# Tourism gentrification in smaller destinations in Central and Eastern Europe

A study about physical changes and its influence on tourism gentrification

# Abstract

In recent years, low-cost flights to smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe grew fast. This growth offered tourists new possibilities to explore new, lesser-known destinations at a low price. At the same time, urban tourism is a common strategy for urban regeneration and development in Central and Eastern Europe, and therefore, a significant factor of the economic restructuring of Post-Socialist European cities. The relations between urban development and tourism are often discussed alongside the rather new concept of tourism gentrification. Previous research of the region in the field of tourism gentrification is scarce with its primary focus on large touristic cities such as Prague, Kraków, and Budapest. These studies have shown that gentrification patterns in these cities center more around physical and commercial changes than socio-cultural and residential impacts. In smaller cities, which were recently connected by low-cost carriers, however, hardly any research has been undertaken, while tourism to these cities is growing at a high pace. The study therefore analyzed changes to the physical environment in three smaller less-known cities: Rzeszów, Lublin, and Ostrava. With the use of observations on site, observations on Instagram and semi-structured interviews, the study explained and discussed the influence of physical changes to tourism gentrification. The study showed that physical changes influence tourism gentrification along four different aspects:

- The construction of new neighborhoods in the outskirts influence commercial gentrification but also indirectly change socio-cultural aspects of the cities.

- The renovation and repurposing of buildings lead to a more attractive cityscape and local-driven commercialization but might also entail aspects of residential gentrification.

- The implementation of cultural and sportive attractions into the cities' public spaces lead to a museumification and co-creation of tourist experiences, which impacts the socio-cultural diversity of the city.

- An aestheticization of non-renovated buildings through small paintings and graffiti lead to a geographical spread of tourists in the city together with a tourist-driven creation of attractions.

Insofar, physical changes influence and interact with a variety of tourism gentrification aspects in cities and are thus an essential part of the tourism development in cities. However, the lines between gentrification and tourism gentrification are blurred, and further research is needed to advance in the understanding of physical changes and their influence on tourism gentrification.

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# 1 Introduction

In the last years, city tourism in Europe has been growing extensively (Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Pasquinelli, 2015). One major factor which led to this growth was the liberalization of air traffic markets in Europe and the consequent introduction of low-cost flights across Europe (Forsyth, 2006; Rey, Myro, & Galera, 2011). In the beginning of this growth, low-cost carriers (LCC) mainly connected large cities in Western Europe with seaside destinations in Southern Europe (Bieger & Wittmer, 2006; A. Graham & Dennis, 2010; Vera Rebollo & Ivars Baidal, 2009). The enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007 widened the liberalized air space and at the same time opened up new potential for LCC to expand (Dobruszkes, 2009; A. Graham & Dennis, 2010). Routes to Central and Eastern Europe were implemented within a short time after the accession of these countries to the EU and led to a more dispersed network of LCC within Europe. A characteristic of this growth was the introduction of flights between secondary airports in Western Europe and regional airports in Eastern Europe (Dobruszkes, 2006; B. Graham & Shaw, 2008).

Several studies have shown that LCC have the potential to create demand for flights and thus tourism to destinations, where previously has not been any demand, and that already the supply of new routes creates demand. The creation of new demand is especially applicable to regional destinations in Central and Eastern Europe. (Boonekamp, Zuidberg, & Burghouwt, 2018; Donzelli, 2010; Forsyth, 2006; Lian & Denstadli, 2010). Thus, the destination choice of tourists seems to be at least partly influenced by the price of the flight ticket and a certain amount of tourists would otherwise not have traveled to the places they were going (Bjelicic, 2007; Castillo-Manzano, López-Valpuesta, & González-Laxe, 2011; Pijet-Migoń, 2017; Vera Rebollo & Ivars Baidal, 2009). In Poland, approximately 20 – 30 % of all passengers arriving at regional airports with LCC are incoming tourists (Echevarne, 2008; Marek & Liszewski, 2015). Several authors thus argue that LCC might be a pre-condition to attract tourists to smaller Central and Eastern European destinations (Bjelicic, 2007; Papatheodorou & Lei, 2006; Pijet-Migoń, 2017). Insofar, LCC influence the rise of less-known tourist destinations, for example, in Central and Eastern Europe.

Increasing tourism to destinations has impacts on the places and the potential to shape and reshape the urban environment. Different studies show that in Central and Eastern European destinations a growth of the accommodation and catering sector, as well as party and stag-tourism, has been observed after the arrival of LCC (Bjelicic, 2007; Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018). Thus, LCC play a vital role in the social and economic development of regions (Hudurek (2008) cited in Costa &

Almeida, 2018) and can further lead to new images of smaller, less-known cities and a possible inflow of foreign investments (Pijet-Migoń, 2017). Destinations in Central and Eastern Europe are currently experiencing massive tourism growth and are now in a development phase, where tourism is becoming crucial for many cities while problems of the negative aspects of overtourism have not yet been experienced (Kádár, 2013; Kotus, Rzeszewski, & Ewertowski, 2015).

Some authors argue that especially the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the accession to the European Union of Central and Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007 respectively, lead to many opportunities for urban development and economic recovery in Central and Eastern Europe (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, Sztybel-Boberek, & Wolaniuk, 2017). However, in comparison to cities in Western Europe, the rapid economic and societal changes after the post-socialist times have led to different urban development patterns (Kovács, Wiessner, & Zischner, 2013). Temelová (2007) argues that local transformation processes and the simultaneous globalization make the urban development of cities in Central and Eastern Europe to a distinctive case. It has further been argued, that change processes mainly center around physical and commercial changes, whereas socio-cultural or residential changes are limited (Haase, Grossmann, & Steinführer, 2012; Kovács et al., 2013). In combination with the use of tourism as urban development and economic recovering strategy in smaller cities (Coles, 2010; Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Edwards, Griffin, & Hayllar, 2008; Hall, 2008), it is needed to advance the understanding of urban changes in connection with tourism in the specific context of Central and Eastern Europe.

The interplay of urban changes and tourism growth is as a field of prolonged neglected research (Freytag & Bauder, 2018). So far, changes in the urban space caused by tourism have mainly been researched in "sun-and-beach" destinations in Southern Europe (McLennan, Ruhanen, Ritchie, & Pham, 2010) as well as in major tourist cities such as Paris or London (Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Maitland & Alvarez, 2010). In Central and Eastern European cities, however, there is not much "specific, reliable and well-documented research data on the physical impacts of tourism […]" (Puczkó & Rátz, 2000, p. 473). The sharp increase in tourist arrivals led to the situation that urban planning of environments for residents and visitors could not have been planned as in Western countries, which impacted the development of tourism services in the city (Kádár, 2013). An absence of urban policies on tourism, however, can lead to unfavorable developments and impact the life of the inhabitants (Kotus et al., 2015).

From a societal perspective, urban regeneration through tourism should not only be economically but also environmentally and societally sustainable (Wise, 2016). However, in most of the cases, cities aim to improve their economic strength when developing new touristic offerings, which could end up in negative impacts for the residents and the environment (Wise, 2016). Tourism might impact the residents in a variety of ways. A loss of the sense of the place, noise emissions, displacements of residents and increasing difficulty to live an ordinary life (Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Novy & Colomb, 2017), are some aspects to name but a few. Resistance from inhabitants against tourism growth and protests have occurred recently (Koens, Postma, & Papp, 2018). Increasing awareness of overtourism and a growing number of studies in the field call for a better understanding of changing processes in cities (Koens et al., 2018).

Changing characteristics of cities are part of urban planning and transformation research and have often been discussed with the concept of gentrification (Gotham, 2005; N. Smith, 1979, 2002). The concept of gentrification explains urban changes as an economic process influenced by shifts in global capital or changing characteristics and preferences of consumers (Hamnett, 2003; N. Smith, 1979). In recent years, there has been increasing acceptance that tourism itself can be a driver of gentrification as well (Barata-Salgueiro, Mendes, & Guimarães, 2017; Gotham, 2018; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). However, research of urban changes and urban planning have hardly been connected to research about tourism (Dumbrovská & Fialová, 2014) and thus, an in-depth understanding of the interrelations is missing. At the same time, there is increasing evidence that the lines between tourists and locals become more blurred, which calls for a combined approach (Pasquinelli, 2015). Tourism gentrification, as a relatively new research field, aims to develop an understanding of tourism as a driver of gentrification and therefore combines urban planning studies with tourism studies (Gotham, 2018). Nevertheless, research is sparse, and theoretical models are hardly available (Cocola Gant, 2018a). Another complication of the concept of tourism gentrification is differing patterns of development in emerging countries (Liang, 2017).

Therefore, this study focuses on the research problem that cities in Central and Eastern Europe are currently undergoing a variety of urban development and regeneration processes and at the same time, tourism is used as a development strategy and is growing. However, an understanding of the interrelations between urban development and tourism growth is missing. The rapid changes in post-socialist Europe further distinguish the urban development processes from a Western European context. At the same time, studies in major cities show that urban changes have the potential to impact the quality of life of residents, and tourism can further lead to adverse effects for the local

community. Physical changes in cities such as the construction of new buildings, the renovation of old buildings or the development of public spaces are considered to increase the attractiveness of the city and influence tourism gentrification (Liang & Bao, 2015; Puczkó & Rátz, 2000; van der Zwan, 2016; Vicario & Monje, 2003). In combination with the argument, that urban development processes in Central and Eastern Europe tend to focus on physical and commercial changes (Haase et al., 2012; Kovács et al., 2013), the author argues that the interrelations of physical changes and tourism gentrification need further research. The concept of tourism gentrification builds a base for advancement in the understanding of tourism as a driver of gentrification but needs to be applied to the specific context of the cities in post-socialist Europe. By analyzing physical changes in urban environments, the influence of these on tourism gentrification in cities in Central and Eastern Europe can be better understood, which further advances the understanding of tourism gentrification in general.

This study aims to advance the understanding of physical changes and its connection to tourism gentrification in the context of smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe while not neglecting the interconnectedness of socio-cultural, economic and residential impacts in the analysis.

The research question for this project is:

How do physical changes influence tourism gentrification in smaller destinations in Central and Eastern Europe?

The remainder of the study is laid out in the following structure. The next chapter describes and explains the interconnections of tourism and urban development and its connections to gentrification. Afterwards, the author introduces the concept of tourism gentrification and its different aspects, focusing mainly on physical changes. Chapter 3 clarifies the methodology and its limitations. Chapter 4 presents and describes the findings from the data analysis, while Chapter 5 discusses and analyses the findings in relation to the concept of tourism gentrification. The study closes with the main findings and suggestions for further research.

## 2   Background

The following chapter aims to expand the readers understanding of the connections between tourism, gentrification, and the concept of tourism gentrification.

### 2.1   Tourism and urban development

Tourism is increasingly considered as a strategy for economic development of a variety of places and destinations around the world since it is considered as a driver of additional income for the respective destination (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2011; Kotus et al., 2015; Przybyła & Kulczyk-Dynowska, 2018; Vera Rebollo & Ivars Baidal, 2009). Especially for smaller cities, tourism development seems to be an acknowledged and conducted strategy to counteract their lack of highly developed producer services (Ashworth & Page, 2011). In the context of post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, tourism has been considered as one of the significant factors of economic recovery after the fall of the Iron Curtain in the beginning of the 1990s and the potential of tourism to regenerate post-industrial cities has been widely recognized (Coles, 2010; Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Edwards et al., 2008; Hall, 2008).

However, tourism development does not exist in isolation. In many cases, it goes hand-in-hand with urban regeneration and the revitalization of places (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2011; Öztürk & Terhorst, 2012; Vera Rebollo & Ivars Baidal, 2009). While in some instances, the promotion strategy of urban tourism differs from general urban development strategies (Öztürk & Terhorst, 2012), in others, tourism demand influences the urban planning in the long-run (Pulina & Cortés-Jiménez, 2010). Öztürk and Terhorst (2012) argue that tourism strategies should be implemented in the urban development strategy. However, urban tourism as a driver of urban development has only recently received the attention of urban development academics (Pasquinelli, 2015).

