

LISBON EXPERIENCE. MOBILITY, QUALITY OF LIFE AND TOURIST IMAGE: A SURVEY

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Abstract: Tourists recently awarded Lisbon as the best city break destination in Europe. This article analyses the various types of tourist experience in the city of Lisbon. The research method is the questionnaire, aimed at investigating the choices of tourists in the area of mobility, their perception of the quality of life and their level of appreciation of neighbourhoods, landmarks and infrastructures. There is an obvious link between the quality of life and the quality of the tourist experience but it is difficult to measure it. Through this questionnaire, we hope to have made a small contribution to the understanding of the perceptive sphere of the individual and his choices in terms of behaviour, which are an essential element of any strategy for tourism marketing.

Key words: Lisbon, questionnaire, mobility, quality of life, perception

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GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The region of Lisbon has always played an important role as a tourist destination in Portugal. Tourism in the city of Lisbon, in particular, is now of paramount importance for Portuguese and international cultural tourism, with global revenues amounting to 562 million euros in 2011 (Turismo de Portugal, 2012). This article analyses the various types of tourist experience in the city, with special regard to the behavioural and perception spheres, which emerged from the results of a questionnaire. Lisbon was once again distinguished internationally, this time as the "*Second Best European Destination*" for 2013 by the Association of European Consumers, beating cities like Vienna, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Madrid, La Valletta, Nice, Milan and Stockholm. Only Istanbul, in Turkey, topped Lisbon in a list of 20 cities, and yet, by a mere 439 votes (Machado, 2013, p.4). Lisbon also secured the distinction of ideal destination for urban getaways.

Most tourists arrive in Lisbon by air. The total number of passengers landed at Lisbon airport increased by more than two million between 2004 and 2011. This increase is concentrated on international flights, since there was a decrease in the number of passengers on domestic flights. The low-cost carriers accounted for a large part of this increase, almost a million passengers, while there was also a decrease to less than half the number of passengers on charter flights (Table 1).

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Table 1. Lisbon. Passengers disembarking, by type of flight (thousands)
(Source: Turismo de Portugal, 2012)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<i>Total</i>	5.244	5.512	6.064	6.611	6.753	6.598	7.020	7.384
Traditional	4.713	4.880	5.119	5.411	5.401	5.450	5.785	6.223
International	3.666	3.837	4.085	4.410	4.463	4.468	4.828	5.305
Domestic	1.047	1.043	1.034	1.001	938	982	957	918
Low cost	195	303	649	929	1.104	948	1.012	1.017
Charters	336	328	295	271	247	201	223	143

As to the origin, the majority of passengers transported by air are of Spanish nationality (13%), a market that has not stopped growing in the last decade. The other important markets for Lisbon are French (11%), Brazilian (9%), German and British, the latter two both with about 8% of the total (Table 2).

Table 2. Lisbon. Passengers disembarking by markets - TOP 5 in 2011 (thousands)
(Source: Turismo de Portugal, 2012)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<i>Total</i>	4.188	4.463	5.025	5.603	5.794	6.598	7.020	7.384
Spain	590	717	833	983	937	895	979	1.026
France	552	548	612	637	691	721	753	811
Brazil	459	526	490	516	575	547	677	724
Germany	446	430	501	528	591	530	548	620
United Kingdom	444	429	461	549	584	538	560	608
Others	1.698	1.812	2.128	2.390	2.416	3.367	3.503	3.594

The steady increase of international tourism in Lisbon metropolitan area is also made clear by the number of bednights, which went from 7 million in 2004 to 8.6 million in 2011 (Turismo de Portugal, 2012). More than a half of this amount (4.8 million) relates to the city of Lisbon, which confirms its role of main attraction pole for the wider Lisbon region and the entire country.

Regarding cruise lines, about 560 million passengers are expected in Lisbon in 2013, confirming the growth rate of about 7% from 2007 to 2011 (Figure 3). This increase is connected with two factors: a rise in the number of operators who choose Lisbon as scale, and the increasing number and capacity of cruises that sail both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Machado (2013) states that “Lisbon emerges as one of the ten destinations to visit, recommended by individuals who responded to the *International Passengers Cruise Survey of 2012*, prepared by the Tourism Observatory of Lisbon, in partnership with the Port Authority of Lisbon”.

