Tourism in Public Space

A review of Baixa Pombalina recent transformation

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Abstract

Starting from the analysis of the public space, centered on its uses and relations, the dissertation that gave rise to this paper focuses on understanding the change of urban dynamics of *Baixa-Chiado*, particularly in the last decade, as a result of the growth of tourism activities in the city.

If at the beginning of the century, the major problems of *Baixa* and *Chiado* were related to the degradation of the buildings, desertification and neglect, in the last decade, tourism related activities gained considerable importance in urban dynamics, bringing consequences for public space and public life.

Starting from an empirical basis that intends to frame and contextualize the *city,* we try to prove that if the public space is the mirror of society, the best questions and answers emerge when we go to the street to observe: the street and the People.

Thus, integrated into the project Public Space Service System, this dissertation has as study-case the *heart of the city* (*Baixa-Chiado*) and with the methodology PSSS, went to the street to analyze it and try to diagnose his conflicts and opportunities, tensions and overloads, waits, shadows and attractions. In this way we realize that tourism is a system of the city, laid on the public space and that represents another layer of the relationships and dynamics that compose it.

Keywords: public space, tourism, Lisbon, *Baixa-Chiado*.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, tourism has increased notably in Lisbon, which has contributed to a change in the dynamics and interactions of the city, particularly in the area of the historic center. Media pressure on the subject, which combines tourism growth with concepts such as *touristification*, gentrification, mass tourism and loss of urban identity, can be seen in other European cities such as Barcelona and Venice, making this a central theme in public debate and in the scientific community.

In this context, focusing on public space use and design relations to tourism, this paper analyses the impact of tourism activities in the public space on the specific case of Lisbon's *Baixa-Chiado*, and its' changing urban dynamics over the past years.

Although there is not enough distance to assess the contours of tourism today, we can admit that since 2008 there is a new phase (UNRIC, 2009): it is in the sequence of the economic recession of 2008 that tourism activities begin to multiply, through the proliferation of the internet and online media.

Therefore, this paper will be organized in two main parts, following the structure of the analysis of the case study inserted in the original dissertation:

1. Study of the recent transformation process of *Baixa-Chiado*;
2. Analyses about the use of the public space in *Baixa-Chiado* nowadays and how it responds to tourism activities.

The first one is developed as a timeline between 2008 and 2018 identifying urban planning and urban design strategies, public space projects and public policies, highlighting how urban regeneration processes affected (or not) the patterns and dynamics over time.

The second one is centered in an analysis of *Baixa-Chiado* public space system using assesment tools developed within PSSS research project[1].

PART I: STUDY OF THE RECENT TRANSFORMATION PROCESS OF BAIXA-CHIADO

The year 2008 was a turning point, not only at the political and economic level (the beginning of the financial crisis and the consequent economic recession), but also for tourism, with an increase in tourist activities changing the urban dynamics of the territory that also played a prominent role in the political agenda of Lisbon in the last decade.

Analyzing the territory on these three fronts (political, urban and tourist) there are some events relevant to the transformation of *Baixa-Chiado*. From this perspective we can highlight three events that somehow served as a motto for the changes observed in the last ten years in the city:

1. In 2007 begins a new political cycle in the city, which lasts until today, with António Costa's election as Mayor of Lisbon, changing categorically the priorities of political action program for the capital.
2. A Proposal for Revitalization of *Baixa-Chiado* is consolidated through the Safeguard Detailed Plan of *Baixa* (2011), with several interventions arising.
3. In 2007 the TLX10 (Strategic Plan 2007-2010) was presented in which three micro-centralities of attraction were created united by the riverside axis (Turismo Lisboa, 2017: 7): *Parque das Nações*, Lisbon's historical center and the zone of *Belém*. One of the main measures of this plan is the promotion of tourism in the online media – this strategic redefinition was crucial for the growth of tourism in the city and ended up being extended throughout the country.

Public Space Transformation

As of 2008, originating from this background and taking into account the international context, the first changes begin to be felt in the panorama of *Baixa-Chiado*.

A (direct) result of the *Baixa Pombalina' Revitalization Plan* were the several interventions of structural nature and of redesign of the public space that emerged, especially on the riverfront, which strengthened the city-river

[1] PSSS – Public Space's Service System is an interdisciplinary research project led by IST - Lisbon University, with Oporto and Barcelona Universities urban research centres, aiming to develop new concepts and tools to foster awareness of public space service value.

connection: *Terreiro do Paço* (2010), *Ribeira das Naus* (2014), *Terminal de Cruzeiros* (2017), *Cais do Sodré* (2017) and *Campo das Cebolas* (2018).

