concept of parishioner is related to the sense of belonging and unity. Residents feel that their past neighbors and friends are no longer part of the community, which reinforces the duality they feel when they agree with the changes but regret what they have lost. As two interviewees pointed out:

*I miss the old Alfama, I miss people, I miss listening to them yelling in Portuguese, I miss the traditional commerce, the children playing football, I miss knowing the news of the neighborhood in everyday conversation.*(Source: female resident, Age: 60)

*Either of the two, previously more parishioner and now with more nationalities and cultures.*(Source: female resident, Age: 46)



**Figure 5.** Concept map for contributions from tourism to quality of life.

When semantically analyzing how respondents think tourism can contribute to an improvement in their quality of life (How can tourism improve the quality of life of Alfama's residents and what measures should be taken to make tourism more of a positive impact on the neighborhood?), the results can be seen in Figure 5.

The two most relevant themes resulting from the semantic analysis of the answers are tourism and the neighborhood, as expected. We choose to keep these themes to analyze the connection between the solutions and the interpretations given for this last question. It can thus be seen that the quality of life in the neighborhood has improved regarding safety (emerging theme) and that the businesses (emerging theme) in the neighborhood can contribute to a neighborhood with more life for the inhabitants (relevant theme) as well. Tourism adds life to the area, which promotes interculturality. Residents who work or own businesses in the quarter also benefit financially, but more rules should be established to protect inhabitants' interests.

The results obtained through the interviews with the residents can be compared with the answers given by the representatives of four organizations in Alfama we contacted;

these organizations are: Santa Maria Maior Parish Council, Alfama Heritage and People's Association, Alfama Merchant's Association and Cultural Centre Magalhães Lima.

All the representatives of the organizations affirm that tourists bring benefits to commerce and to the local accommodation businesses. The changes for the neighborhood include job creation, business valorization, urban requalification, increased security, and the valorization of cultural expressions, from the point of view of the Parish Council. The fact that there are an increasing number of tourists has also increased municipal support for some cultural activities according to the representative of the Cultural Centre. For the Merchants' Association and for Heritage and People's Association there should be policies to protect the rights of residents. A representative of the last one also states that tour operators should involve the community and know more about the history.

Almost all organizations, through their representatives, indicate that noise is one of the main problems of the increase in the number of tourists in Alfama. The representative of the Parish Council also mentions the lack of parking and traffic problems and the increase of domestic waste production. Real estate speculation is mentioned by the representatives of two of the four organizations. Exploitation of tourism-related activities, greed, rising prices, and excess of local accommodation are other problems identified. Heritage and People's Association representative indicates that there is an increase in problems related to drugs and prostitution and a disinvestment at social level, while there is a degradation of the public space, facts that were not mentioned by the residents. The loss of identity of Alfama is mentioned by two of the organizations (Merchant's Association and Cultural Centre).

For the Parish Council representative, a balance between the local resident population and long-term rentals should be promoted in Alfama nowadays, making essential services available for families to settle in the neighborhood. Urban regeneration and an increase in the dynamism of the neighborhood are positive factors in the current Alfama. On the other hand, the representative of the Heritage and People's Association does not like current Alfama, stating that after an initial boost, the neighborhood has declined again. For the representative of the Merchant's Association, tourism should involve residents, and public spaces should be rehabilitated, since tourists are welcome. The Cultural Centre also prefers old Alfama and states that nowadays residents have many bad habits.

For the representative of the Heritage and People's Association, tourism does not contribute in any way to the quality of life of residents. For the other organizations, through their representatives, tourism can contribute to their quality of life if it is regulated and does not push residents away. It creates jobs, boosts the economy, and can result in greater investment in public space. It brings a lot of life to the neighborhood.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

For the limitations of the single case-study approach we used, we claim the data and knowledge obtained in this project is highly relevant to this local territory (Alfama neighborhood, in Lisbon, Portugal), not necessarily leading to generalized conclusions. Aspects as specific as residents' feelings on increased security, greater liveliness and liveliness in the streets depend on government policies that vary in different touristic cities. Although in Alfama, tourism brought more noise at night, the streets are cleaner now and there has been an improvement in the quality of life. We learned that many residents left the neighborhood because houses were too small for families, which could be related to increasing housing costs and minimized affordable places. The neighborhood has lost population and the neighborhood historical social attachments have faded away, with noticeable grievance by those who remained in the area. Previous studies [55] also reported residents' complaints about noise, which is in line with our results, but complaints related to a more general feeling of insecurity do not coincide with the testimonies of Alfama residents we collected here.

