

Memory and the Facts: Figures and Personalities in the building of Lisbon Metropolitan Area.
Collection and interpretation of personal interviews

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Testimonies collection / Urban land developers /
Urbanization Process / Psycho-Urbanism / Lisbon
Metropolitan Area / Psychological Configuration

Partner Institutions

CIAUD / FA-ULisboa

Expected Future Partner Institutions

OBJECTIVES

The project aims at taking the first step in the constitution of an audio library (to be hosted at FA-ULisboa) of personal testimonies (recorded in audio and video, if possible) of the prominent figures who acted, theoretically or practically, in the private-led development of urban land in LMA and in the practice of urbanism in general in our country.

Secondly, it aims at providing new sources of data to explain and interpret the underlying processes and factors that had a significant role in shaping urbanization patterns of large tracts of Lisbon region.

In parallel, and based on the empirical data obtained, that is, on the testimonies collected, to develop the bases of psycho-urbanism, as understood in the theoretical context to be built within the scope of this project.

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ABSTRACT + IMAGES

The project aims at contributing to an enriched understanding of less visible and charted factors underlying the urbanization process of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA), namely those related with the motivations, personal backgrounds and relational aspects of private developers. Particularly after the 1960's, private initiative held a prominent role in the promotion and delivery of urban land, resorting to different legal and urbanistic frameworks. Under a relatively frail condition of the construction and urbanization industry, along with considerable gaps in the state-led and statutory urban planning and development capacity that characterized Portuguese economy, the interpersonal networks and personal practices and psycho-cultural dimension of specific stakeholders must be acknowledged as a fundamental factor to explain specific choices and patterns of development.

Under this idea, the project will collect testimonies of relevant figures in the construction of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, by direct interview, with the intention of starting an audio library to be hosted at the Lisbon School of Architecture, dedicated to this subject – a continuous endeavor to be continued in future research. From these empirical data, we will try to establish the relationships between the practice of these individuals and their psychological configuration. Furthermore, this data can be added, related and discussed vis-à-vis with an already consistent knowledge of LMA territorial development and its process by the research team.

We will also attempt to start the construction of a theory (tentatively called psycho-urbanism) which will create the framework of this new area of research, establish its basic concepts, analytical procedures, criteria for empirical collection of data, basic starting hypothesis and methodological foundations.



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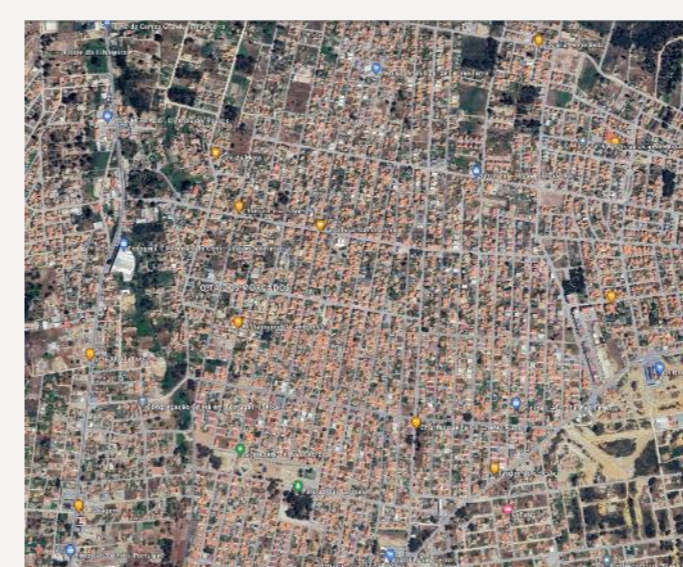
Prominent urban developers exemplified by the following personalities: 1) José Maria Duarte Júnior, 2) Vítor Santos, 3) António Xavier de Lima, 4) José Guilherme



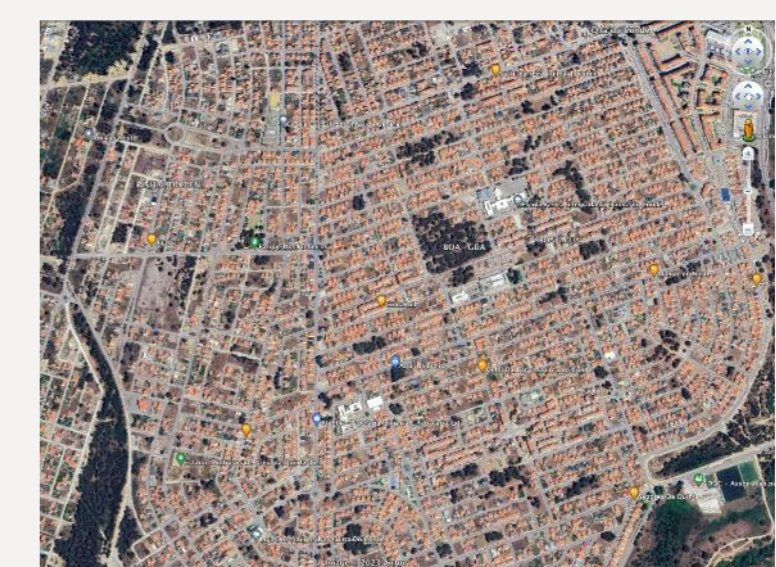
Urban transformations: 1966-1995 (infrastructures). Source: Santos, 2012



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Examples of private-led urban land development: 1) Casal de Cambra, 2) Fernão Ferro, 3) Quinta do Conde, 4) Cacém, 5) Amadora, 6) Rio de Mouro

SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE FOR THE DISCIPLINE

This research provides the missing link between all the theoretical /empirical studies, based on second-hand, indirect, pre-processed material, and the harsh realities of urbanization as it really is. The material collected/produced, unique at least in this country, will help to connect abstract thinking about the urbanization process and the harsh reality of its implementation on the ground.

EXPECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

A more detailed and profound knowledge of the urbanization process will help to intervene in crucial aspects of this reality, with consequences in the legal framework and economic circuits particularly at the financial level of its implementation. The relationships between promoters and the banking sector will be better understood leading to a more transparent circuits in the process of accumulation of capital in this sector, which will eventually benefit the population as a whole.

RESEARCH PLAN AND TASKS

This project attempts a first step in an almost-unprecedented research area, which we will call psycho-urbanism.

It is a matter of identifying, measuring, analyzing and weighing the influence of the psychological configuration of the intervenient in the production process of the urban/regional space that is, in the content of the urbanization process as well as in its results.

The interaction between psyche, process and product takes place both at the level of the elaboration of plans (which we consider of minor importance, given their scarcity and little importance in the generality of the process...) and at the promotion of urbanizations, large and small, as well as commercial and service developments on a scale capable of influencing urban development and structure. It is these developments that effectively materialized the production of said urban space, on the ground, in interaction with the major infrastructures, namely pertaining to accessibility, without which nothing happens.

By "psychological configuration" we mean the existential psychological foundations of the individual, the various formative aspects of his being, from the social environment of origin to family relationships in his childhood, family upbringing (moral, ethical, aesthetic and affective values), as well as the formal or informal education obtained by him, the cultural degree acquired in youth and throughout life, the relevant aspects of his character.

The main task will be to establish, explain, analyze and conclude on the influence that the psychological configurations of the various promoters may have had on the practice carried out by the individual in the process of producing urban space. The person involved in this process, in which he was a leading protagonist, affects both the managing of that very process and the characteristics of the finished product, as well as the ways in which the interpersonal relationships, present in that production process, were dealt with. This last aspect is crucial to the outcome of the "adventure" of creating new urban space, since it is present in all its stages, from buying the initial land, obtaining financial back-up, conducting the building works and, finally, selling the finished product.

The first phase of this research will be the identification of the individuals to be interviewed, through a quick survey amongst colleagues and other professionals involved in metropolitan issues. Establish a list of these individuals in order to contact them and obtain their consent to participate. From the outset, we can name (based on public notoriety) Vítor Santos, José Guilherme, Eduardo Rodrigues, Elidérico Castelo, António Xavier de Lima (son), José Maria Duarte Junior (successors), J. Pimenta, amongst others.

Still in this phase, a written guide/script to the interviews will be drafted and tested in blank interviews, in order to increase its effectiveness.

The second phase will be the conduction of personal interviews recorded in audio and video (but at least in audio), with a common script, conducted by the research team. This guide will deal with the development, psychological and cultural background of the interviewee, his practice on a quantitative level, location of the promotions in LMA, the way in which the land to be urbanized was obtained, the elaboration of the projects, the management models of the enterprises, the economic calculation of the promotion, the matching of the product to be sold with the potential market, the relations with banks and city councils, marketing strategies, etc.

This data can be articulated with other ongoing research projects at CIAUD (i.e. MetroPublicNet) which are producing similar material.

The third phase will be the processing of the empirical material obtained, in order to discuss it vis-à-vis with already established in-depth knowledge by the team and by other research at CIAUD on LMA territorial development patterns.

Continuously, throughout these three phases, a theoretical framework will be developed that will mobilize concepts from psychology as much as from urbanism, in an attempt to create the bases and methodology of a proto-theory of psycho-urbanism that can inform, frame and creatively relate and contribute to urban and metropolitan studies.

EXPECTED SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

The set of collected testimonies, which will continue for as long as it deems of interest, will come to constitute a unique repository in Portugal that will serve researchers, students, other scholars and even the lay public to deepen and improve the understanding of the urbanization process, of the its intricacies (at the land, financial, urban, commercial level) and the characteristics of those who intervened in it, as well as, evidently, the formation of the AML in particular.

The interpretation possibilities of this very rich empirical material will lay the first stone in the constitution of a new research area – psycho-urbanism --, with its own methods, its developing theory, its empirical bases and its practical results.

BUDGET: € 7.323,92

The main budget expenses concern:

- 1) human resources to assist with the logistic activities related with the interviewing and data processing.
(grant BI for Licenciado: €930,98 x 4 months = €3723,92)
- 2) video and audio recording and editing services
(€2500,00)
- 3) laptop computer for data processing, storage and dissemination
(€1100,00)