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# Virtually Anywhere, Physically In Lisbon

A study of gentrification and the new work-lifestyle among digital nomads in Lisbon

**Nora Sofie Braathen**

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University of Oslo
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Department of Social Anthropology
Faculty of Social Sciences

# Abstract

In recent years, Lisbon has become one of the most popular destinations for digital nomads. The large number of foreigners have contributed to the regeneration of the abandoned historical city center. At the same time the foreigners are driving the prices of apartments and living costs up to a level where many local Portuguese can no longer afford to live in the city. The process of gentrification is not unique to Lisbon. What makes the case in Lisbon different is the wide gap between the lifestyle of the two groups. The government is implementing policies meant to benefit the locals. At the same time they are implementing policies to attract foreigners and foreign investment to the country. A specifically problematic policy is the new 'digital nomad visa', which requires the applicant to earn at least four times the minimum monthly salary in Portugal. This reinforces the gap between the locals and the foreigners even further. Throughout the dissertation, these issues are being discussed and problematized. The new work lifestyle of many foreigners have granted them the opportunity to spend longer or shorter amounts of time abroad. At the same time as remote work is providing benefits, such as flexibility, it has also led to the consequence of blurred lines between work and leisure time. Through conducting fieldwork with both foreigners and locals in Lisbon, this dissertation answers the following question; How are the different lifestyles of foreigners and local Portuguese people in Lisbon creating and reinforcing boundaries between the two groups?

# Acknowledgements

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Obrigada!

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# Explanation of concepts

(from Portuguese to English)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Obrigad@** | Thank You |
| **Bom dia** | Good morning |
| **Alfacinha** | A person originally from Lisbon (directly translated: little lettuce) |
| **Pastelaria** | Local bakery/café |
| **Tasca** | Local restaurant |
| **Quiosque** | Kiosk |
| **Bacalhau** | Dried codfish (typically from Norway) |
| **Pastel de nata** | Traditional egg yolk based pastry |
| **Galão** | Coffee with milk |
| **Bairro** | Neighborhood |
| **Freguesia** | Parish |
| **Miradouro** | Viewpoint |
| **T0 - T1 - T2 - T3 - T4** | Explanation of how many bedrooms are in an apartment |

# Introduction

As I leave my apartment I hear the rattling sound of the old Portuguese tram climbing one of the many steep hills of the city. Passing through a busy street I'm met with the smell of the traditional pastry 'pastel de nata' and of the pasteis de bacalhau (codfish pastries). The sun is shining and the streets are filled with tourists taking pictures of the many tiled buildings. Some of the tourists are patiently waiting for a tram to pass so they can get a stereotypical «Lisbon picture». I catch a glimpse of the big red bridge and the Christ statue in the distance, overlooking the river Tejo. The tourist stores are filled with any product you could think of made of cork, and a lot of sardines and tiles. The local pastelarias and tascas are accompanied by a variety of hipster cafés with açai bowls and matcha lattes.

Welcome to Lisbon, I think to myself as I take it all in. This will be my home for the next four months. I feel the excitement take over as I explore as much of the city as possible with my new friends from the hostel. They are all travelers with a limited time in Lisbon. I think their enthusiasm is perfect because they are as eager as me to explore as much as possible in their short timeframes. But I soon come to learn that this also has its price. Just as soon as I get to know them and start considering them my friends, they're gone. Off to their next destination. This becomes a pattern I run into often during my time in Lisbon. A lot of people stay temporarily in this city.

I started my master's program during a global pandemic. Meaning I didn't have one single lecture on campus. The welcome meeting was held on zoom, as well as all lectures and seminars. I met my classmates and professors through a screen. But we weren't the only ones having to move our whole life online. During the pandemic the expression 'home office' became a known phenomena to many. As the weeks and months went by, the comfort of being able to work from home in sweatpants was exchanged with the frustrations of not being able to leave the house and not being able to meet colleagues physically. The distinction between work and leisure has been blurred as the definition of work has changed from the condition of being on time to the condition of being online (Sørhaug 2016).

Through the last two years many have come to learn the pros and cons of working from a home office. At the same time as working remotely comes with a cost, it has never been easier to bring your office with you elsewhere. This has provided a whole new flexibility.

People who were bound to the office in a certain location, now have the possibility to relocate themselves to almost anywhere with a functioning internet connection. They are what we can call place-independent. But does that give them total freedom? Or are there still factors holding them back? In this thesis I will look at the expat community in Lisbon and how they use the city of Lisbon. I seek to see them in comparison with the locals, and how they are a resource and a challenge to the city and its people. I will do so with the still ongoing pandemic and the gentrification as context. I will use Bourdieu's (1986, 1991) different forms of capital, together with theory related to place and space (Appadurai 1996, Anderson 2010) to get a better understanding of how the group use the city and make sense of their lives and roles in Lisbon.

I use Sørhaug's (2016) theory on the change in the way we work and value our work, to look at how the new lifestyle of being a digital nomad unfolds in the city of Lisbon. Most of the people I have met during my fieldwork are in a special time of their lives where they have little responsibility for anyone other than themselves. They don't have family commitments or limits set by work or others. This makes them free to change up their lives, move around and travel as they please. Many of them can leave as easily as they came here. Although they are place-independent, they are often, to a certain degree, bound to time. Like one interlocutor that had a meeting at 7am to answer to the American working hours. Or one of the men in my dance class who had to check the stock market during our break to keep up with his work. And as I will show through this thesis, digital nomads can still be affected by the events of the world, limiting them in different ways.

When I ask people how they ended up in Lisbon, I usually get some version of *"I was only supposed to stay for a week/month, but I just loved it and so I decided to stay a little longer. Now it's been 3 years"*. Just like my interlocutors and other people I have met during my stay here, I fell in love with Lisbon and decided to stay here also during my writing process and beyond. As I postponed my fieldwork, I decided to also postpone my deadline one semester. I was offered the chance to work as a student intern at the Norwegian Embassy in Lisbon, and therefore ended up staying in Lisbon through the whole writing process as well.

# Chapter 1: Method and reflexivity

## Method

### Planning for the fieldwork

In mid-August 2021 I was finally packing my bags and heading to the airport. Due to the pandemic my fieldwork had been moved from April to August, and I was eager to finally begin my journey. I decided to wait until I had both vaccine doses and until the infection pressure had calmed down in Portugal. I was planning to follow people around in their everyday life, therefore I was dependent upon the restrictions allowing me to spend time with people from outside of my family both outdoors and indoors. I had read some articles and seen some short documentaries about Lisbon before going, but I also wanted to be surprised and see the place with fresh eyes once I got down here. In addition, I had spent four months in Brazil before the pandemic hit, so I had learned quite a bit of Portuguese. I thought knowing the language would make a huge difference in my access to the field, but this has not been a decisive factor.

Before leaving I entered various Facebook groups for foreigners living in Lisbon. I asked one of the group administrators if I could make a publication about my fieldwork and ask for participants. From the post I had around 20 people respond that they would help me out. As the only person I knew in Portugal before going there was Marie, a friend of mine from my master's program, it excited me that I already connected with so many potential interlocutors. One foreign man in particular was very responsive and gave me a lot of tips before arriving and I initially thought he would become one of my main interlocutors. This has, however, not turned out to be the case.

As I exited the plane, a heatwave hit me. The sun was shining and the airport was packed with tourists wearing facemasks. After dragging my suitcase up and down between the floors a couple of times I finally figured out where the meeting spots for the Ubers were. A nice Portuguese man came and picked me up and drove me to the hostel I had booked for the first four days of my stay. It had been a while since I had practiced my Portuguese, but I tried my best to keep the conversation going with the Uber driver. We talked about the stereotypes of Norway as a cold and expensive country and how excited I was about getting to spend at least

four months in Lisbon. After about half an hour we arrived and he wished me the best of luck with my fieldwork.

I got to the hostel and stuck to Portuguese even if the receptionist greeted me in English as I entered the reception. I told him I had spent four months in Brazil, and as he himself was Brazilian we instantly had a connection. He showed me to my room, a six-bed female dorm. I began my stay in a hostel with the intent to explore and understand the city before deciding which area I wanted to live in. I had already done some research, but I figured it would be a lot easier choosing an area once I was there. A guy from the Facebook group asked me to meet up with him, and as I hadn't had the chance to meet anyone yet, I agreed to it. Late in the afternoon we met up close to my hostel and went to a park to sit down and have a chat. The park was full of Portuguese teenagers in big groups listening to different genres of music, drinking and dancing, and I immediately went into the role of an observing anthropologist.

## Participant observation

My main fieldwork method has been participant observation. Bernard (2017) describes it as going out and staying out, learning a new language, or a new dialect of the same language, which has been the case for me. One should experience the life of the informants as much as possible, he continues. To succeed at participant observation, one must learn to act so that people go about their business as usual also while you're there. A sign of a good participant observer is that you know when to laugh at something people think is funny, and even further that people laugh at what you said because you meant it as a joke ( Bernard, 2017, p. 274).

My method of doing fieldwork has been semi-structured. I had some idea of what I wanted to do and how I wanted to participate. At the same time I wanted to follow my interlocutors through their everyday life, which included hanging out with them while they worked, but also joining them at their activities outside of work to get a complete picture of their lives in Lisbon. Furthermore, I conducted more formal interviews with my main interlocutors, as well as with numerous others that have not ended up becoming a bigger part of my fieldwork for various reasons. I will elaborate on these reasons when discussing challenges in the field. I have mostly used ethnographic examples I was also a part of, with the intention of interpreting the situation accurately.

In some of my interviews I used audio recording in order to get all the information documented. When this was used I first got the interlocutor's explicit permission to record them. In a vibrant city like Lisbon this was however not always easy. The quality of the recordings was affected by the following background sounds: construction work at seven pm, traffic from the bridge closeby, music in the bar, and people talking in the background. I always took notes at the same time as I interviewed. I have also taken notes on my phone whenever I was in a situation or a conversation which carried significance and I thought would be important to remember for later. I took notes both in notebooks and on my computer. I used conversations online and from open Facebook groups for foreigners and locals in Lisbon as part of my research material.

Especially in the beginning I asked my interlocutors to choose the location for our interview. This was with 'the place-based walking interview' in mind. According to Holton and Riley (2014) the physical space of where the conversation takes place is crucial for the information the interlocutors will share. Through asking them to pick a place, I hoped for them to choose a place where they felt comfortable and in this way also comfortable to open up to me. This has proved to be correct. I can not say for sure if the location was part of the reason for that or not. But in addition to showing trust by letting them choose a spot, I also got to know a lot of spots that I might not have gotten to know in the same way without them. Some of them chose places they wanted to show me and others showed me places in their neighborhoods.

### Fieldwork stories as methodological analysis

I have chosen to present a variety of my interlocutors and their stories through this thesis, to let the story unfold through them, as much as possible. I believe that this is more than anything their story, and I am honored to be able to write it out, categorize, analyze and make sense of all their remarks, as well as their 'boring days' which they did not understand why I wanted to take part in. It is their lives and stories that creates the meaning of this thesis. And this is also why I have decided to refer to the people in my study as my 'interlocutors' instead of my 'informants'. My ethnographic method is dialogic, which means that we co-produce knowledge together with the people we work with. And referring to them as interlocutors therefore gives them more acknowledgement as co-producers (Vorhölter, 2021, p. 19).

# Methodological challenges and ethical considerations

**Access to the field**

*The Portuguese part of society*

As I will show through this thesis, the Portuguese and the foreigners use the city in different ways. It has been easy for me to get in contact with foreigners, but harder to get to know the locals. The locals don't tend to hang out as much in the events posted in apps and social media, therefore I have had less access to them than what I had initially planned. As I have chosen a "go-with-the-flow" approach to finding my interlocutors, I have therefore gotten better access to the foreign part of my field, and thus I have chosen to make this a bigger focus of my study. I believe that if I had a natural place to meet Portuguese people, such as through an on-site job or through university classes at campus, this could've been different. I do however believe that it is a finding in itself that it is not so simple for a foreigner coming to Portugal on his/her own to create a local network. This border between the local and the foreign has in many ways become one of the main parts of my thesis.

*"My life here is boring"*

Even though I knew I was going into a complex urban society and my research was transient, I had an idea of to some degree "go native" in the field. I would speak the local language, find a place to live with others and take part in interlocutors' lives. This did however turn out to be harder than I imagined it to be. In the beginning I found people for interviews, but not people it would be natural for me to hang out with outside of the interviews. We didn't have much in common, we didn't live close to each other, and most of them worked from home. I tried asking if I could join them through their workday and whatever they did after work. In the beginning most of my interlocutors worked from their computer. Not just because the pandemic forced them to have a home office, but because they had place-independent jobs, which had to be done from their computer. The most common online jobs in Lisbon are within the field of telecommunication and tech (such as programming). The response I got were different versions of "I just work on my computer all day, it'd be so boring for you to just sit and watch me. I don't think that's valuable for you".

Several interlocutors did, however, agree to let me follow them around, "but wait until I have more exciting things on my schedule". One blamed not having his new camera, because when he has it "we can do lots of interesting things that could also be useful for your

project". Another one blamed boring meetings. From my understanding, they wanted to impress me with their most exciting workdays, instead of the regular ones. This shows how people often don't see the value of studying the everyday life.

*"I'm going away for a month"*

I have been working mostly with expats, and they are used to moving around. I have spent most of my time in Lisbon, but many of my interlocutors have gone away for shorter or longer periods of time. One is starting a restaurant in Latvia, while another decided he wanted to spend a month in Spain. One went on vacation to Norway, while another went to Italy to figure out her relationship. One goes back and forth to Paris several times a week for business, while another goes back and forth between Lisbon and Peniche to fix his newly bought villa on the coast. This has made it more challenging to take part in their lives, and to continue building relationships with them.

*Access as a woman - Wrong intentions*

When meeting interesting people, I have been very open about my motives. I have told them that I am here in Lisbon to do fieldwork for my Master's thesis, and that I study the gentrification of Lisbon and the relations between the expats and the locals in the city. On many occasions I have asked people I have met if they would like to take part in my project. I have explained to them that it will include an interview and, if they agree to it, hang around them for a day (or more) to get a better understanding of how they live their lives here. After all the explaining, I have still ended up in situations where I have had to make it clear to male interlocutors/ potential interlocutors that I am only interested in them for my project and not for personal reasons. This has led to me losing both interlocutors and potential interlocutors. Some have texted me about having moved to a new AirBnb " with room for two ;-)" and others have taken it as far as saying that they don't know if they can meet me again as only friends, because "I don't know if I can tame the burning beast inside me". I think the issue of female researchers being put in these sorts of situations (or way worse) is an under-communicated issue within the anthropological discipline, that I wish would've been focused more on in the courses before going out into the field as a master's student.

## Language

One of my reasons for choosing Lisbon as my fieldsite was the fact that I already spoke the language. Or at least, so I thought. Once I arrived in Lisbon back in August last year, I signed up for a language course, to freshen up my Portuguese. I also wanted to see any differences between the Portuguese I had learned in Brazil and the Portuguese used in Portugal. My language teacher made it clear to me from day one that the differences between the two versions were *many*. Most of the times when I answered a question in class, I was met with "We don't say that here" or "that verb tense is not used here in Portugal". Outside of class I had no problems communicating in Portuguese, although people mostly replied in English. In the beginning I stuck with Portuguese and tried my best to demonstrate that I actually spoke Portuguese and had no problems with it. But after weeks and weeks of replies in English, I gave in. On the way to the airport at five am, I was told by the Uber driver that it would be easier for me to get into the Portuguese society if I spoke the language. He got speechless as I switched and continued the conversation in Portuguese without any trouble. The driver told me he had not even noticed that I initiated the trip by talking to him in Portuguese, as he "automatically spoke in English when he had a foreign client". This has been a struggle through my whole time in the field, as I have been negotiating my identity as more than just an English-speaking foreigner.

## Covid-19

I started my master's degree during the covid-19 pandemic (in August 2020). It was at that point uncertain whether doing fieldwork was a realistic possibility or not. After adjusting the topic and place of the fieldwork, I did however decide, together with my supervisor, Thomas, to go on fieldwork to Lisbon, Portugal. I planned to leave in April 2021, but ended up postponing until late august 2021. In that way I was able to get two doses of the covid-19 vaccine before leaving. I saw this as important, to follow 'The Principles of Professional Responsibility' from the AAA (The American Anthropological Association, n.d.) on the importance of not causing any harm to the interlocutors. When I considered the possibility of me getting sick and passing the virus on to my interlocutors this was an easy decision for me to make. From when I first went into the field and until now when I am finishing this writing process, I have been infected by the covid-19 virus three times. I have of course followed the restrictions, and stayed home in quarantine all three times, and I quarantined on several other

occasions when interlocutors and others close to me were infected. The restrictions and several other bouts of illnesses I suffered have thankfully not caused any harm to my interlocutors or my thesis, except for loss of time in the field and time to write.

## Anonymization

I have chosen to give all the interlocutors in this dissertation pseudonyms, in order to keep them anonymous. Furthermore, I removed other identification markers such as nationality and professions or work-titles; several exceptions were made where such information was necessary for descriptive purposes. In addition I used pseudonyms for place names where interlocutors have moved to, bought a house, traveled to etc... My fieldsite is urban and not limited to one specific neighborhood or location, which will most likely be sufficient obfuscation for outsiders to be unable to recognize the interlocutors, also known as external confidentiality. But due to many of my informants having crossed paths at some point throughout my fieldwork, often together with me, the pseudonyms might not be enough for other interlocutors not to recognize themselves and each other, meaning there might be a lack of internal confidentiality (Vorhölter, 2021, p. 19).

If I were to remove or change even more characteristics, enough for insiders not to recognize themselves or other interlocutors, it would affect the quality of the ethnographic descriptions in my dissertation. Vorhölter calls the job of preventing insiders from identifying themselves or others an almost impossible one (Vorhölter, 2021, p. 19). She refers to Nelson (2015), asking 'how can we hide participants' identities when they're on Pinterest?' (Vorhölter, 2021, p. 19). I find this interesting, as most of my interlocutors are themselves active on social media and publish content of themselves and their lives in Lisbon. This could potentially lead back to the dissertation, but in that case, it is a choice the interlocutors themselves have made of sharing their lives with the internet. I have, however, inspired by Vorhölter (2021), asked one of my main interlocutors to read through the dissertation before handing it in, to make sure the citations and image I provide is a true one.

## Informed consent

For my formal interviews, I asked the interlocutors to sign a written consent paper, and made it clear that they could withdraw from the project at any time. With several of the formal interviews, I asked to record the interview, which was also part of the consent paper. On one occasion, the interlocutor asked me not to record, and I therefore stuck to only taking notes

during the interview. Sometimes, the information you get as a researcher comes from other sources than the interlocutors. Talking to Uber drivers and event organizers, it is not always easy to ask for consent to use an informal conversation for the thesis. In the case of using such information, the interlocutor is however not mentioned by name or any other revealing characteristics. I have also used information from open social media groups where people can post and comment their opinions on different topics concerning Lisbon and the Portuguese/foreign society in the city.

During various interviews and more informal conversations, the interlocutors have shared very sensitive information with me about their life. I have purposely decided to not write down this information, as it is not relevant for the arguments in my thesis. Before leaving for the field, I applied for and got the approval from NSD (Norwegian Center for Data Storage) to do my research and collect the data for my dissertation. Another reason for not documenting the sensitive information shared with me was the lack of approval from NSD to store such information. I considered on several occasions whether or not to tell the interlocutors to abstain from sharing sensitive information with me, but concluded that it might destroy the trust I had built. For instance, if I were to reject them in a vulnerable moment of sharing difficult emotions or situations they had experienced.