„For these cruise passengers, mostly British (215 645 or 43%), the climate, the local population and the quick access to the city are among the factors that differentiate and justify the placement of Lisbon among the best ports of call” (Machado, 2013, p. 4). The number of passengers of German and Italian nationality has been increasing, representing respectively 16% (81 455 passengers) and 12% (60 578 passengers) of the market share. In the top 5 also Americans (46,922 or 9%) and Spaniards (20,816 or 4%) are to be found¹.

Table 3. Lisbon. Evolution of cruise lines activity
(Source: Porto de Lisboa, 2013)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Evolution of the scales	256	308	294	299	330	314
Evolution of the scales in transit	193	240	188	211	232	244

¹ Source of statistical data: Porto de Lisboa (2013).

The seafront position and city life seem to define the supply of Portuguese tourism in general, with particular emphasis on the capital's metropolitan area, which includes the most favourable conditions for the practice of tourism, and stand out clearly on the map of Portugal. The natural beauty of Lisbon, together with a set of capital gains, such as accessibility and the potential of low-cost flights, makes it unique and a must visit.

Lisbon is also favoured by the variety of tourism supply, the nature of the urban environment and the diversification and qualification of its structures that altogether become a positive influence in the demand (the hotels of 4 and 5 star represent 40% of the supply²). In Lisbon there is indeed an increased demand of the city during the summer months, followed by a secondary “*peak*” in spring, around Easter holidays, when the Spanish market prevails in the city.

According to Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990) urban tourism resources can be divided into primary attractions that attract tourists directly (museums, monuments, places of historical interest, events and urban landscape) and secondary attractions that would not justify the trip alone but globally contribute for the formation of a positive image of the city (cafés, restaurants, hotel service standards, a good business network, entertainment, etc.). The combination of the two types of resources will probably be the main factor of attraction of urban tourist destinations. In the city converge individuals with different tastes and interests attracted by the image of a place of grandeur and abundance of wholeness and freedom, luxury and permissiveness.

On the other hand, tourism tends to focus today on the imagery, ornamental and scenic dimensions of the city, which defines a new reading of the urban space as a place and object of consumption, leisure and recreation, therefore fading the conception of a business and labour site (Rodrigues, 1992). The appreciation of tourism, as well as the recreational and cultural functions of the city, is ultimately a response to the new economic landscape of the Western world, due to de-industrialization and increased consumption needs, corresponding to the progressive globalization. It is the consolidation of a postmodern “*culture of pleasure*”, which is founded in the appreciation of urban environments and aesthetics, fun and culture. Hence, many cities, including Lisbon, have invested in museum facilities and cultural rehabilitation, in the improvement of the urban landscape, in the conversion of riverfronts and in the creation of theme parks or recreational and cultural parks.

The growth in the number of urban tourists will probably continue, both in the professional and scientific tourism field and in the cultural tourism field. This growth is related to the democratization of education and higher levels of education, with the decrease in the number of farmers and industrial proletariat, with the expansion of a new bourgeoisie of intellectuals, scientific and technical free lancers related to the tertiary sector. The intellectual formation of these classes provides greater respect for heritage, historic, artistic and cultural values whose concentration is predominantly urban.

In Lisbon has always existed an individuality of its own, related to its Maneline and Baroque monuments, its original means of transport³, its cafés and its mysterious atmosphere. But also the neighbourhoods contribute to build the image of the city, shaping its popular and historic character. The neighbourhoods symbolize the capital, together with other elements that give it a peculiar touch of cinematic and intense luminosity, such as its topography, the riverside location, and the fact it has always been the birthplace of famous singers and writers.

² According to data from the Turismo de Portugal (2012) there were, in 2011, 54,912 beds for over 4 million guests annually. The bed occupancy rate was 49.3% while the occupancy rate per room stood at 62.1%.

³ Besides those who have become “classics” in the landscape of Lisbon, as the *cacilheiro* (riverboat), the *electrico* 28 (tram nr. 28), the Santa Justa lift and the Bica, the Gloria and the Lavra funiculars, new means of transport emerged lately with much success among tourists, as the Eco tuk tours, the Segway and the Go-Car. The latest is the “amphibious tourist bus”, which runs the city partly on land and partly on the river.

Another image of great tourist interest is connected with the geographical position of the city, as well as with its scenic effect due to the numerous hills and their proximity to the river. This is actually an extremely valued item by written guides (Henriques, 1996).

