CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SPATIAL SEGREGATION IN THE PUBLIC SPACES OF LISBON

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses selected public spaces on the historical and contemporary Lisbon, identifying in each one aspects which contribute to cultural identity or to spatial segregation in the appropriation of public spaces.

Six criteria are proposed as the main factors for urban integration in public spaces, which can define a matrix for the evaluation of cultural identity / spatial segregation in the appropriation of public spaces:

1)   The strategic location of the spaces in the town and their accessibility;
2)   The urban functions on the public space;
3)   The design quality of the public space;
4)   The urban and architectonic value of the area;
5)   Specific social aspects of the area, and;
6)   The urban and cultural value of the area.

This classification could define criteria for town planning to evaluate cultural identity or spatial segregation in the public spaces, identifying its causes and defining processes of intervention.

The public spaces of the case-study are: 1) The Rossio square; 2) The "Av. da Liberdade" avenue; 3) and 4) The "Avenidas" area, both an original and a renovated public space; 5) The "Expo 98" waterfront; 6) The "Martim Moniz" square; 7) The "Amoreiras" area; 8) The Av. da Igreja avenue; 9) The Alameda public space; 10) The "Sete Rios" area, and; 11) The "Colombo Shopping Centre" area.

The paper presents the select case studies, evaluating in each of them aspects of cultural identity and spatial segregation, as a method to test the defined criteria and their representativeness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Along its history, Lisbon has had a strong cultural identity, due to site characteristics (it is known as the town of the 7 hills), urbanity, architecture and social aspects.

As other cities, in the last decades Lisbon experienced an intense transformation, far from planed, from which resulted some spatial desegregation and uncharacteristic public spaces and neighbourhoods.

This intense transformation had an aspect of a territorially action, through: 1) the intervention on existing urban areas, renovating urban fabric and public spaces, and; 2) the intervention on new developments – vacant urban areas and extension of the city -, assuming a cultural modernity, frequently focused in build spaces and guarantee of connection to efficient infrastructures.

However, they usually forgot public spaces and community facilities; a minority of examples invested in the public space as the space of social interaction and cultural integration, through high-qualified urban design and equipment of those spaces.

In this urban dynamic, different public spaces were produced, meaning different forms of appropriation of those spaces as a result of the combination of factors in the field of: 1) town planning; 2) urban design, and 3) urban culture and society aspects.

It is today an important issue to understand the factors involved in the qualification / un-qualification of the public spaces, locking far from a single physical design analysis.

In contemporary society, public spaces are the scenario for social interaction; a qualified and integrated public space allows for human activities and permanence, meaning a capacity: (1) to support social integration, and; (2) to integrate its population on a harmonious community – those are COMPLETE PUBLIC SPACES.

A segregated public space, due to the lack of one of the factors of integration, is an urban space of social un-integration and physical segregation, missing the qualities which contemporary urban society requires – those are UN-COMPLETE PUBLIC SPACES.

It is necessary, therefore, to identify which factors define a complete public space and which, one missing, results in an incomplete public space - the aspects, which contribute to cultural identity or to spatial segregation in the appropriation of public spaces.

The higher or lower appropriation of public spaces by different populations is the reference for firstly evaluate the success of those spaces, allowing to identify, in each of them, which factor is causing the unsuccess or, on the contrary, which factors are key factors for the high level of appropriation by different groups of the population.

Through this analysis, one can identify the factors for integration/segregation in public spaces appropriation. Those factors are the FACTORS OF INTEGRATION FOR A PUBLIC SPACE; each one should be capable to be evaluated on a hierarchy scale. The lower presence of one or more factors of integration in a public space would mean a lack on its capacity to fulfil its role on contemporary society – the area of excellence for social integration.

The following lines will try to identify those factors and to build with them a reference table for the evaluation of the appropriation of public spaces. The field of analysis is a selected group of public spaces in Lisbon, representative of different categories of urban areas and of success / un-success on its appropriation.

The definition of those criteria could help town planners to evaluate cultural identity and spatial segregation in the public spaces, identifying its causes and defining processes of intervention.

2. THEORETICAL MODEL: FACTORS OF INTEGRATION IN THE APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

Six criteria are proposed for the evaluation of cultural identity or spatial segregation in the public spaces, being: 1) the strategic location of the areas in the town and their accessibility; 2) the urban functions on the public space; 3) the quality of the public space; 4) the urban and architectonic value of the area; 5) specific social aspects of the area, and; 6) the urban and cultural value of the area.

