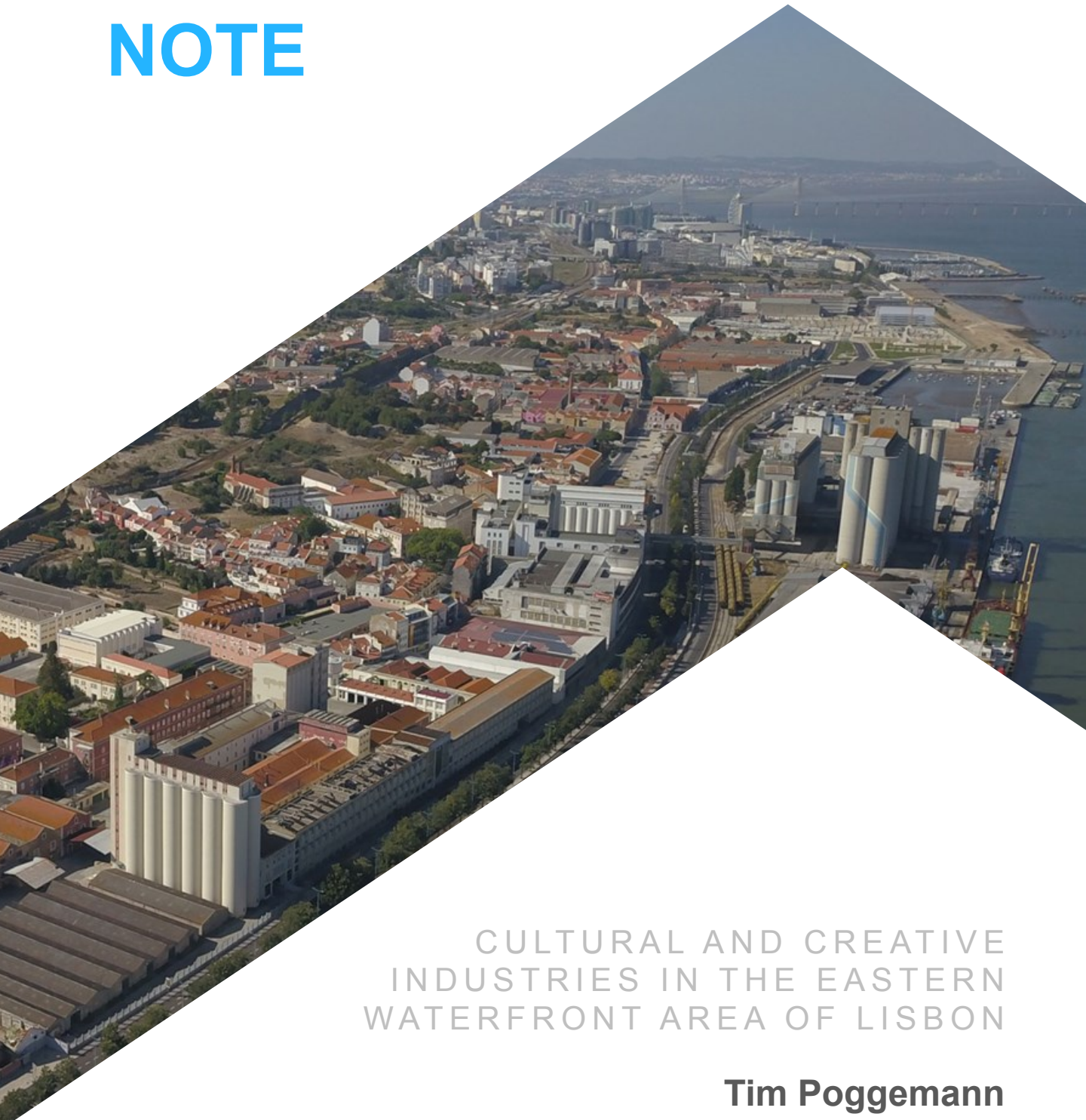


# RESEARCH NOTE



## CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN THE EASTERN WATERFRONT AREA OF LISBON

**Tim Poggemann**

Document produced for the Horizon 2020 project 'ROCK'.  
Year: 2019. Status: Final. Dissemination Level: Public.