On the other hand, the areas linked to the past and memory are described in detail at the expense of the capital outskirts, currently devalued under the tourist point of view. Thus Alfama quarter emerges as a genuine and somewhat exotic and archaic place. It gives the image of a unique and welcoming neighbourhood, which denotes the contemporary interest in tradition, the specificity and the appreciation of the physical and cultural heritage⁴.

We cannot fail to mention the most modern section of Lisbon of about 250 acres currently occupied by the Parque das Nações (Park of Nations), where the Expo 98 was held. This is a paradigmatic case of conversion of a degraded urban space, with functions once assigned to the harbour activities, industrial purposes and warehousing, which now constitute a new tourist attraction with museums and monuments (Oceanario or Lisbon aquarium, Living science hall, gardens, Vasco da Gama tower and the homonymous bridge), buildings of great beauty and architectural value and well framed in the surrounding area (examples of which are the Oriente interface station and former Pavilion of Portugal), good commercial spaces (shopping mall Vasco da Gama), hotels and restaurants, promenades, marinas and large terraces of great scenic effect.

The conversion and renovation of the riverfront is directly linked to the development of economic activities, as well as recreational and cultural attractions. The emphasis is given to the diversity and combination of different elements with different purposes and uses: offices, residential and commercial areas, monuments, recreational venues and exhibitions, hotels and restaurants, enhancing the landscape.

In Lisbon the most scenic tourist spots are therefore aligned along the Tagus. There are three cores in the riverfront, two more traditional (Baixa and Belém quarters) and one more contemporary (Park of Nations). However, there is also an axis perpendicular to the river, set by the historic centre of the city, which extends from Praça do Comércio (Black horse square) to Praça de Espanha, through Avenida da Liberdade (Liberty Avenue) and Eduardo VII Park.

The decentralisation of areas with several points of interest is a result of the cultural and tourism development policy of the city – improvement of Belém area, creation of the Calouste Gulbenkian foundation, inauguration of the Tile Museum and realisation of the Expo 98 among others.

Which are the predominant markets in Lisbon? How is the structure of the demand? And how is the supply organised? Which are the tourists interests and the most visited attractions in the city? What forms does the mobility of tourists assume? What are the most requested experiences? And which of them are more experienced?

These are some of the questions we will try to answer in this study. The research method is the questionnaire. Over 300 questionnaires were carried out to tourists of different nationalities visiting Lisbon during the months of February and June 2013.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introductory remarks

Some of the questions listed above relate to the subjective dimension of the tourist experience and can hardly find an answer in the database, although extensive and accurate information is made available by the state bodies for statistics on tourism. In particular, the choices and behaviours of tourists in the area of mobility, their perception of the urban reality and their level of knowledge and appreciation of neighbourhoods, landmarks and infrastructures could not be known except through

⁴ The most emerging neighbourhood is now the Mouraria quarter, located on the northwest slope of the hill of S. Jorge castle, which is currently undergoing successive restoration of residential buildings, palaces, churches and ancient monasteries. Its cultural promotion is strongly connected to the concept of "neighbourhood of the Fado", a song that was born here and has become globally famous, since it was considered world Heritage by UNESCO.

the administration of a questionnaire, which involved a sample of 300 foreign tourists visiting the city of Lisbon. Such administration was performed by a team of 10 interviewers and took place in two phases: 240 interviews were conducted in the month of February 2013, another 60 in June 2013.

The questionnaire consists of 4 sections:

1. General Information – individual characteristics of the respondent, such as age, gender, nationality, number of visits already carried out, means of transport, type and level of accommodation, purchase of tourist card and / or packages, excursions.

2. Mobility – use of various forms of public transportation, purchase of the daily integrated urban transport ticket, hire of means of transport such as car, bike or scooter.

3. Quality of tourism and quality of life – level of appreciation, on a scale from 1 to 5, of the characteristics which define the quality of urban life, such as cleanness, traffic, cultural life, together with those of closer importance to tourism, such as tourist services and crafts.

4. Tourist experience – level of knowledge and appreciation, on a scale from 1 to 5, of (a) already established and potential tourist areas, (b) public services and infrastructure frequently used by tourists, or those that can be seen as urban landmarks of tourist interest, thanks to their visibility and / or to their aesthetic characteristics.

