

Mass Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and traditional values within citizen lifestyle in Porto (Portugal). An Overview through the HAC4CG Project.

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Abstract

Porto has a rich urban mesh and unique cultural identity, whose preservation has been the basis of its historic centre classification as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (1996). The increase in demand of Porto as a tourist destination since 2015 was also favoured by the opening of Porto's airport new terminal that greatly powered low-cost companies and the licensing for the rehabilitation of houses for hostels and restaurants. These were factors of opportunity that allowed an exponential growth of tourism and a for-profit rehabilitation process in the entire city, albeit without proper control.

Beyond the impact on housing and gentrification, mass tourism has had a great impact on the city's lifestyle. The local community is currently confronted with these rapid metamorphoses, becoming the agent of a process of acculturation that is complex and unsustainable in the long run and with implications in the construction of Identity and future Collective Memory.

Furthermore, to attract the newly arrived costumers and their diverse culinary preferences, the traditional local gastronomy has been changed, remodelled, and repackaged. Deep changes were observed either in traditional food consumption value chains as well in the grocery's stores, markets, and restaurants.

This communication aims to highlight the preliminary results of the research conducted under the HAC4CG project.

Keywords: *Cultural Heritage; HAC4CG project; Mass Tourism; Porto; Sustainability*

1 Introduction to the HAC4CH Project

Climate Change is a current topic that impacts our daily life and our collective future. Thus, approaches made from the Cultural sector are so relevant as any others of different fields. Culture and Cultural Heritage are the drivers of the Cultural Tourism development, and in an era of globalisation and information, heritage is being re-addressed as a document to promote identity and collective memory. Digital technologies allow the construction of “Artificial Memories” and contribute to the growth of the “cult of the monuments” and to their superficial appropriation, which may lead to the misinterpretation of a site’s authenticity and significance (Ferreira, 2011). Tourism, rehabilitation, restoration and marketing are considered the most proper ways to obtain economic sustainability for the cultural sector and explored by our contemporary society in its dynamic of mobility and travel promotion. Tourism as the world’s largest industry is frequently connected with the trivialisation of heritage (Ferreira, 2011).

Despite of the generalisation of the term, the concept of Mass Tourism is not yet clearly defined and regardless of the huge growth of this sector and the consume of cultural attractions, its more consensual to consider the concept of Mass Cultural Tourism (Richards, 2022). Undoubtedly, we have our cities invaded by crowds of tourists and Porto isn’t an exception. The huge growth of Tourism in Porto (as in Lisbon too) impacted the urban lifestyle and set great challenges to the policy makers, since the demand for housing and accommodation boomed the rehabilitation sector and gave origin to the major transformation process on the built heritage of the two last decades (Santos, 2022). This impact has not yet been completely evaluated and some stakeholders have already pointed out some risks of this type of model of heritage and tourism exploitation (UNESCO Portugal; APPRUP¹), specially for a historic centre classified as World Heritage.

Taking in to account that cultural Porto’s identity reflects tangible and intangible values based not only in its built heritage, but also in the social context of its inhabitants, since heritage is always the result of socio-anthropological processes, the HAC4CG² project (trinomen standing for Mass Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Lifestyle in Porto) aimed to draw a state of the art of a pre–Pandemics COVID 19 scenario, within the framework of Climate Change, in order to survey the awareness of the citizens, heritage professionals and other stakeholders to this topic. In a time of Climate Change mitigation world claim it was also a goal to survey how activities increased by Tourism contributed to worsen this problem directly and indirectly. Issues as circular economy, demolitions and waste production in the selected sectors were also addressed.

2 Methodology

This work summarizes the findings of the main goals of HAC4CG’s Work Package 3 (WP3). The following sections highlight the main issues concerning each section. The proposed recommendations to address the negative impacts of the changes described are highlighted in the last chapter.

3 Tourism

3.1 Methodology

The present section aims to draw a portrait of the evolution and current state of tourism in the city of Porto. The impacts of tourism on residents and destinations from a theoretical standpoint have already been extensively researched, as has the importance of resident’s contributions to the overall attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations. Therefore, in alignment with the aims of the HAC4CH project and WP3, we focus on the perception of residents and stakeholders on the impacts of tourism on the city and on their overall quality of life. Data was collected through an extensive literature review, focusing on articles and dissertations favouring empirical research involving residents and stakeholders within the destination and no older than 6 years (2017 – 2023).

3.2 Tourism development and management in Porto

Porto represents an interesting case study. Although it shares a common background with other cities in southern Europe, the changes in the cityscape caused by or related to tourism have happened at a much faster rate in a very small territory (Gusman et al., 2019; B. Sousa et al., 2021; S. Sousa & Rodríguez-Barcón, 2021). Porto’s dramatic growth of tourism was driven by an increase in both demand and offer. From the demand perspective, it is partly explained by the rise of urban and cultural tourism globally, namely the short city break segment. The events in the Mediterranean, triggered by the rise of global terrorism and the Arab Spring, pushed tourists to Portugal, deemed a very safe destination (Fonseca, 2019). On the part of the offer, it was fuelled by the expansion of Porto’s airport, the arrival of low-cost operators (and the consequent proliferation of short-rental accommodations), the decade-long urban renewal efforts led by the Municipality, acknowledged with the classification of the city centre as World Heritage by UNESCO, the title of European Capital of Culture in 2001, and numerous prizes, such as Best Destination awards (Fonseca, 2019; Gusman et al., 2019; Pinto da Silva et al., 2019; Rio Fernandes & Chamusca, 2018). The

¹ APPRUP – Portuguese Association for Urban Rehabilitation

² HAC4CG – Heritage, Art Creation for Climate Change: Living the city, catalalysing spaces for learning, creation and action towards climate change.

2008 financial crisis drove governments to look for quick solutions, presenting tourism as a potential sector of rapid economic growth (Fonseca, 2019). Therefore, Porto was presented as an affordable, novel destination, one of “Europe’s well-kept secrets”. However, it was the city’s intrinsic attributes that shaped the success of the city, which presents a varied portfolio of attractions.