This proposal resulted from the previous analysis of a larger group of public spaces in the city of Lisbon and of the reflection made by the authors on which factors were defining cultural identity or spatial segregation in those spaces, having the followed definitions:

Public Space Quality: An urban design factor – public space design -, meaning the quality of the public space in terms of creation of order, unity, proportion, scale, detailed design, infrastructure; it also considers the existence of high quality urban furniture, trees, and others urban facilities, resulting on a comfortable space with an aesthetical quality.

Urban & Architectural Quality of the Space: An urban design factor, meaning: (1) the quality of the urban fabric where the public space exists - the architectural design of the buildings confining to the public space -, and (2) the quality of the site's urban design, including its integration in urban axes, its urban position, its relief characterisation in relation with the urban fabric, its urban form, its limits and frames – the urban design of the site.

Urban Functions: A town planning factor, considering the relevance of urban functions which confine to the public spaces and are responsible for the generation of urban live in those spaces – equipments of national, regional and local levels, services and trade.

Location & Accessibility: A town planning factor, considering: (1) the location of the public space, its level of centrality in relation to the city centre, sub-centres and nodes of accessibilities, and; (2) the

accessibility of the public space, considering its integration on the network of public transport systems and on other urban transport facilities.

Urban & Cultural Value of the Area: An urban culture / society factor, meaning the urban / cultural value of the neighbourhood or the area where the public space is integrated; includes its cultural identity and its eventual historical heritage – the physical characteristics of the larger area.

Social & Human Environment: An urban culture / society factor, meaning the social and human environment of the public space; it is related whit security in the space, human appropriation, human lively and ethnic minorities integration.
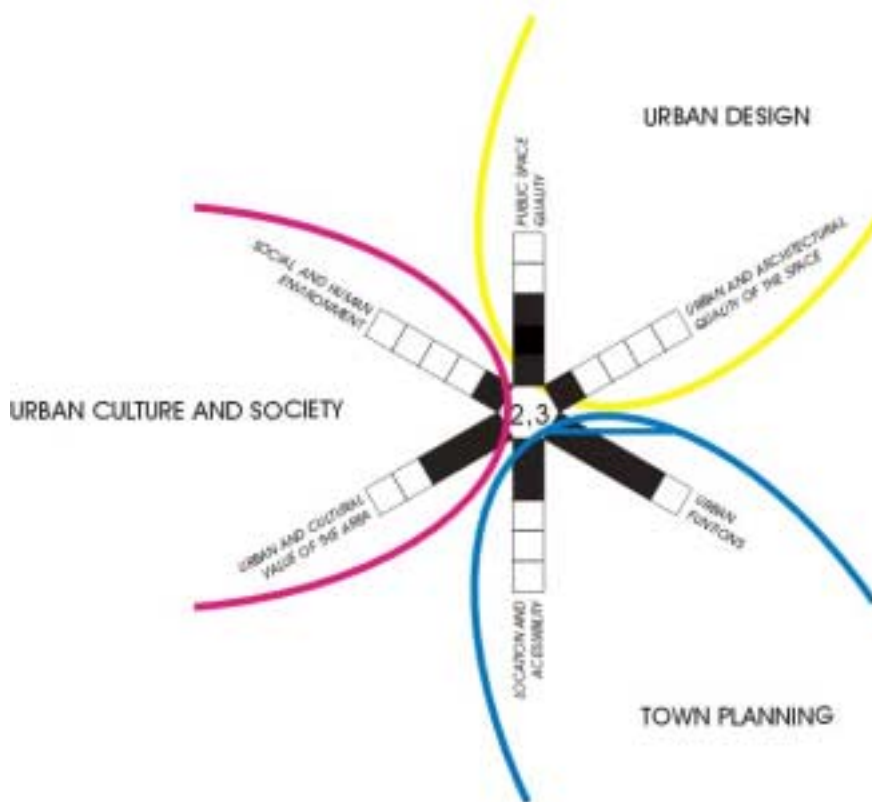
The developed hypothesis considers these 6 factors responsible for the occurrence of cultural identity or spatial segregation in the appropriation of the public spaces.

These six criteria define a matrix for the evaluation of cultural identity and spatial segregation. Each one should be able to have an isolated evaluation, and defining as a hole the global evaluation of the public space.