Urban tourism as a research field can be traced back to the 1980s (Edwards et al., 2008). Since then, there have been several attempts to define the concept. However, blurring lines between tourism and temporary migration as well as changing mobility and behavioral patterns of residents make it difficult to arrive at a generally accepted definition of what entails urban tourism (Pasquinelli, 2015). Pasquinelli (2015) describes urban tourism as "trips to places of high population density" (p. 9) which are attractive due to their usual long history, their cultural heritage as well as their excellent accommodation and transport infrastructure (Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018). Urban tourism is treated as " a special interest activity which is by definition only a continuance on holiday of accustomed

interests and activities" (Ashworth & Page, 2011, p. 7). This definition means that urban tourism is doing the same things in other places. It is widely accepted that urban tourism is different from other forms of tourism, along with five aspects:

- The main purpose of a visit is often not leisure activities
- The local population uses to a great extent the same facilities and infrastructure as tourists
- Primary and secondary attractions characterize the destination
- The stay in the urban area is usually shorter than at other tourist destinations
- Tourism is only one part of the economy and often not the biggest contributor to the city's economy

(Ashworth & Page, 2011; Dumbrovská & Fialová, 2014; Edwards et al., 2008; Pasquinelli, 2015).Insofar, urban tourism is strongly connected to a variety of aspects within cities, and it is tricky to break down tourist motivations, behavioral patterns, the length of stay as well as the economic importance of urban tourism for cities.

Despite the fact that urban tourism is only one part of the economy of cities, tourism has the potential to transform cities, to regenerate abandoned or declining areas and is a factor which influences also social, environmental and cultural aspects of the city (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Edwards et al., 2008; Griffin & Dimanche, 2017). Especially in smaller, less-known destinations could growth in tourism lead to changes in the city, such as an upgrading of the central part together with a degrading of other parts (Kotus et al., 2015; Pasquinelli, 2015; Pasquinelli & Bellini, 2017). Coles (2010) argues that tourism can thus be seen as a part of broader regeneration programs aiming to form a place identity and by supporting infrastructure for wider business development.

While some authors argue that tourism as an economic factor is overestimated (Ashworth & Page, 2011), others mention that tourism can become one of the main drivers of the local economy affecting the shape and functioning of the whole city (Pasquinelli, 2015). Postma and Schmuecker (2017) mentioned that many stores and facilities would not be economically viable without tourists as additional customers. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that tourism creates jobs and thus offers new working possibilities for residents, strengthening the economic power of cities (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2011). However, since a lot of facilities, which are used by tourists, are for free, the tourists are enjoying the benefits of the city without paying for it (Ashworth & Page, 2011). Another aspect mentioned in terms of economic impacts of tourism to cities is that the cities which receive the highest amount of tourists seem to be the least dependent on tourism as an economic factor, while cities who rely on tourism attract fewer tourists than the major tourist cities (Ashworth &

Page, 2011). Besides the contested nature of economic impacts of tourism, there is increasing recognition in the literature that tourism also impacts other aspects of the urban fabric (Edwards et al., 2008; Griffin & Dimanche, 2017). The concept of gentrification has often been used to describe changes in urban environments (Koens et al., 2018; N. Smith, 2002). It is thus essential to understand it in connection with urban development.

## 2.2   Gentrification as a concept for urban development

Urban changes have often been described and researched under the term gentrification (N. Smith, 2002). Ruth Glass (1964, as cited in Cocola Gant, 2018a, p. 11) initially defined the concept of gentrification as the "transformation of a working-class area of a central city into middle-class residential and commercial space." Drawing on examples from London, Glass pointed out how residents of a higher-income class bought old houses and renovated them to live in there, which led to increasing property prices in the neighborhood and displaced people of lower societal classes (Davidson & Lees, 2005). Over time, two major lines of argumentations about the causes of gentrification developed. The first, production-oriented explanation understands gentrification as an economic process which includes de-industrialization, suburbanization, the spatial centralization and decentralization of capital and falling profits in accumulation of capital (N. Smith, 1979). Within the production-side approach, gentrification is seen as a process influenced by the capitalist economy and is mainly market-driven. It occurs when the expected profit of upgrading housing units in the city center are higher than in the suburbs. It leads to a move of capital towards the city, followed by residents who are attracted by the lower price and the advantages of living in the center (N. Smith, 1979). The consumption-sided explanation of gentrification, argue that the reasons for gentrification are connected to changing socio-cultural characteristics of citizens which are influenced by the move from secondary to the tertiary business structure of cities and the change in predominant professions in cities (Hamnett, 2003).

Essential in the whole debate of production versus consumption-side explanations of gentrification is though that gentrification in both approaches is seen as a process of inner-city neighborhood change (Hamnett, 2003). This somewhat limited view of gentrification has been questioned increasingly since the initial definition. Nowadays, it is widely accepted that gentrification is a far more complex process which involves physical, social, cultural, and residential aspects (Davidson & Lees, 2005; Hamnett, 2003). Furthermore, gentrification is occurring worldwide, both in urban and rural environments (N. Smith, 2002). Insofar, Kovács et al. (2013) have even argued that

gentrification is used as a "catch-all term used to describe a great variety of social and physical urban transformation processes" (p. 24).

Four characteristics conceptualize the current gentrification:

- Reinvestment of capital

- Social upgrading of areas by incoming high-income groups

- Change in the landscape

- Direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups

(Davidson & Lees, 2005; Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017).


The actors involved, the location and the form of gentrification are very context-dependent. Actors potentially involved in gentrification processes are the government, private investors, students, tourists, artists and the middle-and-high income class (Gotham, 2005; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017; N. Smith, 2002). As previously mentioned, gentrification processes have been observed in a variety of locations around the world, both in inner-cities, rural areas and brownfield sites (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017; Kovács et al., 2013; N. Smith, 2002). Moreover, it is accepted that gentrification involves not only residential changes as in previous definitions but also commercial and social aspects as well as the gentrification of already gentrified areas or the construction of new buildings (Davidson & Lees, 2005). This increasing variety of different gentrification patterns is also location dependent.


In the context of Central and Eastern European cities, it is argued, that gentrification follows partly different patterns than in Western Europe (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017; Kovács et al., 2013; M. K. Smith et al., 2018). Firstly, it has been argued that gentrification processes in Central and Eastern Europe are mainly driven by the private sector due to weak political situations, whereas in Western cities, the local government is often involved in regeneration projects (Galuszka, 2017; Temelová, 2007). Secondly, the gentrification process itself mainly focuses on specific areas in the city, while other areas remain rather run-down (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017; Kovács et al., 2013; Sýkora, 2005). Thirdly, a displacement of residents of lower social classes, which is a characteristic of Western gentrification (e.g.Gotham, 2005; Hamnett, 2003) is observed less as residents were able to purchase their apartment for a low price after the break down of the Soviet Union during mass privatizations of housings (Haase et al., 2012; Kovács et al., 2013).


Given these specific characteristics of Central and Eastern European gentrification processes, it can be assumed that the changing process is more physical and commercial rather than connected to

residential changes. Besides, it has been argued that in regional cities with a rather small amount of middle- and high-class residents, tourism plays a vital role in gentrification processes, since tourism is seen as the easiest way to improve the economic balance of the city and thus, the tourists purchasing power is needed for regeneration (Cocola Gant, 2018a).

Therefore, tourism can be considered as a factor influencing gentrification in Central and Eastern Europe. The concept of tourism gentrification, which will be introduced in the next sub-chapter, aims to advance the understanding of tourism as a driver of gentrification.

## 2.3  Tourism gentrification

The development of tourism in a destination is, as previously mentioned, considered as a strategy of urban development and revitalization. Together with the argument, that gentrification is considered as a global strategy of urban development (N. Smith, 2002), there is growing acceptance in literature, that tourism itself is a driver of gentrification and thus plays an active role in the urban development (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Cocola Gant, 2018b). The concept of tourism gentrification is used to advance the understanding of the role of tourism in the development of places from a gentrification perspective (Gotham, 2018). The concept of tourism gentrification combines studies of urban tourism with gentrification studies and helps to advance the understanding of the mutual processes (Pasquinelli, 2015). One of the first authors who pointed out the distinctions of tourism gentrification was Kevin Fox Gotham (Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). He defined tourism gentrification as "the transformation of a middle-class neighborhood into a relatively affluent and exclusive enclave marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues" (Gotham, 2005, p. 1102). In comparison to gentrification as it has been defined by Glass (see chapter 2.2), the driver of gentrification in Gotham's case are international companies targeting mainly tourists. These companies use local images which are attractive to tourists to market their products and services (Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017).

However, this definition has been challenged and expanded by several authors. Firstly, Cocola Gant (2018b) argues, that Gotham bases his definition on the assumption that tourism is an isolated phenomenon and occurs only in parts of the city. In the last years, tourism development has often spread to places which have not been designed for tourists specifically (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Füller & Michel, 2014; Maitland & Alvarez, 2010) and thus, tourism gentrification does not seem to appear in specific neighborhoods only. Secondly, similar to the concept of gentrification in general, tourism gentrification has also been observed in rural areas such as coastlines, and urban brownfields – areas which not have been populated before (Liang & Bao, 2015). Thirdly, it seems that tourism

gentrification is not driven by multinational companies only, but also by the actions of local companies and the tourists themselves (Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). Cocola Gant (2018b) further points out that tourism overlaps with other aspects of consumption and production, and thus, tourism and gentrification are mutually reinforcing processes. Therefore, tourism gentrification deals with the role of tourism in shaping and influencing the environments in which tourism takes place. Within the tourism gentrification literature, four distinct aspects can be identified:

- Commercial gentrification
- Residential gentrification
- Socio-cultural gentrification
- Physical gentrification

The next sections explain these different aspects and consequently help to understand the concept of tourism gentrification.

### 2.3.1   Commercial gentrification

One aspect of tourism gentrification, which is regularly considered in literature is the commercial gentrification. It entails the change of commercial offerings in cities towards the needs of tourists (Cocola Gant, 2018b). It is a two-sided process in which on the one hand, multinational corporations open up new stores and entertainment facilities which then attract tourists (Gotham, 2005), but on the other hand, high tourist numbers also attract these companies to open up their branches where the tourists are (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). Commercial gentrification entails the opening of pop-up stores, exclusive brands, and stores of major international chains (Gravani-Barbas, 2017), but also restaurants, nightlife facilities and other commercial offerings (Cocola Gant, 2018b). This development increases the land value and thus the rent of commercial space in these areas, which makes it often impossible for local, independent shops to stay in the area (Novy & Colomb, 2017). Moreover, tourism development as investment leads to increased privatization of public space (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Gotham, 2005), which can be characterized by fewer spaces for non-commercial interactions (Cocola Gant, 2018b). This commercialization also influences socio-cultural aspects, which will be explained in a later chapter.

### 2.3.2   Residential gentrification

In various cities, it has been noted that residents are displaced out of the city center due to foreign investments targeting tourists (e.g.Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Gotham, 2005). Driven by profit-oriented private investors, resident-housing in cities seems to be replaced by tourism accommodation, because these accommodations promise higher profits than renting to

residents (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017). Residential gentrification is further connected to the geographical spread of the tourist accommodation industry, an increase in second homes, more short-term rentals of housing and increasing rental prices and facility values (Novy & Colomb, 2017). Through platforms such as Airbnb, the former residential areas become infiltrated not only by upper-class tourists but also by middle-class and independent travelers (Gravani-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). In Paris, Gravani-Barbas (2017) observed that even very high rents could not compete with the profits of short-term rentals. Displacement of long-term residents out of the spatially centralized area and rising prices of the remaining long-term accommodations have been observed as effects (Mermet, 2017). Cocola Gant (2018b) therefore argues that growth in tourism can lead to higher property prices, which then pushes out the lower class from the center because they cannot afford to live there anymore. This change in demographic structure might lead to resistance and protests of social groups because their power in the city decreases and their community feeling is disturbed (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Füller & Michel, 2014; Novy & Colomb, 2017). This decreasing power relates to indirect displacements and social changes, which will be explained in the next subchapter. However, tourism gentrification does not necessarily replace lower-class residents by residents of higher social class. Instead, short-term contracts for tourists replace long-term contracts for residents, but still, people from different social classes stay in gentrified areas. (Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017).