Drawing an accurate portrayal of the state of tourism is a challenge, as Porto’s image as a destination does not coincide perfectly with its administrative borders (this occurs with many urban destinations), and the city acts as a gateway to the entire North region of Portugal. Also, as none of the NUTs (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistical purposes) overlap with Porto, the destination, data collection is difficult. This situation is also mirrored in the organisation of the destination, with multiple entities sharing this responsibility. The year 2022 marked a turning point, as the Municipality took a more interventive role in destination management, launching a strategic document establishing concrete goals for tourism for the first time.

Data collection and the construction of other indexes should also improve, as the Municipality has announced the creation of a Tourism Observatory and set “smart tourism” and “smart city” management as a goal. The city was even shortlisted as the European Capital of Smart Tourism in 2023. In parallel, in May 2022, the TPNP (North of Portugal Tourism Board) signed a protocol for the creation of a Regional Observatory of Sustainable Tourism, under the Portugal 2027, that will integrate the INSTO (UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organisation’s International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories). As per INSTO guidelines, this Observatory must gather data on residents’ satisfaction with tourism levels and policies that should be published in an annual report. This will be an important complementary tool, as the Observatory announced by the Municipality will not gather data on residents’ perception of tourism.

The last known strategic marketing plan published by Porto and TPNP dates from November 2015. It defines Short and City Breaks, Cultural Tourism, Nautical Tourism, Gastronomy and Wines and Business tourism as anchor products (TPNP, 2015). The business and event sector are also an increasingly important and strategic sector, with public and private stakeholders investing heavily in infrastructure and complementary services (Fonseca, 2019; Marques & Pinho, 2020). Overall, it seems that there is a correspondence between the profile defined by the TPNP and what is perceived by stakeholders and visitors (Fonseca, 2019; O. Silva et al., 2019). Stakeholders interviewed and Fonseca (2019) recognised tourism as a “fundamental, central and strategic” sector to the city’s development and that it was an answer to the progressive des-industrialisation of the region that resulted in the loss of gross income and jobs and later, an escape from the financial crisis of 2008 (Camarneiro, 2019; Fonseca, 2019).

3.3 Impacts of tourism as perceived by residents and industry stakeholders

Job creation and new business opportunities are widely agreed to have been one of the more positive impacts of tourism in the city. However, there have been arguments that the jobs created by tourism tend to be seasonal, without formal or lengthy contracts, under-qualified and insufficiently paid (Camarneiro, 2019; Cardoso & Silva, 2018; Fonseca, 2019; Jordão, 2019; Pinto da Silva et al., 2019; A. F. Silva, 2017). Fonseca (2019) recognises that the wages earned in tourism are not at par with rising prices in the city, concluding that “*comparing what money can buy now with what you could buy before, the local community is poorer*”. There is also a perception that many activities and establishments depend on tourism to survive, and there is an over-dependence on the sector in foreign capital, which is not sensitive to the needs and sensibilities of residents (Camarneiro, 2019; Fonseca, 2019; Jordão, 2019). Residents report a general feeling that tourism favours “*growth over everything*” (Jordão, 2019), tainted by the need to amass the profits of the current “*boom*”, as tourism may not last forever, a feeling also reflected by Fonseca (2019) and Camarneiro (2019) interviewees.

The expansion of Porto’s airport is widely acknowledged as a key factor in the destination’s success and is the leading airport in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. (Fonseca, 2019; Pinto da Silva et al., 2019). Porto has been working on its overall mobility strategy, with the global objective of reducing its carbon footprint and raising interconnectivity. However, tourism seems to be at the heart of many transformations, and both stakeholders (Fonseca, 2019) and residents (Jordão, 2019; A. F. Silva, 2017) agree that tourism has aggravated traffic and congestion, and impacted the overall quality of the environment, namely atmospheric and noise pollution. An extreme example of how city infrastructure has been sequestered for tourism is the tram which has fully become a tourism attraction, having increased its’ price from 0,50 cents in 2003 to a whopping 5€ fee in 2022.

Congestion and overcrowding are reoccurring issues for all actors of tourism. Porto is a small municipality of about 41km² and 230,000 inhabitants that presents high levels of population density (5594,98 residents / km²) superior to Lisbon (5456,32) and well above the average national density (112,15) (INE, n.d.). Additionally, the historical city centre concentrates most attractions in a compact area of roughly 50 hectares turning the city particularly sensitive to these matters. Several articles in both national and international media highlight the negative impacts of tourism and the disappointment of residents, such as the one published by Der Spiegel in August 2018 that used Porto as an exploratory case study for over tourism across cultural destinations in Europe (“Paradise Lost: How Tourists Are Destroying the Places They Love,” 2018). Has Porto reached this state of saturation? Some authors suggest that the rate of visitors to residents could be as high as 8 to 1, well above London to Barcelona (A. F. Silva et al., 2021). It seems that Porto, like many other European destinations, might be suffering from over-tourism. This umbrella term

has no “hard boundaries” and might be highly subjective and emotional, but it can be used to describe a general state of uneasiness with tourism, caused by a perceived decline in the overall quality of life of residents and tourists’ satisfaction, tensions between residents, developers and tourists and rising threats to material and immaterial heritage caused by high touristic pressure (Veríssimo et al., 2020).