Preliminary results of the survey

It should first be noted that here are presented only those who could be called the preliminary results of the survey, i.e. those that emerged from the mere aggregation of the total number of answers for each question. However, this has allowed the identification of some important individual characteristics of the tourist experience, along with a gradient of appreciation and knowledge of individual aspects and elements that contribute to its definition. Only at a later stage of the research statistical correlations between significant elements will be carried out, such as individual characteristics of the respondents on the one hand and the type of accommodation, forms of mobility, appreciation and knowledge of the most important aspects of the tourist experience on the other.

General Information

The interviewed sample is fairly representative of the universe of international tourism in Lisbon regarding age, means of transport and type of accommodation, although it dissociates in some respects from the statistics. This especially for what concerns the average length of stay, which is more than twice (5.2) than the one that emerges from the official figures (2.3).

In detail, it appeared that about 90% of the respondents are between 20 and 60 years old. This is the typical age of tourists who engage in independent touring, while a significant proportion of tourists aged over 60 years opts for the organized tour, to feel more safe and protect by the guide. The majority share of tourists is from EU countries (66.7% overall, especially Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands), besides those from the United States (6.3%), Brazil (5.3%) and China (4.7%). In fact, the weight of the Brazilians is lower than expected, while that of the Chinese is decidedly higher: in this second case, however, it is likely that the coincidence of the first phase of interviews with the Chinese New Year (February 10, 2013) has played an important role. It is also possible that the questionnaire has made obvious an emerging phenomenon, i.e. the steady increase of Chinese tourism, an actual trend for some years in several European countries, including Portugal.

Nearly a quarter of the respondents had already carried out an average of 1.5 visits in the Portuguese capital, which suggests that there is a certain degree of

reliability, perhaps due to the variety of resources available to tourists (culture, congresses, events, but also swimming and sports, such as golf and surfing), which justify and explain the desire to repeat the experience. The plane is by far the most widely used means of transport (90.3%), given the peripheral location of the country. The hotel, especially of 3 stars (30.2% of total hotels) and 4 stars (45.4% of total hotels) is the most commonly used accommodation (69.7% of the total). However, the share of 5 stars hotels is not irrelevant (15.8% of total hotels). The share of rental apartments is interesting (10.7% of the total), a typology of accommodation that sees Lisbon well positioned in Europe in terms of supply.

As for the integration of tourism supply, the percentage of purchase of the “Lisboa Card”⁵ is low (16%), while far more significant is the purchase of the integrated public transport day ticket (43%), in confirmation of what will be said later about urban mobility. A small percentage (26.7%) of the respondents participated in excursions, mostly to Sintra, but also to Cascais and Estoril⁶.

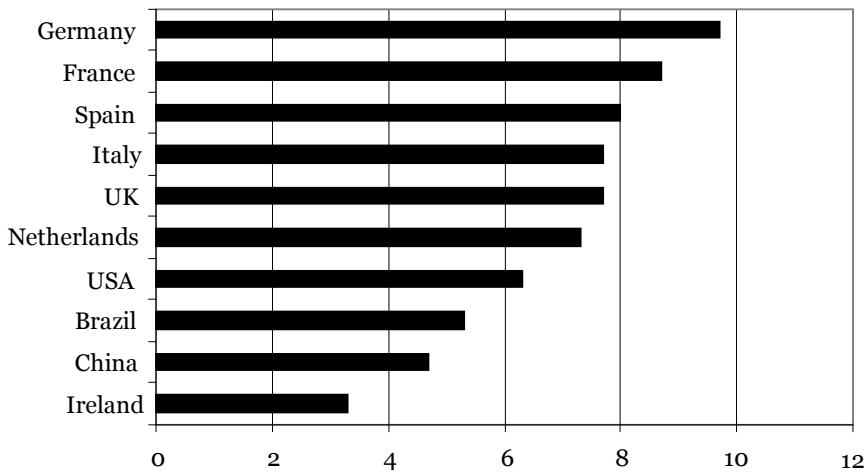


Figure 1. First 10 nationalities of the interviewees (% on the total)
(Source: authors, 2013)

