



## **Is there still place for the traditional markets?**

Rethink consume, sociability and urban form. The Barcelona´s and Lisbon´s case

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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## 01 Introduction

Retail markets have played an essential role in the distribution of quality products to people and have been a symbol of "authentic urban commerce." First as outdoor places and later as covered structures they have survived to changes in society, playing a social, cultural, urban, economically important role. As a result of the changes in context, consumption habits and appearance of a competitive offer adapted to the new society, the development and conservation of the traditional market has been questioned, as have his role and functionality.

Is there market for the Markets? Is the traditional market attractive enough to the current and future society? Is it possible to adapt the place to the needs of the customers? Has the marketplace any added value in comparison to other commercial formats that justifies an investment? Will there be any consequences to the city and its population if the markets extinct? Have the Municipalities vocation to manage the markets? Should markets remain public places?

The main objective of this dissertation is to contribute to the revival of the role of municipal markets in the socio-urban context. We aim to understand the relationship between the urban (and architectural) structural aspects and the social importance of equipment. We identify the dimensions that affect the functioning of the market, recognizing the differentiating aspects in relation to other commercial formats, and propose a way to revitalize the traditional market. To this end the following objectives were outlined:

1. Identify the physical, commercial and urban character of the market;
2. Establish a current picture of the society, city and trade;
3. Develop a SWOT analyses that evaluates the integration of traditional consumption spaces in this new context;
4. Define future scenarios of markets, the consequences of inaction and the vantages of intervention;
5. Identify opportunities and difficulties of renovations done in Portugal;
6. Develop a methodological guide with a strategy of renovation/denomination of a marketplace;
7. Develop a table for diagnosis / evaluation that supports in defining the state of a market based on the methodological guide;
8. Apply the table to two case studies in Barcelona, Barceloneta and Concepció markets, and two case studies in Lisbon, Campo de Ourique and Ribeira markets;

## Methodology

The work was divided into two main phases: the theoretical research and practical research.

The theoretical research developed objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Through literature research, we studied the emergence and development of markets, their physical, spatial and commercial character, and their role in society until the present day. About the history / development of trade, consumer studies and current consumption, the Portuguese case, we used several studies about the markets and we made specific surveys for the dissertation: my Ideal Market (Annex I) that got 61 responses, was conducted online in order to understand people's views on consumption and its relation to municipal markets; Municipal Markets (Annex II) was sent to more than 40 municipalities in which we obtained 12 responses so it was possible to make conclusions on the state of municipal markets in the country.

The practice research was to develop the objectives 6, 7 and 8. After theoretical research, we created a methodology for market intervention and a table diagnosis. The investigation was based on work of urban analysis, space, shopping satisfaction, intervention methods, complemented by direct observation of several old and rehabilitated markets in order to understand the dimensions necessary to revitalize the market. We also interviewed the Architect Miguel Aresta Branco and Engineer Teresa Costa about important aspects to include in the intervention. The second part of the four case studies in the analysis was based on IMMB documentation, magazines, CML, among others, and from direct observation (in situ surveys for data processing, photographic). The evaluation table was applied to the cases and we drew the conclusions.

## 01 the market as an urban and sociable mirror

### The concept - Marketplace

The building market is the result of a historical and architectural evolution and the adaptation to the demands of society (Ripol, 2003). It started as an outside commercial area of the city and became a closed space for reasons of hygiene and comfort. It follows, in general, a typology of "square", with a central space of variable configuration (with stalls, terrados, kiosks) and shops on the periphery, open to the surrounding. They usually are large and bright with vocation as public spaces (Oliveira, 2008). The identity of the marketplace is marked by its vocation as a "shopping plaza" which has therefore strong **social** and **urban** characteristics (Cachinho, 2002). The marketplace is an urban space with a structuring role in cities and strong vocation as a public space and social space, as a place where everyone can be and relate.

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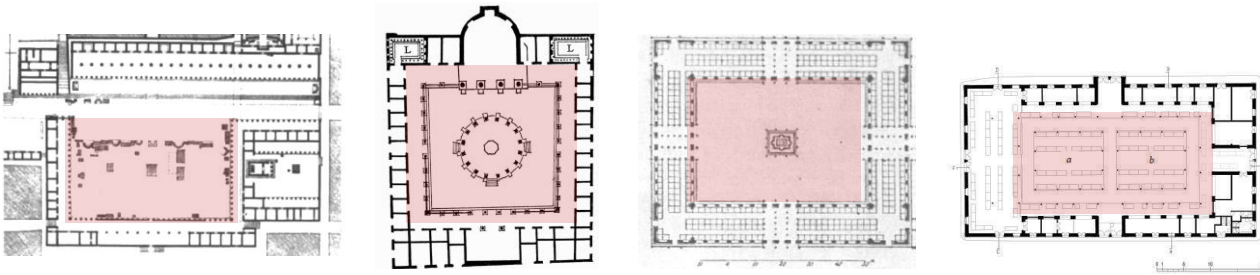


Fig. 01.1 – Representative image of the form of the marketplace.