# Cultural and creative industries in the eastern waterfront area of Lisbon

**Tim Poggemann**

The eastern waterfront area of Marvila and Beato is contemporary experiencing a strong transformation with an ongoing noticeable trend of accumulation of creatives and cultural industries. The following, gives an input about the context of the urban regeneration processes and the transformation trends in the eastern part of Lisbon and the whole city.

The City of Lisbon experienced many changes and transformation over all the years. Even if we only take a view on the last centuries, it has developed and evolved a lot with respect to demography, society, politics and urban forms. A strong impact for Portugal and Lisbon was the economic crisis in 2008, which struck the country and the city centre of Lisbon noticeable under a process of decay and abandonment. The country received financial aid of the EU and other international institutions, but they set up further economic restrictions for Portugal, that resulted in austerity policies within the country and led to a neoliberal way in the politics strategies and urban regeneration policies. As a result of that, the policies focused on attracting investments and competition on the global market and demolished the until 2009 existing rental control law to open the housing market for reinvestments (LESTEGÁS ET AL. 2018, pp. 688–690).

The property values have increased enormous due to the financial austerity and the new law of urban rental legitimized the tourism in the city centre, which started to increase after the crisis. The sharp increase in the tourism brings many short-term financial benefits for the Municipality of Lisbon, and the capitalist post-crisis led to an neoliberal rationality turn in the city government, “which aims to make Lisbon

a more competitive city, attracting foreign investment, visitors, tourists, tying the flows of real estate capital to its built environment, in a frame of globalization of competition between cities and places” (MENDES 2017, p. 479).

Therefore, the Municipality of Lisbon is also following the strategy of branding Lisbon as a “creative city”, in order to attract the creative economy and to increase the international competitiveness: „Lisbon is a city that has all the conditions to build the ambition to assume the role as a creative city, not only on a national scale, but mostly on a European and global scale” (LISBON CITY COUNCIL MUNICIPAL 2013, p. 31).

The mentioned post-crisis consequences are explaining the noticeable Transformation, Touristification and Gentrification in the neighbourhoods in the historic centres of Lisbon. As a result of it, we can observe, that the transformation is spreading to the whole city, up to the suburbs and the peripheral parts. The parishes of Marvila and Beato, that are a “former rural and industrial territory”, are on the one hand, because of weak public transport connections, peripheral from the city centre. On the other hand, this area gets more and more into the focus for the urban planning of the Municipality and real estate market, and because of still affordable housing, the latest trends are newcomers, new constructions, new use of the old industrial buildings and large-scale projects.

Besides, the territory is characterized by a longer historical evolution which still marks the area in form of (im-)material heritage and shapes the urban landscape. In around the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the area along the Tagus river used to be a leisure zone for the wealthier class with many palaces owned by rich families. The construction of palaces by the bourgeoisie and institutions extended to the upper part of Marvila, where at this time, have been mostly farms.

Later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when in Europe and all over the world the industrialisation began, the area became due to its proximity with the river and the well opportunities

for trade and transport an industrial hub and several changes happened in the eastern part of Lisbon. Merchants and industrialists came and many factories were built. The industrialisation created many jobs and attracted a great population from the countryside, searching for work and better living conditions and settled in the area, occupied land and constructed wooden houses, that aroused to the largest shanty town area of Lisbon, called “Bairro Chinês” (JF MARVILA, 2016).



*Figure 1: New use of the old wine warehouse in the centre of the waterfront area of Marvila (Tim Poggemann, 10.05.2019)*



*Figure 2: Example of real-estate market in Marvila: New constructions vs. abandoned houses (Tim Poggemann, 10.05.2019)*

The 20th century is marked in many cities in Europe as the time of the deindustrialisation and socio-economic disaffection (NEVADO 2015, p. 148). Marvila and Beato affected the deindustrialisation strongly, with a risk of abandoned for the palaces and warehouses and many of the old factories became ruins. To that, the Municipality decided in the 1980s 1990s to end and demolish the shanty houses, to reorganize the city and to rehouse the population in social houses complexes.

