



COMMERCIAL URBANISM IN LISBON'S HISTORICAL AREAS
THE CASE STUDY OF BELÉM

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- EXTENDED ABSTRACT -

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INTRODUCTION

This article aims to understand the connection between the evolution of the city and the practice of commercial activities, as well as determine the best strategies for a greater business performance of street stores. The retail trade dynamics and their impact on the rehabilitation of historic areas of the city will be analyzed, with emphasis in Lisbon's historic areas, in particular the Monumental Area of Belém.

The document is organized in three parts. Initially, it presents an assessment of the different commercial urbanism programs developed national and internationally and seeks to understand the reasons for their creation. Following, the research focuses on the historical evolution of commerce in Lisbon and in the characterization of different types of commerce in Portugal, as well as the impact of the cultural sector in the development of cities and commercial activities. The third step is the cultural, commercial and urban analysis of the monumental area of Belém and the comparison between the current situation and the situation in 2004, taking advantage of the research work carried out by Professor and Advisor José Maria Lobo de Carvalho in 2006 on the economic impact of the Jeronimos Monastery in the surrounding area.

KEYWORDS: Commercial Urbanism | Belém | Street commerce | Historic areas

COMMERCIAL URBANISM – THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Commerce, the second largest economic activity in Europe, is a key sector for the development and sustainability of cities, either through the creation of numerous job positions, either through its role in social integration. In the last decades and with the introduction of the single currency, this activity has been undergoing an increase in competitiveness at a European level, and it is now possible to observe a Europeanization of the consumers and their purchasing habits. As a result of this homogenization, it becomes imperative to adapt the sectors of trade and production to new customer concerns regarding the environment, the conditions of production of goods, to animal welfare and sustainable development in general.

Simultaneously and as a consequence of a shift of the commercial activities to the peripheries of the cities, historical centers find themselves deserted and outdated. It is in the context of a growing interest in the economic, social and cultural development, both in Western Europe and the United States, that the redevelopment and revitalization of historic city centers is highlighted, making the need to revive economic activities relevant.

It's in this scenery that the concept of Commercial Urbanism is created, as an "integrative area of the multiple functions of an urban center emerges, creating synergies with high added value for the various stakeholders." (BARRETA, 2007, p.12). The need to address commerce as an urban function and in the context of planning policies becomes clear.

Once the need to diversify the economy of the historic centers is established, as well as it's need for cultural and recreational activities, the hypothesis of creating Enterprising Organizations designed to engage partnerships between public, private and civic sectors in economic and social renewal of city centers - first in the United States and only a few years later in Europe – starts being explored. Within these organizations, we easily highlight three intervention models: the Business Improvement Districts, the Main Street Program and the Town Centre Management.

A Business Improvement District corresponds to a pre-defined and legally approved area within which a tax is imposed for business owners, ensuring the existence of additional services of common interest such as maintenance, cleaning, security and marketing. It seeks to combat the commercial decline that comes as a result of the competitiveness created by the new shopping centers on the outskirts of cities. All the collected funds are delivered to an organization responsible for the BID's management, which generally corresponds to a private non-profit organization or a partnership between public and private organizations (BALSAS, 2002). The effectiveness of this project was notorious in increasing the safety and value of commerce in urban centers.

The Main Street Program, in turn, provides for the development of a commercial revitalization strategy that stimulates the economical development, always considering the preservation of the historical city center. From the various performance areas of the program, it's possible to highlight four: the economic restructuring in order to strengthen the economic base and attract new investments; the organization, which allows to coordinate strategies of revitalization and cooperation between the various intervenients; the promotion, taking advantage of the historic character of the site and promoting the commercial areas to the consumers and investors; and the design, in order to reclassify the external appearance of the shopping area structures. This being a model non-based on government support but in coordinating local efforts, its major limitation corresponds to insufficient funding.