The respondents of a study conducted on Porto’s and Aveiro’s residents showed that 40% of residents took action to avoid or mitigate the impact of tourism in their daily lives (Costa et al., 2021). In the same study, a word cloud constructed from residents’ interviews reads words such as *confusion, gentrification, excess, too much, uncontrolled, exaggeration, unsustainable, masses, noise and fear*. The words with negative undertones far exceed the positive, such as *opportunity, hospitality, quality or benefits*. Cardoso & Silva (2018) conducted a similar study and found that 43% of respondents avoided specific moments or places to avoid tourism and that 5% would like to take or took measures to react against tourism. These numbers might be small compared to other destinations, but they express a growing perception of the negative impacts of tourism. The city addressed this issue by proposing reorganising the tourism cityscape, promoting new itineraries in other neighbourhoods to alleviate pressure on the historical city centre. Some attractions have already adopted strategies to manage the flow of visitors, mostly through introducing timeslots and online reservations, such as the Clérigos Tower and the Lello Bookshop.

Overcrowding is also aggravated by a concentration of accommodation in the historic city centre, which has massively increased in the last few years. In May 2023, the city counted 138 hotel units and 7 new registries until May 23rd. The evolution of short-term rental units is even more impressive. In May 2023, the Municipality of Porto held 9,03% of all short-rental units in the country, only behind Lisbon (18,24%) (TravelBI, n.d.) The average occupancy rate is 82% (AirDNA, n.d.). Its distribution is uneven in the territory, with a very high concentration within the historical city centre. Chamusca et al. (2019) notes that if all short-rental listings were at full capacity simultaneously, the number of guests would be superior to residents in some of the city’s parishes. However, the discourse on short-rental units is dual, with entrepreneurs arguing that they fulfil specific needs of both offer and demand and provide increased benefits for residents (S. Sousa & Rodríguez-Barcón, 2021), whilst others argue that they have only increased the inequalities that already existed between owners and tenants (Chamusca et al., 2019; Jordão, 2019).

Real-estate and rents have gone up, disrupting the life of residents (Camarneiro, 2019; Cardoso & Silva, 2018; Carvalho et al., 2019; Jordão, 2019). Evictions have become one of the most visible aspects of this trend (section 4.3 makes an overview of the policies that allowed such measures). The discontent of locals has been encapsulated in the national and international press and generated protests and other forms of objection (Camarneiro, 2019; Jordão, 2019). The residents in Jordão’s (2019) study claim that “*tourism is the root cause of housing problems in the community*”. They also mention the loss of neighbourhood ties due to the displacement of the residents or the disappearance of traditional places of gathering and social encounters, impacting negatively on the lifestyle of inhabitants. Camarneiro (2019) reports that “*it is a disrespect for local residents. So many grew up and lived their entire lives in the city, and suddenly are being completely pushed out. Either by landlords, who cancel the existing contracts to suddenly almost double the rent price, or by investment funds who show up at your door asking you to sell your house*”. In fact, as noted by Carvalho et al. (2019), political discourse has shifted from the general impacts of the physical requalification of the city towards matters of gentrification, touristification and loss of authenticity. However, different stakeholders evaluate this matter differently, as shown by Sousa & Rodríguez-Barcón (2021), who have explored different narratives through a qualitative analysis of elite stakeholder interviews. These stakeholders describe those changes as a positive sign of the growing attractivity and dynamism of the city and the discontent generated as “*growing pains*”. It is important to note that the ongoing population loss in the historical city centre is part of an older tendency and that population shrinkage is not itself, a positive or negative outcome.

The concern across the more critical sector is that the historical city centre might lose the very same attributes that made it attractive to tourism and, more importantly, the capacity to sustain residential function and function as a normal part of the city. In this sense, one must explore the links between tourism, population loss, gentrification, desertification and touristification.

Gentrification is generally defined as a process in which residents and commercial establishments are replaced by other, “with higher economic and cultural level” (S. Sousa & Rodríguez-Barcón, 2021). In the case of Porto, Carvalho et al. (2019) claim that “*tourism is the fundamental driver of rapid functional gentrification in the city, not residential change*”, as the new residents are mostly “temporary” or “floating” residents, such as tourists, international students (Carvalho et al., 2019; Rio Fernandes & Chamusca, 2018) and more recently, digital nomads, remote workers, expats and other occasional residents, giving rise to residential tourism. These trends have been identified by stakeholders (Fonseca, 2019), by the Municipality (Câmara Municipal do Porto, 2022) and tourism authorities (Turismo de Portugal, n.d.). This raises the question of how tourism may impact political and associative life in this territory (Carvalho et al., 2019; Chamusca et al., 2019).

Tourism has, undoubtedly provoked a shift in the image of the city due to its increase in cultural and leisure offers, which plays an important role in the competitiveness and attractiveness of the city, both as a destination and place of residence. Residents recognise, in general, that tourism has improved upon the liveliness and cultural offer of the city (Cardoso & Silva, 2018; Fonseca, 2019; Jordão, 2019; Rio Fernandes & Chamusca, 2018; A. F. Silva, 2017). 56.8 %

of residents in Cardoso & Silva (2018) were “*proud that people from other parts of the world visit their city*”. However, this is also linked with touristification, meaning the process by which the city, its functions and infrastructure, are reconfigured to serve the needs of tourists and temporary residents rather than residents. Touristification is linked with gentrification as it eventually leads to the displacing of residents through real-estate pressure and rising prices, discomfort caused by overcrowding and the disappearance of services and infrastructures needed to sustain the residential function (Gusman et al., 2019; S. Sousa & Rodríguez-Barcón, 2021). In the “touristified” city, citizens’ lifestyles are commodified and turned into consumption goods for tourism, motivated to “visit like a local” (Gusman et al., 2019). Some establishments have chosen to attract tourists rather than locals; although we cannot provide hard evidence for this reality, this is an easily observable reality on the ground in some historical coffeeshops or well-known restaurants, such as the Majestic, the Brazileira, the Guarani or Chez Lapin.

Others have diversified their offers to cater to locals and tourists alike. In this case, tourism has positively impacted both providers and residents, who also enjoy these new additional services. There are also instances of spaces that have been completely rethought under the lens of tourism. It is the case, for example, of the Lello bookshop. The entrance to the bookshop requires one to purchase a ticket or hold an annual card, both refundable on the condition of buying a book.

