

# MULTIFUNCTION IS NOT ENOUGH AN APPROACH TO A NEW CONCEPT IN URBAN SPACE *LE TERROIR*

**Ana Paula Parreira Correia Rainha**

Professora Associada,

ISMAT : instituto superior Manuel Teixeira Gomes, Portimão

Arquitecta, mestre ,Doutorada

**Francisco Ferreira de Lima Araújo Ogando**

Licenciatura em Arquitectura a concluir Mestrado Integrado na Faculdade de  
Arquitectura de Lisboa

---

## Abstract

The idea is to analyse two urban spaces located close together (Chiado and Carmo), in order to evaluate the differences between them, namely: why is it that before two urban spaces of multifunctional characteristics the touristic impact can be so diverse? The answer is almost spontaneous: the heritage in all its forms - historic, cultural, architectonic, literary, artistic... etc. These variables are, undoubtedly, meaningful, but still there is more to it. This is where the *terroir* concept comes in. Usually applied in vitiviculture, it defines in a gestalt way the territory, distinguishing the wine from one place to another.

The concept itself summarizes something that often cannot be explained: for instance, why do two wines produced in territories with seemingly the same characteristics achieve unequal success? Besides the controllable elements/factors, other interactions arise which surpass the controllable and contribute to the presence of a unique taste. With the territory/urban space the same thing happens, there are elements that interact with each other changing the whole: it's the *terroir*!

---

**Keywords:** *Terroir*; multifunction; urban space; touristic impact; material heritage; immaterial heritage

## Introduction

As you travel along two spaces of a noble area in the city of Lisbon, Largo do Chiado and Largo do Carmo, you realize that multifunctionality *per se* is not enough to transform an ordinary space into a special place. We

introduced a concept used in winery, as the similarity of the concept upstream and downstream of the principles at stake, seemed curious.

## I.

With the end of the 60's, and with the last meet of the CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture) and Team X or, in other words, with the end of the Modernism, it was noted that *zoning*, the magic word of Modern Movement in what concerns urbanism, didn't solve the problems of the city, and didn't give them vitality nor a life at the human scale. Even if the european context was very specific (post-war, economic and social crisis), the truth is that it wasn't a success; the people in Brasília prefer their city today, than sixty years ago because, in fact, more that the people adapting to the city, it was the city who adapted to its inhabitants; however, today, Brasília still is the paradigm of city for the car, the macro block, and the "zoning".

The reaction that arose in the late 60's and during the 70's was fast and lavish in theories that meant to apply the return to the bourgeois city of the XIX century, as a opposed to the "industrial city" towards a city for the people, versus a city for the car. If zoning was the keyword for modernists in what concerns urban space, multifunctionality was the watchword for post-modernists.

After the Athens Letter others appeared, achieving the apology of revisiting the city, redrawing the street, applying the concepts of renovation, rehabilitation, recuperation, but mainly, of reintroducing the human scale and multifunctionality, becoming the urban space the centre of an investigation and of a multidisciplinary practice.

Nowadays, there seems to be no doubt about it. All the practice and theoretical investigation around this topic is unanimous in concluding that multifunctionality is a fundamental principle for the requalification and life of a space.

Inhabitation, work and leisure can coexist in perfect harmony for the happiness of those who live, work, and have fun there. The city is no longer a space without a soul to become a space of joy. However, not all multifunctional spaces have amongst themselves the same charisma. There are spaces that have an energy and a vitality that sets them apart form others, regardless of the common factors between them, namely habitation, commerce, services, public spaces, etc...

We can then say that multifunctionality, in itself, is not enough to turn a space into a special place.

A lot has been written about the elements that qualify the space, even if that is not the specific objective of this reflection. Not all spaces have the same life, or in another way, the same ability to attract us or to charm us.

Let's see the paradigmatic case of Largo do Chiado and its neighbour, Largo do Carmo. Despite being both very specific and noble places, they have different intensities in the way they interact with people. This is where the concept of *terroir* comes in, usually used for wines.

What is a *terroir*?



*TERROIR* in the Caminho de São Mamede, Winter 2015

To the World Congress of Wine and Vine (annual congress in 2010 in Georgia, USA) the vinicultural *terroir* is a concept that refers to a space in which a collective knowledge of identifiable physical and biological interactions is developed, and to the vinicultural practices applied that confer different characteristics to the products coming from that place.

It is a complex concept used in oenology, perfectly integrated in the French culture, having its etymological origin in classical Latin in the word *territorium* and in vulgar Latin in the word *terratorium*.

According to Larousse: a group of land of a certain region known for its agricultural skills and providing one or more characteristic products, for example a wine, and explored by village inhabitants; a territory considered as a habits refuge, typical flavours of a region, for instance a *terroir* writer.

However, in Le Nouveau Petit Robert: it means a limited extension of land defined from the point of view of its agricultural skills related with wine; a *terroir* produces a *grand cru*.

While in the XIX century in France the concept was associated with the production of a nonnoble wine (*cru*), said to have a *terroir* flavour, and to be drunk by rural people, in the 60's the word gathers the expression of

the interaction between the natural environment and the human factors in a certain territory. Therefore, the concept of *terroir* reveals itself in the wine by the *savoir-faire* of Men (choices and costumes, affection and care) in the natural environment (geomorphology, climate, etc.).