Simultaneously, this evaluation allows for the identification of the weakness and strengthens of the public space, helping to define strategies for intervention, including: (1) the strong and weak points of the public space; (2) the need for a profound intervention, and; (3) the types of actions needed.

Each criterion can be evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5, being 5 the highest level of quality; 4 an high level of quality with small negative aspects; 3 a medium quality criterion; 2 a negative quality criterion having positive aspects; 1 a negative quality criterion; and 0 a problematic and very negative aspect.

The evaluation of those criteria in a public space can be defined in a graphic matrix as presented below, corresponding the number of black boxes to the classification of the criteria on the 0 to 5 scale:

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology developed in this study is based on a case-study analysis, which considers the following phases:

1) Definition of a theoretical model, based on the analysis of a larger list of public spaces in the city of Lisbon, which is presented in the beginning of the study as the initial hypothesis: the criteria for the evaluation of cultural identity or spatial segregation in the appropriation of public spaces;

2) Verification of the hypothesis by its application to the selected case-studies, representative of different categories of urban areas – historical areas, new urban areas, renovated areas -, and of success / un-success results on its appropriation;

3) Evaluation of the theoretical model, verifying its effectiveness and identifying levels of public spaces appropriation, types of occurrences and information for intervention in those spaces.
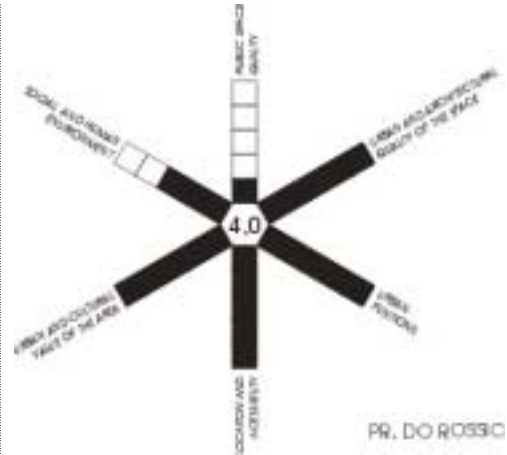
The selected case studies considered:

1) Three examples of public spaces in consolidated urban tissues, having respectively, un-qualified, qualified but old and just re-qualified public spaces: the *Rossio* square in the 18th century town, the *Av. da Liberdade* avenue, a 19th century main avenue of the city, and the *Av. 5 de Outubro*, an avenue of the 1900's, result of the expansion of the city – the "*Avenidas Novas*";

2) Two examples of successful renewal of public spaces: the *Alameda do Rio*, a waterfront space in the *Expo 98* renovated area, and the *Av. Conde Valbom*, a renovated public space in the "*Avenidas Novas*";

3) Two examples of unsuccessful renewal of public spaces: the *Martim Moniz Square*, a renovated area in the centre of the city, and the *Amoreiras*, a un-characteristic public space which resulted from the renewal operation of a main entrance of the city, being also a central area;

4) Two examples of successful public spaces in new urban areas: the *Av. da Igreja*, a main avenue of a 1950's neighbourhood of Lisbon, the *Alvalade neighbourhood*, and the *Alameda*, an important large public space in the 1940's expansion of Lisbon;

5) Two examples of unsuccessful public spaces in new urban areas: the *Sete-Rios* area, an uncharacterised public space located at an important node of public transportation near the city zoo. The second area Colombo, also an un-characteristic public space in the Benfica area, dominated by the largest shopping centre of the city.

4. CASE-STUDY ANALYSIS: 10 EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC SPACES IN LISBON

The 10 case studies were object of evaluation through the application of the theoretical model. Their main aspects are synthesised in the following lines.

4.1 THE ROSSIO

The *Rossio* is a 18th century square of the city. It resulted from the reconstruction of the city after the 1755 earthquake. The public space is out of time, unprepared to the automobile phenomenon. A renovation process is going on at the moment, but no urban life takes place after closing hours.

PR. DO ROSSIO

4.2 THE AV. DA LIBERDADE AVENUE

The *Av. da Liberdade* is a 19th century main avenue of the city, resulting from the transformation of public stroll – a green *boulevard* in the limits of the city similar to the *Champs Elisées* in Paris or to the *Passeig de Gràcia* in Barcelona. Recently its buildings suffered a renewal process, which increased the quality of its commerce and helped to maintain the high quality of its public space. No urban life takes place after closing hours.