Finally, we must also address the creation of new spaces and functions catered exclusively for the enjoyment of tourists. Some of these spaces play with authenticity, creating what Carvalho et al. (2019) call “neo-traditional” or “pseudo-typical” establishments. This is concerning as municipal programs have failed to protect traditional trade, with the disappearance of many iconic establishments making headlines. Rio Fernandes & Chamusca (2018), and, more recently, Andrade (2019), conducted extensive studies of the changes to the economic function of the city and noted the growth of accommodation units, restaurants and coffee shops, a reduction in trades that serve residents (construction materials, articles for the home and personal care) and the complete change of the rhythm of the city, with profound alterations to schedules and volumes of passers-by being a perfect illustration from the transition from a residential function to a city dedicated to tourism and leisure. They also note that there still is a high turnover of commercial establishments in the historical city centre, suggesting that new businesses struggle to thrive. Parallely, there is still an impressive number of empty buildings, a surprising reality considering the unwavering inflated real-estate prices and the deficiency in housing. In some streets, the number of empty floor levels with possible commercial use reaches 24% (Andrade, 2019).

However, we must note that residents are not opposed to the growth of the tourism industry but rather ask for more proactive and regulated approaches with the inhabitants in mind (Cardoso & Silva, 2018; A. F. Silva, 2017).

4 Rehabilitation Strategies for Built Heritage

It is essential to understand the fundamentals that revolve around transforming a community’s distinct identity into built heritage, how the collective memories are ingrained within architectural designs and the multifaceted dilemmas and losses that arise while rehabilitating or altering these structures. Understanding the modifications occurring within the historic city centres’-built heritage is essential, considering the invaluable insights provided by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) report on Monuments and Sites in Danger (ICOMOS Portugal, 2020).

4.1 Methodology

This section employs a multi-faceted methodology. A rigorous literature review serves as the foundation, delving into key definitions, while drawing insights from prestigious heritage institutions. The analysis is guided by conceptual frameworks, emphasizing the integration of tangible and intangible values within cultural heritage, and referencing principles articulated in historical foundational charters. Case studies and historical analysis bring a localized perspective, examining the impacts of tourism, significant events, and legislative measures on rehabilitation practices and the urban landscape. A judicious legal and policy analysis further enriches the study, scrutinizing the detrimental effects of financial instruments, and specific laws on centenary buildings. The methodology concludes with a comparative analysis, drawing insights from analogous studies on urban transformations both nationally and internationally. This multi-pronged approach not only provides a nuanced understanding of Porto's built heritage challenges but also informs the formulation of strategies tailored to the city's unique context.

4.2 Understanding heritage

To fully comprehend the unique characteristics and intricacies of Porto’s’ built heritage, we must begin by understanding the various levels at which it operates and fits. Only afterwards can we effectively work towards its protection.

The definition of cultural heritage, as stated in Article 2 of the Faro Convention, solidifies it as inherited resources that individuals, regardless of ownership, recognise as a representation “...of their evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time” (Council of Europe, 2005), namely “artefacts, monuments, and groups of buildings and sites that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance.” (UNESCO, 2009).

Built Cultural Heritage (BCH) falls within that category of man-made resources. Although BCH represents a smaller portion of what humanity produces, it holds great cultural significance and must be guarded due to its value to past and present generations. The need for its protection extends beyond local: it can be of great importance to others, as seen in cases of national classification or broader forms of safeguarding, such as inclusion in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List for monuments and sites. The tangibility of BCH is almost inseparably linked to its inherent intangible values. In other words, most tangible assets do not possess value in isolation but are valuable because they embody and represent intangible qualities, symbolic meanings, memories, rituals, festivals, social systems, and arts and crafts, which enhance their distinctiveness, importance, and value (Silva, 2008). The UNESCO website for Intangible Heritage (2023) provides valuable insights, depicting the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, including an entire dedicated section and the connections of intangible elements within the built heritage. It emphasises preserving craftsmanship skills and knowledge, promoting the continuation of craft production and skill transmission within communities.

Furthermore, integrated heritage should be regarded as a branch of the broader architectural context of which it is an integral part. It should not be treated separately but rather understood as a vital component of the larger whole, adding value. Furthermore, that, as a primary principle, has been stated repeatedly since the Venice Charter in 1964 (Gazzola et al., 1964), all throughout, until the most recent Davos Declaration (Ministers of Culture and Heads of Delegations of the signatories of the European Cultural Convention et al., 2018) or the Leeuwarden Declaration, on the adaptive re-use of the built heritage (Architects' Council of Europe et al., 2019).

To summarise the concept, there is the *Genius Loci*, or the “spirit of place,” which refers to a location’s unique character and identity. The Québec Declaration (ICOMOS Canada, 2008) emphasises the importance of preserving the spirit of place and involving local communities. To preserve the asset and its perceived essence, it is crucial to “rethink, protect, and transmit the place and its spirit” (Girard & Vecco, 2019).

4.3 Addressing the problem

The intrinsic connection between tangible assets and intangible customs is often overlooked in rehabilitation projects. In Porto, renowned buildings and even entire building blocks are undergoing extensive alterations, leading to the loss of their intended essence or the unique character they have gained over time (ICOMOS Portugal, 2012, 2020)

In section 3.3.3., on the impacts of tourism as perceived by residents, the stated significant events that occurred in the city, changed the rehabilitation practices, and facets of the city’s population, reshaping the city’s urban landscape. The UNESCO World Heritage status granted in 1996, Porto’s designation as the European Capital of Culture in 2001 and hosting the European Football Championship in 2004 played pivotal roles in urban renewal initiatives (Figueiredo, 2021). These events, although transformative, have generated mixed perceptions regarding community inclusivity. Adding the internationalisation of the University of Porto and the establishment of low-cost airline routes, all influenced and promoted the coming of tourists. This convergence of factors has injected new energy and purpose into the city’s historic heart, leading to a dynamic and transient community’s occupation of previously vacant spaces (Chamusca & Fernandes, 2021). However, as stated before, it is essential to note that this influx of short-term residents contrasts with the gradual migration of the living-working population to the suburbs, signifying a shift in the region’s urban dynamics. That led to an undisputed transformation of residential properties into tourist rentals, converting and partitioning houses into rooms or micro flats, fuelling real estate speculation by reaching higher yield rates with higher rents and smaller apartments (Figueiredo, 2021).

