PUBLIC SPACE IN SINERGY WITH CULTURAL FACILITIES

LISBON AND BARCELONA AS CASE STUDIES

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1. Introduction

Public space is the element responsible for structuring the City since its inception and provides the basis for growth and quality of urban space throughout its life cycle (Benevolo, 1993). Throughout history, different societies have come to appropriate it and use it (White, 1980; Gehl, 1987) and therefore we can see that public space is a reflection of the society that inhabits it, decoding their values in the political, economic, religious and social universes (Borja, 1987; Carmona, 2003; Gonçalves, 2006). Public space also acts on intangible levels on the relationship with its community, being able to reinforce the identity of a place through the creation of symbolic references (Brandão, 2008) and the reciprocity that is created between the two sustains the ability that public space has to adapt to the new usages that its community requires.

Provided by the adjustment of the understanding of European cities as part of a network and by the enforcement of urban policies based on the cultural sector as a propeller of regeneration, in the eighties and nineties it is developed an extensive production of new cultural facilities who intervened in the City's public space (Lorente, 1996). In the approach taken on those projects is often included the intervention in their surrounding public space. This is a way to not only enrich that facility for other purposes but also to establish, through the public space, a connection to the City, causing it to integrate the urban public spaces network.

Therefore the subject of this study is the public space in the surroundings of a cultural facility. This work pursues the understanding of this kind of space's role in the contemporary City, the different approaches taken in its design, the evaluation of its physical characteristics that contribute to a quality space and to see how the presence of a facility in relation with the public spaces generated is reflected in the usage and, therefore, the social context of its surroundings. For this, mechanisms for assessing the quality of public spaces will be applied to four case studies, located in two different sites in Europe - in Lisbon and Barcelona - and, therefore, inserted in different contexts and created for different purposes. In Barcelona will be studied the *Plaça dels Àngels* inserted in the CCCB's project, *Plaça Joan Coromines* related to MACBA; in Lisbon will be approached *Praça do Museu* and *Jardim das Oliveiras*, both integrating CCB in the Belém's monumental area.

By the centralizing power of the urban public space, bearing in mind its inherent character of urban regenerator, it is our interest the realization of the contamination's potentiality of this specific type of space, which motivates this work's research question:

Can the public space generated by cultural facilities contribute to a new environment in the urban context of such facility, through a system of public spaces whose stimulated activities "contaminate" new usages and experiences in the process of regeneration?

2. Subject's Context

Evolution

Throughout the evolution of the City, the relation between public space and public facilities had different significances at different times reflecting, at the urban level, the political, socio-economic and cultural needs of each society. At times of history, this relation was more important, as during the Roman civilization, the medieval city and the beginning of the twentieth century. The statement of this relation is justified especially when the power exercised by the Clergy and Nobility in a given society is stronger and, more recently, when the values related to quality of life, leisure and idleness become important in the functioning of the community. However, is transversal to all historical periods the acquisition of a centripetal character by the areas that receive the new facility, and through the arrangement of the surrounding public space, that site emerges as an appreciated one.

Current Developments

Since de end of World War II, the cultural facilities gain prominence and the enthusiasm of architects in relation to their design starts to grow. The political and financial support of these projects provides an incentive in the creative field leading to boldest conceptions of buildings so that, over time, the art museums will act as "seismographs of architectural culture "(Lampugnani, 1999: 7).

Iconic buildings like the Guggenheim Museum in New York, opened in 1959, or the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin in 1968, already show the highlighted character of these buildings in the urban environment, establishing the origins of the approach taken in relation to many of this buildings that remains today. Yet, we can point out another type of approach in the design of today's art museums designating those who work as an extension of a particular urban image. However, is the first positioning who infers more transformation to the context in which it operates - which justifies the choice of the case studies of the present work. Today, Culture has a key role in shaping the image of a group with power to project it abroad, and thereby, enhance the marketing of its products. Thus is formed an industry whose objective is intrinsically linked to economic development of a region and justifies the importance gained by the structure of the sector and defends it as a major strategy chosen for the regeneration of European cities (Lorente, 1996, 2003) .

The museum building has also an impact at the urban level, bringing many gains, not only by its dynamics as by providing rehabilitation of a given sector of the City. Still, two constants are noted at its approach to public space: the creation of a square or plaza in order to vent the building entrance, to allow people flow and to function as a framework for the building; the minimal treatment of space that is either stripped of furniture, vegetal, or vertical elements that obstruct the views to and from the building. It is with these features that we find these spaces today and they are the subject of this investigation.