AV. DA LIBERDADE

4.3 THE AV. 5 DE OUTUBRO AVENUE

The *Av. 5 de Outubro* is an avenue, which resulted from the expansion of the city in the 1900's. It structured the expansion of the city to north – the "*Avenidas Novas*". Recently, the buildings and public space of this area suffered a renewal process. Being a second level avenue of the area with office facilities, shopping and residence, the avenue maintained the original structure of the public space.

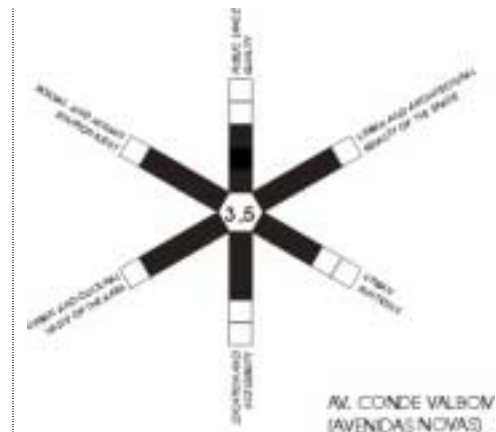AV. 5 OUTUBRO
(AVENIDAS NOVAS)

4.4 THE ALAMEDA DO RIO

The *Alameda do Rio* is a waterfront space in the *Expo 98* renovated area, at the east limits of the municipality. The high quality of the public space, its green areas and built environment accompanied the urbanization process. Its waterfront buildings are mainly commercial areas (shops and restaurants). In its limits, we have a multifunctional pavilion, an *oceanarium*, the presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Portuguese government's building and others at the south and a multifunctional public space – the *Sony Square*.
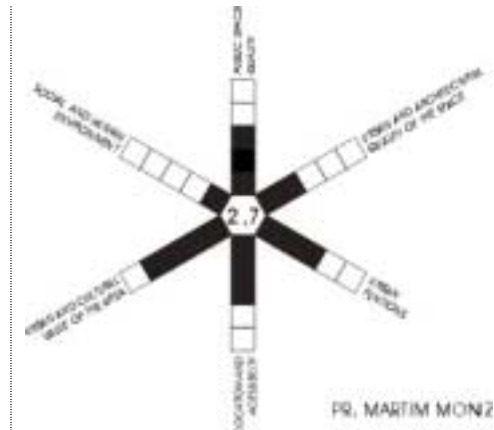

ALAMEDA RIO (EXPO98)

4.5 THE AV. CONDE VALBOM

The *Av. Conde Valbom* is an avenue of the "*Avenidas Novas*". As *Av. 5 the Outubro*, it is also a result of the city in 1900's. Shops and offices dominate this avenue, of second importance. Due to this fact, its renewal process implied a radical change on its original public space, becoming mainly a pea tonal axe.

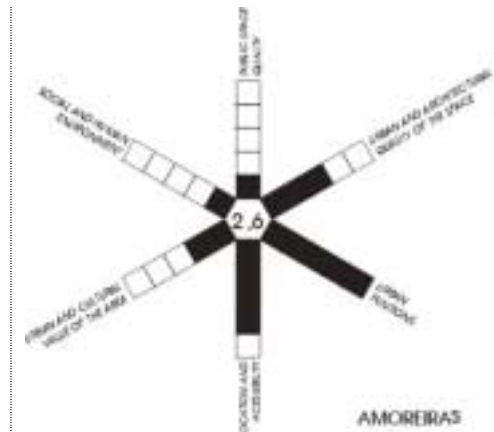AV. CONDE VALBOM (AVENIDAS NOVAS)

4.6 THE MARTIM MONIZ SQUARE

The *Martim Moniz* square is a renovated space in the centre of the city, an area never finished. After several architectural interventions, the last one being the design of a new public space, cultural segregation remains. Its exclusive use by some minority groups and the un-conclusion of the urban fabric in the area characterize this very central and accessible area.