Awareness of the threats of overtourism has led the local governments of some destinations to agree to promote and share best practices in dealing with this ubiquitous phenomenon, where the central role of tourism in the development pathways of destina-

tions was recognized and the need to address the challenges posed by the ongoing growth of tourism on urban livability was underlined [56]. There is general agreement on the increasing material benefits for local businesses. Local commerce has been rehabilitated and traditional cuisine restaurants are attracting more tourists; however, residents report that it has increased prices in general and, particularly, estate prices due to local accommodation and commerce alike. The local business network may have the capacity to link residents to the revitalization process, sharing the benefits of economic development, for example by creating new culture-based employment opportunities for residents by participating, after on-going training, in the tourism industry as tour guides in the historic neighborhood [57]. These results are considerably related to generalized narratives of gentrification [25].

As immaterial or symbolic aspects of gentrification seen [10,37,38], in a great deal, our interviewees miss the old quarter because of the neighborhood spirit, childhood friends and community experiences, which was the basis of a sense of belonging. This nostalgia is expressed through the memories, the sound of children playing, the conversations between neighbors, the festivities of the popular saints, the games at the weekend, the festivities, knowing each other as if they were one big family. Resident participation and involvement are essential to the success of any regeneration program, and their roles and activities must be compatible with the historic neighborhood's distinctiveness [58]; a remaining question is how to achieve this goal. Local tourist policies seem not addressing these people's feelings, it seems that economic development has been greatly prioritized. The valorization of cultural expressions should be made involving the community and leading it to know better its history.

Most of answers indicated by our respondents are confirmed by the organization representatives we further interviewed, as a form of triangulation. Still, organization representatives hold perceptions which are different to residents', as they not only perceive but also defend political or commercial agendas, and we consider this could be a bias and a pitfall in our results. Anyway, the idea of creating a sense of belonging and pride in the local community seems to generate consensus among almost all our respondents to counteract the negative effects of gentrification and a strategy to democratize the neighborhood governance [59].

The fact that elderly inhabitants feel nostalgia while they also recognize that Alfama is now more secure, cleaner and has a lot of liveliness, and also reflects a sense of belonging and connection recognized by older people in previous studies [60] that they still wish to contribute to the community as a whole, which plays a holistic experience that is intended to be transmitted to future generations and conveys a sense of affiliation and connection to the place, which can only benefit this type of neighborhood.

This study has sought contributing to ongoing discussions on the complexities on tourist-led gentrification. While most studies on the theme focus strongly on the negative aspects of Alfama's gentrification, we believe that studying the contradictions between positive and negative experiences by the residents shed lights on a still apparently unrecognized aspect of the matter: those who remain living in the neighborhood, after gentrification has displaced population in great deal, prove being more economically resilient and struggled by the changes. The way overtourism manifests itself depends critically on the city context, and solutions must be adjusted to the local environment, involving all stakeholders to reach inclusive solutions [55]. We realize that our sample is biased towards those who remained living in Alfama for having higher economic capital, as this sample does not include those who have already left the area and might have a divergent approach towards economic benefits, as they lost the strong social capital that once existed in this area [10,37], a capital that was not strong enough to counteract people's direct displacement. We understand this bias as a limitation of our methodological approach.

Our results concur with other studies [61] regarding how tourist-led gentrification can have positive aspects and not only negative ones. Building rehabilitation, increased security, job creation and neighborhood life are all factors that have been identified in our research. As an earlier work by Gago [3] mentioned Alfama's displacement of former

residents as its central point, this issue was not mentioned by our respondents. According to Benis [6] a socially sustainable revitalization includes both a conservation and development dimension and takes the form of strategies and actions that improve the lives of residents and their perception of the neighborhood, attract tourists, new residents and investors. The interviewees have some perception about their lives' improvement related to tourism, so we believe that a process of revitalization of Alfama is in progress that can approach a sustainable development in the future. According to Hall [62], to address the challenges of overtourism, local interventions of attractiveness, destinations and tourism travel stages have to go hand in hand with multilateral initiatives on a global scale.

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