Barcelona

In Barcelona, both public space and public facilities, particularly from the late seventies and early eighties, were important elements in the political regeneration of the city (Bohigas, 1985; Borja, 1995, 2010). Throughout the eighties it was sought to rebalance the uses and functions of the city, always basing on the shape of the "traditional city" (inserted in the concept of "city recovered" as defined Gemzøe and Gehl (2001: 18)) through occasional interventions in the urban fabric. The "metastatic" ability of public space, as described by Bohigas (1985: 21), was the strongest feature of this approach contributing to a faster resolution of the city's problems and to respond effectively to the population's demands.

Thus, it is from the beginning of the nineties that, with the creation of PEMB, culture is defined as one of the cornerstones for the socio-economic development of the city and also as a way to make it more attractive and competitive. In 1999 comes the *Pla Cultural Estrategic* that analyzes the state of the cultural service available to citizens, detects the main issues and opportunities proposing polycentrism of cultural centers and large-scale cultural facilities (Esteban, 1999; Marshall, 2004). This decentralization is coordinated with the creation of the New Centrality Areas (which seeks to rebalance the sectors of the City by creating attractiveness in all of them in order to decongest the city's center) and also with the creation, in 1996, of the *Insitut de Cultura de Barcelona*, which will support the cultural transformations in each of these nuclei and, thereby, enhance the construction of new cultural facilities.

Currently we found that the points where the synergies between public space and cultural facilities are stronger are on the Glories' area (with the axis defined by *Teatre Nacional de Catalunya*, *l'Auditori* and the future *Museu del Disseny HUB*) in Montjuïc (with *Ciutat del Teatre* that brings together *Institut del Teatre* and its museum, the *Teatre Lliure* and the *Mercat de les Flors*) and Raval and Ciutat Vella (with an axis of facilities formed by the parks of *Estacio del Nord* and *Ciutadella*, *Museu Picasso*, *Teatre del Liceu*, CCCB, MACBA and *Biblioteca de Catalunya*).

Lisbon

The public space thought of in Lisbon is very rudimentary until the early eighteenth century, being reduced to the road structure, some squares as *Terreiro do Paço*, *Rossio* and churchyards. Only with the opening of *Passeio Público* in 1769, *Teatro de S. Carlos* and his square in 1793, and *Teatro Nacional D. Maria II* and the settlement of *Rossio* in 1846, was given the impetus for the proliferation of public spaces linked to leisure in the city throughout the nineteenth century, with increasing specialization of types of public space - following what was happening the rest of Europe.

In the following years are inaugurated gardens, viewpoints and other qualified spaces and, already in mid-twentieth century, there is an event of cultural propaganda, insert into the political context of the period, in the west part of the city, in Belém - the *Exposição do Mundo Português*. This event involved the construction of themed pavilions and the reorganization of the area in front of *Jeronimos*

Monastery. The structure of the public space built still remains today and endures to function as an element that gives coherence to the different facilities located there.

But one of the main facilities, generator of public space in the city, arises from the adaptation to new uses, often linked to culture or state institutions, of a type of building that has always been present in Lisbon: the mansion. This tradition eventually returned to the city public space mainly extensive areas of green (parks and gardens), that deep down it always had but it was limited. There are also other buildings of cultural nature created specifically for this purpose and which had great importance in generating the city's public space. We highlight the headquarters and museum of *Calouste Gulbenkian* Foundation, opened in 1969, and also CCB, opened in 1992, as two of the important moments of the relation under study.

Today in Lisbon, we more usually see the reuse of industrial areas as a way to, through binding to cultural activities, being able to regenerate parts of the city into disuse. *Expo 98* is one example, but more recently, the highlight was the establishment of the center of culture *Fábrica do Braço de Prata* and the multidisciplinary complex of *LxFactory*.

3. Evaluation Methodology

The analysis of each case study is aware of two aspects of public space, through the perception of which we can understand it: how it is constructed and how it is lived.

The methodology used to approach the analysis of the built space was based on the parameters proposed in the book *O Chão da Cidade - Guia para avaliação do Design do Espaço Público* (Brandão, 2002) while the apprehension of the social characteristics of each case are based on the work led by William H. Whyte, as a part of the book *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Whyte, 1980). Each method has been adapted to the different cases studied, seeking to make a description as complete as possible of all the its relevant components. Thus, for analytical purposes, we distinguish two different phases, resulting from the two areas of research - physical and social. Initially we analyze all components of physical space, their existence, relevance and quality, as well as the overall design qualities. In another phase we seek to describe in detail the social life that takes place in each case. The aim is to realize the intensity of usage of each space, its variation over time, how people enjoy the place and if it really meets the needs at the local level.