### The society, commerce and city – the importance of the marketplace

Currently there are few consumers who regularly attend markets (“My Ideal Market”, annex I). With social and economic changes, the relation between demand and supply has changed too. It has also emerged new commercial formats (shopping centers, supermarkets and hypermarkets, etc.) which responded to consumers different needs (Barata Salgueiro, 1992). Captivated by the comfort, accessibility, payment, business mix and concentration, etc., consumers chose the "new" equipment to the detriment of the "old" markets.

It was observed that in fact markets are inadequate in relation to current needs, by multiple factors identified in SWOT analyses [Table 01.1], including inaction regarding the habits of consumers, conditions of ancient buildings, inappropriate times, some innovative management and shortage of promoting equipment (Barreta, 2011).

Marketplace	
Strong points	Weak points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specialization in fresh produce;</li> <li>- Enhancement of local produce;</li> <li>- Regulator (local) price competition;</li> <li>- Strong relationship with the urban space;</li> <li>- Generator positive effects on involvement;</li> <li>- Guarantees "city" of sanity, cleanliness and hygiene;</li> <li>- Historical and patrimonial value of public interest, seen as a symbol; Producer image;</li> <li>- Space of interest (bright, spacious and connected to the outside.)</li> <li>- The sell is focused on customer service;</li> <li>- Ability to prepare the product marketed;</li> <li>- A meeting place and social life;</li> <li>- Relation between the seller, producer and consumer,</li> <li>- Interaction of different social classes;</li> <li>- Opportunity of work for disadvantaged people;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overly dependent of format food businesses;</li> <li>- Maladjustment of supply and demand;</li> <li>- Lack of investment and strategy;</li> <li>- Difficulties of access and parking, traffic loading and unloading zone, crossing of people and goods;</li> <li>- Optical little business management;</li> <li>- Lack of training, involvement and poor appearance of the merchants;</li> <li>- Physical environment in poor condition, degraded;</li> <li>- Strong traditional methods of selling - little marketing, advertising, merchandising;</li> <li>- Lack of use of new technologies;</li> <li>- Restricted and unsuitable times;</li> <li>- Lack of consumer services (leisure activities, after-sales service, etc.)</li> <li>- Lack of parking;</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of sold products;</li> <li>- Looking for environmentally friendly products, organic farming;</li> <li>- Government (central and local) faces increasing the markets as an "urban value" capable of creating more "centrality" and generate streams;</li> <li>- Loyalty to equipment Proximity;</li> <li>- Funds provided by the municipality</li> <li>- Joint utilization of synergies authority / operators</li> <li>- Valuation by looking for aspects such as personalized service</li> <li>- Consumer demanding product quality and service</li> <li>- The need to belong to groups, spaces to live;</li> <li>- The purchase is considered increasingly as an act of recreation;</li> <li>- Quest of different, small, special and unique</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competition more aggressive in other formats in segments such as vegetable / fruit, fish, meat;</li> <li>- Increasing influence of brands (international, national and store brands)</li> <li>- Existence of some markets "marginal" (street, by exo.) near the market;</li> <li>- Poor adherence to initiatives that promote Associations;</li> <li>- Excessive reliance on media / municipal resources;</li> <li>- Low responsiveness to modernization by the merchants;</li> <li>- The need for large investment</li> <li>- The age of the operators is high and the use of training is very rare;</li> <li>- Lower frequency in buying and increased volume</li> <li>- Difficulty in extending the time because of the "family" stalls</li> <li>- Existence of the few markets with parking involve large investment;</li> <li>- Offer of the other formats in leisure activities is mucho more complete;</li> </ul>

Table 01.1 – SWOT analyses  
 Fonte: adaptaded of Barreta, 2002

In a modern society, dominated by the isolation of the population in urban areas, commercial and recreational spaces don't contribute to the improving urban life. Shopping centers are closed spaces that try to copy the streets environment, which turns out to create a fake and controlled reality (Barata Salgueiro, 1996). This commercial equipment also reduces the exchange of views, socializing, creating links, social differences, etc. Markets and their social and urban identity can be the engine to change these habits, providing that there is still an important place for the market in the current society, because its relevance goes beyond mere commercial activities (Cachinho, 2002).