However, the negative impacts on centenary buildings do not occur without permission from the legislative body or the absence thereof. Architect Pedro Marques Figueiredo presents a comprehensive analysis in his chapter titled “The legal context and incentives for rehabilitation” (2021), where he explores the complex network of legislation and its effects on facilitating harmful practices that had (and still have) adverse consequences for the community and the preservation of built heritage. For instance, the lowering of interest rates by the European Central Bank in response to the financial crisis led investors to turn towards real estate as an alternative investment option. That, alongside tax exemptions for international investors, mainly through the Gold Visas program, attracted investors and raised concerns about their impact on the housing market. The *Memorando de Entendimento* (Understanding Memorandum), following the Troika’s intervention in 2011, brought the “*Lei Cristas*” (Cristas Law) in 2012, favouring investors/landlords by facilitating eviction procedures and terminating rent-controlled systems, increasing the real estate market activity and the transformation of former dwellings into tourist rentals. Other laws, such as Lei 32/2012 and DL 53/2014 (decree-law), simplified rehabilitation licenses and created exceptions for buildings over 30 years old used for housing purposes, thus facilitating the growth of short-term rental dwellings and leading to the demolition of interiors without clear justifications. Lei 32/2021 and DL-53/2014 simplified administrative procedures for rehabilitation, including safety requirements and licenses of use, contributing to demolitions and facadism without sufficient accountability. Despite concerns and criticism from institutions and specialists, European funding programs like ON.2 - Novo Norte and COMPETE 2020 co-funded large private hotels in centenary buildings or blocks, completely altering their interiors to suit such demands.

The annexation of the Historic Centre of Porto as a World Heritage Site comes with various requirements that must be pursued (ICOMOS, 1996; UNESCO, 2021). Also, that incorporation automatically grants it the status of a national

interest asset or national monument, that is, having significant cultural value for the nation (*Aviso* n.o 19137/2018, de 20 de *Dezembro*, 2018; *Lei* n.o 107/2001 Establishes the foundations of the policy and framework for the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, 2001), which is currently facing challenges following the release of the ICOMOS report on Monuments and Sites in Danger (ICOMOS, 2020). This report has raised the alarm about the potential loss of the World Heritage Site status due to issues such as the extensive demolition of historic buildings, the construction of new structures impacting the urban landscape, the mounting pressure from tourism since the site attained World Heritage status, and a significant decline by more than 50% in the population of the Historical Centre (ICOMOS Portugal, 2020). All this despite and with a sense of disregard for article 11th of the above-mentioned *Lei* n.o 107/2001, establishing the duty of preservation, defence, and valorisation of cultural heritage.

4.4 Strategies and solutions

The examination of comparable studies on urban transformations in various cities, both nationally and internationally, offers insights into rehabilitation patterns that could be applied in the *Invicta* City. These findings may inform strategies to modify or overcome certain practices within the context of the established Sustainability Pillars (Potts, 2021). The four pillars of sustainability, social, economic, environmental and cultural, are interdependent and require a comprehensive approach. The rehabilitation sector needs to implement Conservation and Restoration to enhance social cohesion, circular economy practices for economic sustainability, and energy-efficient measures to support environmental sustainability (Rosa et al., 2022). Nevertheless, all three have broad-ranging effects on society, the economy, and the environment, highlighting the need for an integrated and balanced approach to sustainability.

As the fourth pillar, culture is crucial in fostering communities, serving as a vital force of cohesion. Conservation and Restoration are powerful tools for preserving tangible and intangible practices, ensuring the endurance of history and memory. Preventive Conservation, being the least invasive approach available (Benedetti et al., 2012), comprises documentation and analysis, playing an imperative role as essential tools for characterising and safeguarding the asset, as stated in most charters and principles. Also, raising awareness about the impact current rehabilitation projects take on climate change and the potential losses they entail is crucial, namely the loss of authenticity, the value of technical and historical construction solutions, and historical or distinctive decorative programs.

When considering built heritage, the circular economy concept refers to repurposing materials after treatment and processing from one place to another in need. This practice has not been widely embraced, given the multitude of projects that involve the demolition of entire buildings while only preserving their façades. Consequently, this approach produces substantial demolition waste, disregarding the historical, economic and environmental values it embodies (European Union, 2020). This pillar will focus on resource management and contribute to sustainability in various domains, including decision-making processes, practical applications, business practices and community-driven initiatives. Also, assessing the cost-effectiveness and potential of the rehabilitation models in the city and evaluating the long-term implications that the rehabilitation processes may have on various aspects. This evaluation encompasses analysing the financial aspects, weighing advantages and disadvantages, and forecasting the future consequences of the altering approaches. By conducting such an evaluation, decision-makers can gain insights into the economic viability and broader impacts of the rehabilitation model, enabling them to make informed choices for the city's sustainable development.

Finally, the ecological pillar must concentrate on construction and rehabilitation projects that prioritise the reduction of resource consumption for environmental sustainability and cost-effectiveness for consumers. These efforts align with European legislation on energy performance (Directive 2010/31/EU on the Energy Performance of Buildings, 2010) and its corresponding Portuguese transposition, Decree-Law n. 118/2013 (2013). Additionally, the ecological pillar will collect, and study information related to materials (original and further), including their environmental footprint through life cycle assessments, on-site behaviour, and exploring new forms or products. This research and development branch will collaborate with key regional stakeholders, including public and private sectors, primarily focusing on academic engagement. It aims to foster ongoing innovation and improvement in sustainable practices.