I. Space Evaluation for its physical characteristics

The tools used to analyze the characteristics of the public space, as already mentioned, are a result of the diagnostic process proposed by Pedro Brandão which will be adapted according to the most relevant characteristics, which here are translated into criteria, in each case. The general criteria and specific criteria differ from: the first group of the characteristics evaluates overall assessment of the projects, summarizing their associated qualitative intangible values; the latter relate to the specific and measurable physical characteristics of the elements of its design. Then, we present two criteria and parameters summary tables to which the project must respond:

Main Criteria	Parameters to resolve
Identity	• Promotes formal and recognizable local meanings; • Promotes local characteristic patterns of culture and development; • Promotes the creation of new elements of differentiation.
Continuity/ Permeability/ Legibility	• Provides a good integration in the urban context and fabric; • Provides day and night recognition of milestones for guidance; • Establishes a clear delimitation between public and private space.
Security/ Comfort	• Promotes the safety of persons and property and the safe pedestrian-traffic relation; • Provides visual quality and intense and pleasant relationship with its surroundings ; • Incorporates comfort, utility and ergonomics criteria for users.
Mobility/ Accessibility/ Permeability	• Offers ease of movement and /or traversing and /or connecting; • Promotes the interconnection of movement patterns (modes and routes); • Awareness of the expectations and needs in the usage of space, with no exclusions.
Diversity/ Adaptability	• Flexibility to adapt to various uses and possible future changes; • Compatibility with the choice of different services and equipment; • Promotion of formal diversity (natural / artificial) and alternative living.
Resistance/ Durability	• Adapts to the demands of wear and tear and the elements of weather; • Adapts to the prevention of vandalism; • Suitability to longer usage-life, reducing maintenance.
Sustainability	• Economical - is viable in the time, produces higher value than consumed; • Environmental - with little ecological impact in the construction and maintenance; • Social - meets the aspirations and needs, promotes equity; • Cultural - recognition of meanings, with clarity and consistency.

Specific Criteria	Parameters to resolve
Elements and natural structures	
Elements of Artistic Expression (Público Art)	• Sizing and Positioning; • Service and Performance; • Conservation and Resistance; • Consistency and integration.
Equipment and Urban furniture	
Structures and Lighting Systems	
Road infrastructure, transport and parking	
Infrastructure and support services	
Floor types	

II. Space Evaluation for its social living

The social characteristics of space evaluation is done through an analytical approach looking for synthesize all actions it generates. It uses plans and codes that represent data that will be addressed later. This is a simple technique, based on observation, which attempts to incorporate the largest number of parameters with relevance for the study. The work done on the site's plan is repeated several times per day so as to have a comprehensive picture of the social life of the place. Thus, it is intended to identify:

Location, Activities and Uses	• Map by date and time the location of people;
	• Quantify groups;
	• Identify activities by observation;
	• Identify areas of greatest intensity of use.
Flows	• Identify and locate flows.

III. Summary of the analysis

After the practical phase we proceed to the translation of the obtained data for functional tools trough:

• Processing the collected information;

• Conversion tables and statistical diagrams;

• Crossing the obtained data through the social and physical evaluations.

Now we can make the evaluation summary, comparing the data obtained with the projectual assumptions, trying to explain the success or failure of each case by understanding the functioning of the area, identifying their problems and even, ultimately, identify measures that can help to qualify it.

4. Application to case studies

Plaça dels Àngels

This square is part of the MACBA's project which opened in 1995 and is located in the Raval district, a sector of the old core of Barcelona, with economic and social problems. Its goal was to enhance the regeneration of the area by integrating the project into policies related to the urban cultural strategic line that led to the construction of this equipment. It was intended that this space should establish contact between the building of the MACBA and the city center and act as an attractive and structuring point of the area. The following table summarizes the main points of the evaluation of public space, according to the methodology described above.

Strenghts	• Responds to objectives of social and economic regeneration of the area; • Good integration structures in proximity to roads connecting to the city and public transport; • Integrated in network of public spaces with a main role; • Accessible to all users in all respects; • Multifunctional, easily adaptable to new uses.

Weaknesses	• The skater's intensive use of space is responsible for:
	   . Uses conflict and insecurity in relation to passersby;
	   . Prevention of greater identification with the space by the community;
	   . Wear of the elements that requires higher maintenance costs and its cleanliness;
	• Persistence of the connection to the museum limiting its autonomy;
	• Characteristics of the pavement hinder their experience in the warmer months.