Mobility

As regards public transport, it is necessary to make a distinction between the means which perform a function mainly or solely of transport (bus, subway, train) and those that also perform the role of tourist use (tram, funicular, riverboat), if not a tourist attraction per se (Santa Justa lift). Given the above, we can say that the whole public transport has been frequently used by tourists most of the times just to satisfy mobility needs (subway - 64%, bus - 51%, train - 29%, the latter used, presumably, to reach suburban towns like Sintra, Cascais, Estoril as an alternative to renting a car, as well as to move to more distant locations such as Fatima and Porto). In the case of the tram, also used quite often (43.7%), the transportation function (to take the tram 15 is the easiest way to reach Belém), is as important as the pure tourist use: through the Alfama and Bairro Alto, i.e. two of the most characteristic neighbourhoods of Lisbon, on board of tram 28 is one of the most specific experiences of Lisbon⁷.

⁵ By purchasing the Lisboa Card you have free access to public transport and the main museums and a discount, which varies from 5 to 50%, in services and products of interest.

⁶ Curiously, answering this question, some interviewees (not included in 26.7% of the excursionists) indicated urban places, though peripheral, such as Belém and Parque das Nações, and some people even mentioned the central Castle of São Jorge.

Still concerning the means of transport that are configured primarily as a tourist attraction, the Santa Justa lift (28%) was preferred to the funiculars (12.3%).

The use of taxi is quite frequent in Lisbon (58.3%), where this mean of transport is available in a capillary way at reasonable prices. Lastly, worth noting is the bus “hop on - hop off”, typically for the tourists, that shows a statistically significant although not high use (18.7%). Among the means of transport for hire, only the car reaches an appreciable percentage (12.7%), while others (scooter, bike, Segway, Go Car) are quite marginal. Finally, the variety of means of transport available to tourists should be emphasised (in this regard see also footnote 3), which allow a friendly use by the tourists, in different scales, from the neighbourhood scale (think of the Alfama quarter toured on tram 28 or on Segway), to the urban scale (such as the subway, which crosses the whole urban area in less than 30 minutes), to the regional scale (for instance fast and frequent trains to Sintra and Cascais).

Quality of tourism and quality of life

This section of the questionnaire seeks to understand to what extent the tourist experience in Lisbon has gained the appreciation of tourists, not only regarding the aspects more or less explicitly aimed for tourism in the city (accommodation, tourism services, tourist information, handicrafts), but also – and perhaps especially – with reference to the elements which define the quality of life in the city of Lisbon (traffic, cleanliness, safety, public transport, climate, etc.). These aspects of life are experienced daily by the residents of Lisbon and will certainly influence and even determine the perception of the tourist experience either in a positive or negative way.

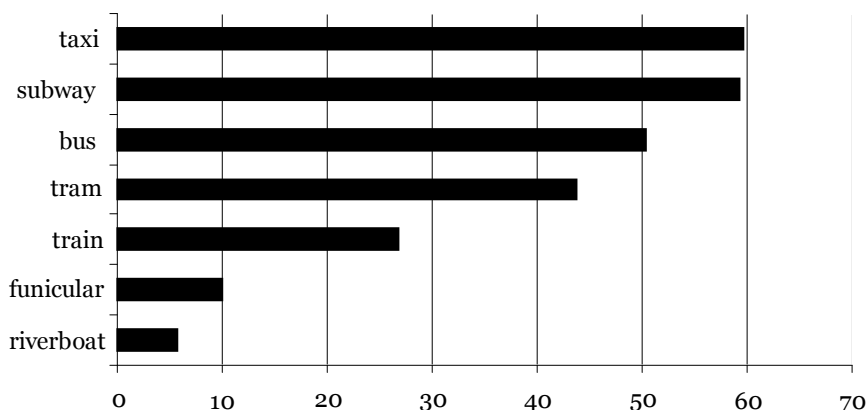


Figure 2. Use of urban transportation (%)
(Source: authors, 2013)

Overall, the satisfaction of tourists is very high: no feature falls below a value of 3.4 (on a scale, it is recalled, from 1 to 5). The highest values (> 4) are achieved by local people, food and wine, architecture, accommodation, urban landscape, atmosphere, location, nightlife, safety, tourist services. Immediately below (3.9 to 4) are placed public transport, tourist information, gardens, and cultural life. Almost all of the aforementioned features have much to do with the authenticity, the everyday life, the city as it is, not necessarily for the consumption of tourists (although accommodation, services and tourist information, characteristics typically linked to tourism, still reach