There are several people I have chosen to include in this thesis that started out as my friends, and not interlocutors. Even though they knew from the start that I was in Lisbon to conduct my fieldwork, I created friendships with them without the intention of them being part of the study. I have however spoken to the most prominent of them, and they have given me their consent to use our stories and events as part of my thesis.

**Limited material**

There are around 545.000 people living in the city center of Lisbon. Considering the surrounding urban area this number does however increase to almost 3 million people. I have yet to find somewhere with an overview of the total number of expats, as they might not get registered if their stay is short-term. With my limited time-frame and capacity, I have only gotten to know a very small part of the community here in Lisbon. I still hope that my selection of people can show some tendencies within the group as a whole. At the same time, it might not be applicable to all foreigners/locals living in Lisbon.

One of the dangers of only being able to study a tiny part of a society might however be that the interpretations I make throughout this thesis end up being different from the lived lives of my interlocutors, and even more likely, different from others living in the city. Like Scheper-Hughes (2000) studied in a small village in Ireland and had a rather narrow focus where she ended up not giving the village credit or recognizing the positive aspects of the community (Scheper-Hughes, 2000, p. 228). Similarly, I've only researched a small part of the communities in Lisbon, and especially from the local perspective. I still hope that I can provide a somewhat nuanced perspective of the field.

Traditionally the idea of 'going native' when doing fieldwork has been a romanticized idea within anthropology. However, according to Ulf Hannerz (2012) there might not exist *as many* natives in the field as before. He claims that as the world is becoming more globalized, the fields and informants are also changing. This leads to less 'native' people in any field (Hannerz, 2012, p. 210). In my field of an increasing number of expats, this means less access to the 'native' Lisbon. I wanted my fieldwork to show the issues of gentrification from both a Portuguese and a foreign perspective. But similarly as Amit-Talai (1997) discusses after her fieldwork from the Cayman Islands, the increase of foreigners settling down means that the foreigners might have as much, if not more knowledge and experience from the fieldsite than  even some of the locals do (Amit-Talai, 1997, p. 60).

# Positioning

**My own positioning - both insider and outsider**

There has been a heightened awareness of the subjective, interpretive element in ethnographic research since the 1970s, owing to the influence of hermeneutics and the feminist scholarship. These theories were highly influenced by Geertz and the book "*The Interpretation of Cultures*", which changed the cultural field and introduced thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973). The anthropologist can not tell the experienced stories without affecting the story itself (Kirsch, 2010, pp. 73-78).

Therefore it is important to reflect upon my own positioning in the research. Before entering the field, I had an expectation that I would become part of both the local Portuguese community , and the expat community. I could definitely be defined as a foreigner, possibly

as an expat, and even as a digital nomad, because I am a Norwegian, and because my studies and my job were both online. I assumed I would gain access to both groups without problems because I speak the local language (Portuguese) and the most common language of the expat community (English). But as I 'look foreign' and speak Portuguese with a Brazilian accent, the Portuguese people usually respond in one of two ways, with an answer in English, or a question, if I am Brazilian. Their responses make it really clear that they do not consider me a part of the local community. Therefore, it seems that if I was Portuguese, and not foreign, my access to the local field and the locals' thoughts on the wave of foreigners could've been completely different.

I have also been reflecting a lot around my own privilege. As a Norwegian citizen, I have the opportunity to stay in Portugal, without a visa. I get a scholarship from Norway, and my salary from a Norwegian company. As a freelance anthropologist for the Norwegian company, Æra, I can conduct interviews and analyze the project's material from my computer. Much like my interlocutors with online jobs. I have had the opportunity to join my foreign interlocutors in most of their activities, including activities that entail a monetary cost. Through my scholarship and salary combined, I have had the chance to live in central apartments in Lisbon, where the prices are now too high for many locals. I have had the chance to enjoy the 'best of both worlds', the Norwegian work and study world, and the lower cost of living in Portugal because my professional activities are all online. As mentioned earlier, I have however also had to deal with the consequences of being a young, single woman, doing research. Whether that has also given me access I would not have as a male and/or older researcher, I am not able to answer but I think it is highly likely.

### Researcher's positioning:  friend/researcher

Scheper-Hughes questions what is the proper relation between an anthropologist and her/his informants (Scheper-Hughes, 2000, p. 225). Building a close relationship with informants may benefit the research but, unfortunately, it can place the anthropologist in an ethical dilemma. If the informants start looking at the anthropologist as a friend primarily, and secondarily as a researcher, they might share information which they prefer to be kept confidential. This confidential information could be exactly what the research aims to unveil. But what do you do as a researcher if your interlocutors ask you not to use information? To solve this, it is important to reflect upon what is most important, the research or the

researcher's relationship with the interlocutor. A high degree of familiarity with the interlocutor might also affect the anthropologist, this is important to be aware of when conducting fieldwork.

In the case of my own research, I have spent time with interlocutors that have become my friends, and also friends who later have turned into interlocutors. I have therefore as part of my research practice often reflected upon my own positionality. As a researcher I have dual intentions. I enjoy spending time with friend-interlocutors, but I am also doing it for my research, which at times has caused me to feel as if my intentions are not 'pure'. Therefore as part of my research practice I have spent much time introspecting and deliberating on the ethical considerations of what information I should actually include that my interlocutors have provided me with.

Tillmann-Healy (2003) argues that there are a lot of similarities between fieldwork and friendship as they both involve being in the world with others. Both through friendship and during fieldwork, we learn social codes and negotiate our roles (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 735 ). Furthermore, friendship as a method is not some sort of guise or ploy strategically aimed at gaining a wider access into the participants inner universe. Instead, it is an investment into the fieldwork relationship, where the role of researcher and friend are sometimes unavoidably inextricably linked (Ellis, 2007, p. 13).

**Us / them -  creating a border**

Through this thesis I am focusing on the locals and foreigners as two different groups, and dividing them as such. This is based upon the theory used throughout this dissertation which argues that there exists invisible fences between the two groups (see Gullestad, 1989). I am using the information from my interlocutors as well as experiences from the field. A possible negative consequence of my research is that I am contributing to a discourse of a border between the local and the foreign community as a reality in the city of Lisbon. Many would argue that this is the case. As a counter-argument to this negative consequence, I want to stress that the following research focuses on a very tiny proportion of the population of the city, therefore this border and the other conclusions I draw throughout this thesis, should be interpreted as tendencies, and not as complete truths.

# Aims and research question

Before going into the field, I had thoughts around what my specific field of research would be. But I also wanted to let the field emerge as I entered into it. This was in order to not miss out on important aspects to the topic of interest (Passaro, 1997, p. 156). Anna Tsing explains that *"Ethnographic immersion requires the fieldworker to allow research objects to emerge from events and contingencies of interactive field experience. Good fieldwork is supposed to change the fieldworker's research questions"* (Matsutake Worlds Research Group, 2012, p. 410). One can plan from the beginning to do research on both sides of the power dynamic, or one can let the research take you there. In that way, the fieldsite emerges as the anthropologist creates relations to the people of a specific geographical site (Madden, 2010, p. 39). As explained through this method chapter, my field and focus has changed from both a local and foreign focus, to a deeper immersion into the foreign community of Lisbon. As an anthropologist it is important to have 'the antennas working at all times' in order to pick up on the unstated and taken-for-granted information (Howell, 2017, p. 17). By doing this, the magic of serendipity comes into play. The expression serendipity is not just used as a chance of events, but as explained in the Oxford English Dictionary the "ability to make discoveries, by accidents and *wisdom* (Howell's emphasis), of things which one was not in quest of." (Howell, 2017, p. 17). After my focus changed, so did my research question. Throughout this thesis I intend to answer the following question: **How are the different lifestyles of foreigners and local Portuguese people in Lisbon creating and reinforcing boundaries between the two groups?**

# Historical context

In order to understand Portuguese society and people, I believe it is important to look at their long and rich historical background. The geographical areas where Portugal is located today, were part of the Roman Empire until the 5th century, and then taken over by Germanic tribes, before the Moors took control from year 711. They were in control of the areas until 1147, when Christian forces conquered the territory, and later forced the Moors to leave (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). Much of what is today considered typically Portuguese; the azulejos (tiles) and food dishes such as cataplana and açorda were brought to Portugal by the Moors

(Taste of Lisboa, 2022). For centuries, the country was tightly connected to Spain, for example through the Iberian Union between 1580 and 1640, where three Spanish kings, known as the three Filipes, ruled both countries .

During the 14th, 15th and 16th, and what is known as 'The discoveries' (Os descobrimentos) Portuguese caravels crossed the sea, and navigated to 'Africa, the Far East and the heart of the South American continent' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). There they conquered lands and hoarded wealth which they brought with them back to Europe. Vasco da Gama discovered the maritime route to India in 1498, and Pedro Álvares Cabral arrived in Brazil in 1500, making it Portugal's biggest colony. The Portuguese also colonized the Azores, Madeira, Angola, Moçambique, Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Principe, Goa in India, Macao in China, Nagasaki in Japan, amongst other places (Cartwright, 2021). Fernão de Magalhães also planned and commanded the first circumnavigation of the globe, which can arguably be seen as the beginning of globalization. At the time, Portugal was the largest empire in the world. The wealth from the colonies were used to build monuments and luxurious buildings around Lisbon. In 1755, a lot of the buildings of Lisbon fell to a devastating earthquake, leaving big parts of the city in ruins. Marquês de Pombal recreated the new Lisbon, 'monumental and ready to take on the furies of nature'(Cartwright, 2021).

After the First Republic ended in 1926, the anti-democratic conservative party took power and installed "Estado Novo" (The new state). The authoritarian, one-party regime was dominated by António Oliveira Salazar for almost half a century (Civitatis Lisbon, n.d.). The people of Portugal were not content with the dictatorship, and on the 25th of April 1974, a military coup led by General Spinola installed the Third Republic in Portugal (Civitatis Lisbon, n.d.). The coup is known as the "Carnation Revolution" and established democracy and freedom in Portugal. This was a non-violent march, where the people wore red and white carnations. The independence of the African colonies were recognized shortly after (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.).  The 25th of April is an important national holiday and is commemorated across the country, with parades and the wearing of red and white carnations. The revolution has also given the name to the iconic, red bridge in Lisbon as "The 25th of April bridge". In 1986 the country joined the European Union, and they started using euros as their currency from 1999 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). Since then, Portugal has been going through a variety of economic challenges, and was heavily affected by the financial crisis of 2008-2012. This will be presented in greater detail in the upcoming chapter on gentrification.

# Chapter 2: Gentrification

In this chapter I look into the gentrification and the regeneration of Lisbon. Through Lestégas (2015) and his informants, I look at the economic background for how the city of Lisbon has reached the current state of an attractive city to foreigners, while locals are being forced out to the periphery. I connect this with thoughts and stories from my own interlocutors of the effect gentrification has on the city and the people inhabiting it. I will begin by shortly introducing gentrification and then I will provide the historical context for the gentrification of Lisbon specifically.

## Theory on gentrification

The term 'gentrification' was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964. She described it as a process where *"middle class residents move into and transform traditionally poor and working class urban neighborhoods"* (Halasz, 2018, p. 1367). This was further elaborated on by Papachristos, Smith, Scherer, and Fugiero (2011):

> Broadly defined, gentrification is a process that changes the character and composition of a neighborhood, resulting in the direct and indirect displacement of lower income households with higher income households. ... We conceptualize gentrification as a churning process that involves the in-migration of wealth and the outmigration of poverty, most often resulting in over time increases in median household incomes, property values, and presence of lifestyle amenities that appeal to the tastes—and meet the demands of—the wealthier residents (Papachristos, Smith, Scherer, & Fugiero, 2011, pp. 216-217).

In other words, the process of gentrification pushes the lower-income families out of a neighborhood, either directly or indirectly. Through increased rents and living expenses, it becomes too expensive to sustain a life in the gentrified area. This has become a global phenomenon, and cities such as Berlin, Athens and Barcelona are strongly affected. Fewer and fewer people can afford to live in the world's city centers. Often the local stores, bars and eateries are being bought up and "colonized" by the newcomers and investors wanting to appeal to them (Halasz, 2018, p. 1367).

# Gentrification in Lisbon

The Portuguese housing market was controlled through rent control implemented by the state in 1910 up until 2012. The original tenants were guaranteed very low rents, which prevented landlords from maintaining their properties, leading to many buildings in Lisbon falling into disrepair. This has in turn been seen as a triggering factor for the abandonment of Lisbon's historic center. If houses in the city center were maintained, this was thanks to the tenants, as the landlords were known to maintain the facade at most. The rent was however frozen only for tenants with contracts from before 1990, and landlords were free to charge the amount they wanted for newer contracts (Lestegas, Lois-González & Seixas 2018, p. 687).

The economic situation changed dramatically for Portugal during the financial crisis of 2008. The country's general government debt increased from 71.7% of its GDP in 2008, to 130.6% of the GDP in 2014. This led to austerity in Portugal, severely impacting the average Portuguese income and purchasing power. The poor became even poorer and the middle class got pushed into proletarianization. "The middle class is disappearing, giving way to a minority of very rich and a majority of poor citizens…" (Lestegas, et. al, 2018, p. 687). Lestégas informants share how the Portuguese suffered brutal income decreases as the government made big cuts in benefits, pensions and subsidies. The general loss of resources, income and in many cases jobs, pushed many Portuguese people out of their homes and the city of Lisbon (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 688). When the article was written, in 2018, the real estate market was still recovering, but the investors were focusing on the foreign market, as 'the economy is still very depressed' (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 688)

After the crisis the Portuguese government received an economic help package through the Troika agreement. In 2011 the New Urban Release Regime (NRAU - Novo Regime do Arrendamento Urbano) was signed by the government and the Troika (a group consisting of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, formed as an authority to manage the aftermath and bailouts of the European financial crisis in 2007-2008). The intention of the legislation was to "stimulate urban regeneration by facilitating the termination of old contracts, removing the rent controls, and speeding up

the eviction process" (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 688). This legislation took away the tenants' protection and gave more power to the landlords. The rent prices were set higher than many of the tenants could afford. Several groups were still protected after 2012, and initiatives to protect historic shops were created (see Petronelli, 2016 and DW Documentaries, 2020).

After the model of suburban development collapsed and the credit flow towards the Portuguese middle class stopped back in 2008, real estate investors started looking towards the historic center of Lisbon: "The liberalisation of the rental market in times of crisis, austerity, and tourism boom has triggered the commodification of Lisbon's historic centre" (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 688). This offered high profitability opportunities, but also a need to evict the residents, which were mostly tenants. By changing the lease law, the tenants could be easily and rapidly evicted, and the investors went from not being able to do anything, to having the power to do whatever they wanted. When the buildings were sold, it became even easier to evict tenants as the new owners only had to claim they would refurbish the building in order to terminate the tenants contract (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 689). Yet, despite these evictions, several of Lestégas informants were positive to the new urban lease regime (called the eviction law by some), as it "unlocked lots of spaces that were closed and allowed new things to be opened and investors to invest" (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 688).

**The non-regular resident tax regime**

Another measure attributing to the commodification of the historical city center of Lisbon is the non-regular resident tax regime. This policy was implemented in 2009 as another way of attracting "high-income professionals and pensioners from other countries in the EU" (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 689). If the foreigner spends at least 183 days in Portugal every year, they benefit from a "reduced flat personal income tax of 20%". This policy also applies if the foreigner has housing in Portugal that he/she intends to use as the fixed home. As a part of this policy, pensioners getting their pensions from outside of Portugal are exempt from paying tax at all, regardless of whether they pay tax in the country from which they receive their pension (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 689). The non-regular resident tax regime is seen as one of the main generators for the upgrade and regeneration of the

historic center. The tax benefit attracts Belgians and Scandinavians, but the biggest group is the French (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 689).

The non-regular resident tax regime attracts foreign investment and helps regenerate a rather abandoned historical city center, but as a result it increases the difficulty for Portuguese people to find properties, as they are being sold to foreigners and foreign investors (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 689). I would like to highlight the further inequity that the Portuguese government has implemented tax benefits to attract foreigners, who on average earn a much higher salary than the average Portuguese worker. With this policy, the government is creating an even wider economic gap, between the locals and the foreigners moving to Lisbon.

**The Golden Visa programme**

A program which has turned out to be less significant, but still relevant for attracting foreigners to Portugal, is the Golden Visa Programme. Through investing 500 thousand euros in the Portuguese real estate market, the investor will be offered a resident permit. In specific areas and if the house is older than 30 years, it is only necessary to invest 350 thousand euros to get the "golden visa". This program has attracted investors, a large proportion of whom are Chinese, to Portugal (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, p. 690).

Between the two programs, the non-regular resident tax regime is less destructive to the natives (Lestégas, 2018, p. 690). The Golden Visa program is more likely to attract investors who don't necessarily have the intention of actually staying in Portugal. With a resident permit, all of EU and Schengen is open to the bearer, and it can therefore open the door to Europe, instead of attracting people to settle down in Portugal specifically. With the non-regular resident tax regime, there is a requirement of spending half the year in Portugal. Even though an economic gap is created between those who benefit from the tax reductions, and the Portuguese who don't, at least the program brings people that in some way or the other becomes a part of Portuguese society. Whereas the Golden Visa program might just lead to a further commodification of the historical city center.

**Changes to the Golden Visa**

From the 1st of January 2022 the requirements for obtaining a Golden Visa have been modified. The amounts needed to be invested have been raised, and there have been put geographical restrictions on where the investor can buy property in order to be eligible for the visa. This new limit excludes cities such as Lisbon and Porto, as well as most of the coastal towns of mainland Portugal (Get Golden Visa, 2022).

In early November 2022, the Prime Minister António Costa shared that the government is evaluating whether they should terminate the Golden Visa program in Portugal. He explains how the program might have already fulfilled the function it was supposed to fulfill, of revitalizing the country and attracting foreign investment. Therefore it might no longer be justified to maintain the programme (Idealista, 2022). No dates were presented in the interview, so it remains to see if the program will be maintained or not.

**The Digital Nomad Visa**

As of 30th of October 2022, the Portuguese government is accepting applications for the new visa, created specifically for digital nomads. The visa is divided into short stay, that provides the chance of staying in the country for up to one year, and the residency permit, for those who are intending to become a Portuguese resident. The visas are for those from outside of the EU and the EEA, who earlier could only stay in the country for 90 days within a 180 days period. To be eligible for the digital nomad visas, the digital nomad needs to provide proof of a monthly income equivalent to at least four times the minimum income in Portugal. In 2022, the minimum monthly income is 705 euros. This means that the digital nomad needs to earn at least 2820 euros a month. In 2023, the minimum salary will be raised to 750 euros, which demands a monthly salary above 3000 euros for the digital nomads to be eligible for the visa (Global Citizen Solutions, 2022). Even though this might facilitate a longer stay for many digital nomads from outside of the EU and EEA area, I would argue that the requirement of having to earn at least four times the minimum wage, is a problematic one. As I will demonstrate through this dissertation, there exists boundaries between the local and the foreign communities in Lisbon. And this requirement, which will attract wealthier digital nomads, is likely to further reinforce these boundaries.

**The rise of housing prices**

What has been discussed most when it comes to gentrification, among my interlocutors and friends, is the rise of the housing prices in Lisbon. Between 2012 and 2015 the amount of housing sale/purchase contracts increased by 105.9% in Lisbon (Lestégas, et, al, 2018, p. 690). According to Miguel Coelho the price of renting a T1 in Alfama went from between 80 and 150 euros a month in 2015, up to around 1,000 or maybe even 1,500 euros a month in 2018 (Lestégas, et. al,  2018, p. 691). Between October and December last year, the average price on renting a furnished T1 apartment was 1,240 euros per month. The rise equaled 10.59%, leaving Lisbon in 11th place between the 22 European cities in the survey (The Portugal News, 2022 I).