### 2.3.3 Socio-cultural gentrification

An increase in tourism influences not only the commercial and residential structure of a place but also its socio-cultural composition. Tourists become one of the primary stakeholders in city centers (Gravani-Barbas & Guinand, 2017), impacting the social life in the core of cities. Several aspects of this change have been mentioned in the literature.

Firstly, changing patterns in tourist behavior in cities have been observed (Freytag & Bauder, 2018). The tourist's desire for "authentic" experiences leads to a geographical spread of tourism in cities and thus, tourists also infiltrate residential areas, which previously have not experienced an inflow of tourists (Maitland & Alvarez, 2010; Mermet, 2017). Further, blurring lines between the tourist's and resident's mobility and activity patterns lead to a less strict distinction between the two (Gravani-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). Tourists and residents coexisting within the same areas has led to more diverse and multicultural lifestyles (Liang, 2017) but also comes with conflict potential: Noise emissions, a loss of sense of the place and expressions of homogenized places have been described as frequent aspects of socio-cultural tourism gentrification (Novy & Colomb, 2017).

Secondly, it has been argued, that tourists themselves create touristic spaces with their mere presence and activities in cities (Freytag & Bauder, 2018), and are more actively engaged in the local culture which leads to a co-creation of urban experiences (Pasquinelli, 2015). This dynamic role of tourists might result in a transformation of the places (Giovanardi, Lucarelli, & L'Espoir Decosta, 2014). Freytag and Bauder (2018) described, that, as a process of touristification of a place, the uniqueness and authenticity might be lost which leads not only to more homogenized places but also to a depreciation of local habits and a loss of local culture and community interaction. In the same vein, Liang (2017) argues that a change in lifestyles and cultural references are observable in tourism gentrification.

Thirdly, neighborhoods filled with visitors make it difficult for residents to live their life (Cocola Gant, 2018b). Research about resident's perceptions of tourism confirms socio-cultural gentrification insofar as a loss of place identity. Feelings such as living in an open-air museum imply that residents notice changes not only in the physical landscape but also in socio-cultural aspects. (Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012). Novy and Colomb (2017) therefore describe socio-cultural gentrification as eventification or festivalisation of places and distortion of local culture and a cultural homogenization as its impacts. Cocola Gant (2018b) further mentions that these aspects could lead to an indirect displacement since the area loses its appeal to residents, and lowers the quality of life for inhabitants. This process is then insofar connected to residential and commercial gentrification, as the natural environment of residents is disappearing.

### 2.3.4   Physical gentrification

The last aspect of tourism gentrification becoming apparent in the literature are physical changes occurring in cities. Within physical changes, it can be distinguished between the construction of new buildings, the renovation and repurposing of old buildings and the development of public spaces.

**New buildings**

The construction of new dwellings has long been considered as part of gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2010). In a tourism gentrification context, it is widely accepted that the construction of new buildings can be considered as a strategy to improve the city image and to attract tourists (Coles, 2010; Liang & Bao, 2015; Petrow, 2011; A. Smith, 2006). A. Smith (2006) argues that so-called flagship tourism development projects such as the construction of iconic buildings and waterfront developments are increasingly used to change the city image. A variety of different types of buildings have been mentioned: Hotels, shopping and entertainment malls, museums, cultural

centers, theaters, and music halls seem to be typical new buildings (Balsas, 2004; Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Liang, 2017; Niewiadomski, 2015). The location of these new buildings seems to differ according to their purpose. While shopping malls have been constructed in former industrial areas outside of the city center (Niewiadomski, 2015), were cultural centers, music halls, and museums instead built downtown or at waterfronts (Petrow, 2011; Vicario & Monje, 2003). Furthermore, the architecture of these premises often differ from the surrounding constructions and can even become hallmarks of whole districts (Niewiadomski, 2015). A typical example of this kind of "new-built gentrification" is Bilbao with its strategy of using flagship buildings to change the image of the city and to become attractive for tourists (Vicario & Monje, 2003). While this strategy might have been successful in some instances, it does come with the risk that these buildings do not fit into the cultural heritage of the place itself (Puczkó & Rátz, 2000) or do not achieve to expected effects (Galuszka, 2017).

In a Central and Eastern European context, Kotus et al. (2015) mentioned that in the biggest Polish cities, new shopping possibilities together with culture and leisure activities infrastructure had been built to attract tourists. In line with the argument that tourism gentrification does not only affect city center but also occurs in somewhat rural areas, it has further been observed that investments in apartments and hotels targeting tourists from Western Europe and Russia have led to a change of the physical environment along the Montenegrin coast (Violante, 2017). Similar patterns have been observed in mainly touristic regions in Hungary (Puczkó & Rátz, 2000) and Spain (Vera Rebollo & Ivars Baidal, 2009).

**Renovation & Repurposing of old buildings**

Besides newly constructed buildings who target tourists, the renovation and repurposing of old buildings can also be considered as part of tourism gentrification literature (Liang & Bao, 2015). It is argued that investments in the renovation of buildings have been undertaken to attract more tourists (Puczkó & Rátz, 2000). Historically important buildings have regularly been refurbished (Kádár, 2013; Liang, 2017) but also apartment buildings were upgraded, although in some instances, the accommodation industry built more new buildings rather than renovating existing ones (Coles, 2010).

Together with the renovation of buildings, a change in use has been described as a normal process. It is insofar connected to commercial gentrification as renovation projects aim to attract tourists also lead to an increase in tourist services. (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gotham, 2005). The repurposing

process has mainly been observed in the old town of cities, and although the business structure of a neighborhood might change, the façade and the building itself keep their initial look and thus a compelling mix between new high-end stores in old buildings seems to happen (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Gravari-Barbas, 2017). At the same time, repurposing also has aspects of residential gentrification, as an increasing amount of apartments seem to be rented out to tourists in the city centers (Freytag & Bauder, 2018). Similarly, a growth of hostels in the old town of touristic cities has been described as characteristic of tourism gentrification (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017).

**Development of public spaces**

The last aspect of physical changes to cities is the extension of public areas which can be characterized by new outdoor cafes and restaurants (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Petrow, 2011) or the theming of squares, parks, and streets (Liang, 2017). Furthermore, the construction of a pedestrian street respectively the ban of motorized traffic has been mentioned as important aspect influencing tourism gentrification (Gravari-Barbas, 2017; Kovács, 2006; Sosnova & Wilkosz-Mamcarczyk, 2017; van der Zwan, 2016). At the same time, public spaces received upgrades through the replacement of the pavement and the construction of parks and green spaces, often located along the waterfront (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Gravari-Barbas, 2017; Kovács, 2006; Petrow, 2011). In Porto, Portugal, the sidewalks of motorized streets were widened to regenerate the urban environment (Balsas, 2004). van der Zwan (2016) argues that public spaces are of high importance for tourism since these are the places where the tourists spend the most time and thus interacts most with the local population. It is the space where tourists and residents mix up. An excellent public space is described as a place where many people sit, walk or cycle around, where there are possibilities to enjoy gastronomy outside and where there are some green areas (Kádár, 2013; van der Zwan, 2016). In the context of emerging countries, it can further be assumed that the improvements of streets, airports, and train stations have the potential to change the cityscape physically (O'Brochta, 2017).

Although public spaces are by their nature accessible for everyone, the design of them can target only a specific group of people – tourists and high-class residents (Petrow, 2011). It can thus be assumed that depending on the way of upgrading and the urban elements included, public spaces are designed to cater to the needs of tourists. This contrast between access and restriction can also be observed in the discussions of increasing commercialization of public spaces mentioned in the literature (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gotham, 2005).

### 2.3.5   Tourism gentrification in different economies

Besides the four mentioned characteristics of tourism gentrification, there is increasing evidence, that tourism gentrification shows different patterns according to the economic structure of the place (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Liang, 2017).

Firstly, in Western countries, tourism gentrification is closely connected to an increasing gentrifying middle-class and the upgrading of the urban environment which lead to the development of premises targeting this middle-class (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gotham, 2005). In emerging countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic, where the middle-class is smaller in size, the role of tourists as gentrifiers is considered to be more critical (Cocola Gant, 2018a).

Secondly, the fall of the Iron Curtain at the beginning of the 1990s is considered as a turning point of the city development (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017). Under the influential role of the government, old buildings have been renovated and privatized to the tenants. Because of this process, a displacement of the cities' residents is less observable for cities in Central and Eastern Europe (Kovács et al., 2013). On the other hand, the lower prices for real-estate compared to Western Europe attracted foreign investors to buy a property and construct and refurbish areas (Hall, 2008). Haase et al. (2012) concluded in a study of Łódź, Poland, and Brno, Czech Republic, that socio-demographic changes in these cities were minimal and that it cannot be assumed that residentials are pushed out due to the upgrading of the buildings.

Thirdly, after the accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union, substantial investment programs by the EU have been set with the aim of structural adjustment (Hughes & Allen, 2009). These programs have influenced physical changes in many cities. Galuszka (2017) mentioned in this context that a variety of abandoned industrial areas were redeveloped, the transport infrastructure was improved, and historical parts underwent renovations. There is further evidence that primarily tourism was used to revitalize the cities (Dumbrovská & Fialová, 2014).

Based on these distinctions from tourism gentrification in a Western context, the author argues, that especially physical changes in the urban structure seem more critical in the gentrification of Central and Eastern Europe while socio-cultural and residential gentrification is less relevant. Given this, the author assumes that physical gentrification is likely to be the first aspect of tourism gentrification observable in smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe. In China, as another example of an

emerging country, residential and socio-cultural gentrification seemed to occur after the physical changes (Liang, 2017).

Although there is partial evidence of the physical changes ongoing in Central and Eastern European cities, it is unclear how these changes influence tourism gentrification. The study thus focuses on physical changes in smaller cities, which will help to understand the connections between tourism and urban development better. One must take into consideration however, that the different aspects of tourism gentrification are closely connected and interrelated, meaning that one aspect of tourism gentrification impacts other aspects of the concept. Still, since physical changes seem to be more prevalent in Central and Eastern European cities, the analysis of physical changes and its influence on tourism gentrification in smaller destinations is a valid starting point.

## 2.4   Analytical Framework

Because neither tourism gentrification nor physical gentrification have predefined concepts and models (Cocola Gant, 2018b), an analytical framework has been built to analyze physical changes in smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe. Based on the different aspects of physical gentrification mentioned beforehand, the critical aspects of each category have been summarized in Table 1. These will serve as a starting point for data collection and analysis. At the same time, the researcher is aware that these aspects are mainly based on literature focused on physical changes in Western Europe, and thus, other aspects might emerge while gathering data.

*Table 1 Overview of physical changes*

*Source: own table, based on the literature*

| New buildings | Renovation/repurposing of buildings | Public spaces |
|---|---|---|
| - type of building | - façade of the historical dwelling | - pedestrian streets |
| - location of the building | - use of the building | - parks & green areas |
| - use of the building |  | - waterfront development |
|  |  | - businesses in public areas |

(Ashworth & Page, 2011; Balsas, 2004; Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Cocola Gant, 2018a; Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Gotham, 2005; Gravari-Barbas, 2017; Kádár, 2013; Liang, 2017; Niewiadomski, 2015; Petrow, 2011; Puczkó & Rátz, 2000; A. Smith, 2006; Sosnova & Wilkosz-Mamcarczyk, 2017; van der Zwan, 2016).(Kotus et al., 2015)

Within the first category, "new buildings," it will be observed what kind of new buildings have been constructed, where these buildings are located and for what purposes the buildings are used. One

must keep in mind that although a variety of new constructions are probably ongoing, not every dwelling targets tourists. Therefore, special attention will be paid to its use. The type of building refers to the material used, while the location will analyze the geographical area where the construction took place.