The successful implementation of such practices in rehabilitation is of utmost importance, hence the need for establishing a dedicated Heritage Observatory. This proposed entity aims to play a pivotal role in preserving and promoting Porto's unique cultural heritage. It may act as a critical interface between the above-mentioned Regional Observatory of Sustainable Tourism and the city landscape. It needs to play as a dynamic platform designed explicitly for the sustainable preservation and management of cultural heritage, operating on the sustainability pillars, as advocated in the report "The Future of our Pasts: Engaging cultural heritage in climate action" (ICOMOS Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Working Group, 2019). Moreover, it should prioritise addressing the unique characteristics and requirements of the city and its residents while maintaining a firm commitment to these pillars.

5 Food and commerce in the city of Porto

In this section, the research focused on reviewing existing literature related to the food policies and initiatives in Porto, with a specific emphasis on activities promoting healthy and sustainable diets. The literature review aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical context, key challenges, and successful initiatives undertaken by Porto in the realm of food sustainability.

The frequently used term “gastronomic tourism” is described as “looking for a one-of-a-kind eating and drinking experience” (Cunha, 2018). Gastronomic tourism, in general, refers to the uniqueness of a meal and its authentic connection to a location, region, or country (Gheorghe & Nistoreanu, 2014). Cooking and manipulating food is nothing more than an art form that has taken on diverse forms in different cultures, giving food a personality that extends beyond its provision of energy to the body (Possamai & Peccini, 2011).

Porto is a city known for its history, culture, and traditions, including its gastronomy. Food is a fundamental part of Porto’s identity, reflecting the diversity of cultural influences that have shaped the city over the centuries (Ramires et al., 2018). However, in recent years, there has been growing concern that the city’s gastronomic culture may start to be lost or diluted in favour of international gastronomic trends.

The influx of tourism and the resulting demand for diverse dining experiences have led to the opening of new restaurants and commercial establishments, with a growth in the number of more fashionable and “neo-traditional” shops, targeted mainly for tourists rather than to residents (Fernandes et al., 2018). While this caters to the needs of tourists, it also raises concerns about the potential loss of the authentic character of Porto’s cuisine. As previously discussed in the tourism and built heritage sections, tourism can have significant impacts on the local population and the city’s heritage.

Considering these concerns, it becomes crucial to devise strategies that balance the needs and expectations of tourists with the preservation of the authenticity of local gastronomy. As part of this broader effort, the Porto City Council has recognised the importance of promoting healthy and sustainable diets among the city’s residents. By fostering initiatives to enhance food literacy and encourage a shift towards healthier and more sustainable food choices, the council aims to address potential challenges to the eating habits of Porto’s inhabitants.

In the following sections, we will delve into the measures implemented by the Porto City Council to improve the residents’ food habits and the results obtained from surveys conducted with Porto residents and local vendors at markets. By exploring these initiatives and the perspectives of both consumers and vendors, we aim to shed light on the city’s ongoing efforts to create a resilient and sustainable food system while preserving the authenticity of its gastronomic culture.

5.1 Methodology

The sources consulted included academic journals, reports from the Porto City Council, and publications from relevant organizations. The review covered a range of topics, including urban agriculture and innovative projects contributing to a resilient and sustainable food system in Porto.

The research design incorporated a dual approach, comprising vendor surveys conducted in Porto’s local markets and an online questionnaire targeting residents of Porto. This dual approach aimed to gather insights from both suppliers and consumers, offering a holistic view of Porto’s local food system. For the vendor surveys, a structured questionnaire was developed to assess vendor perceptions of traditional, ancient, and forgotten varieties of crops, sourcing practices, and the impact of tourism on local food trends. The surveys were conducted in four different markets within the city from June to September 2022.

The online questionnaire aimed to capture the preferences and behaviours of Porto residents regarding their food procurement habits. Responses were collected from August to October 2022, with a focus on residents of Porto. Questions were formulated to gather data on shopping preferences, motivations for choosing traditional/local varieties, and interest in exploring local gastronomy while traveling.

Quantitative data and descriptive statistics from both vendor surveys and consumer questionnaires were analysed using SPSS version 26.

5.2 Food policies and initiatives in Porto’s city to promote healthy and sustainable diets

In line with Porto’s commitment to fostering a sustainable and resilient food system, the city has implemented various policies and initiatives to support local food projects. These projects aim to address issues such as food security, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Porto’s municipal government actively promotes urban agriculture, encouraging residents to grow their own food in community gardens and rooftop spaces. By supporting these initiatives, Porto not only enhances its residents’ access to fresh and nutritious produce but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with food transportation. Furthermore, the city collaborates with local organisations and stakeholders to develop educational programs on sustainable food practices, raising awareness about the importance of conscious consumption and waste reduction. Through these efforts, Porto is nurturing a vibrant food culture while ensuring the long-term resilience of its food system.

The Porto City Council has been at the forefront of innovative initiatives in the field of food policies. Since 2017, the Municipality has been implementing a Roadmap for Circular Economy 2030, aiming to transform Porto into a circular city by 2030. Collaborating with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the city has been involved in various circularity initiatives, with a particular focus on the food system. To promote self-consumption of food, Porto has made available

four hectares of urban gardens, encouraging residents to grow their own produce. Furthermore, local consumption is fostered through farmers' markets and producer markets, which provide access to fresh and high-quality food.

Another key aspect is the city council's commitment to reducing food waste. Porto has introduced projects such as "Embrulha," "Dose Certa," and "FoodLoops." The FoodLoops project enables the mapping of food flows, from production to consumption, identifying points of waste. Additionally, the city organises competitions to recognise and mentor young entrepreneurs who bring disruptive projects applying circular principles to the food system. Regarding waste management, the Porto City Council has successfully implemented a door-to-door collection of organic waste from large producers and some households. Plans are underway to expand this service, allowing more Porto residents to easily separate their organic waste.