(source: https://housinganywhere.com/rent-index-by-city )
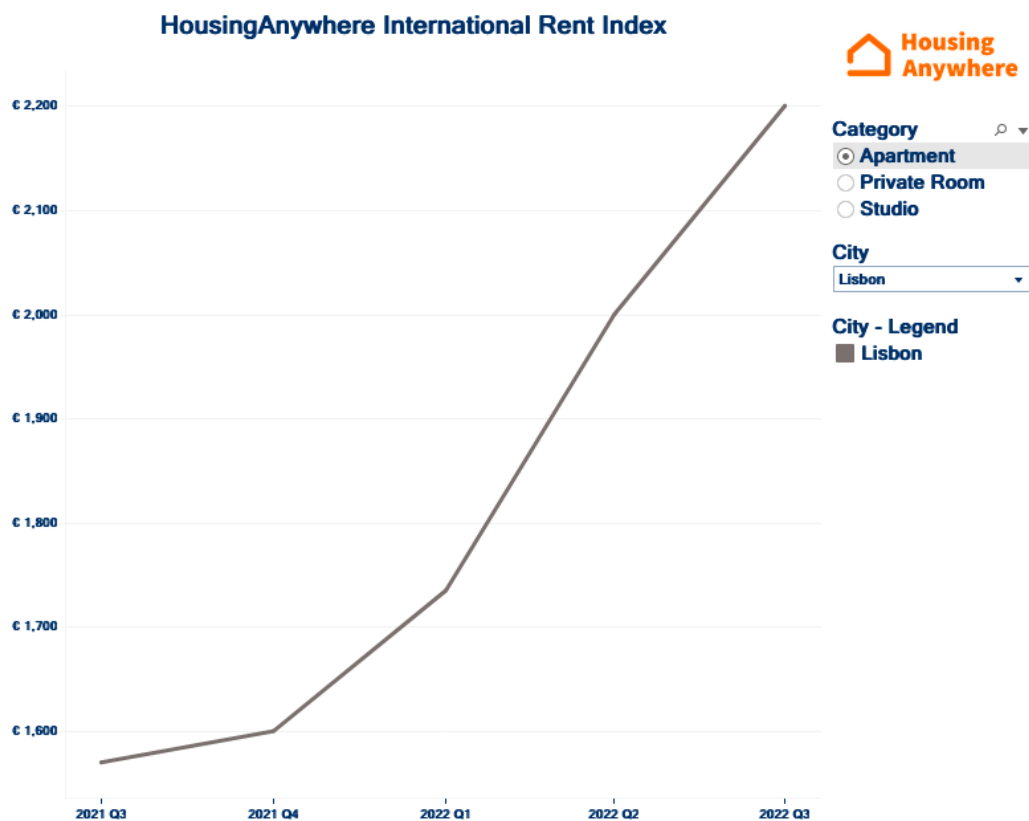
In 2022, the rental prices in Lisbon have increased by 23,2 % (The Portugal News, 2022 I). With the graphic provided above, it becomes clear that the rise in housing prices presented by Lestégas in his article from 2018, has continued to rise. In the articles in *The Portugal News*,

the rental levels in Lisbon are compared to cities like Barcelona and Paris. While the rental prices in Paris are way higher than in Lisbon, so are the salaries. As stated in the article by Lestégas, the city is losing population due to these high rises in prices (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, 690). With the rise of prices in the city center, parts of the population are forced to leave and find new homes in the periphery, which also pushes the prices up outside of the center. Lestégas' informants argue that the urban regeneration of Lisbon is both good and bad. It regenerates buildings and areas that have been neglected for years. At the same time it is expelling the inhabitants of the areas, because "it's not for the people who live here" (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, 692). It is however important to not demonize tourism, as it generates both economic activity and employment for the population. It is good for a city to have a diverse population. But the imbalances also need to be addressed. (Lestégas, et. al, 2018, 692).

## The Basic Housing Law

In august 2019 the parliament passed The Basic Housing Law, which is supposed to bring new subsidies and protect tenants against eviction. Through the law, housing should be treated as a citizens right, and the Portuguese government becomes "the guarantor of the right to housing" and thereby responsible for ensuring adequate housing to all the citizens (Yeung, 2019). The government should promote the use of both public and private housing that are currently vacant. According to the document, the State should also put public property into 'programs aimed at leasing, promoting access to housing with rents compatible with the income of families' (ECO News, 2019). This has however not been implemented as well as hoped for. As an answer to the housing difficulties in the city, a variety of local initiatives have been created. Associations and movements are working to address the housing challenges in Lisbon. Some of them include Habita, Stop Despejos, the umbrella organization Housing for all ('Habitação para toda a gente'), Vizinhos em Lisboa, and the initiative Morar em Lisboa. Even though the Basic Housing Law was implemented in 2019, there has still been an increase in rental prices, and the challenge of living in the city continues. "Real estate is increasingly out of step with the concrete reality of society." Rita Silva from Habita told the press during a demonstration in March 2021 (Portugal Resident, 2021).

# Facing gentrification in Lisbon through the interlocutors

*"We come and go. We are like vermin. Both the restaurant and apartment prices are rising because of us"*- Kristoffer about expats.

**How foreigners look at gentrification**

During my very first interview, Adrian tells me about the good opportunities in Lisbon for foreigners. He explains how they can come here through the golden visa program, and that there is a growing scene for entrepreneurs in the city. "*Portuguese working culture is way behind, so if they want to compete at an international level they need to change their way of working for foreign expertise and experience*", Adrian continues. He is very clear on the importance of living in an international environment, and specifically hopes more professionals will move to Portugal. *"There's a difference between people. People have different lifestyles and budgets, and I wish for more people with my lifestyle here in the city".* He explains how many Portuguese people have low salaries and therefore have a different lifestyle than what he does. *"They can't afford to go out as much as I and other foreigners can".* Adrian sees the expats as a big resource. "*We pay taxes, leave our money in restaurants and bars and help the economy. We are the ones who keep the restaurants going. I choose to go to good service places. In that way I contribute to an increased quality. The Portuguese can't contribute much*", he continues. "*When their salary is 600-700 euros a month, they can't do much*".

The other foreigners I interviewed also mostly see foreigners as a resource. Or as Eric put it "We give and we take!" When asking Hannah about the pros of the expat community in Lisbon, I got a very unfiltered answer. *"Ah, great coffee, isn't that always the pros of gentrification? Those hipsters.. No one can afford a house, but they do bring fucking great coffee. No, I'm just kidding, but I actually do think there is some really great coffee in Lisbon… and it tends to be the fancier places."* Can you think of any other things than coffee that affects the city?, I continue.

> Well, money obviously, coming in, like I'm earning a lot of money from Italy, but I'm spending it here. So that's really big. And I'm paying my taxes here… I do think that there are a lot more kinds of events because of the expats…from what I've heard,

Lisbon was really really poor until recently, so that's probably huge. But I don't know, I wonder if that comes more from tourism than from the expats..

Axel sees the increasing number of foreigners as a reason for the physical change of the city:

There are a lot of expats creating livelihood in neighborhoods that were otherwise forgotten, so I can see that over the course of five years, there were certain neighborhoods that were completely empty, and now I see things happening and a lot of them are not Portuguese people doing them, it's other people doing them, even Brazilians. So not even the wealthy expats, it's basically the immigrants that are hustling. So I think that's important. Because, I think Portugal has been sleeping, you know, it's been the way it's been forever and maybe it took new people to show that change is possible. Even this place (referring to the winebar we're at), right, to have a nice wine bar in a neighborhood like this that actual Portuguese would be happy to come to. I just think it didn't exist 5 years ago. I don't know if the owners are Portuguese or, maybe. But I doubt it. It's actually a huge problem, people coming in, with lots of money, driving locals out of the market.

Here the duality of expats' effect on the city becomes evident. How they affect the city is both for better and worse. This duality, I would argue, is present in everyday life in Lisbon. Axel summarizes this duality quite well:

Right now I feel like the gentrification may be a little bit bad. But I still see tons of abandoned houses around. So it feels like a little bit of narrow policy, not actual housing shortage. …Because I think they said something like 15 % of the available living spaces are unoccupied here in Lisbon. The money from foreigners and tourists has become a big part of the Portuguese economy. So without cash, there's no economy. The solution is to raise the minimum wage, as there is no stopping gentrification.

Peter, another interlocutor, agrees with the others and highlights how the foreigners bring wealth to the country and sustain a lot of professions by spending their money here. But they also add cultural wealth to the city by opening restaurants, stores and cultural opportunities,

sharing their own cultures. This can be seen as a form of cultural capital, which I will get back to in chapter 5.

**Most not intentionally contributing, but some**

Before coming to Lisbon I had an idea that I would meet lots of foreigners living in Lisbon through the golden visa program. Throughout my stay, however, I talked to just two people that specifically mentioned they were using this program. Victor from Sudan told me he came from a family of four-generations of Sudanese in Armenia. He attended school in Sudan and University in the UK. Now in his forties, he settled permanently in Lisbon. He bought an apartment in the neighborhood, Benfica, an area which is nine kilometers from the city center. He chose Benfica because he could afford "a way bigger and better apartment for the price".

Josh, a  programmer from South Korea in his thirties, tried to get a golden visa through buying real estate, but the lawyer he hired to help him out "*ended up messing up the process*", which led to Josh living in Portugal illegally for a short period of time. He now lives in Portugal legally. He has lived in Lisbon for the last six years and owns his own apartment here. "*I try to not be part of the gentrification problem, but I probably still am*", he says.

Most of the interlocutors have not intentionally been here to affect the city or to act in a way that will directly contribute to the gentrification of the city. But there have been a few exceptions. Below is an extract from my field notes where I wrote about the first meeting I had with a few men I met in dance class:

> Afterwards I ended up going for a glass of wine with three of the guys from the class. Josh from South Korea, Hector from Australia and Jan from India. After a glass of wine I ordered some cod with chickpeas (a Portuguese dish). The guys told me about their jobs as a programmer, real estate investor and investment banker. They are a perfect example of people contributing to the gentrification through their job and interest in buying property and living as expats in Lisbon. We talked about the tax system and how there used to be no tax for foreigners working in Portugal. They claimed that it is now raised to 10%. They also mentioned that when you retire, you don't need to pay taxes for the first 10 years.

Several of the other interlocutors see the foreigners as a problem to the city only if they are involved in real estate. '*Foreigners don't harm unless they buy all the house*s', Victoria states. Some buy and sell to other foreigners. Talking to Karoline on our way back from dance class, she specifies: "*They only have two industries here in Portugal, tourism and real estate.*

*It's crazy how expensive the rent is compared to the salaries here...*" One day Jacob offered to take me to Alentejo on his motorbike. I met him outside his apartment. He asked if I wanted to see his other apartment in the same building. He used to rent it out, he told me, but now he only uses it to host friends and family when they come to visit him. This means he is keeping two apartments for ʹhis own use'.

### The landlord perspective

*"Our landlord, Rafa, owns the whole building and rents out rooms through word of mouth. He's not advertising anywhere, but always has full apartments"*, Kirsten tells me. A lot of landlords operate outside of the legal rent system. This means that they don't report to the government that they are renting out their apartments, and in that way they "don't have to" pay the % taxes for getting income from rent. In this way they don't give out a receipt for the paid rent. Most landlords operate within the legal system, using contracts but what the contracts contain also differs. In one of the apartments I stayed at, the landlords were okay with informal contracts, which was the case for a few of the people living there. The landlords might have earned more money with that kind of informal agreement. But at the same time it put them in a situation where the tenants didn't feel a lot of responsibility for the apartment or for letting them know about changes such as moving plans. An example from my field notes shows this in more detail:

> When I knocked on the door of Sr. Manuel and Sra. Dona Irene, only Sra. Irene was at home. I paid my rent for October and she told me that one of my roomies, Lucas, had moved out without letting them know. They hadn't seen him for weeks so Sr. Manuel went to see him this morning. As he didn't answer, they unlocked the door and found that both Gabriel and his things were gone. He hadn't said anything to anyone. He just left. I asked Sra. Dona Irene about the building and she told me that they were the owners of the entire building. Except for the apartment where they lived

themselves, and one other where their daughter lived, they rented out all the rest of them (there's a total of 7 apartments in the building).

## Airbnb

The extensive amount of AirBnB's and rental apartments in Lisbon could be said to affect the city and its people in more ways than one. Not only does it drive up the prices and make it harder for locals to find a good central apartment at a good price. It also affects the living environment, whether that be by noise from the Airbnb guests or occupation of what used to be common areas for the neighbors. Hannah told me about her one bad experience with Airbnb as we were having coffee in a fancy hipster place early on a Monday morning.

> I lived in this apartment where we had a balcony, and the woman below us, she said the balcony was illegal and she threatened to call the police, which had nothing to do with us. *But* I think that might have been an example of gentrification, cause I think that she was angry about it because she said the rooftop should be everyone's. But it was only accessible through our apartment. …I do think they should make it illegal, even though I'm currently in an Airbnb.



(Source: http://insideairbnb.com/lisbon )
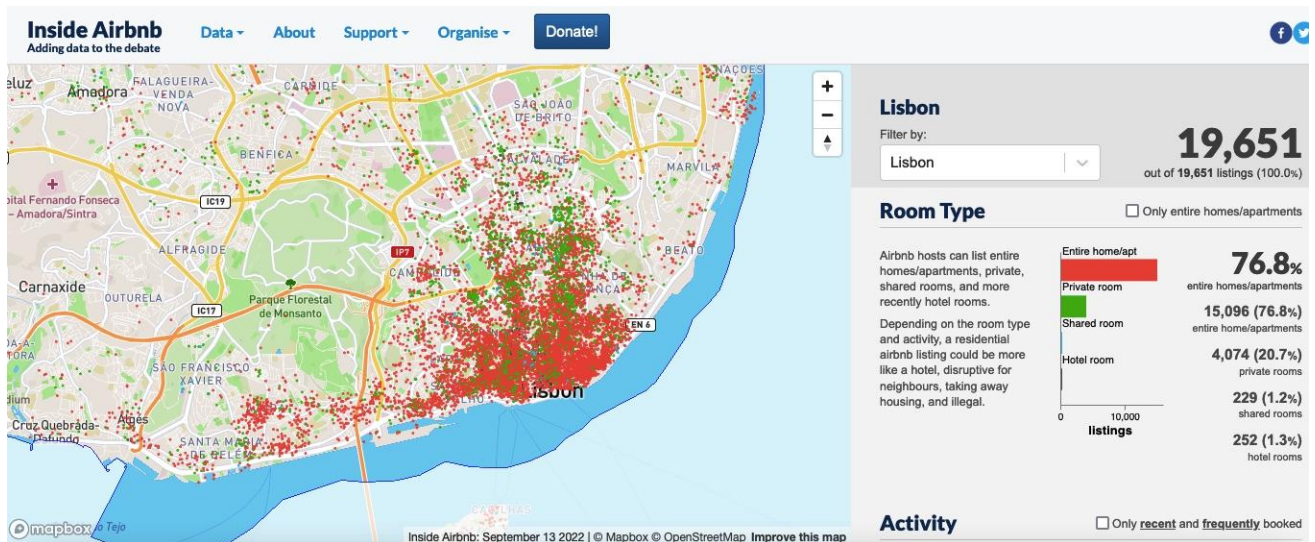
The map above is from the page of the project Inside Airbnb, with the mission to provide 'data and advocacy about Airbnb's impact on residential communities' (Inside Airbnb, n.d.). The project is created as a tool to empower communities to better understand and control the

way residential homes are rented out to tourists. Airbnb is one of a variety of factors that impacts how many locals remain in the city center.

## Alojamento Local (AL)

Walking around Lisbon, you can spot many buildings with a 'AL' sign outside. This means the building or part of the building is local accommodation where tourists can rent a place to stay. All the landlords renting out properties on Airbnb should also have an AL license, but this is far from the reality (Whiteman, 2022) When someone buys a property in Portugal, renting it out as AL is a way of earning money from the property when not using it themselves. There are however some restrictions to the areas and types of AL allowed, as a way of controlling the amount of AL in specific areas around the city. As of April 2022, the government also implemented a ruling where AL apartments in buildings with residential tenants, could potentially be shut down (Pearls of Portugal, n.d.). With the new ruling, other residents living in the building can summon the owner of the AL to court on the basis of dissatisfaction with the way the AL is affecting the rest of the building and its residents (The Portugal News, 2022 II). With such new rules, as cited in the story above from Hannah, the Portuguese resident who was unhappy with lack of access to the balcony could have therefore summoned the landlord of the Airbnb to court. This new ruling thereby empowers the renting population of Lisbon. For investors looking to buy property with the intention of renting it out for profit, it is now necessary to check the possibility of using the specific property for such means. As a result of this new policy, many landlords have changed from short-term rentals to long-term rentals which benefits people intending to stay in Lisbon for longer periods of time and thus participate in the community.

## "The Portuguese don't like it"

Lisa tells me she has a feeling the Portuguese don't like the tourists and expats that much:

> And I've also been confirmed this by some of my colleagues. Because I told them 'I'm one of you, I hate tourists, because every place is full of tourists'. And they were like 'now you understand why we don't like tourists that much'. I think because they live in a more authentic way and these stupid people, people like us, taking pictures and enjoying the city and making the rents go up, skyrocket, yes. So I think they don't like it that much. But on the other way, foreigners and expats keep attracting more

people because of word of mouth and social media and yes, it might be a pain in the ass but it also brings a lot of money and in return it can bring new infrastructures, new services and so on.

"*Portuguese people are being affected by gentrification*", Hannah tells me. "*I've spoken to a few people who are being pressed out of the city because of the local wages. But oddly, and I don't know if that's because these kinda people do not come to expat events*", she continues:

> I have only heard good things from the Portuguese, I've never heard anyone complain about the expats being here. But I don't know if that's because those people wouldn't come. But I mean, they have to be angry, right? Like if your grandma has lived here her whole life and now she can't afford her apartment. I've been friends with people on the other side, like I have some friends that grew up in East London, that is very working class, and the last ten years it has gotten super popular, so they can no longer afford an apartment where they grew up. So I guess I've seen both sides. I don't have an easy answer. I guess for so long I was struggling with my own business, so I didn't even have time to think about that kinda stuff.

In a similar vein to Hannah, I did not hear local Lisboans complain about the rent increases so I could not confirm this further due to the aforementioned challenges in reaching the part of the local Portuguese community with these kinds of perspectives.

### Loss of authenticity

What is authentic? And what is authentically Portuguese? Zukin (2014) argues that we can only see a space as authentic from the outside. Through mobility we get the distance we need in order to see a neighborhood as it actually is, without any personal history coloring our perception of it. The more connected we are to the social life of the place, the less likely we are to call the neighborhood 'authentic' (Zukin, 2004, p. 728). Pedro, who's lived in Lisbon his whole life, shares something similar: "I wish I could see Lisbon with the eyes of someone seeing it for the first time. Like the tiles, I've seen them my entire life. I wonder how they look to a foreign person, you know?" For him the tiles and other 'authentic' Portuguese things are nothing 'special'. Hannah tells me she finds the old dilapidated buildings beautiful, but questions if she is just "glorifying poverty." Conversely, Lisa, one of the interlocutors

argues that gentrification leads to a loss of authenticity: "*Everything becomes the same, and all the brunch places you find here now might as well have been in New York or Milan, so it's a loss of authenticity*".

I asked my interlocutors what they thought of as authentically Portuguese. "*The tascas are regular, everyday restaurants, and the pastelarias are typically Portuguese*", Axel answered.