## 02 Thinking about the future of marketplace

### Future perspectives – The renovation of the markets

The four different scenarios for the future of markets in Portugal "Investing, by giving up" (Do not kill the markets, because they die); "Investing, desisting" (Desappear the rings, but the fingers remain); "Investing coexisting" (If you can't win, join them); "Investing, Investing" ("Barcelona´s way") (Barreta, 2011), it appears that there is the possibility of disappearance of such equipment if there is no change in the overall picture.

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The renovation /dynamism is essential to innovate in an integrated way the market without destroying its identity (authentic, traditional and unpredictable). If the renovation is integrated and includes all important aspects it has its benefits ([http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/URBACT\\_Markets/outputs\\_media/Baseline\\_Study\\_01.pdf](http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/URBACT_Markets/outputs_media/Baseline_Study_01.pdf)):

**Social:** As it is a relational space, this quality will be developed. Through personal attendance of the market stalls shops, producers, traders and customers interact. It promotes the meeting of different generations and social classes, and the integration of vulnerable populations (elderly, immigrants, etc.). Markets offer an important job opportunity for the socioeconomically disadvantaged population as they can pay a reduced fee, to have access to a space and own a business.

**Urban:** The market is mostly seen as an "image" of cities because they are an essential part of the cultural and social heritage. It is a structuring element of neighborhood. This "indoor square" is a collective space that relates to the environment, being a generator element of life of surrounding spaces, promoting local trade and the use of public space. So the marketplace promotes centrality and urban integration and can be used to correct problems of waste management, parking, accessibility and degradation of cities.

**Economic:** It is a visit place that promotes cuisine and culinary tradition and an important part of the identity of places. So the market is a structural element in the urban economy, generating business, dynamism and employment (market vendors, producers, logistics, distribution companies, security). It's the ideal place to promote the marketing of regional products, agriculture and fisheries (rural-urban interface) instrument.

**Environmental:** By promoting to be in the neighborhood it reduces the use of private transport and thus pollution. It can be a model for energy efficiency and promoting products "environmentally friendly"

**Healthy and Sustainable:** The public market management has the opportunity to monitor the quality and variety of products. It can be used as an instrument to promote health and diet programs.

It was observed that the various interventions in Portugal failed to accomplish all the benefits mentioned above (Barreta, 2002). This intervention renewed the equipment but not in an integrated way. Therefore we found the importance to define a strategy to the Portuguese case.

### Intervention strategy

After identifying the structural aspects of the markets we propose a methodological guide for action that results from a compilation of criteria that is considered to be important to create an "ideal market" in a scenario where there is an investment capacity and the will to make something (adapted from the Mercasa guide: "practical guide for the improvement of the competitiveness of the markets", 2008). The proposal includes a table of diagnostic / evaluation that aims to be a support

tool in gauging the state of the market and defining the elements to intervene in an intervention project.

The concrete proposals should ideally point to a threefold direction: **Management** must be modernized; the market project should be inserted in an **urban strategy**; and **equipment** must be renewed through a physical intervention, redefinition of a retail mix and introduction of new services.

- In the **Management of the Markets**: Local councils and the central government should be more involved in the process, like Spain, to create conditions for innovation and rehabilitate markets. The authorities don't have to know how to manage the market, but it is their responsibility to think of it, frame it, and regulate it. It is important to be part of projects such as URBACT-Markets. The management should be modernized promoting new forms of association, participation and professionalism of the operators / traders with the chance of recruiting people with specific technical training as "market manager"; The objectives of the market should be defined by the management and have to include: the social responsibility of the market (such as the support of the socioeconomically disadvantaged population); the promotion of activities in the market; A continuous training plan for the traders; The promotion of social, cultural and environmental health promotion values.
- In **urban strategy** its important to integrate in a plan a way to promote neighborhood meeting, rearrange the flows of access, parking, loading and unloading and improve the image of public space near the local market.
- As for the **equipment**, it is essential to make a physical intervention to improve and optimize space, trying to create a quality, functionality, comfortable place maintaining the symbolism of the market, thinking about the internal disposal of the stalls [Fig 02.1]; It should redefine the retail mix to complete the offer of the market; It is important to introduce new local services;

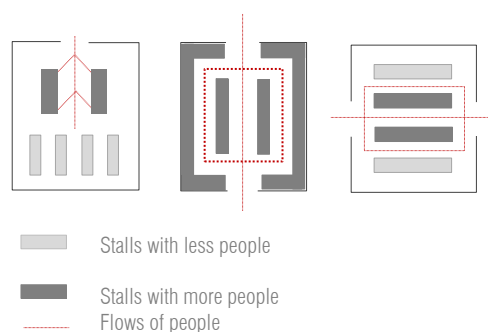


Fig 02.1 – Model of disposal of the stall in the marketplace (Font: Brown, 1992)



### 03 Evaluating of the case studies

The matrix was applied to four case studies to test the diagnostic and understand the differences between the intervention in Lisbon and Barcelona. We studied the Barceloneta and Concepció markets in Barcelona and the the Ribeira and Campo de Ourique markets in Lisbon.