PR. MARTIM MONIZ

4.7 THE *AMOREIRAS* AREA

The *Amoreiras* area is a un-characteristic public space which resulted from the renewal of a main entrance of the city dominated by a large shopping area, offices and residential buildings - the *Amoreiras Towers* – and by new infrastructures. Being also a central area, and after 20 years of existence, its public space continues uncharacteristic and unappealing to exterior permanence.
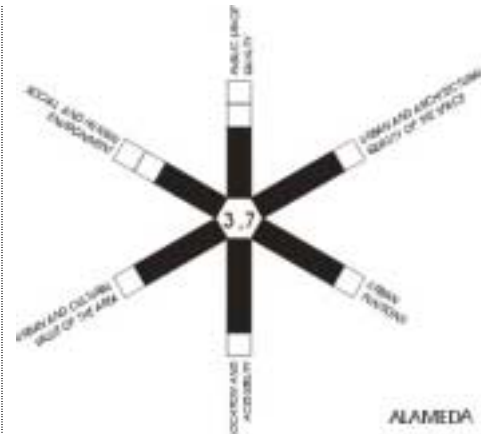

AMOREIRAS

4.8 THE AV. DA IGREJA

The *Av. da Igreja* is the main avenue of the 1950's *Alvalade neighbourhood*, an important shopping area. Today, it is a bourgeois residential central area, which is becoming specialised in shopping and some public facilities, without loosing its residential function.
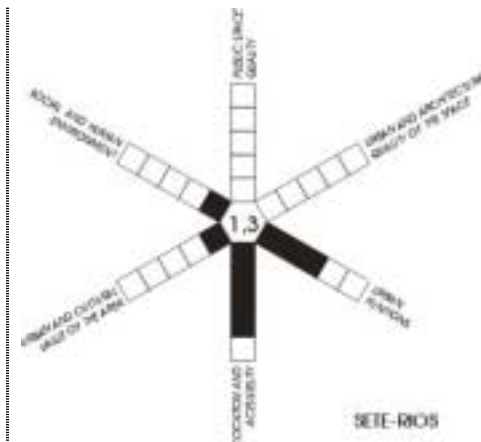

AV. DA IGREJA
[BAIRRO ALVALADE]

4.9 THE *ALAMEDA*

The *Alameda* is a large public space of the 1940's. Its size and topography are appropriate to public life. At its top we have the engineering institute of Lisbon Technical University. It gives access to the historical centre of the city. Along *Alameda* we have some shops and offices, and residential functions.
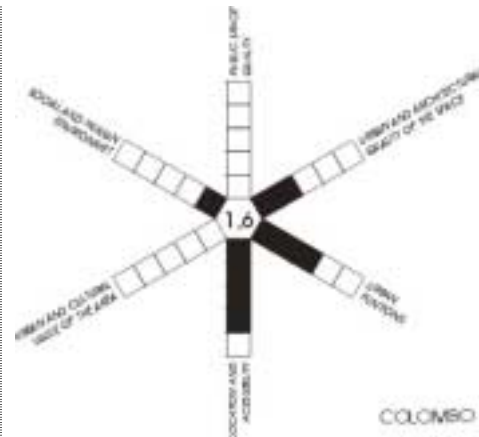

4.10 THE *SETE-RIOS* PUBLIC SPACE:

The *Sete-Rios* is an un-characterised public space located at an important in a node of public transport of the city, near the city zoo, and the technical area of Lisbon subway Company. The area is provided with well-equipped private condominiums – both in social facilities and new infrastructures -, but without public spaces.

4.11 THE *COLOMBO* PUBLIC SPACE

The *Colombo* area is also an un-characteristic public space in the *Benfica* area where the largest shopping centre of the city is located as well as the *SL Benfica* stadium. Its high investment in buildings and infrastructures was not accompanied by investments in public space.

5. CONCLUSION: GROUPS OF APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC SPACES, FROM THE EVALUATION TO INTERVENTION

From the comparative analysis of the presented case studies, four groups are identified, representing five different levels of appropriation of public spaces. Therefore four, classes of cultural integration or special segregation in public spaces.

The 1st group of public spaces is characterized by medium results above 4 (0 to 5). Generally, at least five factors area evaluated 4/5 and, eventually, only one factor receives an inferior evaluation.

In the two analysed cases, this inferior factor was: (1) the "social and human environment", in the *Av. da Liberdade*, representing some slight social degradation in the historical areas of the city, in spite of the high quality of the public space, and; (2) the "location and accessibility", in the *Alameda Rio*, representing the high quality of public spaces in the new areas of the town.

These two cases are representative of recent interventions in towns, which locate the highest quality public spaces in the historical centre of the city and in areas where renewal operations took place.

This group, designated high quality public spaces includes excellent spaces for social interaction, being THE SPACES of cultural integration. The "high quality public spaces" might not need relevant public space intervention in the next years, although the ones located in the historical areas of the town might need re-qualification.