> My neighbor, she's 80 years old, she's typically Portuguese. I take her shopping sometimes, and we went to the fishmarket together and it was kinda fun to see what fish she would buy compared to what I would buy. It's interesting because she wanted to go to this place, it's called a 'geladeria', but they're the frozen fish stores, so there were all frozen things. And it was a thing that I had never experienced where everything was frozen and you take it home. That was the first and last time I went with her. She also ordered the typical Portuguese fish, I would never, you know, order from a restaurant. 'Espada'(swordfish), it's a really big, ugly fish. I don't think anyone else eats it, so that's very typically Portuguese, or, you know, if they do, they don't. I mean that's the thing, for her I think it's about what's affordable. And for her, that was an affordable fish. Something else that is Portuguese are these slippery streets. She's 80 years old, so she has fallen a lot, but she's okay with it. Like in the last three months. She fell, she broke her nose, she went to the emergency room, she fell, she hurt her leg, she went to the emergency room.

As we speak some construction workers start working outside, making a lot of noise. "*I've actually never seen a worker here work past this time. This is not typically Portuguese. That guy is a Brazilian, I guarantee you*", Axel said with a twinkle in his eye.

To summarize this chapter on gentrification I would like to give a voice to the local Portuguese through the interlocutor Pedro:

> I love that there are so many foreigners in Lisbon. I get to travel through them and their stories. Lisbon is really dependent upon tourism though. Everything is about making it pretty for the tourists, and serving them pastel de nata and wine, cause that's all we got… They leave a lot of money here, but I'm not earning anything from tourism, like it's not affecting my salary in any way. Maybe I should get into it. If it

wasn't as expensive I would like to live more centrally though, in a party area like Bairro Alto.

Here we can see how the foreigners both shape and are shaped by Portuguese culture, elevating its food and drink with their appreciation and reducing its people by removing their access to vital space in the city center and even their participation in local city life.

# Chapter 3: Two worlds in one city

In this chapter I want to explore the dichotomy of the two different cities which exist on top of and inside each other without a significant amount of meeting points. I will highlight the difference in behaviors, spending by presenting a careful selection of key interlocutors as a way of demonstrating these divided cities. Through my interlocutors' stories, I seek to highlight the different ways of life in the city of Lisbon.

## The locals

### Marcus

At my very first Expat and Locals meetup, I met Marcus. He was one of the few Portuguese people amongst the 150 people present. After networking for a while, he suggested we'd go for some food, and so 15 of us moved on to a tiny Portuguese restaurant. Marcus recently moved back to Portugal from Latvia. He told me one of his main reasons for leaving Latvia and returning to Portugal was the mindset of the Portuguese people. He explained to me that the Portuguese people are content because of their relaxed and family focussed lifestyles. *"They go to Algarve in July or August every summer. Maybe they travel to another country once a year. Here in Lisbon they go to the same beach as they used to go to when they were kids. They prefer the places and people they are used to."* Here Marcus is contrasting himself with the average Portuguese person, he is someone who enjoys travel and foreigners and new people and places. His perspective of Portuguese people is that novelty is not important to them. I continue asking him about his Portuguese friends. He says they wouldn't feel comfortable talking in English, *"they're afraid of making mistakes and being made fun of. They would rather not talk than for that to happen."* I find this very interesting as the general perception within the expat community is that 'everyone' in Lisbon speaks English. These friends that don't feel comfortable with English are also the group that I was hoping to get in contact with before coming here. I have told several of my Portuguese friends and interlocutors that I would love to meet their other Portuguese friends, but that has not happened.

On several occasions I keep on asking Marcus about his Portuguese friends. He tells me he doesn't spend that much time with them. *"Most of the ones my age have kids and*

*families, and spend most of the time with them when they're not working. We meet up for coffee sometimes, but it is not that often."* He is the only one out of his friends from school that left Portugal to live abroad. Marcus' brother lives in the Netherlands. And Marcus himself currently lives together with his mom in her apartment, as she lives alone, and he is renting out his own place to someone else. Marcus comes from a rather wealthy family, with properties and different kinds of businesses around the country. During a dinner he tells us how his dad used to go home during lunch to make food for him and his brother. He sees this as normal, but all the other's point out that he was only able to do that because Marcus comes from a privileged family. After a BBQ evening at Marcus' place, I share an Uber with one of his Portuguese friends. It's two in the morning, and the friend tells me he has to get home so he can take his daughter for her swimming lessons in the morning. Ever since I moved here I've gotten the impression of Portuguese people as traditional and family centered. This has also been confirmed by both my Portuguese and foreign interlocutors.

## Ida

I started talking to Ida through one of the Facebook groups before arriving in Lisbon. She agrees to meet me for an interview once I arrive. I tell her to pick a place, and we meet up at a local seafood restaurant close to the bridge in Alcântara. Ida is in her mid twenties, and what they call a real 'alfacinha' (a person originally from Lisbon, directly translated: little lettuce). She tells me about all her time living abroad in other cities and countries. She has just started working for a Canadian company. Before she used to work freelance as a virtual assistant for foreigners here in Portugal. She would help them with papers and practical things they needed in order to stay in the country and get their health number, create a bank account and so on. In that way she got to know a lot of foreigners staying in Portugal.

Ida lives with two friends out in the area Ajuda where "there are only houses" ("*só tem casa lá*"). She has a foreign boyfriend and spends most of her time with expats. I ask her about Portuguese people, and she says they tend to stay within the same group. *"They don't leave. And I don't want to always hang out with the same people"*. She's been trying to mix her Portuguese and foreign friends, but it hasn't been a very good match, as her foreign friends only speak English.

There are still traditional tendencies in the families, Ida tells me. Many Portuguese students go to university close to home and live at home until they finish their studies. The parents like to do everything for them. *"I am generalizing, but it is a bit of this 50s and 60s*

*mentality where the girls are taught to do everything at home, and the boys to relax. It is changing, but it is still visible"*. I don't hear this from the other interlocutors, but they all emphasize the traditional and family focused values within Portuguese society. Ida says she usually goes out with friends in her freetime, to have dinner, go to the cinema and do 'expat things'. What about your Portuguese friends?, I ask. *"They mostly live in Almada and further away from the city. It is cheaper".*

## Pedro

I take the ferry over to Almada in the early morning to meet up with Pedro for breakfast and explore the area. The ferry takes 9 minutes from Cais do Sodré to Cacilhas, crossing the Tejo river. This is where many of the Portuguese people live, he tells me as we head to a local padaria for some Portuguese croissants filled with whatever you can think of. The housing on this side of the river is way more affordable, he continues. He himself has been living here for fives years, but spends most of his free time in Lisbon. He works from home with telecommunication for the Brazilian market in a big Software company. His working hours are 13h-22h from Monday through Friday. His company has offices in Lisbon, but he likes the flexibility that working from home gives him, he tells me. He is able to work during the day, and go out partying at night in the city of Lisbon. He goes out more days than not, and most of the times I have met him, I've been on my way home to catch some sleep. while he's just getting to Lisbon and starting his night.

Pedro shows me around in Almada. We walk through the abandoned shipping buildings close to the river. Pedro explains to me that the government made a fifteen-year plan to change the area and reconstruct the buildings to use them for something other than shipping. Now ten of those fifteen years have passed by, and they still look like this, he tells me and raises his shoulders. Even though he spends most of his time in Lisbon, he still knows some spots to show me. We take an elevator up to a viewpoint, he takes me to a café with the view of the river, and we walk through the main street filled with restaurants and bars. On a Friday night, this place is full of people, he tells me. I go back there a couple of weeks later, and he's right, Friday night the street is packed with Portuguese people going out with their friends and families.

I ask Pedro how he would describe Portuguese people, and he responds with one word '*boring*' . As a Portuguese, he spends most of his time with foreigners, because the Portuguese people tend to *"go home to their families and don't really hang out and go out*

*after work"*. Two of his foreign colleagues further confirmed this, telling him that *"Portuguese people are boring, but Pedro is different, because he does things together with us."*

## Bernard

I met Bernard at one of the Expats and Locals MeetUps. He was one of the only Portuguese people there that night. I told him about my project and that I was really eager to talk to more Portuguese people about it. Bernard was another example of the Portuguese people that are interested in the expat world. He went to expat events, and as he liked dancing, he tried a lot of different dance events as well. But he told me that his Portuguese friends didn't hang out with expats. He had unsuccessfully tried to bring foreign friends with him several times. *"The foreigners don't wanna hang out with us. They see what we do as boring."* , explaining to me why his Portuguese and foreign friends were not a match. I ask him what it is that doesn't match between the two groups:

> We want people to be authentic. It's different with a group of Portuguese, we don't talk as much. We don't really small-talk. We prefer having deeper, more meaningful conversations. We might not be as energetic and optimistic like the people here are (referring to the foreigners in the meetup), and I think people might misunderstand that.

I try telling him that I also prefer deeper conversations over small-talk and that I would love to meet up with his Portuguese friends and him. After some hesitation he agrees to let me tag along, but despite the fact that I persistently followed up with him about this, he does not arrange the meetup. As I also dance, we end up only meeting randomly at different dance events around the city after this first meeting.

## João

I had known João for a long time before we actually talked about him and his life. We met through a friend in common, and I would typically meet him in a bar when I was ready to go home and he was in the mood for shots. João is 38 years old and also an Alfacinha (originally from Lisbon). He moved back to the city after having spent 12 years abroad, living in several

other European countries. He tells me how the city is very different now from when he left in 2008, and that the changes in the city is what brought him back. Before he left, the only foreigners in the city were the Erasmus students. The community he is a part of today was non-existent, and many of the areas now frequented by both locals and foreigners were seen as unsafe. "Intendente was full of human trafficking and Praca do Comercio was just a square with no restaurants or bars, where girls felt uncomfortable walking at night", he shares. João works with management within the international section of a telecommunication company. He mostly works from home, but could in principle work from anywhere. "I'm too old to travel around as a digital nomad", he continues.  João lives in Arroios, a couple of stops closer to the city center than Marcus, but still a bit outside the historical center. He spends most of his time with his foreign friends, as most of his Portuguese friends are his age and have already settled down. João would also like to have a more serious relationship, he tells me. But dating in Lisbon is hard. "Most of the people here are single (the foreigners), but they are in this time of their life where they are trying to find themselves and figure out what they want to do with their life". He has been involved with several girls who have ended up telling him that they "don't want commitment right now". This seems to be a common denominator throughout my fieldwork and the lives of the people I meet. Most of them are single, and even though several of them say they want relationships, few of them have entered into anything during the year I have been in the field.

**The foreigners about Portuguese people**

The foreign view on the Portuguese people corresponds to a large extent with what the Portuguese themselves described. "*The Portuguese people have their own group of people*", Mina tells me. "*They've grown up here, went to school here and just stayed within the same group of friends …The Portuguese people are a little bit more like Norwegians, more reserved.*" As a Brazilian having grown up in Brazil and from there having spent years in both Norway and Portugal, she's talking from experience. Adrian described Portuguese people as closed and focused on their families and "*long time circle of friends*". He tells me that his Portuguese colleagues, whether they are twenty-four or fifty years old, go home to their families after work. "*They have this calmness, for good and bad*", Eric says. He describes the Portuguese as quiet, open-minded and welcoming people. "T*hey take everything at their own pace, just like the Greeks*", Peter tells me. "*That also applies to the*

*public sector, which is a disaster",* he adds. *"Portuguese people are very proud people",* Kristoffer says. "*They are themselves and you don't see anxiety or shame in people*".

Lisa works with Portuguese people, and therefore spends most of her time with 'the locals'. She tells me she is still trying to figure out Portuguese people. "*In some moments they seem super open and welcoming like the Spanish and other times they are very closed. And I think it depends from generations. Older generations are more closed, younger generations are super welcoming, super international and so on,*" she explains. Most of her colleagues live in modern areas, such as Restelo close to Belem (seen as a posh area):

> And I don't like to say this, but I think it's because they're rich people, because I work in a rich company with people that went to business school, that traveled and studied abroad, so it's a very specific segment of the population and they live in Saldanha, Marques and yeah the part I told you in Belem.

Lisa is the only one of my foreign interlocutors with only Portuguese colleagues whom she spends most of her time with. However, they are similar to the Portuguese people I have met through my time in the field, those who have traveled and those who are already part of the international society in one way or another.

# The expats

### Defining foreigners

Being a digital nomad is a rather new concept. Hannah tells me about how she met someone introducing themselves as digital nomads ten years ago. She elaborated that at that time, they were calling themselves 'anywhereists' because they could work anywhere. Since she thought it was such a weird concept, she simply didn't answer them. "*Expats are temporary citizens in Lisbon. Most of them are Erasmus students, digital nomads or people working for multinational companies like myself*", Peter explains.

As the non-Portuguese people in Lisbon are referred to with many different terms, I asked my interlocutors to define the terms. And from the answers I got, I combined a dictionary of how the foreigners themselves look at foreigners:

- Foreigner: Anyone not from the country they are in (here: Not from Portugal)

- Digital nomad: A certain type of foreigner. This definition is less about nationality and more about the way the person lives and works. They just happen to be here and happen to be in some fields where they can work remotely. Since covid there has been an enormous increase in the number of people who can work remotely.

- Expat: A more recent word for foreigners moving abroad. These people typically come from wealthier nations. They have job skills that allow them to enter and stay in many countries despite recently increased restrictions on movement of people. They also have the ability to move, and might not stay forever.

- Immigrant: Someone who decides to make a new country their home. This can be out of desires for a new home, or from necessity of safety or better economic conditions amongst other factors.

"Then there's people like us that choose to move here, because we enjoy it here", Axel adds. I don't know what you call us? Expats? You know we just happen to not like where we were as much, so we came here. But we have a lot of flexibility. But I don't like calling myself an expat because I'm trying to think of myself as wanting to be part of the local community all the time.

Victoria says she would like to be a digital nomad, but that now she would probably consider herself as an expat, as she works in tech and might move away from Lisbon. "But I might stay, and then I would be an immigrant", she concludes.

**What category does the biggest foreign group in Portugal, Brazilians, fit into?**

In this thesis I am not focusing on the biggest group of foreigners, Brazilians. This is because they don't typically come here as digital nomads or expats, but rather they come in search of safety and better economic opportunities than they had in Brazil, in other words as immigrants. Torresan (2011) writes about Brazilian middle-class immigrants in Lisbon. She

explains how upon arrival they expected to be treated equally as the Portuguese middle class citizens. But despite their common history and language, this has often not been the case (Torresan, 2011, p. 236). Based on stereotypes of Brazilians, many of them experience racism living in Portugal. This racism seems to be regardless of color, and more towards nationality and language. Brazil used to be the biggest Portuguese colony, but has been independent for the last 200 years (since 1822). Several of my interlocutors have questioned how Brazilians fit into the categories of foreigners. "*I know a lot of Brazilian expats, but I don't know if they count as elite because a lot of them seem like they're economic immigrants, but it's not the same if they're not super forced to come here*," Hannah reflected during our interview, while talking about the different kinds of foreigners. Kristoffer also tells me that he has noticed a lot of prejudices towards Brazilians, which unfortunately has been confirmed by several Brazilian interlocutors.

### Hannah

Hannah has become my main interlocutor throughout my time in the field. She is an Irish woman in her early thirties. Since I first met her, about a month after arriving in Lisbon, she has changed her whole life. She has changed her job, left the country for a different one, and returned. She has moved four times within the city and periphery of Lisbon, and she has left one relationship before starting a new one that she is currently in. It has been very interesting to see her evolve, and to be able to take part in every step of her process. She has let me join her openly at whatever she has been up to, fully aware and excited about her story being a part of my study. Telling her story is however a lot of 'before and now', so I will tell more of her story throughout this dissertation.

A month after arriving I fully emerged into the MeetUp world, and decided to join a MeetUp for something I had been wanting to try for a long time, ceramics. I showed up at the ceramics workshop ten minutes after they opened. Whilst trying to figure out the manual wheel, I got talking to two of the other participants. Hannah was one of them. I tell them about my project, and she says she would love to participate. Ever since then, we have spent days and days hanging out. She's been bringing me to coworking spaces, to breakfast, lunch and dinner, bars, parties and events. We go work out together and travel together. I wait outside while she packs her stuff to leave her relationship and wait in the lobby when she and her new boyfriend sadly end up losing their new puppy to a virus.

Hannah became a digital nomad after spending three months in Asia and learning how to make money online from a man who would later become her boyfriend. After several years freelancing she secured a remote position in publishing. She came to Lisbon with her now ex-boyfriend right before lockdown and they both were forced to stay in Lisbon due to coronavirus travel restrictions. But even during lockdown she loved it here, she tells me. So she decided to stay and create a life for herself in the city. When I first met her, she ate every single meal out in cafés and restaurants. The only groceries she had at home were some yogurts, and mint tea. She would leave her house in the morning for breakfast in a hipster café, before heading to her coworking space, and from there to an event or two. On her way between all the places she spent time throughout her day, she would have meetings on the go, talking to people abroad on her phone as she strolled the streets of the city. Hannah's life here in Lisbon epitomizes many of the aspects of being an expat that I write about throughout this thesis.

**Axel**

"*Can you throw this ping pong ball through our halos*?" Hannah and I asked Axel enthusiastically. We had both dressed up as angels at the angel and demon themed halloween party. Axel was dressed as a demon in a red dress. This was my very first of many meetings with Axel, a wise, young-spirited, warm guy, from the US. The reason I describe him as young-spirited, is that we were both equally surprised by each other's age. After finishing his interview for my thesis, we were discussing whether it was possible to use our driver's licenses in Portugal. As we discussed this I handed him my license to examine. "*1995, is that when you were born, or when you got this license?*" he asks me with a twinkle in his eye. "*That's when I was born*", I reply. "*No way, that means I'm twice your age*". I refuse to believe him until he shows me his ID. And he is right. Axel is fifty years old, and no one would've guessed it. He had made the decision to settle down in Portugal, and had bought both an apartment in Lisbon and a villa in Peniche. He has created a consistent network of foreigners and Portuguese, and lives his life more dependent on the weather forecast than the time or day of the week. According to himself, he doesn't have a typical day here in Lisbon.

> I'm at home or cafés, kinda doing stuff for them (startups). Other days I have nothing
> to do, so I just go for a walk and wander around. … And also, realistically I've had

visitors non-stop since March (from an interview in early November), so there's always things to do, places to go, to eat, activities.

As I get to know Axel more, I learn that he is being sincere. In his life, it doesn't seem like there is a big difference between the weekend and the rest of the week. We travel to the surfing competition in Nazaré on a Monday in December and end up going with a group to the beach on a very warm and sunny day in February. He invited me to join a retreat at his house on a weekend. I stayed for one night together with a group of other foreign friends of his, and he decided to spend another week there.

**Lisa**

I met Lisa through a group chat for girls living in Lisbon. Lisa is a 25 year old Italian woman who came to Lisbon because of a job offer. She is my only foreign interlocutor with both a job located in Lisbon, and whose friends are mostly Portuguese. Her job is an international job in the financial sector. She tells me it is not the job of her dreams, but the fact that it was based in Lisbon made her accept it. Four years ago she spent six months in Lisbon as an Erasmus student. In the future, she wants to work in the culture and entertainment business. On a normal day she spends the whole day at the office with her colleagues, who are mostly from Portugal. For lunch they go out somewhere, usually to a tasca (local restaurant). After work she continues with dinner and drinks somewhere outside, before she heads home to sleep. Throughout this dissertation I will elaborate further on Lisa's life as "one of the locals".