The second category, "Renovation/repurposing of buildings," will be analyzed according to the appearance of the façade and the use of the building. The façade of the building is used to determine if the building has been renovated. The renovation of buildings followed by changes in the usage towards industries targeting tourists is one element of tourism gentrification (e.g.Gravari-Barbas, 2017) and thus deserves the attention of researchers.

The third category of changes in urban spaces deals with the state of pedestrian areas, the development of parks and green areas, the waterfront, and the businesses in the public area. As the tourism gentrification literature has shown, public spaces are one of the most important areas of tourists and are thus crucial in attracting tourism (van der Zwan, 2016). An investigation of the state of these areas will allow determining its impact on tourism gentrification.

Before using the framework for the data gathering, the next chapter describes the methodology.

# 3   Methodology

The following chapter will present the methodology of the research at hand and argue why the research methods used where chosen. Furthermore, ethical considerations and limitations of the study will be stated. The chapter starts, with the description of the research approach and the research strategy.

## 3.1   Research approach

In general, research can be approached either in a deductive or an inductive manner. In the latter, the data gathering can be considered as a starting point from which then a theory is derived or constructed from observations made (Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, a deductive approach starts with hypotheses based on existing theories. The research's aim is then to prove the validity of the assumptions made. Once the data is gathered and analyzed, a conclusion is drawn if the hypotheses can be confirmed or rejected while at the same time, revisions of the theory are considered. (Bryman, 2012). Apart from this rather strict definitions, Perry and Jensen (2001) have argued that it is almost impossible nor advisable to follow only one approach and suggest to combine the two approaches.

Based on this reasoning, the research at hand can thus be described as a quasi-inductive approach. Within this approach, pre-categories which have been defined based on theories are used before sampling and coding (Perry & Jensen, 2001). This approach has been chosen because it allowed the researcher to narrow down his initial interest in transformations of destinations in Central and Eastern Europe towards tourism gentrification without losing the flexibility of redefining the initially defined dimensions according to its gathered data (Perry & Jensen, 2001). Moreover, a rather inductive approach allows the emergence of categories out of the data gathered without having assigned the importance of the categories beforehand (Hobson, 2003).

A quasi-inductive approach can be combined with the exploratory nature of this study. The aim of exploratory research has been described as "the production of inductively derived generalizations about the group, process, activity, or situation under study" (Stebbins, 2001, p. 5). Hobson (2003) mentions that exploratory research is needed to increase the understanding of the complexity of interrelations typical for tourism. Exploratory research in tourism gentrification, a field connected to urban planning and impacting various aspects of a city, is thus considered as needed. The fragmented nature of tourism gentrification, as well as the unknown patterns of physical changes in the smaller destinations in Central and Eastern Europe call for an explorative approach.

The researcher is aware that this study will not be enough to arrive at a theory of physical changes influencing tourism gentrification. However, he argues that due to the explorative nature of the study, a base for further investigations of physical changes is made.

## 3.2   Research strategy

As the aim of the study is to investigate tourism gentrification practices in smaller destinations in Central and Eastern Europe, a qualitative research strategy has been chosen. A qualitative approach is appropriate to this study since the chosen approach is rather inductive, which has been described as typical for qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). Based on the understanding of tourism gentrification as a "transformation of social space"(Liang & Bao, 2015, p. 463), qualitative research is considered as valid because it sees "social reality as a constant shifting emergent property of individuals creation" (Bryman, 2016, p. 33), which reflects the ongoing physical changes in tourism gentrification. Furthermore, qualitative studies have been applied in various studies of physical impacts on destinations (e.g.Gravari-Barbas, 2017; Krase, 2005; Puczkó & Rátz, 2000). The researcher considers qualitative research as crucial for an increased understanding of the influence of physical changes to tourism gentrification, especially because tourism gentrification is not an established, clear-cut concept. The understandings of tourism gentrification differ, and the possible multiple physical influences on tourism gentrification would be impossible to gather with a quantitative research strategy, which aims to test and generalize (Hobson, 2003). The explorative nature of this study, on the other hand, aims to investigate a phenomenon and to describe characteristics of physical changes influencing tourism gentrification instead of accepting or rejecting a hypothesis.

## 3.3   Sampling

For the research, a generic purposive sampling method was chosen, because the unit of analysis is less-known destinations in Central and Eastern Europe and thus the sampling was chosen with the research in mind (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, a contingent approach was chosen to allow flexibility during the research and to adjust the sample in regards to possible accessibility restrictions (Bryman, 2016).

In the first step, due to geographical closeness, the author decided to focus on cities in Poland and the Czech Republic in the first instance. Both countries are part of Central and Eastern Europe, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2001). While

Krakow, Warsaw, and Prague are well-known, established tourist destinations (Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018) both countries have other growing tourism destinations in smaller cities (Kotus et al., 2015).

In a second step, the author took into consideration all the cities who are served by an airport with regular commercial passenger traffic, because airline connections have been described as a driving factor for the development of short-break international city tourism (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Dumbrovská & Fialová, 2014; Pijet-Migoń, 2017). Under regular commercial international passenger traffic, the author understands year-round scheduled flights for which tickets can be bought through various channels in comparison to charter flights for which the tickets are usually sold by a tour operator only (Finavia, 2018). In the week of 11th till 17th of March 2019, a typical week in the winter season, the following cities have welcomed at least one flight:

The Czech Republic: Prague, Ostrava, Pardubice, Brno

Poland: Warsaw (2 airports), Gdańsk, Szczecin, Poznań, Wrocław, Kraków, Katowice, Łódź, Lublin, Rzeszów, Bydgoszcz, Olsztyn

In a third step, cities which are mainly or exclusively served by LCC were chosen because it has been argued that especially LCC encourage weekend and city trips (Dumbrovská & Fialová, 2014). This process then led to the sample of Rzeszów, Bydgoszcz, Lublin and Olsztyn in Poland and Ostrava, Pardubice and Brno in the Czech Republic. At the same time, the remaining cities are smaller in size and are thus adequate for the research question. Lastly, the researcher contacted the respective destination management organizations in the sample with the request for interviews with the head of the tourism development of the city. Follow-up e-mails were sent to the cities where no answer has been received. The respective persons from Ostrava, Lublin, and Rzeszów agreed to be interviewed, and thus, these cities were chosen as the final sample. Insofar, the sample in the research has also aspects of a convenience sample (Bryman, 2016). The three cities in the sample, however, share some commonalities which make the analysis of tourism gentrification in these cities valuable. What follows is a short description of the cities itself.

**Rzeszów**

Rzeszów is the capital of the Polish Podkarpackie province and home to approximately 220,000 inhabitants. The city is located in the southeast of Poland, 150 km East of Kraków and approximately 100 km away from both the Ukrainian and Slovakian border (Google, 2019). Rzeszów is a typical industrial city, specializing in the aviation industry with a cluster of more than

150 companies in the region, but also IT and pharmaceutical companies have invested in Rzeszów. In terms of tourist offerings, Rzeszów is home to a variety of festivals and cultural events as well as some museums and galleries. (City Office of Rzeszów, n.d.). Within the province of Rzeszów, tourism is a growing economic factor, and the number of accommodated tourists grew from approximately 700,000 to more than 1 million between 2012 and 2016. A majority of the tourists are Polish. (Statistical Office in Rzeszów, 2018).

**Lublin**

The city of Lublin is the capital of the province with the same name and with 36,'000 inhabitants the biggest city in Eastern Poland 170 km Southeast of Warsaw, Lublin is also close to the Belarussian and Ukrainian border (Lublin City Office, n.d.-a). Lublin is famous for its universities, and its economy is highly diversified, with companies both in the secondary and tertiary business sector (Lublin City Office, n.d.-c). Tourism numbers in Lublin are lower than in Rzeszów, although the industry is growing as well. Between 2012 and 2016, the number of tourists accommodated in the province grew from approximately 700,000 to over 800,000 within five years (Statistics Lublin). Major tourist offerings include the Lublin Castle, the city's old town and the Centre for the Meeting of Cultures. Furthermore, the city is currently undergoing a restoration of its old town to strengthen the tourism industry in the city (Lublin City Office, n.d.-b)

**Ostrava**

The capital of the Moravian-Silesian Region is the third-largest city in the Czech Republic. Located in the very East of the country, its population is approximately 290,000. With only 50km to the Slovakian and 90km to the Polish border, it shares some parallels with the other two cities in the sample, being located at the edge of the respective country (OstravaInfo, n.d.). The discovery of coal in the Ostrava region made the city a major industrial city in the time from 1770 up until the 1990s (Havránek, 2016). Nowadays, the city's economy is based on the automotive industry as well as outsourcing services and IT technology (OstravaInfo, n.d.). As in Rzeszów and Lublin, Ostrava and the whole region experienced an increase in tourism in the past years. The number of guests in the region grew from approximately 770,000 to nearly 900,000 between 2015 and 2017 (Czech Statistical Office, 2018).

All three cities share the following aspects:
- located near international borders
- medium-size population

- similar tourism numbers

The next sub-chapter continues with the research methods and the data collection procedures.

## 3.4  Research methods and data collection

### 3.4.1  Observations on site

The main methods of this study are observations. Based on the tradition of pragmatism, it is assumed that changes in the city structure can only be understood when immersing oneself into the place of action and when it is experienced on-site (May, 2011). The method of observation has been applied in a variety of studies of tourism gentrification or gentrification in general (Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Krase, 2005) but also in studies of urban planning (Sosnova & Wilkosz-Mamcarczyk, 2017). The researcher further argues that especially for the analysis of physical changes to the urban landscape, observations are a valid method, since the different aspects defined in chapter 2.4 are observable. Since physical infrastructure is directly accessible, it offers a possibility for observations without the need to gain informed consent (Silverman, 2013) to analyze its changes. Moreover, the observations of physical changes offer the researcher independence from both weather and time restrictions of participants. The exploratory nature of the research fits well with observations because this method allows flexibility in the process of data gathering which is considered crucial for explorative studies (Hobson, 2003)

In line with the quasi-inductive approach chose, the data gathering started relatively early in the research process. The researcher visited the city of Bratislava at the end of February 2019 for three days to get a first impression of urban changes and its relation to tourism in Central and Eastern Europe. Bratislava was chosen as a pre-study trip due to the rather small population in the city and the fact that Bratislava's airport is only served by LCC and charter airlines, which is common among smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe. It has been observed that the physical structure of the city seems to change, which can be exemplified by the construction of several skyscrapers near the central bus station. Furthermore, the author noticed that the buildings in the old town seem newly renovated. The gathered impressions of the preliminary field trip guided the search for the literature of physical changes induced by tourism, which has been described in chapter 2.3.4. Based on these aspects and in line with the quasi-inductive approach, preliminary categories were formed which guided the actual observations in the cities of Rzeszów, Lublin, and Ostrava.

The on-site observations took place from the 26th of March 2019 until the 2nd of April 2019 and at least two days were spent at each destination, walking around in different districts at different times

of the day. Guided by the preliminary categories, the author wrote down field notes of aspects relating the categories but was also flexible in its observations and opened for new aspects emerging. To strengthen the data collection and the objectivity, the field notes were complemented with pictures taken on site. Observations, in combination with picture taking, improve the completeness of the research better than just taking field notes (Krase, 2005). This allowed the researcher to reconsider the field notes in later stages of the research and combine the emerging themes with the pictures taken on site.