Other interventions have contributed to the improvement of accessibility and pedestrian mobility, such as the *Elevadores do Castelo* (2013), which completes a network of shortcuts that have improved the relationship between hills. In line with the strategy of polarizing *Baixa-Chiado* as a cultural and creative center, new museums such as *MUDE* (2008) and *Museu do Dinheiro* (2016) were created, along with the pre-existing nucleus of *Faculdade das Belas Artes, Museu do Chiado, Teatro São Luiz* and *Teatro São Carlos*, came to reinforce the cultural nature of the territory.

Business Dynamics Transformation

According to the data collected from the Lisbon Tourism Observatory and the field work, we found that the vast majority of activities related to tourism and trade are financed by private investors.

Thus, we found that, between 2010 and 2016, of 900 stores that existed in *Baixa* only 50% remained open with the same usage and typology (Pereira, 2017). In 2015 the Municipality of Lisbon creates the project "*Lojas com História*" (approved by Deliberação No. 99 / CM / 2015) filed by the sense of urgency to preserve and foster the heritage concerned[2].

ATL started to take an active part in the creation and management of projects and equipment of tourist interest in the city, such as the *Pátio da Galé* in *Terreiro do Paço* (2011) or the public opening of the *Arco da Rua Augusta* (2013).

In 2011 is published the TLx14 (Strategic Plan for Tourism Lisbon 2011-2014) which aimed to put Lisbon in the top of mind of European capitals (TLx14), fostering the increased tourist flow in the capital and the notoriety of the destination. In this same plan, a strategy for responding to the globalization of the tourist market is defined for the first time, where supply exceeds demand (Turismo de Lisboa, 2017: 8).

Tourism as a city producer

The investment in the tourist sector in Lisbon historic center increased in an urgent way: for example, the hotel industry and local accommodation establishments have the highest concentration in the historic center, where the *Baixa* and *Chiado* stand out from the remaining city (PEDULx, 2016: 305-313).

It is at this time that the tourist sector starts to think in Lisbon beyond the city limits and in 2015 the Strategic Plan for Tourism of the Lisbon Region (2015-2019) is presented. This plan aims to create a coherent vision of the region, through appropriate solutions, taking into account the specificities and differences of the five macro tourist points: *Lisbon, Cascais, Sintra, Arrábida* and *Arco do Tejo* (Turismo de Lisboa, 2017).

It turns out that the plan is implemented three years ahead of schedule (2016) and in 2017 comes the Tourism Strategy 2027 (at the national level) that introduces new themes in the promotion and strategy of tourism. For the first

[2] Source: *http://www.lojascomhistoria.pt/sobre*.

time the idea of economic, social and environmental sustainability emerges and the five main challenges are identified, among them, the valorization of Heritage and Culture and the dispersal of demand.

The data concerning the period between 2008 and 2018 is presented below in a chronology, in which succinctly are highlighted the main changes in the political context, urban and tourism in the study area.

Public Space	Tourism	
CML starts the Plano de Pormenor para a *Baixa-pombalina* [3].	Number of international arrivals corresponds to approximately 1.9 million [8]. There were 105 hotels in the city of Lisbon [8].	2008
	First company of tourist vehicles begins to operate in Lisbon (CitySightSeeing) [9]. The number of low-cost souvenir shops in Baixa corresponds to nine (Pereira, 2017).	2009 Reelection of António Costa to President of CML(Sampaio, 2015).
Reduction of car traffic in Terreiro do Paço (LUSA, 2012).	There were 299 stopovers at the Lisbon cruise terminal and 448 497 passengers [8].	2010
Detailed Plan for the Safeguarding of Baixa Pombalina [4]. Reopening of Mercado do Chão do Loureiro: new car park and panoramic elevator that facilitates access to the Castle [5].		2011
Implantation of new uses in the galleries of Terreiro do Paço (restaurants, terrace areas, Lisbon Tourism Observatory, tourist point, discotheque) (Turismo de Lisboa, 2017).	First tuk-tuk company starts operating in Lisbon (TukTukLisboa) (Barbosa, 2014).	2012
Inauguration of the Elevadores do Castelo project: Improvement of the link from Baixa to Castelo (LUSA, 2013). ATL opens Arco da Rua Augusta for touristic visits (Turismo Lisboa, 2017).		2013 Second re-election of António Costa as President of CML (Boaventura, 2013).