**The foreign bubble**

I would argue that with all the foreigners staying in Lisbon, either temporarily or permanently, there now exists a foreign bubble. There are so many events and places to get to know foreigners in the city, and with the border between foreigners and locals that I have been demonstrating throughout this thesis, it is easy to be caught inside the foreign bubble. This is also something most of my interlocutors agree with. Eric, an Israeli, is surrounded by his own nationality at his work in customer service. He and his colleagues provide customer service for clients from their home country, so their workplace is very much a cultural hub, he explains. They speak their native language together and outside of work they mostly hang

out with each other. Peter, a Greek, says he mostly hangs out with his colleagues from France, Italy and Brazil. He also spends time with other Greek people, but similarly to Eric, he doesn't really know Portuguese people, despite having lived here for several years. Like the others, Arne also spends his time with other foreigners. He tells me it is different here than in other countries he has lived in. Previously, when he lived in Denmark and Italy, he had mostly local friends. Kristoffer tells me all his friends are either Brazilian or North-European. He rarely meets young Portuguese people (under thirty-five), he continues. Victoria exclusively has foreign friends. She says she doesn't know how to get in contact with the Portuguese or talk to them. "*Maybe through tennis or sports*" she reflects.

The expat bubble has proven itself to be rather small. Going to different events, but also just on the street around the city, you run into the same people. And maybe the expat community worldwide is still small enough for people to eventually run into each other again. I started thinking about the narrowness of the expat community after a chance encounter in the party neighborhood of Bairro Alto. I bumped into Leonardo on a random street and two years earlier we had stayed at the same hostel in Rio de Janeiro. Through my time here, I have had a bunch of these moments, of running into someone I met a long time ago, or finding the most random common connections with new people.

# Do the two worlds meet?

### Different worlds

You would come to Portugal and the history really is in your face. You know the earthquake and the Arabs and it's all so in your face. God, that's really bad, but I think Portugal reminds me of the past in some ways. Like they had their better days in the past and they're more traditional, with their families. And then you have the whole digital nomad thing which is huge and more in the future, so I don't know, it's complex.

Hannah reflects.

Lisa points out that there isn't much to do here for Portuguese people:

I speak to people from here and sometimes they are like 'yes, Lisbon is amazing' and other times they're like 'oh I'm from here, so I don't see this wide range of things to do'. So maybe it's because I'm not from here, and I feel like there is a lot to do.

Lisa tells me she feels like she's both on the inside and the outside of the local community.

I think I will, in a year.. But because I work with Portuguese people and otherwise, I think I wouldn't. Because Lisbon is very easy to enjoy as a foreigner and you have so many places to go, you have the beaches, you have the good food, so you are not incentivized to see the real Lisbon.

According to her, 'the real Lisbon' can also be less interesting. With her Portuguese friends, she goes to miradouros, tascas, they drink, and they "*live Lisbon not as a fairytale*", she explains. I find this interesting, how Lisa refers to the Lisbon of the foreigners as 'The Lisbon of fairytales', as if it is a fantasy, something less real.

### Hard to become a part of the local community

I asked both my foreign and local interlocutors whether foreigners had the possibility to become a part of the local Portuguese community. Paulo pointed out that there are so many expats in the city, so it's easier for them to just stay within the foreign bubble. But the Portuguese people are open to including foreigners, he continued. Axel does indeed see the possibility of becoming like a local in the future. He points to the diversity of Portugal and how it differs from other Southern European countries where he claims he will forever be a foreigner. In Portugal on the other hand, he feels an openness and believes that he can "*get to know his neighbors*".

Lisa tells me how she is still trying to create deeper connections, and escape from her 'foreigner' mark.

So I've made a lot of connections, but now they're not deep. Because now I'm trying to build a network. I don't have deep connections yet, but I have two favorite persons, which are my colleagues, and I'm going to say something strange, because now, being the only international with a lot of Portuguese people, I tend to be seen as the Italian

one, you know what I mean? Not as a person, but as the foreign one, so a lot of time we're talking about food and pizza and places and differences between Portugal and Italy and where are you from, blablabla. The most deeper connections I've made was because I started talking with these people about actual problems, actual personalities, so more besides the "oh you're the person from abroad.

It is interesting to note that according to Lisa stereotypes can also travel from the less economically dominant group to the economically dominant. These stereotypes are one of the factors responsible for maintaining the borders between foreigners and locals. It is therefore advantageous to note that one method of reducing stereotypes is to draw on one's unique personal history.

# Chapter 4: Physically here - virtually not

**Introduction: traditionally in sync**

Traditionally we as a society are used to living a more or less synchronized life. This means that we take our vacation around the same time, and that companies are closed on the public holidays. Up until recently, most people worked regular hours, from eight until four, in what Sørhaug (2016) refers to as the industrialized worklife of modernity. Work was previously measured by the number of hours spent working. Work and leisure time were separate spheres, and as long as you were at work during the hours you were supposed to, you were doing your job. Today, we have been moving away from using hours spent working as the main measurement of work. Sørhaug (2016) describes the worklife of postmodernity as a personally organized work life. Today, there is more importance placed on the quality of the work, and the availability of the worker than the time as a goal in itself (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 139). Or put in an easier way, in postmodern work, it is not important to be on time, as long as you are online (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 138).

In this new postmodern way of working, being at the office is no longer a requirement. Especially after two years of a pandemic that forced many to look for new solutions, home office and remote working became a new normal. Even though it was not a new concept, it definitely became more widespread because of it. This new normal gave many a more relaxed rhythm, where they did not have to commute to work or travel to business meetings. It provided the opportunity to work from home, but also from the family cabin in the mountains, and in post pandemic times from a beach in the Carribeans. At the same time, the importance of the social scene at work became clear. At the same time as the technology is supposed to bring us closer together, it might also tear us wider apart (see Hannemyr et al. 2015, Turkle 2011). The concept of new means of communication lacking intimacy is not a new thought. In his text 'Phaedrus', Plato recorded Socrates' concerns on the new medium of writing as it did not invite one to interact in the same way as in-person communication did (Hannemyr et al., 2015, p. 106). How is this lack of intimacy reflected in the digital worklife? In this chapter I dive deeper into the new ways of working, how the digital nomads handle their work life balance, as well as the pros and cons of being remote and place-independent.

# Place independent - work from anywhere

I spent much of my time in the field hanging out with my main interlocutors. We went to coworking spaces, and hipster cafés. But we could also meet up for lunch or activities, where they all of a sudden had to go into a meeting. Hannah was a master at multitasking between her job meetings and other activities. In an extract from my fieldnotes I describe this process in more detail:

> After having lunch we continued to walk towards the city, and Hannah had to go into a meeting. She logged onto zoom on her phone and entered into the meeting. I led the way, accompanied by my dear friend Google maps, and she followed me while talking to a guy in the UK on the phone. Now and then he would comment on her amazing multitasking skills as she walked and talked without any difficulties whatsoever. As the walk back home took us about an hour, she finished the meeting while we were still walking. We got home and she started to prepare for the next meeting she would have, before we planned on getting dinner.

With the smartphone as your working tool, you can always bring your job with you in your pocket. In that way you can always be connected, available and move through different mediums, fields and spheres almost instantly (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 146).

With this new focus on the tasks over the time spent solving them, it becomes the tasks themselves who determine when it is necessary to work (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 139), and not a fixed schedule of eight hours work between eight am and four pm. This provides a lot more flexibility for the workers, as shown in the example above. Instead of them being conditioned to stay in the office during the day, they can get creative. Anywhere with a relatively usable internet connection (2mbps) can become an office, the beach bar is just as much of a valid office. On a warm winter day in February, Rachel only had a couple of meetings she needed to sit through. So when Axel, Marcus and I wanted to spend the day at the beach, she decided to bring her computer and join us. While the rest of us headed down to the beach for some sun, she stationed herself in a café closeby, finishing her meetings for the day. Instead of planning her activities around her work hours, she brought her work with her to the activity space.

As mentioned, a flexible schedule provides the opportunity to design the schedule to fit other activities and errands during the day. Going with Rachel as her day unfolded, I learned that flexibility also requires some structure and a plan in order to get the actual work done. When time and being present at the office during work hours was the prerequisite of doing your job, being there was enough to have fulfilled the job (Sørhaug, 2016). But when the work can be done from anywhere and at any time, the framework gets blurred out. Even though I agree with Sørhaug concerning the importance of the fixed working hours, the time as such has not lost its importance completely. As the following example from Rachel shows, many remote workers still have a certain amount of hours they have to fulfill in order to answer to their work requirements. In Rachel's case, this includes tracking and reporting her hours, similarly as in what Sørhaug refers to as the industrial work life (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 133).

> Since I left my computer at Rachel's I had to go get it today in order to be able to work on my thesis. When I arrived they were doing construction work outside the apartment. Rachel was busy tidying up the house. We caught up on everything from last night and she went from room to room to clean, change sheets etc. By the time she finished it was around 13:30 and we decided to go for lunch. We ended up in a pizza place where you could order slices. After finishing half her food she left to get a pedicure. As I'm writing this I'm in a coffee place I haven' been to before, recommended to me by Rachel. It's called Delta - The coffee house, and it's definitely a fancier coffee shop. By the time Rachel arrives from her pedicure appointment, it's 15.30, and she's finally ready to start her workday. Are you joining the dance classes tonight?, I ask her. "*No, I have to work my hours for today*", she answers.

# Challenges with the remote/ flexible work/lifestyle

**Always connected**

Hochschild (in Sørhaug 2016) created the expression "black leisure" ("svart fritid") to describe situations when workers do private business during working hours (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 148). When the tasks no longer belong to different spheres in time and space, and the technology (the smartphone) is the same for both work and leisure it can get challenging to separate what is work and what is leisure and when to answer a work mail versus a private message. This can result in the worker answering emails from clients late at night, or making

personal phone calls in the middle of the workday. With the liberty of a flexible schedule this can seem acceptable. As Sørhaug argues, when you choose to do personal and work related tasks no longer depends on if the clock is past four pm or not, it becomes a personal choice (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 148). This can seem to be a positive change, and it might also be in many cases. But at the same time, these blurred lines between the work and private sphere might also contain an expectation about availability at all times.

In my field notes I have a variety of examples from Hannah concerning how her work is occupying her leisure time. Somewhere in the middle of our conversation Hannah becomes very busy with her phone. *"Sorry, someone just resigned. I'm trying to talk him out of it"* I tell her it's all good, and for her to take her time.  She continues:

> This morning I worked for an hour as soon as I woke up, and I ended up having a panic attack. I keep telling my boss that I have way too much to do and way too much responsibility. Before she would try to save money everywhere and tell me that I could find a way to solve all the problems, but now she's actually listening when I say there's too much on my shoulders.

I just nod, and try to listen, at the same time as I've heard all the ups and downs of how Hannah's boss is treating her.

The next day we met up again. That day, the story was different.
> I'm tired of doing everything. I work from 7 in the morning and this week I've had meetings every day at eight or nine pm. Before I met up with you here (at nine am) I have already worked for two hours. She (her boss) has also started to schedule meetings during the time I keep for myself, which is the time when I go to dance class. Just because that's the time of the day that is convenient for her to work. … So I've been thinking about finding another job.

**Quiet quitting**

It is easy to sell all of your being to the technology which coordinates your working life. It is as if the work sticks to you and becomes personal, it becomes a part of you (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 147). At the same time as the new way of working may provide flexibility, it might also be

overwhelming to not have the clear limits of the work hours and being able to leave the work in the office. This has led to a new trend going viral as I have been working on this thesis. The concept of 'quiet quitting' can be seen as an answer to the increased expectations from bosses and clients for workers to always be available, and to perform beyond what is agreed on in their job description (Faria, 2022).

As a matter of fact 'quiet quitting' can be seen as a way of going back to the industrial work life mentality described by Sørhaug (2016), where work and leisure are in separate spheres and the end of working hours means the end of the workday. Although this might seem as two contrasting mindsets, I believe it comes down to the workers wanting their freedom to define their own work hours, without having to be available twenty four hours a day.

**Finding ways to create bonds online + presence**

Online work provides liberation from the slowness of the physical space, but it causes us to lose the same presence as we have when being physically in a space. An auditorium used to have a door, and a physical space where the students had to at least pretend like they were paying attention (Sørhaug, 2016, p. 179). Today online lectures and meetings have become a standard, and we get easily distracted by answering emails or checking out online stores. Even when present in a place, one could argue that we are often not fully present, as the phone vibrates in our pocket, telling us there is something for us to open. When we move everything online, we don't only lose our presence and possibly our attention, we also lose the social interaction between the meetings, the lunches with all the colleagues, or the afterwork social events. It is of course possible to arrange digital versions of these social interactions. Hannah sets up team lounges so she can hang out as friends with her colleagues. She also schedules weekly 1 to 1 sessions. She stresses the importance of complimenting her colleagues when they come to her with challenges, as a way of creating trust within the team, although they work remotely. "*We still haven't met each other in person,*" she finishes. This shows the importance of creating relations at the workspace, also when the workspace is online.

# Cultural differences?

As Hannah tells me more about the company she works for, she highlights another difficulty with an online international workforce; cultural differences:

> We have a totally distributed workforce. So our project manager is from Kenya, we have people in the US, the Philippines, our designer is from India, our clients are all, not all, from America and Europe. Our CEO is Italian. Yeah, so it's kinda interesting, we have these cultural forces, for instance: The Filipinos will not say they have too much on their plate and that they're struggling, they find it very hard to say that. Unless they feel comfortable coming to you with things, it's hard to know. Like in the office, you have to work really hard to gain that trust.

Without the cultural knowledge, and through a screen, this can be hard to perceive. It's more difficult to interpret body language through a screen.

## Structure, productivity and distraction

As well as having to find structure in the flexible schedule, productivity and motivation can be an issue. At a vegan nata (pastel de nata) place in Campo de Ourique (a more Portuguese residential area), Hannah is having a meeting on her phone while we're eating vegan pastel de natas and having some vegan galão (coffee). *"I don't even wanna go to this meeting. I'm not even arranging it.. hahaha, so annoying that I have to do my work, hehe, during working hours"*. As I will argue later in this thesis, Lisbon is a city full of options at all times. The trick is to find the balance between working and enjoying everything the city has to offer. Is remote work, but hardly working an issue?

> Christian told us he had started his new job in Valencia. He had only worked a week, but was already behind on work. While being back in Lisbon he had been partying every day until four in the morning. He was supposed to log in and start working at eight am, and explained to us how he logged in and opened a word document to be active for the company. He would place something on top of the keyboard so it would look as if he was actually working, although he was not. *'Hopefully I still have a job*

*when I get back to Valencia, ' he* said. I couldn't interpret whether he was joking or if he was serious.

I do however believe that most online workers are putting in the effort, if not even more, than they would in an office. As the lines are more blurred, there might be greater expectations to answer job emails outside of work hours, as the hours are more fluid then the office eight to four schedule.

**Time dependency**

Time is indeed a very interesting factor in this new digital work era. Even though many of the workers are place independent, they might not be time independent. I was presented with plenty of examples of this throughout my fieldwork. To elaborate further on a story mentioned previously, during the break of a dance class, my dance partner excused himself to check something on his computer that he had brought with him to the bar. I went with him, and he told me he works as an investment banker. He told me how he only works four hours a day, which leaves him with a lot of time to enjoy life here in Portugal. But, he added, he has to be up when the markets open in Hong Kong and New York. This means he has to work at one-thirty am to answer the market in Hong Kong, but also at two-thirty pm when the market in New York opens. In other words, his job gives him a lot of flexibility, but is at the same time limiting him at certain hours of the day, and night. Here it becomes clear that a workday with fixed working hours would not be possible, as there is a timeframe of when the work tasks have to be carried out (Sørhaug, 2016, pp. 164-165). Another example of this is how Rachel could never hang out on Sunday afternoons, as she was working towards the American market, which meant that the Sunday morning meeting they had decided on, would be during the afternoon for her.

## Not always possible to be a digital nomad - societal issues

Two societal issues have affected Europe and the world while I've been working on this thesis. As if conducting fieldwork during a global pandemic was not enough, there has since February been a war in Ukraine, led by Russia. Both of these crises have been affecting my

interlocutors, and can be seen as proof that also the digital nomads with the liberty of moving more or less as they please around the world are still affected by what happens in the world.

As I am finishing up my thesis, the war in Ukraine is still an ongoing conflict that may or may not escalate even further. One of the people affected by the war is my interlocutor, Katryna. We met in Lisbon in the early fall (2021) and had our Christmas dinner before going home to our families for Christmas. While I went home to Norway, she went back to Kyiv, Ukraine. Her plan was to celebrate Christmas with her family and get her drivers license, before heading back to Lisbon. But as it turned out, her way back to Lisbon would be way more turbulent than planned. Working online with programming, Katryna could work from anywhere. Bringing with her her computer to work from home should therefore not have been an issue. But then the war broke out. Two weeks after the invasion I talked to her on Whatsapp.

*Hello my dear, thanks for the message. It warmed my heart a little. I'm still in Ukraine but we moved out of the capital which was a really unsafe place to be. We are relatively safe now. I'm volunteering with preparing food and making nets for tanks. Wow, who knew life could take this turn. Sometimes I think about Lisbon, meeting you guys, nice weather and it cheers me up. I'm really looking forward to come back to Lisbon, hopefully it* (is) *all gonna get better soon* 🥹💛

*I've been working online to, this been a little distraction but sometimes I got frustrated because it's hard to find motivation in current situation. I'm sure it's gonna become better when i also recharge and improve my sleep. Such a basic thing. But I also remind myself to be grateful even for small things I have* 🙏

A while after this I received another message, saying that she had made it out of the country and was currently in Amsterdam with her mom and brother. Her step-dad had to stay there, as they didn't let men leave the country. She told me that she had gotten a new job in Amsterdam and that they were gonna send her to Lisbon for a week in April. She said she was super excited to get back to normal life and to meet up with me and her other friends in Lisbon again. As mentioned Katryna works in tech, and therefore had the chance of working also while stuck in her home country. But her freedom as a digital nomad was suddenly limited by the war breaking out. Here we can see that the events in physical space continue to

restrict mobility impinge on a deterritorialized life. In a similar fashion, visa issues are related for people from many countries. The freedom of movement is an unfairly distributed resource.

Another one of my interlocutors affected by the war was Maria. Working as a translator between Russian and Spanish, she lost her clients overnight. From one day to the next, no one wanted to do business with the Russians, as Europe put a set of restrictions upon not only Russia as a country, but the Russian people, businesses, and also Russian people living abroad. Even though they were not the ones deciding to go to war on Ukraine, they were also getting punished for the actions of their country. As for my interlocutor, this meant a loss of income. Luckily in her case, she also had another job, and was therefore not made completely unemployed, although partially so. These are two of many examples of how also digital nomads can get overtaken by societal events in the physical world.

## The pandemic

It is impossible to not include the pandemic in this thesis, as it affected both the fieldwork itself, me as a researcher, and how the interlocutors conducted their lives in Lisbon. Some came to Lisbon due to the pandemic, and some were unable to leave because of it. While some enjoyed how the city was emptier due to restrictions, others felt the restrictions as a burden.

Peter was working in a travel agency back in Greece when the pandemic first broke out. He tells me he knew something big was coming, as conferences and big events were canceled. As no one could travel, he lost his job at the agency. He started applying for new jobs, and found one in Lisbon. When he first got to the city, there were few covid-19 cases, and people could walk around freely. But then the lockdown was implemented and he had to stay inside. He tells me how he and the people he had gotten to know in Lisbon started meeting at each other's houses, although that was not advised to do. "*Where I'm from we don't trust the government*" he told me. And continued on with stories about illegal parties at their house. "*Nothing happened and no one got sick though*" he finished.

While Peter applied for a job, Victoria chose Lisbon as a backup plan since her original plan of moving to Japan was canceled due to the borders closing long enough for her Japanese visa to expire. Hannah went on a trip that was only supposed to last for a couple of weeks, but ended up getting stuck and then staying:

It's totally random that I'm here, I know a lot of people are like: it's sunny, it's cheap, but no, we just got locked down. And I still loved the place, so I thought, if I love a place in the middle of a lockdown, I'll probably not wanna leave when things open up again.