### 3.4.2   Observations on Instagram

The observations on site were complemented with observations on Instagram. Since the researcher was on-site only a few days, he considered it essential to include other methods to prove and validate his findings from the observations. Pictures uploaded on social media have been assumed as a valid source of data since a tremendous amount of data is easily accessible (Laestadius, 2016). Besides that, user-generated content has increasingly been used to analyze various aspects of tourism such as mobility patterns, destination images or tourist behaviors (Cvelbar, Mayr, & Vavpotic, 2018; Kádár, 2013). It is argued that an analysis of photographs taken by tourists gives insights into their use of public space and their mobility patterns (Kádár, 2013). Instagram, as one of the most popular photo-sharing platforms, provides a good source of visual images (Zasina, 2018). Studies about Instagram have further shown, that users, besides other aspects, take the images uploaded as an information source about cities and its sights (Zasina, 2018). Instagram thus has the potential to influence the image of a place, but also to reflect and reinforce processes of gentrification (Boy & Uitermark, 2017). This is partly because the images posted are taken at particular locations and hence increase the popularity of this place (Boy & Uitermark, 2017). The pictures present only a particular aspect which is selected by the user of Instagram itself because of the aesthetic appeal (Zasina, 2018).

Moreover, it has been mentioned that Instagram users upload pictures with which their followers interact (Laestadius, 2016). Therefore, the author considers Instagram pictures as a valid source for research about physical gentrification, because the uploaded pictures potentially show aspects, which other tourists like as well. One restriction in the use of these pictures is the uneven use of social media platforms among demographic groups since social media is used more often by younger and better-educated people (Kádár, 2013; Laestadius, 2016). Nevertheless, claims that the vast amount of pictures uploaded still provides useful insights have been made (Kádár, 2013) since the pictures on Instagram reflect mostly urban environments (Zasina, 2018). Another aspect worth considering is the fact that the pictures in the analysis are extant photographs, meaning that they

have not been taken for the research especially (Bryman, 2016) and thus, an analysis of these pictures can be considered as an unobtrusive method (May, 2011). Furthermore, the amount of data accessible is enormous and can be stored, allowing the use of the picture even if it was deleted after the data collection (Laestadius, 2016). Also, the sampling described below only includes publicly accessible pictures tagged with the particular hashtag and thus might be partly biased. However, the researcher considers private pictures taken and uploaded insofar as less relevant for tourism purposes, as their potential to influence the city images is limited to a smaller group of people. Lastly, pictures on Instagram can be deleted at any time by the uploader (Laestadius, 2016), which implies that the amount of data varies. Hence, it cannot be assumed that all pictures ever uploaded on Instagram under the chosen period are in the sample.

In comparison to previous studies of Instagram pictures and visual methodologies in general, the researcher did not aim to interpret these pictures or add meaning to it. The researcher instead used the pictures as an extension of the physical observations, meaning that the pictures have been considered as a window into the destination and its physical structure. The captions and comments accompanied by the pictures have not been taken into consideration, as it would probably have influenced the data analysis.

The collection of the Instagram pictures was conducted between the 8th and the 19th of April 2019. A purposive sampling approach was chosen. The hashtag #visit, followed by the respective destination, was chosen in the first step. Laestadius (2016) suggest that searches for hashtags should build the basis of Instagram research. The hashtags #visit… were chosen based on the assumption that people using the hashtags aim to encourage other people to travel to the place. Furthermore, there is a limited number of pictures posted with the hashtag, while the use of # followed by the name of the city would include posts about a wide variety of things related to the city, not especially relating the tourism. Application programming interfaces to generate the pictures (Zasina, 2018) were not used because of the limited scope of the research and time restrictions. For the three cities under consideration, the following number of pictures have been found.

*Table 2 Amount of Instagram pictures tagged with the selected hashtag*

*Source: Instagram, 18.04.2019, own table*

| Hashtag | Number of pictures |
|---|---|
| #visitrzeszow | 175 (including 24 posts tagged with visitrzeszów) |
| #visitlublin | 1313 |
| #visitostrava | 1630 |

One reason for the significantly lower number of pictures uploaded for Rzeszów might be the smaller population of the city. When comparing the hashtags #rzeszow, #lublin, and #ostrava, pictures of Rzeszów are also clearly fewer uploaded. The number of pictures has then been reduced to pictures uploaded back to April 2018. In this way, the amount was limited to a reasonable number while at the same time, it was ensured that a full year of uploads is considered. Due to the seasonality of tourism, the author considered it essential to have a whole year of pictures in the sample. In a third step, the final number of pictures was then chosen according to the following criteria:

- The pictures are taken in the respective city

- The pictures show either buildings or public space in the city

- The pictures show fragments of buildings or urban environments

This selection resulted in the following amount of data.

*Table 3 Amount of Instagram pictures analyzed*

*Source: Instagram, 18.04.2019, own table*

| Hashtag | Number of pictures |
|---------|-------------------|
| #visitrzeszow | 44 |
| #visitlublin | 203 |
| #visitostrava | 217 |

The selection of the limitation decision criteria was guided by the research question focusing on physical changes in tourism destinations. Insofar, pictures of persons or commercials for events have not been considered as relevant for the analysis of physical changes.

### 3.4.3 Interviews

As a third method, three semi-structured interviews with officials from the local tourism authority have been conducted. Interviews can be considered as one of the main methods in qualitative tourism research (Gard McGehee, 2012). In comparison to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews offer more flexibility and allow the interviewee to point out aspects which he or she considers as relevant. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews have the advantage of clarification and elaboration and thus enable the interviewer to probe. (May, 2011).

Interviews of local tourism professionals have been included to achieve a more in-depth understanding of the interrelationships between physical changes and tourism gentrification, which could not be achieved with observations as a single method. Also, the interviews allow to ask specific questions related to the observations on-site and thus can increase the value of the

observations. Another advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they allow an understanding of meanings and reflections (May, 2011) which is considered as useful in the study of tourism gentrification, mainly because it entails a variety of aspects which might be interpreted differently by different stakeholders. It has been argued that employees in the tourism industry are valid knowledge sources since they acquired a wide range of experiences and are often willing to share their knowledge (Gard McGehee, 2012). Tourism professionals of the destinations were chosen for the interviews because they are considered to have extensive insight into the tourism planning strategy of the city. Moreover, the researcher assumed that these leaders are familiar with the impacts on tourism and relevant information about tourism development. The choice of the interviewees can be described as a generic purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016). In qualitative, explorative studies, this kind of sampling is typical (Hobson, 2003) and thus appropriate for the research at hand.

The interviews were held the 28th and 29th of March and on the 2nd of April 2019, respectively. An interview guide was used to structure the interview partly. However, the nature of semi-structured interviews allowed probing and follow-up questions (Bryman, 2016). The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour and 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

When conducting interviews, it is suggested to keep certain aspects in mind. May (2011) describes accessibility, cognition, and motivation as critical aspects. Firstly, accessibility describes the condition that the interviewee needs to have the information the researchers aims to find out. In the research at hand, this had been assured due to an extensive explanation of the research when approaching the potential interviewees and with clarifications during the interview.

The second precondition, cognition, deals with aspects of knowing the expectations of each other, interviewee and interviewer (May, 2011). Cognition was ensured with clarifying the form of the interview in the beginning and by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of the interviews.

Thirdly, the researcher has to ensure that the interviewee is motivated to conduct the interview (May, 2011) and feel that his contribution is valued. The author ensured this aspect when indicating the benefits for the destination of the research project as well as ensuring a feeling of value during the interview.

## 3.5 Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed with the use of thematic analysis as it allows the identification of themes which are related to the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, a thematic analysis allows a flexible, reflective approach to the data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018), while it still permits new themes to emerge (Bryman, 2016). A thematic analysis follows five steps: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

In the first step, the researcher transcribed the interviews and read through the field notes from the observations. The aim was to familiarize with the data because it allows an overview and organization (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In the second step, the researcher applied coding principles to arrive at groupings. For the interviews, the software NVivo was used while the coding of the pictures and the observation field notes was done manually. The coding was insofar a priori (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018), as the researcher used the categories from the literature as a starting point while still allowing other codes to emerge. In the process of coding, the researcher reflected upon the codes, redefined the categories, and only stopped when theoretical saturation was reached. The author reviewed and re-coded the data several times to ensure the reliability of these categories. Participant validation was not considered as appropriate since only a small part of the data came from interviews (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). However, the interview transcriptions were sent to the interviewees to check through and insofar, a member check has partly been conducted (Gard McGehee, 2012).

The categories were in a third step combined, the relations to each other were considered and described, and its connections to the literature defined (Bryman, 2016; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Out of this process, themes emerged. These were in a next step checked in terms of their relevance to the research questions, the scope of the theme, and its boundaries. Over the time of these four steps, interpretations of the data were made, which then in the final step were reconfirmed, written down and the connections to the research question specified.

**Triangulation**

For the research at hand, the use of three types of data sources allowed data triangulation. Triangulation has been considered as an essential method in qualitative research, especially when using different data sources (Gard McGehee, 2012). Triangulation is described by Bryman (2016) as "the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings might be cross-checked" (p. 697). While it has been argued that triangulation is mostly

applied in mixed methods, it has also be used for pure qualitative research (Decrop, 1999). The advantages of using triangulation in qualitative studies have been described as testing the validity of the findings (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014), improving its credibility, transferability and confirmability (Decrop, 1999) as well as "making a more systematic use of the variety of qualitative research methods and approaches" (Flick, 2009, p. 452). The triangulation process has been conducted as follows. In the first step, the thematic analysis coded the different data, and the emerging themes were written down. In the second step, the themes were compared for similarities and differences. As the results section will show, some patterns have been noticed in all three data sources, while some themes were only identified in two of the three data sources. The interrelation between the three data sources are presented in Figure 1.
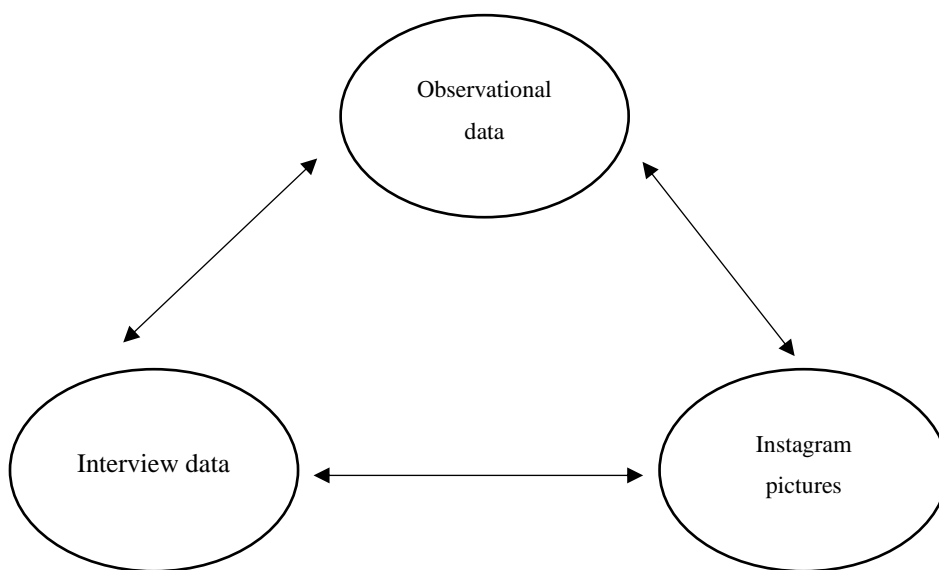


*Figure 1 Triangulation of data sources*

*Source: own illustration, based on Flick (2009)*

The observations on site were compared with the observations on Instagram as well as with the themes emerging from the interviews. The observations on Instagram, at the same time, were compared with the interview data, and the differences and commonalities were identified. Lastly, the emerging themes were cross-checked among all the three themes until theoretical saturation was reached (Bryman, 2016). The chosen methods are related to each other as follows.