⁷ In fact, the experience of tram 28 receives a relatively lesser degree of satisfaction against all the expectations, ranking with a score of 3.98, in the second place from bottom of the sub-section "public services and infrastructures," and this perhaps due to the considerable crowding of the tram – which is literally sieged by the tourists themselves – as well as because of the risk of pick-pocketing.

values between 4.26 and 3.96). The other features of the same type, however, are placed in the bottom of the list: prices, traffic and cleanliness (this last one is the only feature to record a value lower than 3.5). Therefore, the result is a perception framework with many lights and some shadows: the authenticity of Lisbon is much appreciated but with some exceptions, at least as regards traffic and cleanliness.

The warm appreciation of the price level is probably explained by the fact that the reality of Lisbon does not match, if not for minor aspects, the idea – consolidated in tourist imaginary – of a rather cheap destination. The meteorological conditions should not be considered (3.7, one of the lowest on the list), since the first phase of the questionnaire, that is numerically more consistent, took place on a day of adverse weather conditions, which has certainly affected the perception of this aspect (and perhaps others) in a very negative way.

With regard to the frequency of the response, the higher numbers (299 responses out of 300) are totalled from the characteristics perceived as less positive (prices, cleanness). The following features are weather conditions, geographical location, atmosphere, architecture, local population, and safety, with more than 290 answers. Curiously, traditions and crafts characteristics are relatively less present in the tourist imaginary (respectively 225 and 220 responses). More understandably, the feature that records the lowest number of responses (184) is the nightlife, normally little used by tourists who choose Lisbon as a destination. Anyway it must be pointed out that as many as 17 characteristics out of 20 receive at least 250 responses out of 300, which is perhaps a sign of the tourists desire to express themselves – generally somewhat or very favourably – about the city, in spite of a knowledge and an experience in many cases limited and partial.

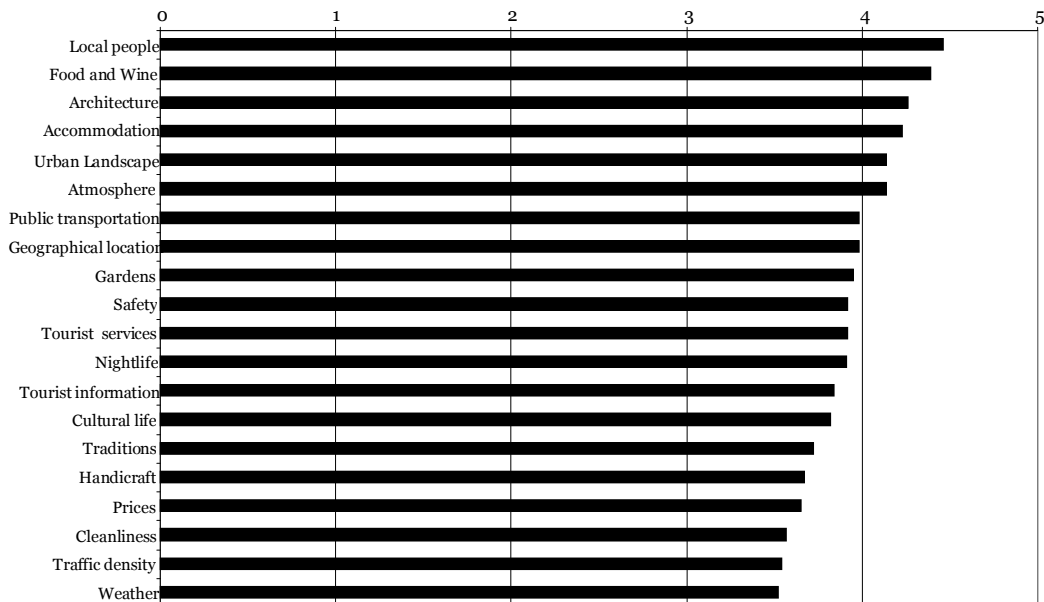


Figure 3. Quality of tourism and quality of life
(Source: authors, 2013)

Tourist experience

With regard to the knowledge and satisfaction – after a first impression – about the different areas of the city, there must be a premise: the tourists may have been surveyed at the beginning of their stay, thus not having yet had the opportunity to

visit some areas of Lisbon, on which therefore they do not provide any answers, but perhaps they will still visit these areas in the remainder of their holiday. The fact that they had visited or not a given district at the time of the interview may indicate at least an order of priority: the more a district appears to have been visited (as evidenced by the number of responses), the more likely that it was perceived as relevant (a must-see, so to speak) right from the beginning of the stay.