	Public Space	Tourism
2014	Inauguration of the redesign Ribeira das Naus (LUSA, 2018).	The number of tuk-tuks operating in the city is between 70 and 80 vehicles (Barbosa, 2014).
2015 Fernando Medina holds the position of President of CML.	After 27 years, the Chiado reconstruction plan is finished, with the completion of Terraços do Carmo: they establish a connection between Chiado and Largo do Carmo [6].	Between 2014 and 2015, 23 new hotels are opening in the city of Lisbon, with the highest number ever (LUSA, 2018).
2016 The Websummit event takes place in Lisbon for the first time.	Museu do Dinheiro - rehabilitation of Banco de Portugal' building [7].	The number of low-cost souvenir shops is ninety. (Pereira, 2017). The estimated number of tuk-tuks to circulate in Lisbon is between 400 and 600 during the high season [9].
2017 Fernando Medina is elected President of CML . The Websummit event returns to Lisbon.	New Cruise Terminal and respective work on the river front (LUSA, 2017).	There are five sightseeing companies operating in Lisbon, with variations in the type of vehicles: from panoramic buses to hybrids that offer the Tejo crossing [10]. There are 204 hotels in Lisbon, with a practically double increase of the number of establishments [11]. 330 cruise ladders and 521 042 passengers are counted [11].
2018 Lisbon is the host city of the Eurovision Song Contest for the first time (Nogueira, 2018).	Inauguration of the redesign of Campo das Cebolas (LUSA, 2018).	In the first quarter of the year, the number of stops at the cruise terminal was twice more than the same as the previous year [11]. By the end of the year, 25 new hotel units are opening in the city [12]. In 2018 Lisbon received 4.5 million tourists per year and on average there are 12465 tourists daily [13].

Fig. 1: Chronology 2008/2018 - Lisbon and *Baixa-Chiado*

[3] Source: *http://websummit.com/.*

[4] Source: *http://www.museudodinheiro.pt.*

[5] Source: Carristur.

[6] Source: APECATE.

[7] Source: Sightseeing companies in Lisbon.

[8] Source: ATL.

[9] Source: *http://observador.pt.*

[10] Source: *http://www.publico.pt.*

PART II: ANALYSIS OF BAIXA-CHIADO

In order to understand how the *Baixa Pombalina* public space is performing nowadays, we used the PSSS assessment tool to address tourism activities in public space. PSSS tool (P. Brandão, Brandão, & Ferreira, 2018) is based on the idea that the public space comprises hardware and software features – being attributed the most physical and formal characteristics to hardware and more incorporeal features to software. The methodology framework comprises four main concepts and assessment axis:

01. System - How does the public space relates and connects to other spaces?

Public space is by definition relational, so its primary role is to make contact, to ensure interactions, links between private places and other public spaces, joining users together and hosting a variety of overlapped functions. It "(…) is a system of systems where the layers of functional networks – infra-structural, cultural, economic and environmental – intersect and complement each other in a mutual and consolidated way." (UN-Habitat, 2015, p. 42).

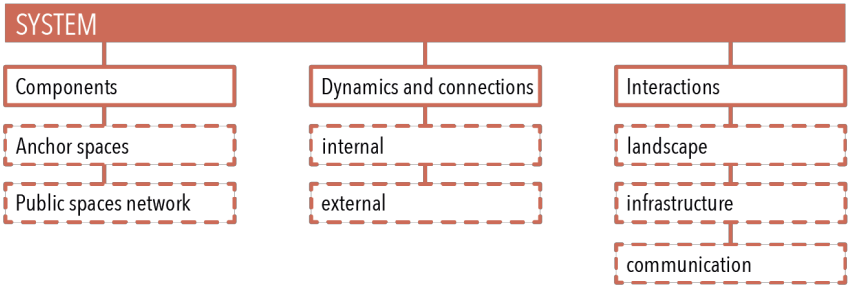

Fig. 2. System Organization in PSSS Method (PSSS, 2018)

02. Service - What is this public space for and what is offering to people?

As a collective space, common and open to all users, public space enables the provision of several public goods and supports: vital activities for the city ensuring services that are crucial and collective valued. So we can acknowledge and identify the benefits people obtain from different functions and activities of a public space. Thus, quickly, we can understand that a public space can supply diversified services in a multifunctional space.