Finally the Town Centre Management is based on a philosophy of centralized commercial management and the establishment of an organizational structure that unites the public and private sectors in order to preserve the quality of city centers as shopping destinations. Through an organization that includes members of local authorities, commercial and business associations - coordinated by the Town Centre Manager – this program seeks to prioritize interventions and manage resources for the implementation of a realistic action plan. The goal is the revitalization of city centers, based on what is

known as the Matrix of 4 A's and defines four key process areas: accessibility, attractiveness, animation and action.



Figure 1 - Town Centre Management, UK

Briefly, it is considered that the figure of the town centre manager is omnipresent in all the above partnerships and that the change and revitalization of historic city centers is possible through the involvement of the public and private sectors and with appropriate financial support.

As with the examples above, also in Portugal we witness desertification of historic city centers and an opening of markets, namely with the access of the country to the European Community. It is, then, necessary to study the dynamics in the relationship between the commerce and the city and the competitiveness between companies and establishments as well as the revaluation of land use planning policies. It is in this context that is created in Portugal and by *Decreto-Lei nº 184/94 de 1 de Julho*, the Support Programme for the Modernisation of Commerce (PROCOM). This program - state funded with support from the European Regional Development Fund - intended to support investment projects of enterprises of trade and services, in a new effort to modernize the commerce.

This new instrument to support the modernization of commerce covers three distinct areas: the first is identified with the direct support to the promotion of companies through innovation and expansion, considering each company individually; the second with the incentive to measures to promote business cooperation, boosting the associations of undertakings; and finally the third is aimed at the strengthening of associations of the sector and its ability to intervene with companies and workers.

In a synthetic way, this instrument potentiated the enhancement of commerce as a strategic urban planning sector able to actively participate in the revitalization of the historic centers. It also allowed the country to take the first steps towards a culture of cooperation and partnership, with the

participation of different levels of government and partners to jointly seek a solution integrated in the reality to be intervened. On the other hand there was not only a low membership and participation by retailers, but also a heavy reliance on public funding, preventing the sustainability of a long-term program. In the Portuguese case and opposed to what was found abroad, doubts still persist as regards the need for a town center manager and its possible powers (BALSAS, 2002).

Later, with the *III Quadro Comunitário de Apoio*, a new program arises: the URBCOM. It results from PROCOM's impacts in city centers and seeks to give continuity in a more detailed manner, with smaller areas of intervention and more direct actions such as the modernization of facilities, the adoption of appropriate times to the demanded needs, professional training of human resources and a new position in the integrated management of the traditional centers of commerce.

FROM THE LOCAL COMMERCE TO THE CONCEPT STORE PHENOMENON

With the establishment of the Republic on 5 October 1910, it begins to be observed in Portugal the predominance of small businesses and traditional portuguese commerce, always favoring the city centers to the detriment of the surrounding countryside.

This trend found itself counteracted from 14 October 1961, with the opening of the first supermarket in Portugal, the *Independente do Saldanha*, at Praça Duque de Saldanha, where the Banco Popular is located nowadays. Considered the first store in self-service system in Portugal, the Independent marked the beginning of a commercial revolution - consumers become autonomous in choices, roaming freely through the store and heading to the counter only upon payment. In the 70s continue to emerge new shopping centers and supermarkets in different parts of the country and in 1984, the Auchan group, formerly known as Pão de Açúcar, launches the first white label products. We witness in the successive decade a transition to a business model characterized by a business concentration and by the polycentric urban structures, in a affirmation of the "consumer society" that we recognize today (FERNANDES, 2012).



Figure 2 - Location of the first supermarket in Portugal

The commercial area in the historic centers of cities sees itself affected by the rise of these new polarities, which begin to multiply, both in the cities and on the periphery of cities, providing a great diversity in the commercial offer. The increasing mobility of consumers and greater availability of information, results in greater selectivity in the purchase. It becomes apparent the lack of small local businesses ability to overcome structural weaknesses. At a time when solutions are being sought to combat desertification of the historic centers also continue to emerge major shopping centers. The opening of the shopping center of Colombo in 1997 marked the affirmation of another new polarity, followed by Vasco da Gama in 1999.