Despite the word existing only in French, it has been used in other languages, for marketing purposes and also by ONU and UNESCO, as it is considered of great importance for the sustainable development of some world regions.

But what makes this concept interesting is the fact that a certain cast in different territories – even if close together or contiguous – worked in different ways, originates different wines. These human relations and identities are what constitute cultural diversity.

To Bruno Gomes, from *Quinta do Gradil*: “There are three fundamental things: sun, weather and plant, where the only thing controlled by Men is plant. Even in terms of pruning, it can be mechanical, which is never the same as manual. In plant care there is a special energy and poetry.” There are wines resulting from moon harvests, in nights of full moon and even the pruning and harvesting instruments are decisive.

The secret lies in the love that you put into everything that is created and, for that, the poetry is the biggest tool to transform a territory in a *terroir*.

Why use this concept in urban space?



Alentejo – old vines, winter 2015

Controlling the way to add value to a space by the *terroir* concept can bring an overflow of people to a space, inclusively in a touristic level. Since the definition of tourism is precisely the flow of people that move in a territory interacting with it, we are improving the tourism that respects the local cultural heritage and the identity of that place, contributing to a sustainable development of the territory, cultural bonds, and its preservation.

It's in the transformation of the trivial in exceptional that we find Art. On the other hand, it's not by cataloguing heritage that we boost it; it's Art that has the force of bonding feelings and the power to bring us what once existed in History, making us travel through time.

The fact that the people that occupy a *terroir* participate actively in working the land implies a close relationship between the object of creation and the final result. The same happens in Architecture in all projects where the population will take pleasure from the projected space, participating in its creation, construction, or just feeling as part of it, originating not only a more successful project for use and satisfaction, but also a greater emotional engagement.



Largo do Chiado and Largo do Carmo

In order to transport this concept from oenology to urban space, we chose two similar neighbour territories: Largo do Chiado and Largo do Carmo.



Old western door to Lisbon, 2015

Going down Calçada do Combro, a place of big palaces from the XVII century where the aristocracy lived, we come across two churches that face each other, virtually creating an entrance to Largo do Chiado and calling upon the old western door of the *Fernandine* wall. Largo do Chiado is a place for walking by and for meeting people. The subway entrance that exists is a consequence and not a cause of this fact. It's a place where many references gather. It has always been very attractive, from its fine grocery stores, high-end commercial stores, coffeehouses like Brasileira, and the Havaneza tobacco shop, to the barbershops where you could find the cultural elite of that time (XIX century and beginning of XX century). This built heritage, particular and objective, is associated to an immaterial heritage coming from the collective imaginary and from its own identity, set by the life and work of authors like Eça de Queirós and Fernando Pessoa, impossible to dissociate from this space.



Life in Largo do Chiado, 2015

The same cannot be said about Largo do Carmo. Contrarily to Largo do Chiado (essentially a place meant for walking by), you either go to Largo do Carmo, or you don't. Ironically, in terms of built heritage, Largo do Carmo has greater importance, located at the contour line of the level 42, in half hillside, that may have been the trace for the roman aqueduct. It's localization (on a cliff) made it a privileged spot, specially chosen by Dom Nuno Alvares Pereira to build a convent facing the city of Lisbon. Today, its ruins/museum determine the kind of people that go there, which results in a much smaller flow of people than in Largo do Chiado. The existence of a church, a school and a military fort reinforce that this is a more domestic area and place for staying.



Life in Largo do Carmo, 2015

In terms of collective memory, it is associated with the Carnation Revolution, for being the set of the revolution in April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1974, contributing for its political identity that, for itself, is not enough to attract or create affection and heritage in time, to those who never heard about it. Largo do Carmo is a heritage that has all the parts, but lacks the whole, which is present in Largo do Chiado, making it more attractive, even for tourists.



Political reference in Largo do Carmo

It's in the affection, that is not lost in time, that a connection with a place is established. With this transmission arises a material and immaterial heritage. From this men/place interaction, in which affection makes a difference, an old vineyard inherited from several generations originates a final product of higher quality, a wine that is distinguishable.

If, in a *terroir*, time transforms old vineyards in the main character, also in a space imagination (affection and heritage) gives more detail to the immediate, and, out of the blue, the show begins (largo do Chiado).





People in the landscape, *terroir* and Chiado, 2015

## Conclusion

And if, as architects and urbanists, more than simply creating spaces we create affection towards these places, in ourselves and in others, maybe we can make Architecture and Art by transforming what is vulgar in extraordinary, bringing us closer to a real *terroir*.

## References:

Cavicchioli, Marina Regis, “O *terroir* e a identidade cultural”, Revista Adega, 2006

Tonietto, Jorge, “Afimial o que é um *terroir*?”, Bon Vivant, Flores da Cunha, 2007

Robert, P. , Le Nouveau Petit Robert, Paris, 2006

Larouse, <http://www.larousse.fr>

Conversas com Luís Conceição, Professor Doutor em Arquitetura

Conversas com Bruno Gomes, Quinta do Gradil