The 2nd group of public spaces is characterized, as the first group, by medium results near 4 (0 to 5), but in this case one of the factors is clearly negative, evaluated 0/2.

In the analysed case of this group, the *Rossio*, the negative factor was the "quality of the public space". It represents the degradation of the physical design of the public space, generally out of its time, although in a high potential central and historical urban area.

This group, designated high potential public spaces has the possibility to be an excellent public spaces for social interaction, after a re-qualification / renewal intervention on the public space design, eventually including some social aspects. The "high potential public spaces" should be priority spaces for physical intervention.

The 3rd group is characterized by medium results above 3 (0 to 5). Generally, three/four factors are evaluated 4/5 and two/three factors receive an inferior evaluation, but not negative.

These cases are generally expansion areas of the city, which become new specialised centres, maintaining its original public spaces or are subject to their first renewal operation.

These cases represent a recent interventions in towns, which locate quality public spaces in its new centres, urban areas of the last 100 years, some conceived as new centres, which suffered an expansion of its residential areas and a renovation process of their urban fabric and uses.

This group, designated quality public spaces includes good spaces for social interaction, also spaces for cultural integration.

The "quality public spaces" are becoming old areas, each one a single case. In the next years some public spaces might need some re-qualification particularly the ones in which urban uses have changed to trade.

The 4th group of public spaces is characterized by medium results above 2 (0 to 5). Generally at least one factor is evaluated of 0/1, although some factors can be evaluation of 4/5.

These two cases are representative of 25/30 years urban renewal processes, where public space was not a priority, being residual, nor the social environment generated in the area after the renewal operation allows for inter-cultural interaction, becoming exclusive spaces for some social minorities.

SYNTHESIS TABLE	URBAN DESIGN		TOWN PLANNING		URBAN CULTURE & SOCIETY		
FACTORS SITES	PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY	URBAN & ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY OF SPACE	URBAN FUNCTIONS	LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY	URBAN & CULTURAL VALUE OF THE AREA	SOCIAL & HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	RESULT
Rossio	1	5	5	5	5	3	**4,0**
Av. Liberdade	4	4	5	5	4	3	**4,2**
Av. 5 Outubro	3	3	5	4	4	4	**3,8**
Al. do Rio - EXPO	5	5	4	3	4	5	**4,3**
Av. Conde Valbom	3	4	3	3	4	4	**3,5**
Pr. Martim Moniz	3	2	3	3	4	1	**2,7**
Amoreiras	1	3	5	4	2	1	**2,6**
Av. da Igreja	3	4	3	3	4	4	**3,5**
Alameda	3	4	4	4	3	3	**3,7**
Sete Rios	0	0	3	4	0	1	**1,3**
Colombo	0	2	3	4	0	1	**1,6**

This group, designated low quality public spaces include spaces, which repel human permanence or become places of social segregation. The "low quality public spaces" demand physical and social intervention, in order to correct the factors, which are repelling human permanence or creating social segregation.

The 5th group of public spaces is characterized by medium results bellow 2 (0 to 5). Generally, at least three factors are evaluated 0/1 although one/two factors can be evaluated 3/5.

In the two cases analysed of this class, the common inferior factors were: (1) the "public space quality"; (2) the "social and human environment", and; (3) the "urban and cultural value of the area".

The two spaces represent the non-design of the public space, which do not allow human permanence. They are uncharacteristic urban areas with low cultural value, which suffered unqualified interventions – *Sete-Rios* -, or recent urban areas without any cultural value - *Colombo*.

Paradoxically, both are node central areas of sub-urban accessibility to the city of Lisbon, well connected to public transport network, but in both cases road infrastructure was the priority. The *Colombo* area presents a specific perversion, once it considers that the shopping centre in the 'new public space' and the areas outside should be just accessibilities and parking.

These two cases are representative of recent interventions in towns, locating lower quality public spaces in well accessible new areas of the city where infrastructure becomes the only objective and were public space was not considered an objective.

This group, designated <u>non-public spaces</u>, includes excellent spaces for social segregation, which do not allow cultural integration. The "non-public spaces" demand profound physical intervention, in order to invert the present dynamic and to bring those spaces back to urban live; they are THE AREAS for public space renewal.

NOTE: The views rights of the *Rossio*, the *Av. 5 de Outubro*, the *Av. da Igreja*, the *Alameda* and the *Sete-Rios* space belong to: JORGE, Filipe; *Lisboa Vista do Céu*; Argumentum, Lisboa, 1994.

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