In 2001, another novelty appears in the world of shopping centers, with the first department store, El Corte Inglés, to be opened in Portugal. We are witnessing, for the first time in the country, a self-service system that develops in an open space, gathering the different sections by floors and harboring in the same space several brands. Seeking to offer competition to existing shopping centers, the concept of open-air shopping center emerges, proposing to impose the rules and benefits of shopping centers to a range of high street stores, either by standardizing the schedules of stores, either by offering parking places, or through a security system which protects the safety of consumers and retailers. At the same time, with the persistence of the economic crisis, the public takes a more responsible buying behavior, focusing on recycling and buying second hand.

It is also at this time that we are witnessing a significant increase in e-commerce - online sales - from foreign sites but also from small traditional stores that have been forced to also join the digital marketing. In the year 2013, 72% of Portuguese people have made at least one online purchase, and, in 2014, 75% of goods purchased on the Internet were purchased through a smartphone (GONÇALVES, 2015).

Nowadays and considering that buying online is an increasingly natural habit, the future of physical stores foresees big changes. It is anticipated that by 2020 all physical stores will become showrooms for brands and cease to be effective purchase spaces (UOL HOST, 2014). It is therefore essential to define rules regarding the commercial competition, in order to allow a fair and balanced dispute between the different establishments, whether physical or digital. Also essential is to understand the role that trade unfolds in the socio-economic development and the revitalization of the city, as a guiding element and as point of contact between citizens and the local community.

LISBON'S HISTORIC AREAS

The historic areas are what distinguishes and characterizes the essence of Lisbon. Always considered a strategic region, both by proximity to the Tagus River and the strategic location at the westernmost tip of Europe, Lisbon was prime target of attacks and intrusions over several centuries. As

a result of the constant climate of war and insecurity, the city closes itself behind walls - which would later be recognized as *Cerca Velha* -, hosting in its interior a rich commercial emporium for different goods, including gold and silver.

When, in 1147, D. Afonso Henriques - 1st King of Portugal - manages to succeed in conquering the city and orders to transform the great mosque in what is now recognized as the Lisbon Cathedral, the city's expansion begins to be noticed beyond their walls, continuing to fulfill its mediating role of trade with Africa and Asia. It is at this point that, in a clear change of city limits, new districts start establishing, such as the districts of Alfama and Mouraria, which would later become two of the districts with more history and tradition of Lisbon.



Figure 3 - Bairro da Mouraria

The November 1st 1755 marks a new development cycle for the city of Lisbon, following the earthquake that hit the whole downtown area and the neighborhoods around the Castle. Following this disaster, the need for a plan that would restore order and begin the rebuilding process emerges quickly. With the support of Manuel da Maia and his team of collaborators, the Marquis of Pombal begins to rebuild the city following an orthogonal layout with heights similar to all buildings and an "access corridor" to the city - Praça do Comércio. Hence arises a *Pombalina* Lisbon, built by fixed rules and lined streets and planned directions, always considering as a main component the resistance to seismic actions. The importance of the commercial class in social stratification becomes clear for the first time with this reconstruction.

A few years later, in 1764, motivated by the need to respond to the expansion of Lisbon and give it a pleasant leisure area, it's inaugurated, the Lisbon's Public Promenade, a landscaped path, bounded by walls , for recreational activities of the bourgeois and noble classes. At the end of the 1850s, it was finally clear the urgent need to modernize the Portuguese capital and raise it to the standards set by the Haussmann plan for Paris. The official opening of the works for the construction of the Avenida da

Liberdade takes place on August 25, 1879, with a project coordinated by Frederico Ressano Garcia and marks a new era in the life of the Portuguese capital. It represents yet another milestone in the expansion of the city to the north, making it a prime location for the homes of the upper classes and for displaying very bold architectural works.

Currently, the Avenida da Liberdade incorporates three car mobility routes, interspersed by two landscaped tracks, ensuring the coexistence of two scales: the human scale and the scale of the metropolis. Considered the 35th most expensive street in the world, it is the area of the country with the most expensive rents regarding to the commercial segment. It is the location chosen for the luxury brand shops such as Cartier, Fendi, Louis Vuitton, Emporio Armani, Prada, Armani, among many others, in Portugal, being synonymous with prestige, elegance and exclusivity. Defines, together with the Baixa and Chiado, the shopping area of Lisbon par excellence, offering the whole buying opportunities for all budgets.