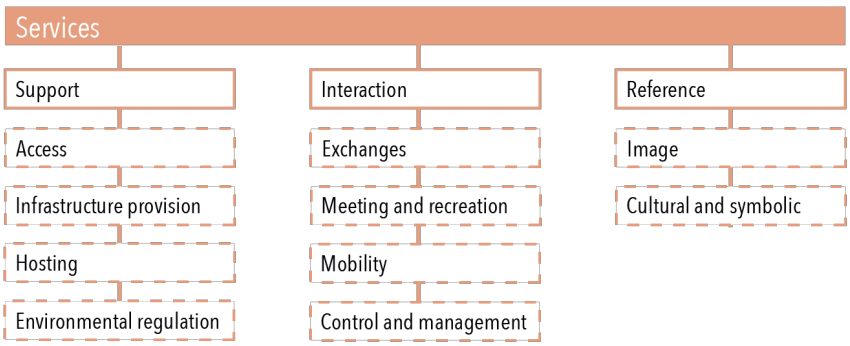

Fig. 3. Services organization in PSSS Method (PSSS, 2018)

03. Stakeholders - What are the stakeholders of this space and their needs?

Public space is not just a matter of physical form or vessel for social relations to take place, it depends on relations of actors and agents. Addressing what are the stakeholders of a public space is a step further so that their needs can become legible within the system structure. They may be organized in different typologies, according to the role they play in the context: users, regulators and producers.

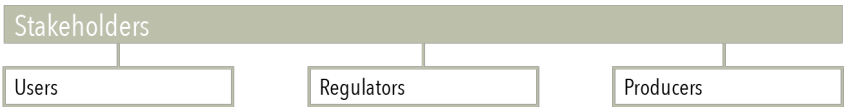

Fig. 4. Stakeholders organization in PSSS Method (PSSS, 2018)

04. Value - What types of values are acknowledged?

Finally, in an evaluation process, value is a central concept. Given public space multiplicity and diversity, instead of using a unidimensional form of 'value', it is explored the plural form. 'Values' embracing different kinds of value: use, social, economic, environmental, image, cultural, etc. Underlining also, they vary from actor to actor, from context to context.

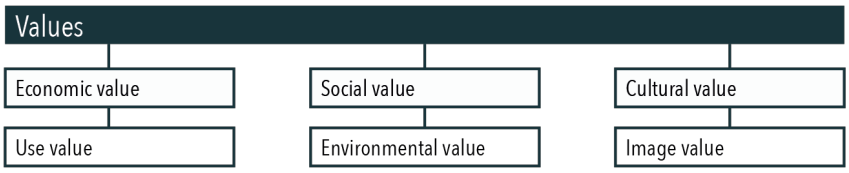

Fig. 5. Values organization in PSSS Method (PSSS, 2018)

Based on the urban context presented in part I, where we understand the evolution of the territory over the last decade and the respective changes of uses and dynamics, we have identified the limits of the system under analysis.

The system includes *Baixa-Chiado* and takes into account the river and the riverfront that joins the new Lisbon Cruise Terminal to *Cais do Sodré* – since the improvement of the relationship between the city and the river has always been a parameter in Lisbon tourism objectives.

In this sense, we note that the *Baixa-Chiado* system consists in three relevant subsystems: the *Baixa Pombalina*, *Chiado* and the riverfront. In addition, we could also verify that there is another subsystem present composed by the activities, connections and actors related to tourism. Although this *tourism system* uses the hardware of other urban

systems (the public space as physical space is the same), from a software point of view, the urban system works autonomously.

In the following figures we present the subsystems presented previously and define the limits of each one.

Fig. 6. *Ribeira das Naus*, April 2018.

Fig. 8. *Rua dos Correeiros*, April 2018.

Fig.9. *Largo Camões*, August 2018.

Fig. 10. Internal system of *Baixa-Chiado*.

This definition of the *tourism system* was made based on the field work developed. We tried to understand with the main institutional stakeholders related to tourism the principal routes recommended to tourists and what places are considered and recommended as attractions. In addition, during interviews with the other actors (tourists included), we tried to understand the main routes in the area and what points they considered as touristic points.