Fig. 03.1, 03.2, 03.3 e 03.4 –Photographs of the four case studies

The entity manager and promoter of the market, influence the outcomes of interventions. Markets in Spain are a result of the Mercasa program (in the national program of renovation of municipal markets) and in Barcelona the work is developed by IMMB. The plan to revitalize the markets in the city is an international case study because of the relevant results in the city. Also noteworthy is the involvement and integration of traders in the renovation and management. In Lisbon, there is a lack of responsibility of the public officials in the renovation market. In the analyzed cases, the proposals were private, a result of concession of the CML, so they were isolated initiatives. The management of the market itself in Lisbon demonstrates lack of social responsibility. That is because it is a private management that wants to generate money.

In relation to the intervention itself, in the adaptation of strategy and consumer cases are also different. In Barcelona there is a strategy of urban renewal, improving the surroundings of the market. On the equipment they worked in various aspects of the market, integrating new services, retail mix, among others, improving the quantity of people that buy in the market and promoting the other important values. In Lisbon there is a low urban strategy but not compared to what it could be.

In adapting the equipment, it was improved the physical aspects and functionality, marketing and image in the market, and introduced a new service (restore) that attracts consumers but not complete nor promotes the market itself, not enough to revive the offer the commercial market gives. Between the two cases of Lisbon, in the Campo de Ourique's market the location of the new offer was bitterly done, because it was placed in the center of the market which achieves a better integration and relationship with the trade market. In the other one, the restaurants and the markets itself are in separate parts which is a mistake, because people can go to the new area without seeing and buying in the other one. Therefore, these projects should not be followed as "good practice" in relation to the commercial revitalization of markets. They demonstrate willingness to act, entrepreneurship and innovation but it does not involve the innovation of the market itself and the important values of the place.

The proposal is a set of measures and strategies that can be adopted, but the subjective nature of some criteria of intervention requires a critical eye in order to select the features that best fit each situation. The proposal should involve an analysis of the context, the supply of the population, needs, accesses, among others, in order to project a specific proposal.

#### 04 Conclusions

Related to the table of diagnosis, to facilitate the process, since it was considered a similar weight to the different dimensions of the diagnostic model, it should be interesting to see the relative weight of each dimension (urban strategy, brand management, physical space, retail mix, marketing and training for traders) in order to detect which is the most urgent intervention criteria. It could be an option to adapt the evaluation matrix to an interactive platform that would allow its use by any entity for any market and, through its completion in digital form, which would translate problems in each dimension and recommendations. This tool will make the process of assessing the state of a particular market, or to compare a number of markets, easily accessible to any interested entity.

We conclude that markets are undoubtedly a commercial format that justify the commitment towards its financial rehabilitation, organizational innovation and improving the sales. **There is market for the markets** if they are adequate to the new demands so that they can effectively serve as a valid option among the others for the consumers. This process cannot simply translate into mere physical intervention projects, its crucial to integrate also other aspects - organization, management, marketing, etc., under the possibility of remaining the known issues. The market innovation must be accepted in fullness and worked in three directions defined in the methodological guide.

In urban strategy and upgrading of equipment, the role of architects, organists and sociologists is central. It is a complex area to intervene and it is impossible to set specific options for intervention. There is a large subjective space (aesthetics, urban values, created environment, etc.) that involves creativity and market knowledge as a characteristic and complex space. The reconverted markets should not become "(Hyper) Grocery", "(Mini) Hypermarkets," "(Micro) Trade Center". By being nothing of this it must turn into something with a little of all this. The designers must work together to provide solutions favoring integration of the equipment in the territories in which they operate making positive and attractive spaces in which the new (rehabilitated) buildings can compete with large surfaces. Markets can give what the other coercion offers cant: a collective public space, loaded with symbolism and tradition, which relates to the urban

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space as a "shopping plaza" for those who enjoy it. Markets have roots in the past, are from the present and have a vocation for the future, we just have to change the way we see it.

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