The fire that destroyed a large part of Chiado on 25 August 1988 opened doors to a new challenge to this historic quarter of the city. At a time when the historic center saw its importance diminished in favor of new shopping areas in development on the outskirts of the city, the rebuilding of Chiado was the opportunity to renew the area's image, with the architectural restoration of one of the most famous shops at the time, *Armazéns do Chiado*.

In recent decades, we have been witnessing the transformation of another historic district of the capital in the new shopping destination - the *Príncipe Real*. The opening of the Pepe Jeans by Andy Warhol shop on Rua da Escola Politécnica in October 2008, followed by a recovery action of the Príncipe Real Garden, launched the motto for the new trend that would set this area - the author's stores. With great support from Eastbanc, Rua Dom Pedro V, the Rua da Escola Politécnica and the Príncipe Real Garden started becoming a commercial complex with alternative street shops, in a very different concept from Baixa / Chiado. As per the New York SoHo style, showrooms quickly dominate the economic sector in Príncipe Real.

Globally, Lisbon is in 19th place in the list of cities with more presence of international brands (such as Zara and H & M) and is the 22th European city with more luxury brands, including Max Mara and Louis Vuitton. This growth of the commercial sector combined with the country's history, tradition, climate and gastronomy make the city of Lisbon in vogue and in the sights of world's tourism.

CULTURAL DISTRICTS IN EUROPE

Museums and shopping areas act as anchor institutions that guide people, becoming symbols of connection. They are reference points that unify the city and attract various visits, which consecutively

attend the rest of the activities of an area. From this premise and from the need to counteract the desertification of areas of the city with great historical and cultural value, an initiative for their rehabilitation arises all over Europe by creating cultural districts.

A cultural district is characterized by a high concentration of cultural facilities which act as an attraction anchor to the area that defines it. With spaces such as museums, art galleries, ateliers, music production studios, among others, cultural districts are born from a collaboration between the local community and the authorities in order to revitalize areas whose potential is not positively enjoyed.

The MuseumsQuartier in Vienna is perhaps the most successful example of this type of strategy. Located in Vienna's historic center, this vast cultural complex helps to set up a cultural and historically important area of the Austrian city. It seeks to state the city's profile as a center of tourism and culture, creating a favorable environment to the implementation of cultural and artistic activities and services with its own identity.

The district is managed since 1990 by the Association of MuseumsQuartier Operational Development, an initiative of the State and the City of Vienna which allows the use of a hierarchical management model with statutorily independent organizations but funded (partially or totally) by the state. Thus, although reducing the autonomy of organizations, ensures the overall coordination of the project and the integration of different functions - from planning and investment and events management to the maintenance of equipment and services as well as marketing strategies and support to the visitors.

The nowadays famous city of Bilbao, in Spain, also saw its exposure be increased in 1997 with the creation of the Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry. With a new image for the city that restructured the relationship between new and old institutions, strengthening the existing and previously unknown museums, the city of Bilbao has become a very requested tourist destination.

Similarly, the development of Le Centquatre in Paris explores the relationship with the implantation of the city, establishing a connection between two streets through a free central structure with an iron and glass cover. Seeks to bring the ambiance of the streets into the building and, like in the MuseumsQuartier, gathers artists from different areas in the same space, transforming the atmosphere of the building in an atmosphere of a neighborhood.

These cultural districts prove thus the viability of a cluster of museums, which grows and develops independently of the economic outlook of the city. In Portugal, the museum and headquarters of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was the first set of its kind to demonstrate the advantages of bringing together different spaces for cultural purposes in the same enclosed area. With a clear command over

space, scale, light, transparencies and prospects, the block is assumed with a new monumentality and spatial fluidity that links the inside to the outside.