Plaça de Joan Coromines

Also located in Barcelona, this square was born in the spatial reorganization of this sector of the Raval that PERI was responsible for in the early nineties, with common access to the CCCB, MACBA and Facultat Ramon Llull. It has suffered some renovations but, from 2009 it took the form that it has today. Not explicitly integrant of any facility's project built around, it established stronger links with the CCCB who uses it to carry out activities related to its operation. The following table summarizes the most important features of this area revealed by the evaluation.

Strenghts	• Good integration in proximity to roads connecting the city and public transport; • Integrated in the local network of public spaces; • Connects between four entities of importance to the city level; • Accessible to all users; • Social variety of its users; • Permanence of elements evocative of preexistences - facilitates the connection of community identity; • Reflects sense of pride and belonging in the community; • Empowerment from the surrounding facilities.
Weaknesses	• Access is barely visible; • Closed by night; • Lack of places to sit.

Praça do Museu

This space is part of the complex located at the CCB, in the monumental area of Belém, in Lisbon. It is a large rectangular square and is designed as a multifunctional space that serves as a distributor element when is not hosting an event. This internal square character is reminiscent from the cloisters of the convents and traditional courtyards of the portuguese old mansions. Through its evaluation was possible to identify the following points:

Strenghts	• Responds to the social and economic objectives for the area regeneration; • Multifunctionality and adaptability to different uses of space; • Good use in spring and summer; • Maintenance assured by a private entity (CCB).
Weaknesses	• Poor integration into the local public spaces network; • Difficult accessibility for users with limited physical conditions; • Insufficient lighting system; • Strong connection to the CCB complex inhibits its autonomy; • Under-utilization of space in the winter months.

Jardim das Oliveiras

Jardim das Oliveiras is part of the set of terraces/garden in CCB, being the one with highest expression, and also for its sunshine and privileged views, the most dynamic among all its peers. This elongated space is directed for leisure, having several distinct areas set by the presence of vegetal elements, water mirrors and artwork that give spatial, visual and usage diversity. From the analysis and evaluation according to the parameters it was concluded:

Strenghts	• Responds to the objectives of social and economic regeneration of the area; • Ability to empower from the cultural entity to which belongs; • Strong relationship with the surroundings; • The presence of vegetal and mineral elements enrich the different types of environments; • Diversity of uses; • Social and age diversity of the space users.
Weaknesses	• Poor integration into the network of public spaces; • Difficult accessibility for users with limited physical conditions;

5. Conclusions

The evolving relationship of public space with urban facilities has been increasingly important in the structuring of the City (regardless of the existence of urban strategies more or less intentional in this regard). Still, we can consider a growing appreciation of public space by increasing the specification of types and uses of space.

More recently, the cultural, along with the environmental field, have gained prominence in the urban sphere. Today we see the massification of culture in our cities as a form of urban regeneration. We can also see that the local culture can have a major impact, particularly on economic growth and social diversification, as seen in the study areas of Belém and Raval that also continue to have more and more public spaces associated with their network while their area of influence grows.

Replying to the objective of dealing with this type of spaces, associated with cultural organizations, to assess their usage in relation to the quality of its design and its impact on physical and social environment of its proximity, through the analysis of four case studies we could identify the strengths and weaknesses most commonly associated with this type of project and that turned possible to highlight three main points that define the success of public space connected to cultural facilities:

I. The ability of space to empower itself from the entity that generated it. The space that stands on its own, that people can use regardless of the presence of a cultural entity or in connection with an activity developed by it. It provides a good service to the community, may it be its immediate community or from elsewhere in the world, contributing to the identity and social integration through the use and ownership it provides.

II. Their ability to provide value added services to the community in which it operates and who uses it. The transformative potential to that environment of such a space will be reflected in its economic base, thus contributing to its social diversification and to trigger the processes of gentrification. Its design, while crucial component of this service, should be able to ensure all the conditions that support their living, not creating conflicts of use and being accessible to any user, regardless of their limitations.

III. The conscious positioning of the architects in the intervention in public space. The public space is part of a network of services to the urban scale that goes beyond the context of the building that originates as a decisive element for urban quality. The current trend linked to the architecture of major cultural facilities develops the strand of the "building-object", seeking to give visibility to the cultural entity through a strong contrasted image with the architectural features of the environment in which it operates. This approach is also implemented in the intervention on adjacent public space and in other locations for various recreational and cultural activities, turning itself to the appreciation of the building instead of boosting the development of community space.

Thus, within this final work that is held in the context of an Architecture Master's degree, we emphasize the importance of a closer look on our behalf, while architects, regarding to how we see projects, including those who by their public nature infer directly in the social and economic life of a community. Only through informed and active collaboration between government, private organizations, architects and specialist agents we will be able to better respond to the ever changing needs of an evolving society.