Adrian moved to Lisbon right before the pandemic, and said his life was more or less normal. Compared to his home country Italy, the situation in Lisbon was nice, he told me. He went on vacation to the Algarve, where he had a big apartment with a balcony, close to the beach. Going back to Italy was not an option for him. As he didn't know what was safe, he ended up in a relationship with his neighbor. "*I think people had a need to find comfort with someone,*" he continued.

The pandemic showed us a lot of sides and issues within our societies. All of a sudden, it mattered where you were physically, and also what your nationality was. As foreigners, some of my interlocutors met problems dealing with healthcare and other bureaucratic processes. When asking Axel, he told me he had several issues:

I had trouble. Because I got my residency right before covid. So getting vaccinated was actually quite complicated, cause I had to wait to get my numero de utente - my public health number, which you needed to get vaccinated. And since none of the services were open, you had to do it through email. It took six months to get my number. Things were difficult. But it was fine. And eventually I just went to a different Municipal, I just went to Mafra and they gave it to me like in a day. Lisbon was just really slow. They were just like, oh it might take you forever. And it also caused another problem, because I wanted to transfer my drivers license. You have a certain amount of time to do that. But to transfer your license you need a health checkup, but to get that, you need the numero de utente, and since I didn't have it, I actually missed the time to transfer my drivers license, so there are silly things like that that were frustrating. But if it was actually important, they would solve it for you, so.. I was pretty happy, even when I got vaccinated, the people were super friendly and they kinda figured out how to make it work for me. They were flexible.

Vaccination and numero de utente turned out to be a problem for several of my interlocutors. Peter told me he had not gotten the vaccine yet.

> You can get your vaccine tomorrow, but you will not get proof that you have taken it. You have to have your "numero de utente". I sent them an email to get one, two months ago, and have still not heard anything. On average it takes four months to get an answer. So you can get the vaccine, but you will not get the ID and then you will have to take it again if you want to have proof that you are vaccinated.

Josh told me he went to Alaska for a month this summer in order to get vaccinated. As his mom is seriously ill, he will go back home to see her, and therefore needs to be vaccinated. And getting the vaccines in Canada was an easier process than getting them here as a foreigner, he told me.

# Chapter 5 Social, economic and cultural capital as a lens

In 1979 Bourdieu published the book La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement. The book presented his theory on capital as lenses to analyze society through and in 1984 the book was translated into English. 43 years later, his theory is still being widely used as a tool to understand different parts of societies. In this chapter I use Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of social, economic, and cultural capital to look at various sides of the local and foreign community in Lisbon . I argue that the most important capital in Lisbon is the social one. I also look at the languages used in Lisbon as linguistic capital, and part of the cultural capital in the city. Through a story from the field, I also look at what happens when someone doesn't follow the social codes and ends up losing all social capital.

## Defining capital

In the beginning of his essay The forms of capital, Bourdieu (1986) present the reader with the following definition of capital:

> Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (Bourdieu, 1986, 243).

# Social capital

## The social scene in Lisbon

In Lisbon I would argue that the most important form of capital is the social one. As most of the people I have met here are foreigners who came here on their own, they all strive to create a network for themselves. Most of them don't have their families or their friends from back home to rely on. I have found that there are different types of foreigners in Lisbon. There are the ones who only plan to stay for a short period of time, for a few months at most. They are the digital nomads that can work from anywhere and can also move to the next place whenever they feel like it.

Often they do however end up staying way longer than initially planned, and you will meet them in any event with different versions of "*I was only staying for x weeks and now it's been x years.*" Then you have another group who are united by the fact that they intend to make Lisbon their permanent home. If they are not EU citizens, they often are in the process of getting their Portuguese citizenship. Many of them also work remotely, but have chosen to make Lisbon their base. Some have also found jobs here in Portugal, often within the field of teleperformance or Tech. The commonality for them all, whether they have an online job or a presential one, is that the company they work for is a foreign one.

## Online sociality as a tool and a purpose

Almost ironically, a lot of the social connection building between expats in Lisbon also starts online. Through apps such as Whatsapp and Meetup, all sorts of events and activities are shared with the ones interested. In Whatsapp, which is a messaging platform, private groups are made, and only the people in the group can see the messages sent and the events planned. To join the groups on Whatsapp , you either need to be invited by one of the group administrators, or join with an invitation link. Since arriving in Lisbon I have joined a hiking group, a group of just girls living in Lisbon, different dance groups, groups for Norwegians in Portugal and a variety of more intimate groups made by people I've gotten to know, or people I consider my friends. On the app Meetup, it works a bit differently. Anyone can create an event, and the members of the app can choose to sign up for it. Some Meetup events are regular ones, while others are one-time happenings. Some events are open for everyone,

while others have limitations. Besides this, there are also a variety of Facebook and Slack groups serving a similar purpose, to connect people.

Throughout the fieldwork, I have entered too many Whatsapp groups. So is the case for many of my interlocutors. Groups are being made to stay in touch with the people you meet, or as a means of meeting people and getting to know them, usually through activities. After my first dance class, Hector made a group with me and the two other guys we went to dinner with, for the four of us to stay in touch. He then made another group, where he kept adding more people as he met them. It does however seem like there is a sweet spot, to where the group is too big for people to interact freely. Asking if someone wants to meet up for lunch or drinks is a bit different in a group of ten people than it is in one with two hundred people, of whom you might only know five. Through the dancing we also created various groups, both for dancing and other social activities. As the group grew, some people left Lisbon, and others arrived, the group lost its original dynamic of everyone being active. A new group was therefore created, with the ones that were still active. We had discussions on who to kick out of the group, for being inactive and who to keep even though they left the city. A friend of mine called this the "lifespan of the group" , how it goes from an active group, to one where people read and maybe at most react to the few things that are being posted.

### A need for community + finding it

Before one of my first networking events, I met up with the founder of the group for a chat. Angela told me she had lived three years in Lisbon, and that she started the group because she saw a need for a platform where expats and locals could get together and get to know each other. The community grew really fast and it now has over 24.000 members. She told me she didn't want to arrange meet-ups during the pandemic, as the guidelines said not to meet up. She also changed the meet-up from a weekly event to a monthly one.

> A lot of people started writing to me during the pandemic because they were here alone and really wanted to meet other people. They wanted me to arrange events, but I told them I would not do that. Other people in the group started arranging things on their own. They invited me, and I went to a couple of them. I was shocked by how there were like 50 people there and no one was following the restrictions. It's a miracle that no one got sick from those events. But then again they only met the

people at the events, and no other people. Which also says something about the need for the events.

Angela´s example of the need for a community during the pandemic reflects the importance of a community between the expats in Lisbon in general. Many of them point to the ease of getting to know new people and trying new things as one of the main factors as to why they have chosen to stay in Lisbon.

Lisa compares Lisbon to where she used to live in Canada.

> You said there is a need for community, it's true, I completely agree. In fact I thought I was lucky, I am lucky, but the city is a city of communities. … But I lived in Canada and I saw the opposite. …There were a lot of communities, but ethnic communities, racial communities, Italians with Italians, Chinese with Chinese, Portuguese with Portuguese. And here I feel like there is the opposite. There is this mingling with people from abroad. … If you live here, especially if you're an expat, you always think "wow, Lisbon is amazing". And I love this, it's like being in a big community".

As mentioned earlier, there is a special type of people that comes to Lisbon. Although you can find people of all kinds, a lot of people have a lifestyle and/or a mindset that is similar. Victoria appreciates how the people she's met here in Lisbon share values and are easy to relate to. Hannah compares Lisbon to the UK where she used to live, and reflects upon how there she mostly got to know people through mutual friends, *"while here it's like, we met at a pottery event."* Here again we see that the participants generally do not have dependents or strong family connections and live a life that is focussed primarily on their own needs.

As there are so many different ways of meeting people here in Lisbon through events, it should be easy to find like-minded people. Roger tells me he has never had as good friends as he does here in Lisbon. That the people at home are just stuck in the same place, *"while here people are ambitious, they want to do things with their life and they connect in a very different way."* Here he gets motivated by the people around him.

**Using my social capital**

During my fieldwork I also got the chance to organize my own event. As one of my interlocutors started working in the newly opened restaurant/bar of his friend, they told me to

attract people. As I've gotten to know a lot of people during my stay here, I told them yes, and started planning an event together with another friend of mine.

We did a trial event to see how it would work.

> We started out with some sort of dance class with just a couple of friends attending. As the night went on we switched from salsa music to reggaeton and other kinds of latino music. A lot of our friends arrived and we filled the whole place with our invited people. Everyone was talking, drinking and having a great time. Diogo and Marcus were happy and kept themselves busy with making both tapas and drinks for all the guests. We stayed until almost midnight before we moved on to Cinnamon for some karaoke. The owner, Diogo, was so pleased with the event and the amount of people showing up that he told us we could do whatever events we want to in the bar.

We ended up doing a couple more events after that. A game night, and the birthday celebration of my interlocutor working there, which were both a success. I would argue that this shows how valuable social capital can be in Lisbon. By having a big network, we were given the liberty to create the events that we wanted in a private bar. The bigger groups organizing Meetup events usually go to a new place each time. This is a way for people attending to discover new places, and for the places hosting to get new customers and publicity. Ignacio, one of the arrangers of weekly meetups for digital nomads, told me they're a team of ten people, who take turns arranging the events. They have already been doing this for five years, he tells me. The events are so popular that they now have to restrict attendance.

## Challenges with social capital

### Mobility leads to fluid networks

In his fieldwork in the Cayman Islands, Vered Amit-Talai (2012) argues that the movement of people is often motivated by excitement and liminality for the new place, and not from a desire to settle. Her informants knew little about the place before coming there for work, and Amit states that "*they were looking for an adventure rather than a new home*" (Amit-Talai, 2012, p. 502). I would argue that this is also the case for many of the foreigners coming to Lisbon. Like I mentioned above, the duration of the stay varies within the community. But for

most of my interlocutors and the people I've met here, Lisbon has been an exciting stop, often longer than planned, but rather a stop than the 'end station'.

It might however be difficult to know from the beginning if the people you meet will stay or leave. As most expats in Lisbon have a rather flexible lifestyle, this flexibility also lets them leave if they find better opportunities elsewhere. This has also been the case for several of my interlocutors. Talking to Peter about his future he told me that "*...I don't know if I will stay or not. Now the company pays for the apartment, but if I change jobs and have to pay the rent myself, it is very expensive.*" On another occasion I took the tram back to the city center with Trisha. I rarely take the tram, as it gets really crowded with tourists wanting to ride the classical old Lisboeta trams. We chatted about her relationship with a man who was now leaving Lisbon for a job in Austria, despite the fact that he had told her he was trying to create a life for himself in Lisbon.

**Meetup events - ever enough?**

As I've been going to several of the mingling events for digital nomads, I recognize a lot of faces. There seem to be a lot of regulars who attend the events. This has left me with the question; When is your network big enough? Or, when have you gone to enough expat events? I think there are several answers to these questions. The first one being the consistent flow of people to and from the city. In other words, people leave and create space for new connections. But this might however pose a challenge, if the goal is to create a consistent network of people.

Axel told me about his perception of the mingling meetups:

> …And then there's this group that's very popular with everyone new to the city. It's called Lisbon digital nomads. So every week they have a happy hour, they do events. It's kind of an easy thing when you've landed in a new city, to just show up. But I don't really go anymore, but a lot of the people I met were through those six months of getting to know those people. I don't actually enjoy them that much anymore, cause it's just a lot of smalltalk. You spend 90 percent of your time doing smalltalk. I think it's exciting for people that are new to the city, because you meet a lot of people. But now I have my little group of core friends that I see really regularly, once

a week. And I don't need to meet new people. So I'm kinda at that level where I have enough interesting things to do, that I don't wanna smalltalk for three hours. I feel like these kinds of events are a little bit drinking heavy, cause you're meeting new people.

As he had managed to create a consistent network, he therefore stopped going to these kinds of networking events. Axel was the sole example of an interlocutor with a consistent network, this highlights the transient nature of relationships among the Lisbon expat community.

**Fluid home space**

Beginning a new relationship with the awareness that many people in the city are only here for a short term stay makes it difficult for many people to open up to new people or invest in the relationship, as it might only be a temporary one. I got to experience this firsthand as I moved into a new apartment where I had four roommates I did not know from before. I was excited to get to know them, but the excitement was not reciprocated. After several weeks I talked with Ramiro, one of the roommates, in the kitchen. The following is from my notes:

> …We touched upon a lot of different personal topics and agreed that we liked to live in an apartment where people actually talk with each other and it's more of a familiar vibe. Ramiro told me a story of how he used to get to know the people he lived with, but that he stopped because everyone kept on leaving and it was too painful. He therefore decided to not put as much effort into creating relations with the people that he lives with, as he expects them to move out shortly.

Indeed, one of our other roommates had just moved out, without telling anyone he was leaving. We talked about how weird it was, and about the fact that since we didn't really know each other or communicate regularly, we couldn't know if something bad happened to one of the others. Since our landlords did not ask for any identification before moving in, we actually had no way of knowing who we really lived with. I would argue that the combination of no need for identification and no inclusion in the decision making of who will move into the apartment creates a lack of the sense of responsibility, as well as the sense of a community or a home.

**Difficult to create deep connections**

Indeed, several of my interlocutors talked about the difficulty of making deeper connections. Lisa told me how creating a network for her here in Lisbon is different from back in Italy.

> I'm much more spontaneous, because in Milan I have my family, I have my friends that I have been with since forever. Here I'm trying to make friends and so if someone texts me and I have not made plans I just say okay. So if there are some changes of plans, I follow them…I mean we moved here two months ago. It takes time. It takes a lot of time. But I also tend to be like this, I wanna be friends with people hard and quick, but I think it doesn't work like this..

This is a challenge when moving to a new country in general. At home, most people have their safety net of family and friends. When moving to a new place this often has to be created from scratch. Creating real connections takes time, which can be challenging in a community where people come and go.

### What happens when it fails? - loss of social capital

Right after arriving in Lisbon, I signed up to some dance classes through the MeetUp app mentioned earlier. I already had some dance experience, but I decided to join some beginners classes, just to get back into it, and as a way of getting to know new people in the city. For the first class, I got lost and ended up arriving late. I tried my best to chat with people while we were dancing. As it was a couples dance, I only got to talk to the guys, as they were the ones I danced with. I asked the basic questions of 'what's your name?' and 'where are you from?'. I quickly learned that the group of people was international. Not one single Portuguese person participated.

As the weeks and classes went by, I got to know more and more of the other students. The teacher arranged dance events and other kinds of events outside of the classes. This created a close social group, and I started to think of both the other students and the teacher as my friends. I would say it was all fun and games, until someone other than the teacher decided to arrange an event. We had been told by the teacher not to post any other events in the dance Whatsapp groups. We had the regular Whatsapp group and the VIP Whatsapp group, and our teacher was responsible for both of them. Lisbon is a city full of events and happenings at any given point, so it was just a matter of time before someone in the group

would like to try alternative dance classes. As the students were not allowed to post about these in the dance groups, we made a new chat. This was not received well by the teacher. He accused us of wanting to mess up his business and told us we were bad friends for stealing his students. For my birthday I arranged a party and invited everyone in our VIP group. My birthday was on a Sunday, and the teacher told me that it was not ideal to plan something on a Sunday, as people might get tired and would therefore maybe not meet up for his classes the next day.

From there it escalated. We used the new group to plan events, but the teacher told us to delete the group and would react negatively to us inviting people from the class into it, and would react very negatively if we attended other dance events that were not his. He decided to leave his own Whatsapp groups as a way of protesting. Due to his poor behavior he lost many of us as his students. Until this day, we barely greet him when we meet. When we first met he had a community of regular students around him, and now he holds classes for tourists that are only passing through Lisbon. The dance teacher lost his community.

I would argue that the social capital was more valuable in the long term than the short term economic gain. He lost a group of people that would show up, that would bring him new students, and promote his business. He wanted to be the spider in the web, the center of attention. He wanted to be in control of everything and everyone, and then he fell out of his own web. He was trying to rule the community through a sort of monopoly capitalism, where his words were law. Anything that didn't come through him, was forbidden, and would lead to negative sanctions. These negative sanctions  were small such as comments in class about how you had chosen to go somewhere else or large such as a dancer being blocked from the Whatsapp groups, the spider's web. The only problem was that after doing things too many times, the spider himself was the one that was shut out. He was the one that lost his social capital. He risked his social capital in the search of a higher economic capital, but ended up losing both.

# Economic capital - hierarchy and economic gap

**Idea of elite immigrants**

I had this idea before going to Lisbon about finding elite-immigrants. People who could be anywhere, but chose to move their lives and in many cases businesses to Lisbon. These were people with high income, which separated them from other immigrants that immigrated in order to create a better life for themselves and their families. The people within the group of elite immigrants did not lack anything in their countries of origin, they simply chose to come to Lisbon because they could.

**Finance not so important**

I had an idea that the group of elite immigrants would stand out from the rest of the foreigners in Lisbon. Maybe this group does exist. But if so, I have not been very successful in finding it. Or maybe the group has different characteristics than I first assumed. Within the groups of people I have gotten to know here, there are people with a variety of different careers and incomes. Some work for about the regular Portuguese income, while most of my interlocutors and friends  are paid from outside the country and some work highly respected jobs. Between the people I have gotten to know, it is however rarely visible who earns more than the rest. The ones that are better off have bigger apartments where they can host dinners and parties, while the others often share a flat with one to eight other people. Some of the better off  individuals have vacation houses around the country where they can head off to for the weekend, or host large events for friends and family. And maybe those that are better off don't blink when the bill for the drinks needs to be paid. But except for that, the people I have gotten to know that could be considered better off than the rest, are pretty similar to the rest of the group. Once the workday is over and we all meet up to watch the sunset at one of the city's many miradouros, it does not matter whether you spent your day dealing with difficult customers at customer service or if you went to foreign affair meetings trying to make connections between countries. Like Axel explains it *"… I love that I talk to so many different people and we don't care about what kinda job you do, but everyone lives different lives and has a different perspective, and I kinda like that."* Or as my supervisor, Thomas Hylland Eriksen framed it: *"We're all the same when we go out"* (Personal communication) .

**Still differences, even within the expat community : Arne and Kristoffer**

This is however not to say that there aren't differences within the expat community. By coincidence I got the chance to interview two different foreign guys, from the same country. They came from different parts of the society back home, and worked for the same company here, but in very different positions. I interviewed them individually, but quickly saw the lines that put them together and set them apart. Arne works as a recruiter for Teleperformance and told me he was responsible for 10-12% of the Norwegians and Danes starting in the company here in Lisbon last year. He told me he worked his way up from being an agent, to becoming a recruiter, and now working as a senior international recruiter. According to him, he earns within 10% of the highest salaries in Portugal, which (according to him) equals three times more than the Portuguese minimum wage (705 €). On top of this he earns bonuses and has a lot of freedom. "*I'm rich here, and I can do whatever I want, when I want to*", he tells me. "*I don't mean to brag*", he adds.

Kristoffer also works for Teleperformance, but at a lower level. He tells me how he didn't have a lot of money back home, and that despite not earning a lot here, he is still better off. He tells me how the Teleperformance company is a company in rapid growth, as they have hired 1000 new employees in the last 12 months. There is a big difference in age, he continues. The people over 30 stay in the job, while the ones under 25 stay for a short time before leaving. From when he started he tells me only three of his team of twenty are still working there. According to Arne this is because the younger workers look at the job more as a way of living in Portugal and enjoying life, than an actual job they want to keep and take seriously. The company pays for the apartments of most of their employees. This means that on top of getting their salary, they are also provided with a place to live. What a place to live means is however different for the two guys. While Arne lives in a big central apartment on his own, Kristoffer is living in a shared flat in the outskirts of the city.