The *Centro Cultural de Belém*, by the architects Manuel Salgado and Vittorio Gregotti, completed in 1993, also seeks to associate different cultural functions in a three-volume set with three distinct and complementary functions - a meeting center, a center of entertainment and exhibition center. The diversity of uses proved to be very beneficial for all, with the three functional modules working together for the same goal.

CASE STUDY – THE MONUMENTAL AREA OF BELÉM

This case study aims to analyze the commercial development of the Monumental Area of Belém, considering the possibility to apply for the area a Commercial Urbanism program similar to those studied. The limits of the study area were established based on the area of influence of existing cultural attractions in the surrounding area to the Jeronimos Monastery and that consequently have a direct impact on the development of trade activities and services.



Figure 4 - Study area limits

Since 2006, there are a few projects and programs planned for the Monumental Area of Belém, the first being the “Belém Rediscovered” Project. This plan takes as its starting point the new Museu Nacional dos Coches and is an ambitious plan, which seeks to enhance the artistic, cultural and gastronomic aspects of the neighborhood. Funded from money from the Casino Lisboa, the construction of the new Museu Nacional dos Coches aims to boost the growth of the area of Belém, turning it into a noble place, with a wide cultural offer. The program foresees the renewal of public space, with standardized signage to identify consistently the different touristic and cultural facilities in the area, and the attraction of sophisticated and modern cuisine restaurants and specialized trendy spaces.

In 2008, the Lisbon City Council and the *Sociedade Frente Tejo* develop the *Plano Geral de Intervenções da Frente Ribeirinha de Lisboa*, which defines an integrated strategy of urban interventions

on the riverfront with the aim of developing the city of Lisbon. The goals are to create a pedestrian and cycling continuous path along the river front, improving access for pedestrians to it, with recreational and leisure areas and with the integration of the supply of tourist and cultural facilities as well as landmark buildings. Of the major issues detected in Bethlehem, it's convenient to highlight the lack of pedestrian links from the city to the Belem Tower and river front, the lack of equipment that would allow the fruition of space and the lack of infrastructures to support tourism.

Roughly, the Monumental Area of Belém is characterized by a balanced distribution of Green Spaces and Special Equipment's Use spaces, which are complemented by a surrounding of Central and Residential spaces. In this neighborhood there are five classified buildings, the Centro Cultural de Belém, the Jeronimos Monastery, the Belém Palace, the Central Tejo building and the Convent of *Nossa Senhora do Bom Sucesso*, and two buildings to be classified, the Angeja Marquis Palace and the building of the Museum of Popular Art.

Currently, Belém stands out for it's great proximity between all the cultural attractions, unifying the area in a large cultural area of great tourist value, fundamental part of any tourist itinerary.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN 2004 AND 2016

It is possible to define, for the study area, three commercial axes with different characteristics that allow the distinction between them. In the image below we can find defined: zone A, which comprises all the commerce that faces the Rua de Belém and that is characterized by a mostly tourist audience, with a bustling atmosphere and difficulties both in the pedestrian movement and vehicle circulation; zone B covers the Rua Vieira Portuense and all eating establishments that predominate in it and is characterized by a more peaceful tourist environment where people sit to enjoy a meal and where cars do not circulate; and zone C, defined by the intersection of the Calçada da Ajuda with Rua da Junqueira, and which corresponds to a less touristic area, with an atmosphere of a local community. Taken together these three areas harbor 73 of the total of 81 stores involved in this analysis.



Figure 5 - Study Area: commercial hubs

The limits set for this investigation contain a total of 81 establishments from which 55.56% correspond to the restaurant sector, representing a significant majority by this type of activity, directly influenced by the intense tourist numbers. This commercial activity sector is followed by the services and the traditional trade sector with respectively 16.05 and 17.28% of the total percentage of institutions for these uses. The the hotel offer in the area corresponds, contrary to expectations, to a total of three establishments (a hostel, a hotel and a pension), representing only 3.70% of the activity in the area.