Given the above, in this case it yields also a framework characterized by a generally high rating (6 out of 9 districts have a score higher than 4, while the other 3 are between 3.5 and 3.9), which is accompanied by a variable degree of knowledge. The favourite zones seem to be those that possess highly specific characteristics, in terms of landmark (Belém, Baixa) or atmosphere (Alfama, Bairro Alto, Chiado). These are also the most visited – or at least most popular – areas of Lisbon (the number of responses ranging from 252 of the Baixa section to 157 of the Alfama district), since they are better placed in the information system available to tourists as traditional itineraries prepared for their use and consumption. In fact, they together accounted for the number of responses that is superior to half of the sample.

The less “*typical*” or newer areas (Marquês de Pombal, Parque das Nações, Alcântara), despite being in possession of their own character, landmark and tourist infrastructures⁸, do not appear at the top of the list neither from the point of view of satisfaction nor from that of knowledge. This perhaps due to a lower perception of authenticity associated with lower centrality (Parque das Nações) or visibility (Alcântara). Finally, the Mouraria, in spite of the very authentic atmosphere and the very central location, and excepted as noted in footnote 4, is unknown to most of the respondents (65 responses) and relatively less appreciated (3.94), probably because not yet completely restored and made fully suitable to the needs of tourists.

Visibility, authenticity and tourist enjoyment appear to be the winning features, while centrality and remoteness seem to play a role not defined a priori: if on one side the Belém district is absolutely the favourite one (4.48) and the second most well-known⁹ although in a peripheral location, the Parque das Nações, in spite of the considerable attractiveness (and easy access by subway), is less visited by the present sample (133 replies) perhaps exactly because of its peripheral position. The Mouraria, due to a still weak image, appears little known even if central. The conclusion is perhaps that the centrality becomes really significant only when combined with other features such as visibility, authenticity and tourist enjoyment, which become thus strengthened. Remoteness, however, as evidenced by the reputation of Belém district, is not an obstacle to the tourist experience, thanks to a rather efficient public transport system¹⁰.

With regard to public services and infrastructure – the above premise also applies to this item – the data regarding Rossio station strike the eye. This spot is fairly appreciated (4.21) and well known (134 responses), probably because of a combination of factors: centrality, visibility, architectural specificity, and function¹¹. For the rest of the features, the average level of satisfaction is still high – between the Águas Livres aqueduct (4.12) and the Oriente Station (3.85) – compared with a number of responses,

⁸ Centrality and monumentality to the Marquês de Pombal Square; Vasco da Gama Tower and Bridge, Oceanarium and Hall of Living Science to the Parque das Nações section; 25th of April Bridge, Docas de Santo Amaro and LX Factory to the Alcântara district.

⁹ Centrality and monumentality to the Marquês de Pombal Square; Vasco da Gama Tower and Bridge, Oceanarium and Hall of Living Science to the Parque das Nações section; 25th of April Bridge, Docas de Santo Amaro and LX Factory to the Alcântara district.

¹⁰ Moreover perceived as such also by tourists: a score of 3.97 on a scale of 1 to 5, although only eleventh in the ranking, is nevertheless high.

¹¹ From the station of Rossio, characterized by architecture certainly worthy of note, leave the trains to the renowned town of Sintra, UNESCO World Heritage Site.

ranging from 124 to the 25th of April Bridge to 20 of Prazeres Cemetery. It is rather strange the relatively modest degree of knowledge of the 25th of April Bridge, although it is regarded as the quintessential landmark of the city of Lisbon, not tied to a specific neighbourhood (although physically located in Alcântara) and visible from a number of perspectives and belvederes, besides being well evident both from Belém and along the way to reach this quarter, that probably all of the 250 respondents sightings¹².