**Economical services**

In Lisbon, there are also a variety of services that need to be paid for. This includes Ubers, as mentioned earlier. But more importantly, it includes coworking spaces. To be able to work from a coworking space, you usually have to pay. There are different ways of doing that. You

can choose one and pay for either a daily, weekly or monthly pass, or you can buy hours through an app such as Croissant. This can be a good option for digital nomads lacking a place to work from home, or the ones that prefer to work from outside of home. It is also an excellent way to create a network and meet like minded people. But, it costs money. Some are lucky to get the costs covered by their company, while others have to pay for it themselves. Kristoffer tells me how the coworking space he went to charged him sixteen euros for one day. *"That would be over one thousand euros a month"*. In other words, if you lack sufficient financial capital, you cannot access the coworking spaces and the social capital you might gain from staying there. It is worth mentioning that with the different plans it would actually be closer to several hundred euros a month, and not a thousand as Kristoffer calculates, unless someone chooses to actively pay for one day at a time.

### Finance - space

The financial capital also has another effect related to physical space. As discussed in Chapter 2 about gentrification, the housing prices in the city center have increased exponentially. In the gentrification chapter I wrote about how the prices forced the locals out of the city center, but I did not pay attention to the foreigners that can not afford to live in the center. Although expats in Lisbon on average earn more than the locals, it doesn't mean that they are all rich. And some might just want to spend their money differently than on an apartment where they might just sleep. Whether it is out of need or by desire, some also live outside the center. This will in many cases be a cheaper alternative, but to what cost?
If you choose to live further away from the center, you also need to spend more of your time commuting back and forth to the center, as that is typically where things are happening. This means that you might save money, but lose time. Another thing you might lose is social capital. As someone living downtown can join a plan and be there in ten minutes, someone living half an hour by train and a twenty minutes walk from there, has to plan things more in advance, or risk not being around for the things happening spontaneously. Everything moves faster and is more intensive in the center, this is naturally where things will happen.

# Cultural capital

## Linguistic capital

As mentioned above, Bourdieu writes about three forms of cultural capital; embodied, objectified and institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). The cultural form of capital I have seen the most of during my fieldwork has however been linguistic capital, and how languages play a big role in creating both community, identity and borders within the city of Lisbon. "Language forms a kind of wealth" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 43). Language can be empowering for those who possess the knowledge to use it, and disempowering for those who don't. Having linguistic capital can shape the person's everyday life and can be seen as a significant social tool. Linguistic capital can provide access to higher educational institutes or communities of research and business (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021, p. 2). In the case of Lisbon and my research, the language skills, or linguistic capital can determine if you will get access to the different communities or not. The linguistic capital in Lisbon can be said to be even more applicable to the English language than the Portuguese. The official language of Portugal is Portuguese. Arriving in Lisbon without knowing this information, one could however think it was English. Like Bourdieu (1977) recognizes, the language is determined by social relationships. This further means that the value of the spoken language will depend upon the power dynamics of the social relationships in a given space. In the case of Lisbon I would argue that the high number of foreigners in the space gives a higher power to English as a capital than Portuguese.

## English as capital

After staying in Lisbon for over a year, I am still met with English eight out of ten times, even though I initiate the conversation in Portuguese. I have on several occasions also been in situations where people are surprised when someone living in Lisbon does not know how to speak English. Following is an example from my fieldnotes of this linguistic dynamic:

> What was very interesting with this specific lunch was the language barrier. Ever since I came to Lisbon, people have known how to speak English. That was not the case with two of Julia's friends. They were both from Brazil and living in an area

outside of Lisbon, which they said still belongs to Lisbon. Leonardo had been living in Portugal for 3 years already, while his friend (Ricardo) arrived only 3 months ago. None of them spoke English. The others reacted and asked how it was possible to live here in Lisbon without speaking English. He explained that he works in construction and only has Portuguese and Brazilian colleagues. As most of their customers are also Portuguese, he only needs Portuguese as a language at work. He tells me he's been very focused on work since he came here, and has therefore not been communicating and getting to know many people here. To be fair, Portuguese is the official language in Portugal. I therefore found it very interesting that the others reacted to the fact that he has been living here for 3 years without learning *English*. Throughout the lunch the table was divided with one side talking in English and the other one in Portuguese.

Here the linguistic capital of knowing the local language was not given as much value as the value given to the English language.

Several of the people I've gotten to know here have also learned how to speak English after moving to Lisbon. And one even started English classes. I asked if it wouldn't make more sense to take Portuguese classes since he was living in Portugal. He answered that he thought English would be more useful for him to live here. And indeed, in many places and groups of people, it seems like English is the default language. My field notes are full of remarks like 'We all spoke together in English, although most of us also spoke Spanish or/and Portuguese' and 'As soon as they arrived we switched to English'. When I first arrived I wrote down one night that: 'I tried my best to talk to the waiter in Portuguese, but most of the time he answered me in English. Not until I was going to pay did he reply in Portuguese. Josh also spoke to him in Portuguese, while the other two only spoke in English'.

Some Portuguese people switch smoothly between the two languages, depending on who they're talking to. This was definitely the case when it came to Marcus:

> His other friends were a good mix of internationals and Portuguese people. He switched between talking in Portuguese with his mom and Portuguese friends, and English with the rest of us. Usually he and I speak Portuguese when we see each other, but when we are surrounded by others that don't speak the language, we always end up talking in English.

I had already met some of his international friends at a dinner party he arranged before Christmas. They were all living in Lisbon and most of them had for several years. Yet they did not speak much Portuguese. It takes time to learn Portuguese well enough, Axel argued, to the point where hanging out isn't difficult. *"Your english is your default, so to hang out with actual Portuguese people, you don't wanna force them to all speak English, cause that's not their natural thing…"*

Hannah tells me about a place she really likes where they have arts events and free movie nights. She stresses how it seems to be only expats, and no local artists participating.

> And I would have thought that the community around that would have catered to both of these. But even, they put subtitles in the movies and I thought 'oh cool there's gonna be Portuguese subtitles', and then they put English subtitles. I was like what, even though the movie was in English.

This leaves no room for those who aren't that steady with English. And I would argue also sends a clear message of who their target group is, foreigners and English speaking Portuguese.

After a while of living in this English bubble here in Lisbon, some start taking it for granted that whatever they attend will be offered in English. Hannah once told me a story of how she felt really stupid after having assumed that her event would be an English one:

> I went to a different dance class, and this is so arrogant, but I forgot to check if it would be in English, and she didn't speak a word of English and so I had to do it all in Portuguese. But I'm so used to go to events, and that they're all in English, and I was like, that is so fucking arrogant, like I deserve this. And I've been trying to learn Portuguese from my friends but I just haven't had enough time to sit down and work on it, but I really wanna do it.

A common theme is that English is the primary language of discourse in small businesses, classes, and events especially when these are directed at foreigners. This demonstrates the growing predominance of English as capital in Lisbon.

# Portuguese as capital ?

Many foreigners I speak to don't see the value in learning Portuguese. They have lived here for three years, and have been doing all good with English. While Eric tried to do a course, but found it too hard, Victoria is too tired after work to start studying. And Peter says he wants to learn, but as he doesn't need it in his daily life in Lisbon, it has not been a priority to him.  My friend Roger has also lived here for three years, and can only say 'obrigado' with a thick English accent. When having him over, I end up being the translator between him and my Portuguese roommate Jonas, who almost surprisingly only speaks Portuguese.

But of course, every 'rule' has its exceptions. Both Arne and Kristoffer have learned Portuguese and see it as valuable to live in and get integrated into Portuguese society. "*I love languages*", Arne tells me. "*By speaking Portuguese you get respect in the store and I get done what I need to get done. I'm involved in the healthsystem, and my doctor has stopped talking English to me*", he continues. *"I don't feel like an expat. Rather an immigrant."* He explains how he thinks it is disrespectful to not learn the language and immerse yourself into the local culture once you move to a new country. *"The people often say 'look at the tourist', but then I talk and they take it back and apologize."* Kristoffer also sees the value of knowing Portuguese: "*Outside of the city center it is different. English is not as common. In the city center when they work, they speak English, but when they go back to where they live, they switch back to Portuguese. Out here where I live (in Benfica) you won't get food if you don't speak Portuguese. So you have to learn it"*,  Kristoffer concludes. Susana agrees; *"In other parts of Portugal it is different, for example in the Interior of the country, you have to speak Portuguese."*

When traveling to Braga with Hannah, we got to experience this firsthand. As we got into a small local tasca, Hannah asked for an orange juice, in English. The Portuguese lady working there looked at her as if she had just said something offensive. I quickly translated and asked for the orange juice in Portuguese. "*Why didn't you just say that?*" the lady responded back on her way to the orange juice machine. Do you think it would change anything, if you knew Portuguese? I asked Hannah as we sat down at the local tiny tasca.

> I think I would feel like less of a dick. I hate to walk in and everyone has to speak
> English. … I guess it's more of a respect thing. I haven't found discomfort in my life

at all to not know Portuguese, like I feel like it would be okay to live your whole life here without knowing it. I don't know if that's really bad to admit but..

As mentioned earlier, this has been the response I have gotten from most of my interlocutors. If they haven't had any specific reason for learning Portuguese, they haven't bothered to do so.

But there are situations where you would need Portuguese. If you want to do 'high cultural' things like go to the theater or informational seminars, you will most likely be lost without knowing Portuguese. Early in the fall they were showing a Norwegian movie I wanted to attend. Roger said he'd come with me, but as the movie was Norwegian with Portuguese subtitles, there was no point in him joining.

## Language is power/ as a border

Language is power, and it is also economic capital. And even more so if you work for Teleperformance. As several of my interlocutors have told me, you get paid based on what languages you speak and which market you work up towards. Eric told me Scandinavians earn more as there is a higher demand for them, *"…and it is more difficult to find Scandinavians willing to work for the salaries they pay here in Portugal."* This is confirmed by the Brazilian woman, Mina, who speaks Norwegian after having spent four years in Norway. *"They pay me more because I speak Norwegian. It is hard to find Norwegians that will agree to the salary they pay here."* Pedro is also affected by this. As he is Portuguese, he taught himself Brazilian Portuguese in order to work towards the Brazilian market. But he would like to try out the English market, he tells me, they earn better. With the language knowledge, or cultural capital as I call it here, one can in this way gain more financial capital, and it becomes clear that cultural and financial capital are intertwined.

Even though most things happen in English, some things must be done in Portuguese. Marcus tells me how in Latvia there was no problem for him to do bureaucratic processes in English.

> Here in Portugal it's different. Most people speak English. But we also have bureaucracy. If you're unlucky they might demand a translator to help you. An

example is this Israeli girl I know that wanted to marry a Portuguese. Although her Portuguese was really good, she was told she had to bring a translator to proceed.

Ida also explained to me how she got to know a lot of her foreign friends while she worked as a virtual assistant. She would help foreigners in Portugal get the documents they needed from the government in order to stay in Portugal for a longer period of time. A lot of it is only in Portuguese, she explained.

How is it with the language barrier when most people speak English?
Like with the birthday lunch where the Brazilians only spoke Portuguese, a language can be seen as a barrier if you don't know it. I've tried my best to be open with everyone I've met here, but have had some trouble connecting with certain people. This was the case for a Brazilian girl in our group of friends. However, as soon as I spoke with her in Portuguese, she opened up. She told me that her English isn't very good and that she is often seen as shy in social gatherings as she is struggling to participate in the conversations in English. A lot of the people in our friend circle don't speak Portuguese, therefore the primary language used is English.

"*My homeland is the Portuguese language*" ("*Minha Pátria é a língua portuguesa*"), the famous Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa stated in his poem about the Portuguese language (Pessoa, 1982). The Portuguese language can also be seen as a barrier to really get into Portuguese culture. Adrian emphasizes that he would have access to 'local Lisbon' if he wanted to. But admits that there is a language barrier there, and that it's on him for not learning the language. Hannah also agrees that if she spoke the language, it would be easier to take part in the local community. This does however become more complicated when you're involved with someone who doesn't speak the language. Susana tells me how her boyfriend doesn't speak Portuguese, which complicates every family gathering. As her grandparents only speak Portuguese, it is hard for them to get to know her boyfriend. In their case they only speak one language, but it can also be a question of what Leonard (2016) refers to as 'high intimacy language'. The concept explains how people switch language in situations of intimacy, or closeness to the others in the group, for example within the family (Leonard, 2016, p. 62).

# Place dependent capital

Another way of spotting cultural capital in Lisbon is by comments related to space. As the different areas in the city have different reputations, people use it as a way of describing what kind of person someone is. When Rachel was telling me about a Portuguese man she saw as a nice, decent person who has it all together, she told me "*He is not the kind of guy you will find in Bairro Alto.*" This refers to the neighborhood Bairro Alto which is a party area with tons of bars and clubs, where people typically stay out until the morning. The area is seen as quite touristy, and a place where mostly foreigners go out. This is strengthened by places like 'Erasmus Corner', which is a corner and a bar where all the Erasmus students meet up and hang out.

# Taste for "authenticity"

Zukin (2004) argues that it is not the presence of the artists (in this case foreigners) that evokes the displacement process. It is rather their taste for 'authenticity', for the specific ambiance of restaurants, boutiques, gourmet stores and design (Zukin, 2004, p. 734). She points to the cultural mismatch between the foreigners' desires for 'raclette and lattes' as opposed to 'bodegas and take-out Chinese' (Zukin, 2004, p. 735). This specific taste of 'foreign and authentic' products can be seen as a way of cultural capital, as the foreigner inhabits a specific taste that the current market space in Lisbon is seeking to cater to. The norm of this alternative consumption as opposed to the regular consumption by the locals in Lisbon therefore becomes a way of excluding others from the space (Zukin, 2004, p. 745). As a result, even the traditional Portuguese pastry 'pastel de nata' has been customized to accommodate the foreigners' desires, by making a vegan version of the pastry, originally based on eggs.

# Chapter 6: Place and space

The city of Lisbon is today a shared space between the locals, the foreigners living there, and the increasing stream of tourists visiting. In this final chapter, I seek to look at how the space of the city is being used differently by the locals and the foreigners living here. I will look into places perceived as local and places perceived as foreign. In the light of the topics discussed throughout this thesis, I will end the chapter by looking at invisible fences in the city of Lisbon, and how they are maintained by the different communities in the city.

# Theoretical framework

### Neighborhoods

Appadurai (in Savage & Longhurst, 2005) argues that localities are not 'given' primordially, but that they are socially produced through processes of boundary definition. Neighborhoods therefore get their meaning and limitations in opposition to other already produced neighborhoods. Furthermore, neighborhoods can be produced through people's imagination of their neighborhood as different from others. In that sense, neighborhoods should not be seen as passive, static products, since the dynamic of change comes from factors outside of the neighborhood. The residents can potentially redefine the neighborhood through encountering new images, people and technologies outside of their neighborhood (Savage & Longhurst, 2005, p. 7). In today's Lisbon, this process might happen on a daily basis as the city is in constant change.

### Imagined communities

To understand the dynamics of the city, I believe the expression 'imagined communities' is useful. Appadurai states that 'The imagination has become a collective, social fact' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5), building on the technological changes during the last century. The development of imaginations, he claims, 'is the basis of the plurality of imagined worlds'. Imagination in its collective forms creates ideas such as neighborhood and nationhood. The imagination can also be seen as a 'staging ground for action', not just a simple escape from reality (Appadurai, 1996, p. 7). These connections between imagination and nationhood are also supported by Benedict Anderson (2010). He defines the nation as 'an imagined political

community' due to the fact that most of the members of any nation will never know nor meet each other (Anderson, 2010, p. 49) . Even so, they carry with them a sense of belonging, of being part of the community. According to Anderson, what created these imaginations was the convergence of capitalism and print technology. By exposing the diversity of human language it gave different groups a common ground of imagination through language and its central role to the nation (Anderson, 2010, pp. 57-58).

# Lisbon and the relation to space

Mainland Portugal is today divided into eighteen districts, where Lisbon is one of them. The municipality of Lisbon is again divided into twenty four freguesias (parishes). Both the foreigners and local people do however commonly refer to the different spaces in Lisbon as "bairros de Lisboa" (neighborhoods). There are no defined boundaries of the neighborhoods, but they do typically have a common historical culture and living standard, as well as similar architecture. People know more or less where the 'borders' are, and many people living in Lisbon have an opinion about the characteristics of the different neighborhoods.

Some examples are Alfama, known as one of the last 'authentic neighborhoods' and Bairro Alto, as the party district of the city. Santos is seen as a gentrified neighborhood full of tourists and foreigners. Many of the neighborhoods are changing a lot these days. As discussed in the chapter on gentrification, buildings are being renovated, and new businesses create new life to old abandoned buildings and streets. At the same time they change the dynamics within the neighborhoods, and also the people's imagination of what these neighborhoods are. Take Joao's image of the Bairro Intendente as a neighborhood 'full of human trafficking', which is now seen as a cool area with nice restaurants and trendy bars.

# Local places

Throughout my fieldwork in Lisbon I was taken to some local neighborhoods by Portuguese interlocutors. I was also brought to places some of my foreign interlocutors saw as local places. When conducting interviews, I asked my interlocutors what areas they frequented, and not, if any. Axel told me about a neighborhood he saw as a Portuguese one: "*There's a*

*neighborhood a little bit North called Alvalade, that I really like a lot. It's just a few stops up. It has good restaurants, it's still on the green line, it feels like a real community, so I like that area*". He is making an effort to get to know the local places, culture and people. Throughout my fieldwork he shows me several places around the city that he considers local.

**Local neighborhoods**

Walking around Alvalade with Marcus, I learn a lot more about the area. As we walk through his neighborhood he tells stories and points to different buildings that have changed or stayed the same for decades.

> There are mostly Portuguese people living here. On my street I know of one German, one Italian, two Polish and one French. Most of the people stay here their whole life. Their grandparents lived here, their parents lived here and now them. They work and live here and go out to eat and party here.

As we pass by different places, Marcus shares the history of each single place. From having grown up in the area, he knows a lot about it. He points to a restaurant; "*That restaurant is really good and cheap, you can spend the whole night and end up paying 7 euros*".

"*Alvalade and Campo de Ourique are almost the same. They're both expensive neighborhoods made primarily for families. I rent in Areeiro because Alvalade is very expensive*". Why is it so expensive there if they're Portuguese neighborhoods? I ask. "*Because there are only T2's or more. There are no studio apartments or T1's in these neighborhoods. In my mom's street there are only T4 apartments and on the other street there are only T2's.*" In Portugal they refer to the size of the apartment by T and the number of bedrooms in the apartment. T2 is a two bedroom apartment, whereas T0 is a studio apartment. "*But people must afford it somehow, right? Since there are mostly Portuguese people living in all of them?*" Marcus explains how the area has changed for many different reasons:

> You know, before it was normal for several generations to live together in the same house. But this is changing. Now people are more egoistic and want to live by themselves. So the elderly are sent to live in nursery homes instead of living at home with their children and grandchildren. In that way the children have the houses to themselves, or are able to rent them out, for example to foreigners.

We get to a park, Jardim do Campo Grande. It is full of university students. "*Do you see that library over there?*", Marcus asks. "T*here used to be a bookstore with old books there, as well as an African disco. Now they put a McDonald's there instead*". Why? He just shrugs his shoulders as an answer. We walk past some restaurants that all used to be banks. Then we got to an ice cream place. "*It only stays open during the summer (for 6 months) because she earns so much she doesn't need to open for the other half of the year*". The owner is an Italian lady who's been there for 30 years. According to Marcus, it's the best ice cream in Lisbon, and the place often has a line around the block. On a later occasion he brings me back there to try the ice cream. And I do get the hype. Another thing Marcus likes about the area is that they still have local stores, not just big brands and companies.

