

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

NEW TYPOLOGIES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN THE WORLD HERITAGE CITIES OF CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Factors such as the cataloguing of Toledo and Cuenca as World Heritage Cities, the appearance of digital platforms specialised in short-term rentals through the Internet, the implementation of the Tourism Law of Castilla-La Mancha, and the approval of Decree 6/2018, May 29, that establishes the regulation of tourist flats and dwellings for tourist use in the region, have dynamized the historic centres of these cities where new types of accommodation have emerged and consolidated, or even some of the existing ones have been legalized.

2. OBJECTIVES

The basis hypothesis has already been tested in the latest publication of the authors (Aparicio et al., 2021): the location of new types of tourist accommodation in places with important natural and cultural resources especially in the World Heritage cities of Castilla-La Mancha.

The main objective of this article is to study in detail the appearance, evolution and generalization of tourist flats and dwellings for tourist use in the last 25 years in the region, and more specifically in two World Heritage cities (Toledo and Cuenca). In addition, this work aims to go a step further because it provides a critical vision on the implementation and growth of holiday rentals and analyses the possible impact on the touristification of these urban spaces, and the possible changes in the design of local regulations that standardise of these uses, or specific modifications of their urban planning.

These approaches are related to others hypotheses. In this sense, it should be noted that the dynamics and processes have changed in recent years as a result of the improvement

of communications, the implementation of new urban policies, the development of special planning; the existence of an excellent natural and cultural heritage, and the expansion and diversification of the traditional hotel and non-hotel tourist supply, as well as the appearance of new accommodation formats located mainly in places with important tourist attractions as a result of online sales.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used is historiographic. This has required the review and consultation of bibliography on the subject ranging the region and others autonomous communities. Likewise, it has been accompanied by the collection, treatment, analysis, contrast and interpretation of the data obtained from the different sources (statistics and documentaries). Based on this, a quantitative diagnosis carried out complemented by a qualitative analysis with information from comments from the local online press. The use of the QGIS software has allowed the elaboration and preparation of the result cartography considering that the scope of study has been the perimeters protected by UNESCO in both cities. The resulting information has been verified with the results the real-life data observed during the fieldwork and the record of the experiences lived enriching the main arguments with the analysis by the authors and with the information and diverse opinions such as that of the tourism technician from the Tourism Office of the Delegation in Cuenca or the collection in the newspaper sources or the informal conversations with inhabitants of the areas affected.

4. RESULTS

The actions launched within the framework of the regional program A Plena Luz and the cataloguing by UNESCO of Toledo and Cuenca have induced some important actions. These include: the recovery of the physical or monumental heritage of empty or underused containers; the change of use with the installation of accommodation establishments; and the appearance, consolidation and proliferation of apartments and homes for tourist use. The inclusion of both cities in the World Heritage list has offered an opportunity to connect culture and tourism having a positive impact on the dynamics and processes that have taken place since then and until now.

The results obtained in the study confirm the basis hypothesis because they confirm that the supply of tourist flats and dwellings for tourist in the cities analyzed, mainly in their historic centres, has grown exponentially in parallel to the improvement of communications between the provincial capitals of the region in the last decade and especially between them and the rest of Spain.

In the case of Toledo, a slight reference to this type of establishment is included in the specific modification n.º 29 to the General Municipal Plan of Urban Planning of June 2018. The draft of the new municipal ordinance to regulate this activity was known just before the state of alarm was established in Spain. It is a tool developed between the Department of Tourism and The Department of Urbanism. The aim is to make the presence of

tourists compatible with the residents of the town centre and to avoid conflicts of unfair competition with hotel establishments in the area.

On the contrary, in the case of Cuenca, local regulations have yet been drawn up to regulate the presence and development of this type of accommodation. Neither the General Urban Development Plan (1995) nor the Special Plan for the Old Town (2002) include any reference to tourist accommodation. Perhaps it could be time to examine and update the planning including this type of issue.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of internet hosting marketing platforms and the adaptation of digital consumption habits have made consumers prefer from acquiring packages established by a standard tour operator. They plan their holidays through these tools that, normally, allow to find the most favourable sale for the consumer. All this shows a considerable increase in rent in residential housing.

At present, and as a result of the various regulation approved (Law 8/1999, of 26 May, on the Regulation of Tourism in Castilla-La Mancha, and especially Decree 6/2018, of 29 May) there has been a double effect from the years 2018 and 2019 particularly in the provinces of Toledo and Cuenca with special attention in their provincial capitals. First in its historic centers, there has been a massive record of existing accommodations before its regulation. Second, a lot of establishments have emerged later and as a result of the condition of the declaration of these two cities as World Heritage Sites. Most of the apartments classified as tourist have become homes for tourist use in the case of Toledo, specifically in its historic centre, while in the case of Cuenca, tourist apartments have shared prominence with the dwelling houses balancing the offer between both.

In general, the pattern of localization of the new modalities has been dominated by a centrifugal sense. Although they have emerged in the historic centre related to the existence of a powerful cultural historical centre, they have emerged in areas of the new city and the outskirts. On the contrary, the traditional typologies of accommodation that were frequently installed in the expansion area of the city during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They have been located in the urban space of the historic centre experiencing a centripetal sense. However, it should not be understood as an exclusive model. It is an example of coexistence between the two trends of historic cities with concomitant urban aspect (narrow streets, difficulty in finding buildings of a suitable size for hotels, etc.). Cartography shows that these types of accommodation have proliferated everywhere although the cultural epicentres suffer the greatest pressure.

It is confirmed that the development of tourism in the cities analyzed has contributed to their recovery and functional revitalization although in the face of excessive and uncontrolled pressure. It is urgent to take measures by the competent administrations to manage it since these cities have acquired the commitment to preserve a heritage with recognized exceptional universal value (Troitiño, 2018).

However, problems do not affect all cities in the same way. The proliferation of holiday rentals shows some spatial correlation with areas with a highest proportion of vacant hous-

ing, and with the greater presence and proximity to tourist attraction points. In the case of the city of Cuenca, these types of accommodation are accepted because they contribute to a decrease in the number of empty dwellings and it is seen as an opportunity to create jobs associated with hospitality, leisure and tourism. In the city of Toledo, regularization and inspection are chosen to offer the relevant guarantees due to the greater proliferation which translates into the necessary elaboration of a local regulation in this regard pending approval similar to other cities to adopt a radical plan against tourist flats and the closure of many of them.

In short, a new management of the relationship between tourism, heritage and urban policies is necessary to limit on an excessive tourist growth depending on the reception capacity of the destinations and their spatial characteristics.