CONCLUSIONS*

The theoretical part of this paper clearly shows how Lisbon is becoming increasingly important among the most well known cities for international tourism. In fact, the city recently received several awards. Furthermore, it plays a vital role in Portuguese tourism as an interface for cultural touring in the city and in the whole country with passengers coming mostly by air but also by sea. In spite of an increase in Chinese tourism, the European markets prevail, with tourists aged between 20 and 60 years, who stay longer in Lisbon, in 3 or 4 star hotels, attracted by the diversity of supply, the natural beauty of the city, the atmosphere, its people, the opposition between old and new neighbourhoods, and the quality of service in the tourism sector.

On the occasion of Expo 98, the Portuguese capital has managed to show the world the image of a dynamic city, at the same time characterized by tradition and modernity, culture and leisure, historical memory and projection into the future, in a pleasant context strongly characterized by its mild climate and landscape values and identity, so much so that the wishes of a further significant tourist development, formulated by analysts at the time (see Henriques, 1996, p. 173), appear to have largely come true.

The preliminary results from the questionnaire are certainly in line with the positive scenario outlined above. The satisfaction of tourists – about two-thirds coming from European Union countries – is generally high, both for what concerns the characteristics which define the quality of urban life, and as regards those services more specifically aimed at the tourist market.

The highest values are achieved by “*local people*”, “*gastronomy*”, “*architecture*”, “*accommodation*”, “*cityscape*”, “*atmosphere*”, “*location*”, “*nightlife*”, “*safety*”, “*tourist services*”. Immediately after, but still with a very high level of appreciation, are “*public transport*”, “*tourist information*”, “*gardens*”, “*cultural life*”. “*Price level*”, “*traffic*” and “*cleanness*” are placed in the bottom of the list, but on levels of satisfaction still more than acceptable. It should be noted that those aspects that have to do with the authenticity and every day life are particularly appreciated, although with the above mentioned exceptions, which do not affect – or affect only marginally – an overall very good judgment.

As noted above, even the public transport in the city of Lisbon is enjoying quite high consensus among the respondents. It is an aspect closely linked to the quality of life for residents, which we believe will improve significantly and will enrich the tourist experience, deserving a specific section of the questionnaire. It was found that a high percentage of respondents – more than 60% in the case of the subway – has used public transportation to meet their needs for urban mobility in a friendly way, but also to live a tourist experience tout court, as in the case of the funiculars, tram 28 and Santa Justa lift. The purchase of daily-integrated tickets was also significant, to optimize the cost of public transport.

It should also be pointed out that an efficient transport network also fulfils the function of making accessible peripheral urban areas of tourist interest, and expands the sphere of action of the tourist. It may therefore play a role in respect of the tourist experience, becoming, more than a mere logistical support, a structural and strategic

¹² In this case, there is a doubt that a majority of respondents interpreted the question in a literal sense (visit / use), i.e. whether they had actually crossed the bridge or not.

* Miguel Brito has written the “General Framework”; Luca Zarrilli has written “The Questionnaire”; the “Conclusions” have been written by both authors.

element. That is the case of Belém, the historical and monumental quarter, far removed from the congestion of the city, which is the most visited by tourists (almost on a par with the central Baixa), as well as the most appreciated, thanks to the fact of being easily reached with tram 15. Besides Belém and Baixa, the favourite neighbourhoods seem to be the most authentic ones, i.e. Alfama, Bairro Alto and Chiado. That is not the case of the very modern Parque das Nações district, which today represents an important, attractive and new opportunity of leisure for tourists. Nevertheless, it is not the top priority of visit for respondents, who seem to just focus on historic districts, characterized by atmospheres perceived as genuine. Therefore, centrality is only important if combined with visibility, authenticity and commodification.

In essence, it is reasonable to assume that the tourist range of action – that in the mid-nineties appeared to be limited to the central core of the riverfront (Baixa, Bairro Alto, Alfama), its internal extension (Marquês de Pombal, Parque Eduardo VII, Praça de Espanha) and the area of Belém (see the interesting cartogram in Henriques, 1996, 145) – is to be extended, from the time of the Expo 98, to a third area, that of the Parque das Nações, which became accessible thanks to the creation of a new subway line.

There is an obvious link between the quality of urban life and the quality of the tourist experience but it is difficult to measure it. Through this questionnaire on the case of Lisbon, we hope to have made a small methodological and empirical contribution to the understanding of the perceptive sphere of the individual and his choices in terms of actual behaviour, which are a central and essential element of any strategy for tourism marketing.

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