These initiatives demonstrate Porto's dedication to creating a more sustainable, healthy, and resilient food system. Through strategic partnerships, support for local consumption, food waste reduction, and efficient waste management, Porto is driving positive transformation in its food chain and moving towards a more sustainable future.

Here are the measures/initiatives implemented in Porto City related to food:

5.2.1 "Good Food HUBs"

This project aims to make the city's food system more sustainable, healthy, fair, and local. It promotes the interaction between consumers, producers, and distributors through temporary spaces called HUBs. The project is promoted by the Municipality of Porto and involves seven institutions, including the University of Porto and various faculties. The Good Food HUBs project includes the development of an application to facilitate order management and communication between consumers and producers/distributors. The Municipality of Porto has been working on various initiatives related to the food system, such as promoting local consumption in fairs and markets, reducing food waste, and supporting circular economy principles in the food system (Câmara, M. *et al.*, 2022).

The "Good Food HUBs" project seeks to bring consumers closer to producers and distributors who have organic certification. Under this program, the distribution and sale of organic products will take place near institutions in the Asprela area, where approximately 60,000 people circulate daily, and more than 30,000 residents live. The project aims to facilitate access to fresh, high-quality, healthy, local, and reasonably priced food while promoting sustainable agricultural practices to protect soils, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to decarbonising society. The ultimate goal is to transform Asprela into a healthy, sustainable, local, and waste-free food system.

One of its objectives is to establish a living laboratory for decarbonisation in that part of the city. Additionally, the project will foster a constant dynamic of events in partnership, including workshops, lectures, conferences, and other activities. It also aims to introduce sustainability criteria in university cafeterias within the area and support research projects associated with the food system.

The "Good Food HUBs" project in Porto represents a significant step toward creating a more sustainable and localised food system, leveraging the unique opportunities provided by the Asprela area and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders to drive positive change.

5.2.2 "Dias da Saúde no Bolhão"

The Mercado do Bolhão, a famous fresh food market in Porto, launched this initiative to promote healthy habits and literacy among the community. The initiative includes partnerships with the Faculty of Nutrition and Food Sciences of the University of Porto (FCNAUP), and the municipal company Go Porto. The goal is to promote nutritional and health literacy based on scientific evidence and generate value for the community. The initiative involves projects like "NABO - Nutrição e Alimentação é no Bolhão" and "De Manhã Começa o Dia"³, which focus on promoting nutritional and food education and aim to enhance the knowledge and skills related to healthy eating practices (Bruna Silva, 2023). The initiatives include different activities and workshops targeting various groups, such as the public, in general, young people from youth associations, and market traders (Neves, 2023)

5.2.3 MAAP - Mapeamento do Ambiente Alimentar do Porto⁴

This project aims to map the food environment in economically vulnerable areas of the city. The goal is to identify areas with limited access to healthy food and develop policies to improve access to nutritious food and reduce inequalities. The project focuses on collecting data in economically fragile zones and mapping different areas of the city to identify gaps and implement measures that promote better access to healthy food (Câmara, M. *et al.*, 2018) (Machado, 2018)

5.3 Results - Questionnaires

³ "NABO - Nutrition and Food is in Bolhão" and "In the Morning the Day Begins."

⁴ MAAP - Mapping Porto's Food Environment.

To gather comprehensive insights into Porto's local food system, two distinct questionnaires were conducted to two different target groups: 1) consumers and 2) vendors in local markets within the district of Porto.

5.3.1 Local markets: questionnaire results

The questionnaire aimed to assess the vendors' perception of traditional, ancient, and forgotten varieties of different crops in the food chain and communities, as well as the impact of tourism on these trends.

The study involved surveying a total of 20 vendors from 4 different markets located in the city of Porto: *Mercado do Bolhão*, *Mercado Municipal de Anjeiras*, *Mercado Municipal de Matosinhos* and *Mercado de Levante do Covelo*. Out of these vendors, 16 were women, and 4 were men. Their ages ranged from 31 to 80 years, with an average age of 59 years.

The results obtained from the questionnaire provided valuable insights into the vendors' practices and perceptions regarding traditional varieties and their sourcing. Among the surveyed vendors, it was found that they primarily relied on four main suppliers: *Mercado Abastecedor* do Porto SA, their own cultivation, local/Portuguese suppliers (from Póvoa de Varzim, Barcelos, and/or Baião), and direct external suppliers (mainly from Spain). Notably, 15% of the vendors stated that they exclusively sourced products of Portuguese origin (either from their own cultivation or local suppliers). Only two vendors relied solely on their own cultivation.

Furthermore, 80% of the vendors (n=16) reported utilising the *Mercado Abastecedor* to access imported foods when they are not available locally. All vendors acknowledged the challenge of maintaining a 100% Portuguese product supply throughout the year due to the seasonality of certain foods. The primary reason cited for this limitation was the seasonal availability of products, with 40% of the vendors emphasising the demand for year-round access to a variety of produce. As one vendor put it, "People want everything year-round, I can't depend solely on Portuguese production."

Other reasons highlighted for the inability to achieve a 100% Portuguese supply included price, with farmers in Portugal increasingly demanding higher prices for their products, and accessibility, as the *Mercado Abastecedor* offers a wide range of products, minimising the need to seek out other local suppliers.

When asked about the main reasons that would motivate them to sell traditional varieties, 75% of the vendors (n=14) emphasised the superior quality and flavour of Portuguese products. Additional reasons included meeting the demands of both tourists and an increasing number of Portuguese consumers, having greater trust in the treatment and cultivation practices of Portuguese farmers (with fewer fertilisers), and supporting the local economy and Portuguese farmers.