Comparing the data collected during the month of February 2016 and the data developed by Prof. Lobo de Carvalho during the year 2004, the increasing number of outlets immediately stands out, growing from 68 to 81, which represents a 19% increase in the number of existing street stores in a 12-year period, leaving no margin for doubts regarding the growth of the Monumental Zone of Belém as a tourist hub. The number of bank agencies has doubled, and there are currently eight agencies of this kind. The number of cafes and pastry shops also increased by almost 50%, with 6 stores open in 2004 and 11 in 2016. The scenery is even more representative in the case of restaurants, with 9 new institutions for this purpose.

In contrast, there is a clear reduction in the number of specialized stores for retail trade: the two furniture and bed linen stores that once existed, and the two hardware and office shops that were there, were closed and in the case of the furniture stores, replaced by new spaces.

Comparative Analysis of the number of establishments in 2004 and 2016								
Type of establishment	2004	2016	Type of establishment	2004	2016	Type of establishment	2004	2016
Local Administration	1	1	Office and Computer	2	0	Furniture	2	0
Snack-Bar	1	0	Offices	2	1	ONG	0	1
Bank Agency	4	8	Pharmacy	1	1	Food (Others)	3	4
Travel Agency	1	0	Art Gallery	0	1	Stationery	1	1
Handicraft	2	2	Wine shop	1	0	Pension (cat.ª **)	1	1
Chinese products	0	1	Hostel	0	1	Mail office	1	1
Home/Décor	1	2	Hotel (cat.ª ****)	1	1	Turism Office	1	1
Gardening	1	1	Church	0	1	Sales point	1	0
Clothes	1	0	Real Estate	1	1	Clinic	1	1
Accessories	0	2	Beauty	0	1	Police	1	1
Café	6	11	Jewelry	0	1	Shoe and leather shop	1	0
Coffee Shop	2	1	Build. Mat., Metals and Hardware	1	0	Restaurant	19	28
Beer Shop	2	1	Opticians	1	1	Headquarters Facility	1	1
Dentist	1	0	Mini-market	1	1	Tobacco shop	1	0
Total of establishments							69	81

COMMERCIAL URBANISM IN BELÉM

The area of Belém is a clear example of the influence of the museums and the cultural sector in the urban structure of a city. The cultural infrastructure are a stimulus to new experiences and boost the development of urban areas. Similarly, the trade sector as urban function can attract the population and determine the functions that are established in a particular area and is central to the sustainability of cities for its role in social integration.

From the analysis of the case study, it is noted that there is a tendency to trade specialization, with the existence of two types of establishments which take precedence over the others - the banking sector and restaurants. Consequently, the area in evidence is characterized by lack of supply diversity, in particular non-specialized stores, such as supermarkets and establishments directed to tourism, such as craft shops and souvenirs.

In a user's perspective, there is a big gap regarding the pedestrian routes, especially in Rua de Belém, in which the pedestrian traffic is hampered by the narrow walks and the high number of people not only circulating but also waiting for their turn to enter the Pastéis de Belém. Likewise the existing pedestrian crossings are distributed in dispersed way and detract from the pedestrian movement of tourists. Simultaneously, the parking supply, particularly for tourist buses, is greatly reduced, resulting in abusive parking. The difficult access from the Jardins de Belém to the river side should also be noted, as the visitors see themselves forced to cross the only existing subway to access the river front, resulting in a cluster of people close to this access.

Thus, despite the monumental hub of Belém being a consolidated area recognized for its cultural value, it is necessary to stabilize the commercial and circulations slopes in the area. It's obvious, by the increasing number of establishments in the area in the last 12 years, that trade is still a growth sector which is, however, expanding without a defined strategy.

The programs previously defined for the area of Belém aim at a significant improvement of accessibility and quality of public space, unifying the area and ensuring coherence between the different tourist facilities. Still, none of the proposals for intervention for the zone provide a global management of the commerce. Of the knowledge acquired, it is determined that the collective responsibility of the interveners in the field is critical for individual institutions to benefit from the joint services. Hencethere should be a management organ that integrates and considers the multiple functions of an urban center and develops a strategy to strengthen the intervention area in all sectors.