The observations on-site aimed to gather data on the physical structure of the cities, the location of the different aspects mentioned in chapter 2.4, and to explore local characteristics of physical changes. Furthermore, the on-site observations were used to reconfirm that the buildings uploaded on Instagram are located in the respective city. Observations on Instagram were used to complement the observations on-site and to shed light on the tourists' view on physical infrastructure at the

destination. The pictures uploaded by tourists enhance the findings insofar, as the cross-checking of the data gathered with these two observational methods ensure the validity of the observed physical changes for tourism gentrification. The interviews then include the perspective of tourism professionals on the physical changes and their view on the assigned role of tourism in these processes — moreover, the interview data allowed to cross-check the observations. Insofar, the themes which evolved from all data sources can be considered as the most relevant aspects of physical changes influencing tourism gentrification in smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe.

## 3.6  Limitations

This research comes with limitations. Firstly, the qualitative approach chosen for the researcher as well as the generic purposive sampling has impacts on the generalizability of the research (Bryman, 2016). The researcher is aware of the limited possibility to generalize the findings to other smaller destinations in Central and Eastern Europe. However, in explorative studies like the one at hand, one main goal is to grasp a phenomenon rather than to generalize (Hobson, 2003). Furthermore, the triangulation used increases the generalizability of the research (Decrop, 1999).

As with most qualitative research, the replicability of the study is limited (Bryman, 2016). Given the exploratory nature of the study and the constantly ongoing physical changes in cities, the results are difficult to replicate. However, Castleberry and Nolen (2018) argue that limited replicability does not hinder qualitative research and suggest that readers should instead consider how the findings can be used in their research area.

A regular critique of qualitative data analysis is that the researcher might be influenced by his direct involvement in the data gathering process, and thus, the results come with a particular subjectivity (Bryman, 2016). The researcher is aware of this risk. To ensure the highest possible objectivity of the research, the author followed the steps in the analysis/process suggested by Castleberry and Nolen (2018) and aimed for theoretical saturation in his findings. The applied triangulation of methods further helped to enhance the objectivity of the study (Decrop, 1999)

Lastly, the research language of this project is English. Thus, research connected to urban tourism, urban regeneration, and impacts in other languages has not been taken into consideration for the literature review nor the theoretical framework. This might have limited the scope of the secondary data analysis insofar, as articles describing aspects of tourism gentrification in Polish or Czech are not included.

## 3.7   Ethical considerations

Conducting ethical research is essential for the integrity of research (May, 2011). During the execution of the research at hand, several ethical considerations arose, which will be described in the following subchapter.

For conducting the interviews, informed consent was given by all the participants (Bryman, 2016). The interviewees were asked at the beginning of the interview if they agree with the interview being recorded, and all interviewees received the transcriptions of the interview for approval. Furthermore, the interviewees had, at any point, the possibility to withdraw from the interview, which reflects voluntary participation (Silverman, 2013).

Observations, in combination with picture taking, have the potential ethical problem that people enter the research, which are not informed about being part of research (Silverman, 2013). The research at hand, however, focused on physical changes, and thus, the people's behavior itself was not observed. Furthermore, when taking pictures of the buildings, it has been ensured that no person is on the picture. In this way, the researcher avoided ethical challenges.

Working with digital material poses a set of ethical challenges (Rose, 2016). While in most research forms, explicit consent is considered as necessary for ethical research, the opinions for pictures uploaded on social media differ (Rose, 2016). The vast number of pictures makes it often impossible to ask for explicit consent of all the contributors. For observational research on Instagram, obtaining explicit consent is not needed to analyze the picture (Laestadius, 2016).

In terms of reproduction of Instagram images, Laestadius (2016) mentions that consent is not in every case necessary. Nevertheless, the researcher should reflect on possible threats to the producer of the image (Laestadius, 2016). Since the pictures used in this research are only such of physical infrastructure, the researcher assumes that reproduction is less problematic than with pictures capturing people. Nevertheless, the researcher decided to anonymize the pictures reproduced to minimize possible dangers. Lastly, the researcher only used pictures who are publicly accessible on Instagram. In line with previous research conducted, the use of free accessible pictures seems to be an accepted approach (Boy & Uitermark, 2017; Zasina, 2018), although the producer of the image might not be aware of the public nature of the picture (Laestadius, 2016).

# 4   Results

The thematic analysis and the triangulation of the data gathered identified four distinct themes of physical changes to the urban environments of the cities in the sample.

- The construction of new neighborhoods and its commercialization
- The renovation and repurposing of buildings
- The implementation of cultural and sportive offerings in public spaces
- Aestheticization of old buildings

These four themes are now described in detail before its implications for tourism gentrification are analyzed in the next chapter.

## 4.1   New, commercialized neighborhoods

The first theme identified can be described as the construction of new commercialized neighborhoods. In Rzeszów, Lublin, and Ostrava, substantial construction work is ongoing. At considerable areas in size in the outskirts of the center, apartment- and commercial complexes have been built or are still under construction. The architecture and material used for these new neighborhoods are significantly different from the dwellings in the center and include mostly glass, metal, and concrete. Figure 2 shows an example of a construction site in Rzeszów. Together with a small skyscraper, some other massive dwellings are built. The sign in front of the building pictures, how the area will look like once it is finalized. It can be assumed that the investment is privately driven since no indication of governmental cooperation can be identified. Areas like this have been observed in all three cities. The surroundings of these new neighborhoods can be characterized as fallow land.



*Figure 2 Real-estate investment in Rzeszów*

*Source: own image*

The buildings will contain offices, apartments, and commercial facilities. In the finalized commercial complexes, a variety of international stores offer their products to customers. Food courts and entertainment facilities such as cinemas, water parks, or theaters are also part of the complexes. In the case of Ostrava, a tourism information desk is also part of the shopping mall, while in Rzeszów a hotel is part of the whole complex. With regards to these constructions, the

interviewees mentioned their influence in changing the resident's mobility patterns. One interviewee stated that the new mall "actually killed the city center" in the opinion of many locals because stores moved to the shopping centers. Another interviewee, however, mentions that the malls increase the overall commercial offering in the city.



*Figure 3 Modern architecture represented on Instagram*

*Source: Instagram*

The attractiveness of these new neighborhoods from a tourist perspective seems to lie in the distinct, modern architecture and the variety of offerings for entertainment and consumption. On Instagram, buildings with modern architecture are usually captured in fragments and not in its entirety. For example, are the facades, the roofs, or the decorations within the complexes uploaded regularly. Scenes from the stores or restaurants; on the other hand, are hardly visible on Instagram Figure 3 shows an example from Lublin of a typical picture uploaded on Instagram. It can thus be assumed that the attraction for tourists lies not only in the commercial offerings but also in the architecture.

## 4.2  Renovation and repurposing of buildings

A second theme within physical changes and its impact on tourism gentrification can be defined as the renovation and repurposing of buildings. Within the theme, two groups can be distinguished: buildings of historical relevance and other dwellings.

The first distinct group of renewals includes buildings of historical importance. Buildings like churches, town halls, theaters, castles and old university buildings seem to have been entirely renovated as the bright colors of the façade indicate. These dwellings are among the ones who are



*Figure 4 Sing indicating the use of the building*

*Source: own image*

mostly renovated. Signs at the buildings as in Figure 4 indicate that they still serve their initial purpose. Furthermore, its historical importance is mentioned, and the sponsors of the renovation are credited. In Figure 4 the bottom line of the picture describes that the building was renovated in a project involving the regional and local tourist organization, the European Union and the cross-border program between Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine. Most historical buildings in the

cities under considerations have some sign at the murals. On Instagram, it has been observed that these historical buildings are photographed entirely and build the center of the uploaded pictures. Furthermore, people are hardly observed in the pictures. The interviewees stressed the importance of the renovation of these historic buildings for the tourism development of the cities and further mentioned that a significant amount of time and money have been invested in the refurbishment. Insofar, the analysis shows, that the renovation of these dwellings is an integral part of physical changes in Rzeszów, Lublin, and Ostrava.

The second group within the theme include buildings who do not serve for cultural, governmental or religious organizations or the general public. A lot of these buildings seem to be renovated as well. However, still, a certain amount of non-renovated buildings can be observed. It has been mentioned in the interviewees, that this is due to difficulties of the authorities to identify and contact the owners of the house for its' privatization after the fall of the Soviet Union. Independent of this challenge, the "regular" buildings in the core of the city, surrounding the main square, have all been renovated.

In comparison to historical buildings, however, it is assumed that their use changed, which can be identified by signs at the buildings. A lot of these dwellings host restaurants, bars, nightclubs, or shops. The naming of the premises as "old…." indicates further that a change in use has happened. Figure 5 is an excellent example of a building which has been renovated and changed its use. On



*Figure 5 Gentrified building in Lublin*
*Source: own image*

the one hand, a restaurant and shisha bar called "Cleopatra" is located in the basement. On the other and, the sign on the left of the picture states "apartments to rent," which is an indication of potential touristic use of the building. The Egyptian name of the premise further indicates a change. Similar changes, as described in this example, have been identified in all three cities.

The interviewees further confirmed that an increasing amount of buildings in the center are turned into restaurants and are run by the owners of the house. However, not only catering services can be found in these renovated buildings, but also office spaces have replaced apartments according to interviewees. In contrary, on Instagram, it has been observed that sometimes, pictures of modern, renovated apartments are posted together with descriptions of the possibility of

hiring the apartment. Insofar, there is an indication of a change towards touristic use. In Rzeszów it has been mentioned, that also apartments in the outskirts are rented out to tourists. In comparison to historical buildings, "regular" houses are not captured in its entirety on Instagram. Either, these buildings are just visible as part of a broader city scene or only fragments of the dwelling such as ornaments, windows, or door handles are portrayed.

Renovation and repurposing do not only happen in the city center but also, to a lesser extent, in the outskirts of the city. In Ostrava, old industrial fabric halls have been renovated and repurposed and serve as cultural event halls nowadays. In Rzeszów, industrial sites tend to open their production to tourists and allow visits of tour groups, while in Lublin, an old building has been turned into a cultural center.

## 4.3   Implementation of cultural and sportive offerings in public spaces

The third theme centers around the upgrading of the cities' public spaces. It is suggested to divide between two groups: inner-city spaces and green areas.



*Figure 6 Rzeszów walk of fame*

*Source: own picture*

Within the inner-city spaces in Rzeszów, Lublin, and Ostrava, it has been observed that streets are free of motorized traffic and benches and other seating possibilities have been placed along the walking paths. Furthermore, it seems that the pavement has been renewed as can be observed by the rather new appeal of the cobblestones. Besides the mere renewal of these streets, cultural attractions have been implemented in these spaces. In Rzeszów, the pedestrian street was upgraded by a kind of "walk of fame" as can be seen in Figure 6. For the length of this street, an unknown number of cobblestones have been labeled with the names of different people. Similarly, in both Rzeszów and Lublin, the main walking streets entail some exhibitions of the street from ancient times. As shown in Figure 7, a showcase box has been installed from where one can spot the pavement in earlier years. The objects are described in English and Polish and introduce the history of the street to those interested.



*Figure 7 Showcase box*

*Source: own image*

Furthermore, in all three cities, other cultural offerings have been installed in public areas. In Rzeszów, a footbridge presents the history of the city along its walls, whereas in Ostrava an exhibition of contemporary photography has been placed on the main square according to pictures on Instagram. Furthermore, in Rzeszów and Lublin, multimedia fountains have been installed in central areas. These fountains perform regularly shows with a combination of light, music, and water. Therefore, the fountains can be considered as cultural attractions.

Another part of physical changes of public spaces can be described as the installation of urban art in these areas. Sculptures, statues, decorative elements, and other physical objects with a cultural value have been installed in the cities.