Concerning the presence of tourists at their stalls, vendors specialising in olive oil, olives, and dried fruits reported the highest demand from tourists, particularly during the summer season. However, vendors selling vegetables and fruits at *Mercado do Bolhão* noted that although tourists frequently visited their stalls mainly during the summer, they often did not make purchases. These vendors mentioned that tourists typically arrived with guides but did not buy anything. In contrast, vendors in markets located away from the city centre reported lower tourist demand and did not alter their offerings accordingly.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, vendors at *Mercado do Bolhão* experienced a considerable decrease in sales and temporarily closed most of their stalls for a few months. In contrast, vendors at *Mercado de Matosinhos* experienced a significant increase in sales. They were able to adapt better by offering home delivery services, and people had more trust in local markets compared to crowded supermarkets, which operated on reduced hours.

5.3.2 Consumers: online questionnaire results

Based on the responses obtained from the consumer questionnaires, a total of 1032 responses were collected, with 270 respondents being residents of Porto. Among the Porto residents, 196 were female (72.6%) and 74 were male (27.4%).

Regarding their shopping preferences, 79 participants (29.2%) exclusively relied on supermarkets to purchase their groceries, while 28 participants (10.4%) exclusively frequented local markets and/or grocery stores offering organic and/or locally sourced products. A majority of 163 participants (60.4%) mentioned utilising both supermarkets and local markets, organic stores, farmers' markets, or their own gardens for their food procurement.

In reference to the choice of local markets for shopping, among participants aged 18 to 25, only 7 individuals (18.4%) reported frequenting traditional/local markets. Among those aged 26 to 35, 16 participants (27.6%) mentioned visiting local markets. In the age group of 36 to 49, 14 participants (19.4%) reported shopping at local markets, while 24 participants (24.5%) aged 50 or above mentioned frequenting these traditional/local markets. None of the 4 participants under the age of 18 reported visiting such markets.

When asked about the factors that would lead them to choose a traditional/local variety, the option "better nutritional quality, such as protein, fiber, and/or vitamins and minerals (e.g., iron, potassium, vitamin K, etc.)" received the

highest number of votes among Porto's residents, with 206 votes. The second most popular reason, with 163 votes, was "more sustainable agriculture (lower carbon footprint)," followed by the option "reduced use of fertilisers," which garnered 133 votes.

In relation to tourism, participants were asked if they were interested in seeking out traditional/local food in the places they visited, such as local markets. Only 35 participants (13%) stated that they were not usually interested in exploring local markets or trying dishes from the gastronomic culture of the places they visited outside their own city.

These findings highlight the preferences of Porto's residents regarding their shopping habits, their motivations for choosing traditional/local varieties, and their interest in exploring local gastronomy while traveling. Most respondents showed a preference for a combination of supermarket shopping and visits to local markets or organic stores. Nutritional quality, sustainability, and reduced use of fertilisers emerged as important factors influencing their choices. Additionally, a significant portion of respondents expressed an interest in exploring the culinary culture of the places they visit, indicating a potential market for traditional/local food experiences among tourists in Porto.

6 Conclusion

Although tourism's contribution to the overall economy of the city is undeniable, we ask ourselves if the inhabitants of Porto benefit from it. Previous findings show that the inhabitants of Porto gladly receive tourists; it is the economic and daily consequences of tourism that seem to worry them the most.

Both cities and urban tourism will experience exponential growth in the next decades, and therefore it is more important than ever to link tourism and city planning. Cities as destinations carry specific challenges, as residents and guests interact heavily and share the same spaces and infrastructure. Poor management of cities carries the risk of an impoverished city that no longer serves its original function, that of sustaining urban life, and does not provide the conditions of fulfilling residents' physical and emotional needs. Therefore, proper tools for monitoring the impacts of tourism on the city and on the overall quality of life of residents should be prioritised to adequately evaluate the current state of the city and better inform decision-making.

In a round table carried on in March of 2023 within this project that gathered different stakeholders of the city like Tourism and Public Health and Food departments of the Municipality, owners of local iconic restaurants, as well food trade innovators, researchers (sociologists and tourism experts) and ICOMOS Portugal and APPRUP association as well architects and historians of the city fabric it was possible to conclude that policy makers with responsibilities on outlining guidelines based on the contributes of the distinct sectors failed. All participants agreed that Tourism was the driver of the economic development of the city and the impact it had in the rehabilitation of depressed urban areas. Nevertheless, some conflicts were pointed out according to professional perspectives of speakers. While heritage professionals accused policymakers of favouring strategies of uncontrolled actions on the rehabilitation of built heritage as the main threat to the cultural identity of Porto, sociologists and tourism experts signalled the contradiction between the need of economic sustainability and the need to accept the inherent deep changes and transformation of urban heritage and citizen daily life (*Do Porto e do Mundo. Sabores, Vivências e Experiências*. March 2023).

In the context of Porto's cultural landscape, food holds a significant place, embodying both tradition and innovation. The culinary scene of Porto showcases a rich gastronomic heritage that has evolved over centuries, offering diverse flavours and experiences. However, the rapid growth of tourism has brought challenges to the local food ecosystem. The increasing demand for authentic culinary experiences has pressured local food producers and threatened the sustainability of traditional practices. To preserve and promote Porto's culinary heritage, strategies are needed to balance economic opportunities with the protection of local food traditions and support for producers. Collaborative initiatives involving stakeholders from the food industry, policymakers, and cultural organisations can foster sustainable practices, encourage responsible tourism consumption, and create a resilient and inclusive food ecosystem benefiting residents and visitors alike.

To address these challenges, the establishment of the Heritage Observatory is proposed as a proactive platform that promotes sustainable practices and innovation in heritage preservation. The Observatory emphasises preventive conservation in the built environment, awareness of climate change impacts, and circular economy practices in the construction sector and throughout the community, from citizens to businesses or even within the tourist sector for resource management. By focusing on data gathering and generating, the Heritage Observatory flaunts an opportunity for integrated results again from all spectres of the active society in the city. These collaborative efforts among stakeholders, including local communities, experts, and policymakers, are fostered to develop effective strategies for preserving and promoting all cultural aspects.

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