### Local but foreign neighborhood

When Kristoffer and I agreed on our interview he said he wanted to show me a neighborhood he really liked in Lisbon, called Martim Moniz. We met up there and went to Mercado Oriental for lunch. He showed me around the area and shared stories about the different places we passed by. "*This place reminds me of Grønland in Oslo*", he said. It is strongly influenced by other cultures and there are a variety of stores and restaurants with foreign foods and products (mostly Asian). After walking around for a bit we ended up in the neighborhood Intendente and continued into Casa Independente, a kind of bar in a big old house with two floors and plenty of rooms. We sat in the backyard and grabbed a beer, and joined in when a group of Portuguese people celebrating a birthday started singing.  The bar is located in the same area João referred to as one of the unsafe areas before he left the country in 2008. But now it is frequented by both Portuguese and foreign people. Maybe it has been transformed into one of the areas where locals and foreigners actually meet?

### Tascas, pastelarias and quiosques

The tascas are local restaurants, serving typical Portuguese lunch and dinner. They usually have paper tablecloths on the table, and older Portuguese people serving the food. The prices are typically way cheaper than foreign places, and on the menu they usually have several types of bacalhau (codfish), as well as other seafoods and some sort of meat, all served with potatoes and vegetables on the side.

The pastelarias are Portuguese bakeries/pastry shops where people come in for a 'café' (espresso) and some sweet pastry, often in the form of a traditional 'pastel de nata' (egg-yolk based pastry).

The quiosques are kiosks placed around in the city, serving different kinds of beverages and  a small selection of pastries. They are gathering points for many Portuguese people, typically after work. Many students also go to the quiosques to hang out and grab a beer, which is usually cheaper than in other bars.

I would argue that many of the local places mirror the Portuguese people. The quality is great, at the same time as they have a simple and down to earth appearance. Similarly, Portuguese people are generally polite and nice people who don't make too much of themselves. Lisa explains this simplicity through the way the Portuguese serve the food in local tascas: "*In general when I think of authentic Portugal, I think of really a place without, I don't know how to explain it in English, they have to present the food, they don't try to serve the food in a fancy way, they just get you straight the food*". I interpret this as a contrast to the many foreign places where they present all their dishes in a very fancy way.

### "Local" places

Axel asked me to meet up and said he knew of a local rooftop bar in Mouraria. We met up outside at the location he sent me. The building looked nothing like a bar, and I said I would've never gone inside if I wasn't with him. We went through the backyard, up some stairs and through the building to a tiny bar with two older Portuguese men behind the counter. They sold a glass of wine for one euro and fifty cents and a beer for one euro. Definitely not the typical rooftop bar prices. Axel got me a (paper) cup of whitewine and a beer for himself. We went outside to find a table. There were two different rooftops. The second one had a view of the city and the sun setting in the horizon. Before entering, Axel said there were usually only Portuguese people there. But after listening to the people around us, we concluded that there were no Portuguese people there that afternoon. Many places in Lisbon seem to be local. Some because of the prices (cheaper than the foreign places) and some because of the characteristics of the place. While most of the foreign places have been refurbished, the local places tend to be simpler in their interior design, and often also in their original architecture. So then the question is, what determines whether a place is local or not?

Is it the price range? The people working there? The condition the space is in? The people frequenting the place? Or maybe a mix of all of them?

## Associations

During my time in Lisbon I have come across several associations in the city. These have a member fee of two to five euros per semester, and provide you with a member card to present at the entrance. They often arrange concerts and other cultural events for the members to attend, and take part in. This can be jam sessions, music genre based nights (such as Latino night or Balkan party), movie nights or flea markets. Axel refers to these associations as 'social clubs': "*I think the social clubs are centers, they're spaces, there's no cost to it, so it makes it accessible for a bunch of people to just show up and try*". This, I believe, also leads to more Portuguese people using these spaces. Several of the associations are based out of old buildings and have an underground feeling to them. They differ from the fancier, expensive 'expat places' through often being in their original state as well as having a community of people who frequent the space on a regular basis, rather than the Meetups that typically attract foreigners and people temporarily in the city.

## Limited to foreigners?

I would argue that the local places described above are in themselves not limited to foreigners. But they might not be as visible or known to them. Even though several of the associations have social media where they post about their events, you have to know about the association somehow to find them. They don't put their events on apps such as MeetUp, like many 'foreign places' do. The local neighborhoods are also open to foreigners. But as many of them are located a bit further from the city center, not as many foreign people tend to go there. And as there are not as many 'attractions' to pull them there, they might not have any specific reason for spending time there. The local tascas, pastelarias and quiosques are also available to whoever wants to eat, drink or spend time there. But as described above they are usually quite simple places, with local food and drinks. They might therefore not be as attractive to the foreigners who often seek matcha lattes and fancily prepared seafood.

<center># Foreign places</center>

## **Coworking spaces**

As a response to the wave of online workers in the city, there is equally a wave of coworking spaces popping up everywhere. The coworking spaces provide the choice to pay for a day, several days, a week or pay a monthly fee to sit there as much as desired. The coworking spaces have desks to work from a personal computer, meeting rooms available for booking, phone booths to make calls, common areas for eating, taking breaks and socializing with other workers. There are also apps such as 'croissant' where you can pay for a certain amount of hours and use them in whichever one of the coworking spaces working with the app.

During my time in the field I have both paid for separate days and used the croissant app to try out a variety of different coworking spaces as a part of my research. It has provided me with knowledge about how the coworking spaces work, and who works from there. Some coworking spaces also offer office space for companies, typically startups. Here I have noted that there are some Portuguese companies renting space. Except for that, there's mostly foreigners using the coworking spaces. This is based on all the people I have met and talked to, and also based on the languages I've heard spoken in- and outside of meetings (not Portuguese).

Coworking spaces can be said to create a work community between online workers. While most of them have their job tasks and their colleagues available only through the screen, they also have the opportunity to smalltalk between meetings, and socialize during lunch. Even though it is not strengthening the bonds with the colleagues, it's a way of creating new bonds, and if one stays in the same coworking space, a way of creating a community.

## **Hipster cafés**

Ever since I came to Lisbon, I have discovered new cafés and restaurants, referred to through this dissertation as "hipster cafés". They seem to pop up everywhere. There is a commercial market for hipster cafés, and as my Portuguese interlocutor Iris put it: "*it seems like it is a bottomless well where there is always room for more cafés and coffee shops serving matcha lattes, (smoothie) bowls and pancakes*".

We continue talking about hipster culture and how it is visible in Lisbon. "I*sn't it kinda against the nature of hipsters to have things being this expensi*ve?" Iris asks. Zukin

(2014) explains that the need for shopping food or socializing over a cup of latte turns into a way of manipulating authenticity (Zukin, 2014, p. 734). Even the newest hipster cafes have authentic azulejo tiles, a tradition dating back to the seven hundreds, to create an air of authenticity.  As discussed earlier, the owners cater to the needs of the group, and in the case of the 'hipsters' (or foreigners) there is a market for hipster cafés. And as the people frequenting these cafés are people with the economic means to pay a higher price than in the local places, the prices are adjusted thereafter.

> I met up with Hannah at a hipster café at ten am. She was already there when I arrived, sitting on the sofa furthest into the café. All the other tables were already filled with young foreignlooking people eating pancakes and fancy avocado toasts. '*Wow, it's only ten o'clock and it's already full*', I said. "*Yeah, I don't understand how all these people can be here now, like don't they have to work?*" Hannah answered. After thinking about what she had just said, she corrected herself: "*Well, I guess we're also here at this time.*"

### Fancy restaurants and wine bars

According to Axel the economic gap creates such a big divide that the foreigners and locals don't cross each others paths enough. "*There's a cocktail bar down the street where, the one where we met that's really expensive. There's no way a local person would come. Unless it's a date and they really wanna impress that person, really, you know.*" He admits that he thinks places like that are a bit too much. At the same time,  "*until 5 years ago, a lot of these buildings were falling apart and not maintained and vacant. And now there's life to the streets, the neighborhoods, and it looks nice and safe and all those things.*"

### Limited to locals?

I would argue that the biggest limitation to the locals when it comes to the 'foreign spaces' described above is the prices of the services. At the same time it could be naive to think that all the Portuguese people are actually wanting to frequent the foreign places. It could very much be that the Portuguese people who do have the economic means to go to these more expensive foreign places are in a different stage of their lives, where pub crawls, clubbing and fancy brunches is simply not a priority. Maybe they are older and/or are more devoted to spending time with their family than to going out in the same way many foreigners do.

Another aspect is where their social circles are. When the imagination of meeting up with friends is at the quiosque close to university or in the neighborhood, then this might be more desirable.

# Us vs them - space version

**Difference between the foreign and local places**

"*I don't know, I guess you do feel like you're living in two worlds, like I feel like I'm living in the expat Portugal and the local Portugal. And they do kinda feel a bit different,*" Hannah explains and shrugs. During my time here I have daily been made aware of the differences between what is Portuguese and what is foreign. It is often visible when going out for food or drinks. Commenting on the prices has become a part of going out, and something most of the people around me tend to do. The prices in the city is a topic 'on everybody's lips'. More so the foreigners than the Portuguese, from my experience.

> Like you can go to a pastelaria and get a sandwich and a coffee for less than four euros. But then there are all these hipster cafeés where it would cost you 15 euros. It's just straight away, you know the difference between them, like a foreign and local place, it's obvious.

Hannah explains during our first interview. At the end of the paragraph on "local" places, I asked what defines a local place. For my interlocutors the easy answer is the price. If it is cheap, it is local, if it is expensive, it has to be foreign. This dichotomy is interesting if we look at price as one of the factors causing the boundary between our two groups.

"*The places we go to are not the fancy places that foreigners and tourists go to,*" Bernard explains as to why the Portuguese people often don't mix as much with the foreigners. Some of the places where the Portuguese people spend time are also physically separated from the rest of the city due to being located on the opposite side of the Tejo river, such as Almada: "*A lot of Portuguese people live here in Almada and they just stay here*", Pedro explains. "T*hat's why you saw a lot of people here on Friday. I go more to the other side than here. There are still places here I don't know, although I've lived here for 5 years*".

According to Zukin (2004) the cultural gap between the 'old residents' and the 'hipsters' is too big for the owners of consumption spaces to be able to fill (Zukin, 2004, p. 731). Therefore the consumption space has to cater to one group or the other. This can be based on economic factors such as the price of the products or cultural factors such as aesthetics and comfort level, but also exclusion from urban space (Zukin, 2004, p. 735). Zukin argues that the groups are too far from each other, for the owners to be able to meet the needs of both groups. In that way the consumption space has to choose one group over the other and will in that way keep the other group out. I would argue that in the case of Lisbon, the preferred group has come to be the foreigners, as they typically are willing and able to pay more for the products and services. But this can also serve as an explanation as to why most places in Lisbon fall into one of the two groups, either 'local' or 'foreign'.

### How they move within the space

Another aspect differing between the groups is how they move within the space of the city. Here it is however important to point out that this also varies within the groups. The city of Lisbon provides many public transportation options. There is the metro, the traditional trams, modern trams, buses, and trains commuting to the more peripheral areas. As I have described through this thesis, many of the locals are in general living further outside of the city than the foreigners. They are therefore also more dependent upon public transportation. Some of my interlocutors do not use public transport at all, but exclusively get around by Ubers.

After meeting an interlocutor for the second time, we walked together towards the bus. He asked me several questions about it. How did I know which bus to take, and where to get on and off? And did I pay on the bus or have some kind of monthly pass? A bit surprised by the questions I asked him if he didn't normally take the bus himself. He told me he usually just took Ubers around the city, since they were so cheap here. And if things were relatively close, he preferred walking, to "*go down underground into some cramped metro*". He walked me to the bus stop, and we kept on talking until my bus arrived. I tried to convince him to join me, as he told me he had never taken the bus in Lisbon before, after three years of living here. He wasn't convinced and we said goodbye. He stayed behind to book an Uber.

Another example of ubering around the city is Jacob. I took the bus to the area we agreed to meet in, due to a special restaurant we wanted to check out. As I walked from the bus stop, a car rolled up and stopped next to me. Jacob came out and greeted me. He came by Uber to

the location, as it was the easiest way to "get all the way out here" he said. After talking a bit about the Uber culture in Lisbon, he shared that he takes Ubers everywhere.

> The company I work for was supposed to provide me with a car. But parking in Lisbon can be quite difficult to find, and also traffic can get pretty bad. So I bargained a deal with them, Since I don't have a car that's paid by the company, they pay for my Uber rides. First the deal was just work related things. But since I would also be able to use a car for my spare time activities, we decided to include the sparetime as well. So that means I can go wherever I want with Ubers, and the company will pay for it.

# Invisible fences

I would argue that there exists a set of invisible fences in Lisbon. By this I am referring to Marianne Gullestad's (1989) concept of invisible fences as borders set up by one group of people to distance themselves from others. This creates an 'us' and a 'them' where the groups become segregated from one another. Gullestad explains how the term 'immigrant' in Norway is being used about 'the other' and how it works as an invisible fence between them and the Norwegian people. She provides an example of an Indian woman with Norwegian citizenship and knowledge of the Norwegian language, who is told by a professor that no matter what she does, she will remain an 'immigrant' in Norway for 'all her life' (Gullestad, 1989, p. 50).

Through this dissertation I have looked at the differences between the Portuguese community and the foreigners in the city. As discussed in chapter 3, there exist a variety of words to describe the non-Portuguese people in Lisbon; foreigner, expat, digital nomad and immigrant. These are descriptions categorizing people based on their nationality as non-Portuguese and their status in the country based on their intentions of staying. But they also create a border between the groups. When speaking to João about the difference between the terms, he asked why some people don't want to be called an expat. From the information provided through this dissertation, I believe that being put into one of the 'foreigners categories' reminds some foreigners that they are not a part of the local community, and as in the example from Gullestad, that the foreigner might not ever be able to move from that group to the local one. This becomes clear through Axel's desire of "*one day becoming Portuguese*".

One way to confirm sameness or difference can be through availability and unavailability. According to Gullestad people can recognize themselves as equal through being available to others. Unavailability then becomes a sign of differences (Gullestad, 1989, pp. 90-91). If one experiences another as too different from oneself it can be easier to create distance than to confront the differences. This is how the 'symbolic fences' are created. The fences create a social border to whom one interacts with and not. One of the contexts where this becomes visible in Lisbon is through the use of language. As soon as someone is perceived as non-Portuguese, most Portuguese people in Lisbon will switch to English. In that way English becomes a way of keeping a certain distance to 'the other'. At the same time, as argued in chapter 5, the English language also becomes a way of creating a distance to those without the language knowledge.

Why is it so important to fit together? The people that fit together can according to Gullestad (1989) be defined as the people with similar expectations and rules for what is the correct way to act in various interactional situations. These mindsets can vary from one society to another and may be strongly influenced by different peoples' lifestyles. Lifestyles can in this case be defined as different economic, organizational and cultural aspects by a specific way of life (Gullestad 1989, p. 86). This may be anything from occupation and eating habits to how social interaction is organized. In the case of Lisbon, I would argue that the Portuguese people typically have a similar lifestyle, and therefore 'fit together'. Similarly, foreigners share many of the same habits and have a similar spending power, which also makes them 'fit together' as a group.

But what does these differences in lifestyles mean to how connections between people are created, maintained or cut? Gullestad argues, in her article, that sameness in Norway can be seen as more or less like equality. She shows this through theory about Norwegians interacting with each other in a way where they highlight what they have in common and leave out their differences. An example of this can be the Norwegian national day, where everyone gets together and celebrates, regardless of how they live their lives during the rest of the year.

In the context of Portugal and Lisbon, this could be compared to the 25th of April, which is Portugal's Freedom day (commemorating the Carnation Revolution). This is celebrated with parades of Portuguese people walking with different organizations and slogans. They all shout phrases related to "never more fascism", and it doesn't matter what their life looks like

during the rest of the year. They all agree that they don't want to go back to fascism like under the dictatorship. The 25th of April is a national holiday in Portugal, meaning that most Portuguese people are off work. The parade as well as the program of speeches and entertainment on this day is all in Portuguese (naturally), which one could argue excludes all the foreigners not knowing Portuguese. As it is a Portuguese historically important day, it would however be strange if they were to adapt the day for non-Portuguese people to participate. As many of the city's foreigners work for international companies, they might have to work on this day (and other national holidays), leading to them not having the chance of participating.

But why is it that we surround ourselves with the people that resemble us the most, instead of learning and growing through surrounding ourselves with people with other worldviews and values than ourselves? According to Gullestad, it could be because of identity. Who are we? Our identity is not just a product of who we want to be, but a result of the statuses other people attribute us. It doesn't help to walk around acting like the king of Norway if no one else recognizes that as your identity. It can be argued that surrounding yourself with other people with certain similarities with oneself can confirm the identity one wishes to inhabit. So maybe the fencing is a way for Portuguese people to maintain their identity as Portuguese, in a city that is becoming increasingly international?

### "Foreigners use the city, locals stay at home"

The headline of this part might be controversial. But in a way it sums up what I have been told, what I've seen and what I've experienced during my time in the field. Axel explains why the expats and the Portuguese don´t cross paths very often since the places the groups go are different, because they have different circles and means of meeting people: *"The reality is, and that's why the expat groups cross, because, you know we're the ones going out to all the places and I think a lot of locals have their place and they see their friends usually at home or more local places. Not at a meetup, like why would they go to a meetup?"* Axel asks me in a rhetorical way.

What makes a place a home? The short answer is the people. Through this thesis I have looked at how the sense of community, social relations and communication defines the sense of belonging in Lisbon. Most of the networks I've come across during my fieldwork have been fluid, where people come and go. My only interlocutor with a constant network is Axel.

He told me he was looking for a place to feel at home. He wanted to be surrounded by people he could see over and over again without too much difficulty. This is something he has managed to create for himself here in Lisbon. There is a chance of spending time together with these people over the course of ten or twenty years, he continued. "*You're the only person I know that might not stay. I mean almost everyone I see regularly has moved here permanently and made Lisbon their home.*"

# Conclusion

Never before has it been easier to work from our computer and bring work with us to whatever part of the world we desire, as long as there is a decent internet connection available. The new work lifestyle has provided many advantages, primarily that of leading a more flexible life. At the same time the flexible workers are still bound by common denominators such as being time dependent and societal issues. The blurring of work and homelife has also been shown as a significant negative consequence of remote working. Throughout this thesis I've worked to dive deeper into the social aspects of these rapid changes. I've looked at how the significance of place and space are being challenged through new ways of using and being in a space. I believe that human connection is still something that differs between online- and in person contact, and I am curious to see how both the consequences and solutions for human sociality becoming more and more digital will look like in the near and distant future.

*"In Rome, do like the Romans"*, Peter told me before he got into an Uber. As he ubered everywhere I found it rather ironic that he would quote such a thing, but it sure made me question a lot of things. With foreigners becoming such a dominant group in the city of Lisbon, who would actually be considered 'the Romans'? Is it the Portuguese people just because they grew up there? Or is it the foreigners who've settled down and made Lisbon their home? The ones that make use of the city and have made it their mission to try every new place that pops up?

The globalization and gentrification of Lisbon as a capital and big city is not something completely different from the rest of the world, where cities like Berlin and Barcelona have been through a long gentrification process already. What is special in Lisbon is the wide gap between the Portuguese lifestyle opportunities and the foreign lifestyles in the city. On top of that, the gentrification of Lisbon is happening in a time of "accelerated change" as my supervisor, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, would call it. This is reflected in the exponential growth of the price of apartments in the city. The Portuguese lead a very different lifestyle in the city than what the foreigners tend to do. The Portuguese are more family oriented, whilst the expat communities are based on transient groups of friends. The boundaries between these two groups are created and reinforced by different languages and different spending powers. In this sense, the shared objective space Lisbon becomes very different subjective places for members of the two different groups.

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