*Figure 8 Tree trunk held by a red hand*

*Source: Instagram*



*Figure 9 Urban art in Lublin*

*Source: own image*

Figure 8 and Figure 9 show examples of this kind of urban art. One shows a tree trunk which is held by an oversized red hand, while the other picture shows a sculpture on a rope balancing between two old-town buildings. Other examples are light installations or a group of umbrellas between the roofs of pedestrian streets. In the three cities, these objects are placed in different parts of the city. While in Lublin, most pieces can be found in the old town, urban art objects are located near newly constructed buildings in Ostrava. In Rzeszów, parks and pedestrian streets both include art objects. The good physical condition of the installations indicates that these are rather newly installed. Although the interviewees do not refer to the installation of urban art in the interviews especially, they have mentioned regularly that the cultural offerings of the city are expanded and marketed more intensively in the last years. On Instagram, urban art is regularly observed in the pictures, and all varieties are uploaded. The installations are usually in the center of the picture, indicating the attractiveness of the object for the tourist.

Within the parks and green areas in the cities, it has been observed that especially along the waterfronts, a redevelopment took place. Bike roads, sidewalks, benches, and outdoor gyms have been constructed in all three cities. Furthermore, infrastructure for the practicing of watersports has



*Figure 10 Riverside in Ostrava*

*Source: own image*

been observed or mentioned respectively by the interviewees. As presented in Figure 10, in the background of the picture, a pedestrian walkway can be seen, whereas the front shows infrastructure for canoeing. The interviewees reconfirm the importance of changes in urban green spaces. They refer to recent upgrading projects in these areas and mention that the aim is to create spaces where people can relax, refresh, and meet with other people. The interviewees also mention that most of the activities are free of charge and governmentally sponsored while some complementary offerings such as restaurants are privately owned.

On Instagram, the cities' green areas have been identified regularly. Showing mostly the river in the middle of the picture, people are hardly visible on the images. Thus, it can be assumed that tourists value the beauty of the natural space itself.

## 4.4   Aestheticization of old buildings

The fourth theme emerging from the thematic analysis has been named the aestheticization of old buildings. While most of the physical changes described up until now dealt with the reconstruction,



*Figure 11 Old mural in Lublin*

*Source: Instagram*

renovation, or new construction of city landscapes, it becomes apparent that also non-renovated buildings can be attractive for visitors. This finding is based mainly on observations on Instagram, where pictures of old non-renovated buildings who nearly fall apart have been observed. These pictures usually show fragments of an old building such as broken windows, closed doors, stairs which seem to fall apart or murals who nearly decay.

Figure 11 is a good example. It shows an old building in the old town of Lublin whose parts are partly falling apart. Nevertheless, the image-taker decided to upload

the picture on Instagram. It indicates that he or she was attracted by the building itself or its murals, although no physical change has been undertaken.

*Figure 12 Mural painting in Ostrava*

*Source: Instagram*

It has further been observed that some of these old buildings have been decorated with graffiti or paintings. They are usually located on one of the side murals. The graffiti cover almost the whole façade. The quality of the graffiti or paintings indicates that professional artists created these pieces of urban art. Figure 12 shows one of these typical graffiti. Located in Ostrava, the whole façade of the building has been covered with a portrait of a woman. The building itself appears non-renovated and somewhat run-down. Pictures with similar characteristics as this example have been uploaded on Instagram repeatedly. Howsoever, not only huge paintings are created on old buildings, but also small art pieces have been observed on Instagram as well as

on-site.

Physical changes to old buildings also appear in only small parts. As identifiable on the building captured in Figure 13, the windows have been replaced by wooden panels, which then have been aestheticized by a small painting. This minimal physical change attracts the eye of tourists because pictures like Figure 13 are commonly uploaded. Other examples of small changes are the painting



*Figure 13 Mural painting in Lublin*

*Source: own image*

of an art-pattern on parts of the murals, the replacement of windows with pictures of people or the painting of quotes on run-down murals. The interviewees, however, did not mention these changes to non-renovated buildings as an aspect of physical changes. Nevertheless, the regular uploading of images showing these rather run-down buildings, and the apparent small physical changes observed on-site, call in the opinion of the researcher for an integration of this "aestheticization" of old buildings into the considerations of physical changes in cities. Besides a signature by the creator of the art, further information about the paintings could not be found on site.

To sum up the results section, the following table provides an overview of the findings and points out the central aspects.

*Table 4 Overview of results*

*Source: own illustration*

| | **New neighborhoods** | **Renovation & repurposing** | **Implementation of cultural and sportive offerings** | **Aestheticization** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Observations on site** | - massive construction in the outskirts<br>- residential as well as commercial offerings<br>-different architecture<br>- different materials used | - historical buildings: completely renovated; still serve the initial purpose; touristic relevance<br>- "regular" buildings: mostly renovated, repurposing towards catering and event industry; turn towards accommodation business | - pedestrian streets with benches and seating possibilities<br>- public areas used for cultural purposes due to the installation of exhibitions or sculptures<br>- parks & green areas as places to do sportive activities, relax and refresh | - non-renovated houses with small changes, e.g., mural graffiti or small paintings at defunct parts of the building, pictures of people place |
| **Observations on Instagram** | - only fragments of the new buildings<br>- modern interior regularly captured | - historical buildings: entirely captured, in the center of the picture<br>- "regular" buildings: part of street scenes or fragments of buildings such as ornaments or windows | - urban art objects regularly uploaded<br>- parks & green areas presented with a focus on nature- | - fragments of non-renovated buildings<br>- graffiti<br>- mural paintings<br>- small paintings at old houses<br>- photographs of people |
| **Interviews** | - resistance from locals<br>- fewer people in the city center<br>- the disappearance of local stores | - the ongoing renovation of both types of buildings<br>- turn towards more touristic offerings in terms of accommodation & catering | - development of cultural offerings<br>- refurbishment of public spaces and infrastructure to create meeting spaces | N/A |
| **Core aspects** | - construction of new, distinct, modern districts who change the physical appearance as well as mobility patterns | - touristic importance of historical buildings<br>-The city center with more restaurants, bars. Repurposing of regular buildings | - culture is a central part of physical changes | - small, aesthetic changes seem attractive for tourists<br>- a possible new strategy for changes? |

Based on the core aspects of the different kind of physical changes, the author discusses the influence of physical changes to tourism gentrification in the next chapter.

# 5   Discussion

The findings mentioned in the previous chapter will now be analyzed with the tourism gentrification literature and the influence of physical changes on tourism gentrification discussed.

## 5.1   New, commercialized neighborhoods

Newly constructed districts in the outskirts of the city center relate to a variety of tourism gentrification practices.

Firstly, it exemplifies urban brownfield development, which is a typical aspect of gentrification (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017; N. Smith, 2002). Financed by private investors, it reconfirms further findings that gentrification in Central and Eastern Europe is mainly driven by the private sector (Galuszka, 2017; Temelová, 2007). The distinct architecture and its modern appeal reflect flagship developments which have been observed in a variety of other cities around the world (A. Smith, 2006). Furthermore, given the use of different construction materials, it is valid to assume that these new districts influence the appearance of the city and the perception of the tourists (Coles, 2010; Liang & Bao, 2015). The photographing of the buildings with a focus on the architecture observed on Instagram is an indication of its appeal to tourists. Additionally, a change in mobility patterns can also be assigned to these physical changes since tourists are moving out of the city center to these new districts to admire the architecture of the buildings as the results indicated (Freytag & Bauder, 2018).

Secondly, commercial gentrification in these new districts is ongoing. The opening of shops from international brands, a variety of restaurants and entertainment facilities are indications of typical commercial gentrification patterns (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gravari-Barbas, 2017). However, in comparison to the literature, this process is occurring in the outskirts of the city in newly constructed areas, as observed in the data collection process. It is valid to assume that these consumption areas attract not only locals but also tourists, as indicated by tourism information desks or hotels in the complexes.

Thirdly, the new districts also indirectly influence socio-cultural gentrification. Because of the opening of commercial complexes in the outskirts, shops disappeared in the city center according to the interviewees, and in the opinion of some locals, the city center becomes an empty space. These opinions reflect a possible indirect impact on residents' life because due to

fewer shops in the center, their quality of ordinary life is decreasing, thus impacting socio-cultural gentrification (Cocola Gant, 2018a). Furthermore, the new apartments in the outskirts might also attract middle-class residents to move to the outskirts, which then might lead to divided social classes. In comparison to tourism gentrification, this would, however, reflect a pattern of general gentrification which has been identified in Western Europe in the early stages of gentrification (Cocola Gant, 2018a). Howsoever, the influence of physical changes on residents housing patterns has not been analyzed in this study.

To conclude the discussion of this first theme, it can be stated that the construction of new commercial districts in the outskirts influences tourism gentrification through their distinct architecture and their commercial offerings which leads to a higher geographical distribution of tourists in the city. Furthermore, the new dwellings could influence socio-cultural gentrification through new apartment complexes targeting middle-class residents.

## 5.2  Renovation and repurposing of buildings

Within this theme, two groups have been identified: buildings of historical relevance and regular buildings.

The physical changes in the first group, renovations of historical buildings, reflect an attempt to increase the attractiveness of the city for tourists (Kádár, 2013; Liang, 2017; Puczkó & Rátz, 2000). The renovation of these dwellings is a typical process of physical gentrification and have been observed in various cities (Kádár, 2013; Liang, 2017). The upload of a variety of pictures focusing the historic buildings is a further indication of the appeal of these dwellings for tourists, and it can thus be assumed that the physical changes are valued positively by tourists. These changes influence tourism gentrification insofar, as the visitors interact with the histories of the dwellings and thus engage in the local culture (Pasquinelli, 2015).

In the second group, regular buildings, the results are two-edged. While the renovation of the buildings improves the appeal of the center, it does, at the same time influence commercial gentrification of the center. A trend towards more restaurants and night clubs have been observed, which reflects typical commercial impacts of tourism gentrification (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). However, given the fact that most of these establishments are run by the owners of the building, it seems that the process of commercial gentrification is slightly different than described in the literature. While in Western Europe, international chains and stores open up facilities in the center (Cocola Gant, 2018a; Gotham,

2005) it seems that in the smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe, ownership-driven commercial gentrification is ongoing. However, it is unclear how these changes should be classified and if these changes are just the beginning of an internationally driven commercial gentrification. In cases where apartments are rented out to tourists, aspects of residential gentrification have been observed as well (Gravari-Barbas, 2017). However, in the case of Ostrava, there is governmental interest in creating tourist accommodation in the center to counteract the degradation of the city center after the opening of the shopping center in the outskirts. Insofar, it can be assumed that residential gentrification in the city center is not as negatively perceived as in Western tourism gentrification literature.

In terms of renovation and repurposing, it can be concluded that on the one hand, historical buildings attract tourists and give them the possibility to interact with the local culture. Renovated, regular buildings, on the other hand, tend to be commercialized by local companies and apartments rented out to tourists, which reflects residential gentrification.

## 5.3   Implementation of cultural and sportive offerings in public spaces

The upgrade of public spaces through the construction of pedestrian streets and the placement of benches and other seating possibilities is a common aspect of tourism gentrification (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; van der Zwan, 2016). The aim is to create spaces where locals and tourists can meet and interact (van der Zwan, 2016). Insofar, the physical changes in the cities under consideration reflect patterns which have been observed in other cities as well.

However, the analysis has shown that simultaneously, cultural offerings are installed in the cities' public areas. These installations could reflect an eventification of cityscapes as described in tourism gentrification literature (Novy & Colomb, 2017). The public space becomes a tourist attraction itself, and tourists seem to be encouraged to interact with the cultural offerings and be part of it (Pasquinelli, 2015). As these installations are placed in different areas of the cities, it might motivate tourists to leave the core center and explore rather untouched areas of the city, as described in the literature (Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Maitland & Alvarez, 2010).

