Proxemics and Historic Housing Tourism in Portuguese Manor Houses

A Proxémica e o Turismo de Habitação em Casas Solarengas Portuguesas

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Objectives | The aim of this research will be to compare the results obtained within the scope of doctoral research – which materialized in the application of Grounded Theory methods to the substantive area of Historic Housing Tourism – with the theory of proxemics, developed in the 1960s by Edward T. Hall. In this sense, the Grounded Theory that was applied to Historic Housing Tourism allowed the emergence of two properties of the category "Accommodation Exploitation Modality": "Segregating" and "Approximating", which made clear the adjustment of the emerging theory to the theory of proxemics developed by Hall.

Methodology | This study is based on 53 unstructured interviews and 5 participant observations conducted with owners and hosts of manor houses (i.e. Historic Housing Tourism) between 2011 and 2014. As part of this study, 48 face-to-face interviews, 3 by telephone and 2 by email were conducted with owners/hosts of houses used in the aforementioned modality. In terms of sampling, owners/hosts of manor houses were interviewed in Minho (34), Douro Litoral (4), Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (3), Beira Litoral (4), Beira Alta (1), Ribatejo (1), Alto Alentejo (2), Baixo Alentejo (3), Algarve (1) and Azores (2). Historic Housing Tourism houses are small in size (2 to 15 rooms). Data analysis followed the precepts of Glaserian Grounded Theory, constituting an iterative process that goes through the following steps: open coding, constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, identification of the central category, selective coding, classification of memos, theoretical coding and writing memos.

Main results and contributions | The spatial "segregation" carried out by the owners/hosts can be implemented immediately when the main house is re-functionalised to accommodate the AEM, by prohibiting guest access to certain rooms of the house and by converting the outbuildings, which become exclusive hosting areas. In the professionalisation phase of the AEM, there seems to be a tendency to create spaces inside the house for the exclusive use of guests that are closer to

the stereotypical structure of massive accommodation, as in the case of outbuildings, with the owners and their families remaining with a substantial part of the main house for themselves and, eventually, for family guests. On the other hand, the closer the contact between the guests and the host family, the more the former will participate in the latter's family life during their stay. They will enjoy the house more since their tastes are already known to the host, and the surroundings since they already know them. Internal separation can be achieved in the following ways: separation by floor, opening bedroom doors to the outside and creating outbuildings exclusively for tourism. Another way of creating obstacles for guests is for the host to keep the doors closed. The host may create these subterfuges to defend himself and preserve his privacy. Or he may have mental circuits that he runs in the main house to avoid inappropriate contact. In this way, each host will present a distinctive accommodation proposal, which may include more or less proximity to the host family and more or less autonomy for the guests in the house. In the improvisation phase of the AEM (which took place, in most cases, during the 1980s), there is a greater closeness between the host and the guest that can lead to the former not feeling fulfilled due to situations of sharing bad intimacy, owing to the forced cohabitation that is established between the host's family and the guest.

Limitations | Although the data collected for this study were collected some time ago, which constitutes a limitation, the abstract nature of the categories generated by Grounded Theory allows them to remain current for a long time and can be modified at any time. In fact, one of the criteria by which Grounded Theory should be judged is "Modifiability".

Conclusions | The present work constitutes an innovation, by maintaining that in Historic Housing Tourism the theory developed by Edward T. Hall can be verified, particularly with regard to distance in a social situation, that is, "a small protective sphere or bubble that an organism maintains between itself and others". The study will present the categories "approximating" and "segregating" that substantiate the application of this theory.

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