The physical changes through the placement of urban art in the cities further influence socio-cultural gentrification, as the local uniqueness or authenticity of the places might be lost (Freytag & Bauder, 2018). Since the observed urban art cannot be related to traditional culture, these physical changes might lead to a mix of cultures and could have the potential to influence the authenticity and the perceived place identity of the residents (Liang, 2017; Novy & Colomb,

2017). Furthermore, the distinct image which is communicated to the locals and visitors through this urban art could hinder a group of people to access the area. Some members of the local community might not identify with these images – Feelings of exclusion might appear (Petrow, 2011).

At the same time, other than in Western European cities, the physical gentrification in terms of cultural offerings does not lead to fewer spaces for non-commercial interaction (Cocola Gant, 2018a). On the contrary, more spaces where people can meet and interact are created. This finding also relates to waterfront developments, which is typical in tourism gentrification (Barata-Salgueiro et al., 2017; Gravari-Barbas, 2017).

Thus, the implementation of cultural and sportive offerings in public spaces influences tourism gentrification to the extent, that the city itself turns into a tourist attraction, space for the co-creation of experiences are constructed, and thus, a mixing up of locals and visitors is encouraged, which could lead to cultural homogenization.

## 5.4  Aestheticization of old buildings

The last theme of physical changes influencing tourism gentrification deals with the aestheticization of cityscapes. Although non-renovated buildings have not been included in the literature, the analysis showed that these dwellings also seem to be crucial for tourism gentrification. The frequent picture taking of these dwellings stresses the value of these buildings for tourists. It can be assumed that the visitors appreciate the old buildings to a similar extent than the newly constructed or renovated buildings. The acknowledgment of the buildings thus shows that the tourists themselves have the power to create their own experience when visiting places (Freytag & Bauder, 2018). It can further be related to an interest in the old and authentic parts of the cities and a search for authenticity (Maitland & Alvarez, 2010; Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018). The upgrading of buildings with small paintings or huge mural graffiti enhances the interest in these dwellings even further, but also comes with the danger of museumification of the old non-renovated areas (Cooper & Morpeth, 1998; Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012).

Depending on the location of these buildings in the city, these small physical changes can influence the mobility patterns of visitors, possibly leaving the touristic center and exploring parts outside (Maitland & Alvarez, 2010; Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018). These movements might lead to a disturbance of residents in rather non-gentrified neighborhoods since tourists

might arrive in areas which have not been visited before (Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018; Mermet, 2017).

Additionally, the aestheticization of these buildings also has the potential to increase tourism gentrification in the areas of these buildings in a commercial sense. According to literature, an increasing amount of visitors to an area can attract the attention of companies who start to target tourists and thus change or influence the commercial offerings in the places (Cocola Gant, 2018b; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017). However, these physical changes seem to be a new phenomenon in tourism gentrification, and its impact deserves further research.

Lastly, these changes come also with conflict potential with the tourism development strategy of the city. The images transmitted by tourists from these non-renovated buildings might differ from the images, that the destination wants to communicate to potential tourists.

In terms of the aestheticization of buildings, it can thus be summarized that non-renovated buildings and minor physical changes to these dwellings influence tourism gentrification due to their aesthetic appeal. Changing mobility patterns, a museumification of the city, and disturbances of neighborhoods could be possible negative impacts. However, given the unexplored nature of the impact, further studies are needed.

# 6 Conclusion

The thesis aimed to advance the understanding of physical changes in cities and its connection to tourism gentrification. Furthermore, the interrelations between socio-cultural, economic, and residential impacts were analyzed.

After careful data gathering, analysis, and discussion, it can be concluded that physical changes influence tourism gentrification in smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe in a variety of ways. Four themes of physical changes have been identified: new, commercialized neighborhoods, renovation and repurposing of buildings, implementation of cultural and sportive offerings in public spaces and as a fourth theme the aestheticization of old buildings. Each of them influences tourism gentrification in a certain way.

The construction of new neighborhoods, together with shopping and entertainment venues, create new attractions for tourists and leads to commercial gentrification of formerly abandoned areas. It also reflects aspects of new-built gentrification, as mentioned by Vicario and Monje (2003). These physical changes reflect both gentrification in general but also tourism gentrification in particular. Further, it has also the potential to influence indirect socio-cultural gentrification, impacting the lives of residents in the city.

At the same time, renovations of old and historical buildings increase the attractiveness of the inner center. The renovation and repurposing of regular buildings towards restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and tourist accommodation, leads to areas which attract tourists. However, in comparison to the tourism gentrification literature, the repurposing seems to be driven by local businesses and not by international companies.

The implementation of cultural and sportive activities in the public spaces can be interpreted as museumification or eventification of the city centers and further increases the attractiveness of the area for tourists (Novy & Colomb, 2017). Depending on the location of these urban art installations, they also influence tourists' mobility patterns and can increase the geographical spread of tourists in the cities. At the same time, a co-creation of culture between tourists and residents is fostered, which might create feelings of loss of culture for residents (Pasquinelli, 2015). Although the public spaces are upgraded, there are still areas for non-commercial

interactions, and thus, physical changes influence tourism gentrification differently as in Western Europe.

Non-renovated buildings and minor changes to non-renovated buildings also have the potential to influence tourism gentrification. The aesthetic of these buildings is attractive to tourists. The location of the buildings around the city influence the mobility patterns of tourists, which can lead to further tourism gentrification of cities. Furthermore, the aestheticization could also lead to a museumification of the city together with possible negative impacts on the residents' quality of life. Therefore, it should not be taken for granted that massive physical changes are always the appropriate strategies for tourism development since old cityscapes can equally be attractive to tourists.

In smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe, a wide variety of physical changes are currently ongoing. While some of these changes influence tourism gentrification directly, it can be assumed that other changes instead reflect gentrification itself and thus, the line between tourism gentrification and gentrification in general is blurred. Furthermore, tourism gentrification in these cities is not occurring to the same extent as in major tourist destinations in Central and Eastern Europe such as Prague, Budapest, or Kraków. It is, however, unclear how the cities will develop in the future. The observed changes are either beginning of tourism gentrification patterns as in bigger cities or distinctions to bigger cities that are characteristic of tourism gentrification in smaller cities.

There are thus indications that the ongoing physical changes influence tourism gentrification. They might lay the bases for increasing economic, socio-cultural, and residential changes which are attractive for and influenced by increasing numbers of tourists. Tourism gentrification in the sense of extremely commercialized, internationalized and culturally flattered areas are, however, currently not present in the smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Physical changes influence tourism gentrification in smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe in a variety of ways. Some of the changes are similar to tourism gentrification processes in Western Europe. The physical changes in terms of the aestheticization of non-renovated buildings, the locally driven commercialization of inner cities, the installation of urban art objects in public spaces together with the creation of more non-commercial places of

interactions and its impacts on tourism gentrification, however, seems characteristic of smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe.

The conducted research raises a variety of new questions and approaches for further investigations about the influence of physical changes to tourism gentrification. The next two subchapters discuss suggestions for further research and evaluate the chosen research methods.

## 6.1   Further research

The study unveiled new perspectives on the influence of physical changes on tourism gentrification. However, further research is needed to strengthen the findings and to conceptualize physical changes as an influencing factor of tourism gentrification even more. It is suggested that research needs to advance in the following fields.

Although the influence of new neighborhoods to tourism gentrification has received some attention of researchers, the findings of this study indicate, that it is not only the commercial offerings that attract tourists to these consumption zones but also the aesthetics. The modern architecture is perceived as attractive by tourists. Insofar, it is suggested that further research in the field should conceptualize the role of the aesthetic value of flagship buildings in tourism gentrification and combine it with the commercial gentrification ongoing. This would help to understand better how new constructions interrelate with tourism gentrification.

With regards to the renovations and repurposing of buildings in the city, it seems clear that these changes influence tourism gentrification. However, in the case of smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe, this process seems to be driven by local business owners rather than international business. This distinction, in comparison to major tourist cities, needs further analysis. It is unclear if these changes are just a first step on the way towards commercial gentrification as in big cities or if the somewhat local driven tourism gentrification is a distinct characteristic of smaller cities in Central and Eastern Europe. A widening of research towards more destinations with similar characteristics is suggested.

The upgrading of public spaces with cultural and sportive offerings adds on to the recent literature, but further studies about the interrelationships between tourism and public spaces are needed to enhance the understanding. As public spaces act as areas where tourists and locals meet and interact, the impact of the cultural offerings installed in the public areas on the co-

creation of touristic experiences need further research. An increased understanding of this process would help to better understand the role of these physical changes on tourism gentrification from a socio-cultural perspective and can help to prevent adverse outcomes mentioned in literature. The author argues that further observations, as well as interviews with users of these spaces, are needed to enhance the understanding of the value of these spaces for city users and tourists, especially.

The study indicates that non-renovated buildings and small upgrades to these might also influence tourism gentrification in cities. However, to prove the validity of this finding, further research is needed. Furthermore, it is suggested to analyze the impact of these buildings on the tourists' images on destinations.

While this study was conducted independent of the tourists and the residents at the destinations, it will be beneficial to include the people's perspective, their behavior and mobility patterns in further studies of tourism gentrification. It seems that physical changes have the potential to influence the tourist's mobility patterns, and thus, it seems crucial to understand the people's perception of physical changes.

As the study at hand has shown, there is some evidence that the images transmitted on Instagram have the potential to identify new tourism hotspots, which might represent another aspect of tourism gentrification. The scope of this project is, however, too limited to establish a relationship between Instagram images and new mobility patterns of tourists. It is therefore advised to conduct further research on this aspect to arrive at a better understanding of the gentrification power of social media.

Lastly and more generally speaking, longitudinal studies about the changes in the smaller destinations are advised. Since urban changes are happening over a relatively long period, the research at hand could only analyze the current influence of physical changes on tourism gentrification in the cities and thus describe important current aspects rather than frame stages in the changes of the cities in terms of tourism gentrification. It is thus unclear how the situation will change over the next years and which aspects might become more apparent, while others disappear.

## 6.2 Evaluation of research methods

The observation of physical changes in cities has been a valid source of data gathering. It allowed the researchers' immersion into the cityscape itself and to get an impression of city planning and urban development on-site, which would have been impossible to gain with another method. Moreover, experience on-site helped to validate the observations on Instagram, since the researcher can prove that the pictures uploaded are taken in the respective city. On the other hand, observations do not unveil the initiators of the physical changes and their intentions behind it. Hence, the impact on tourism gentrification can only be assumed based on the use of the building.

The observations on Instagram proved to be an excellent method to increase the understanding of aspects, people are attracted in and to uncover aspects, which might have been missed out during the fieldwork on site. It has therefore enhanced and improved the overall results of the study. Nevertheless, a qualitative content analysis or a netnographic approach would have enhanced the understanding of tourists' meaning of the pictures and the place, which might have added additional value to the findings.

The semi-structured interviews have been beneficial in deepening the understanding of tourism gentrification aspects in the chosen cities in Central and Eastern Europe. The possibility to probe and ask follow-up questions was necessary because a shared understanding of various aspects is still missing. Additionally, the semi-structured form allowed the researcher to deviate partly from the interview guide, which then enhanced to capture the complexity of the physical changes and its influence on tourism gentrification. Interviews with professionals in urban planning and development besides the tourism development officials would have added additional value to the research. However, since the main methods of the investigations were observations of physical changes, the interviewees with the tourism marketers are considered as a method to validate and enhance the understanding rather than the primary data source.

Lastly, the choice of three different destinations to analyze tourism gentrification has been somewhat complicated. Given the complexity of the various cities' historical development, a case-study design would have been more helpful. However, one must keep in mind that, as the study has shown that the tourism industry is not big yet, potential interviewees would have been even more challenging to acquire. Moreover, as the research has shown, some patterns seem to be a topic in all three cities and thus improve the generalizability of the study in comparison to a case-study design.

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