The area of Marvila and Beato has nowadays strong social imbalances, which are reinforced by an enormous geographical barrier, because of two train lines, that separate the waterfront area with the social housing area, and built a socio-spatial barrier.

In 1998 due to the EXPO Exhibition, the eastern part close to the Vasco de Gama Bridge, the neighbourhood of "Oriente" was revitalized and transformed, which was an important urban character for the city of Lisbon, also in their position in the European union (PEREIRA 2013, p. 2). The territory between, the parishes of Marvila and Beato, stayed neglected for a while. However, in the last decade, the overload of the city centre, the still affordable housing and the industrial atmosphere in the waterfront area of Marvila, lead to a certain attractiveness for cultural and creative industries.



Figure 3: Oriental Zone of Lisbon, Beato and Marvila (Jornal Arquitectos, 1825 Studio 2018, p. 57)

Examples and experiences in many cities from the last twenty years show, that creative individuals and creative businesses search for suitable living, affordable rents and working conditions. Mostly, due to the deindustrialisation, these can be found in working-class districts, and goes along with abandoned industrial areas and vacant warehouses, which offer great interior spaces for creative usage and low rents (SHAW 2014, p. 1). Further, the urban landscape can be stimulating by creating a specific (industrial) atmosphere, symbolic value and the importance of the industrial heritage, because of its memorable value. As we can see, "place", "community" or "location" play an important role for the growth of the cultural and creative

economy and the most initiatives have been taken at neighbourhood and city level, were hubs, clusters and regions were growing (NEWBIGIN 2017, p. 98).

Because this growth goes along with an economic growth, the importance of the so-called cultural economy and cultural and creative industries have increased enormously, particularly for the urban regeneration policy strategies. A key approach in urban regeneration policies was the connection to culture as a tool of “arts-led regeneration”, and “culture-led regeneration” (GARCÍA 2016, p. 312). “Cities have exhibited a conspicuous capacity both to generate culture in the form of art, ideas, styles and ways of life, and to induce high levels of economic innovation and growth” (Scott, 2000, p. 14).

Culture is an important instrument for competition between cities and to stimulate creativity and innovativeness, create new jobs and support cooperation among actors. As the culture-led regeneration policies stimulates urban and economic growth, it was extended to include the concept of Landry (2000) of the creative cities and further cultural clusters, or so-called urban villages and cultural and creative industries (SLACH AND BORUTA 2012, p. 100).

Although policies try to work a lot with culture, most of the regeneration of abandoned quarters are the scene of “bottom-up regeneration” stimulated by cultural and creative activities, or like Florida names them, the creative class. Florida therefore describes the creative class “as the motor of urban regeneration” (Florida 2002) (PRATT 2016, p. 2). The bottom-up initiatives attract more and more other members of the creative class, which can also lead to high-tech investors (PRATT 2016, p. 4).

Experiences show, that on the political level the best key to success for a sustainable urban regeneration is to address the city’s residents. This can be done by suitable top-down urban policies like the investment into cultural institutions, bohemian

cultural or creative quarters and to encourage urban environment, lively scene, authenticity and diversity. (INSTITUTE OF SPATIAL POLICIES 2011, p. 10).

However Garcia argues, that “the introduction of urban cultural policies has been far slower than the trend towards commodifying urban culture” (GARCÍA 2016, p. 314) and during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the evolution of a global, service-oriented economy has placed culture at the very centre of urban development and has shifted culture, which is in the traditionally way art and heritage, to a “view of culture as an economic asset a commodity with market value and, as such, a valuable producer of marketable city spaces” (GARCÍA 2016, pp. 313–314). This commodification and a disregard of the population who then feel undesired in their own city can cause not only urban regeneration, but is also in risk to lead to gentrification which can be observed in many cities in Europe like Lisbon and all over the world.

The aim of this work gains to collate the general observation of experiences from other cities on the perspective of culture and creativity as a driver for urban regeneration to the waterfront area of Marvila and to reveal the characteristic attributes of the territory. For that, different narratives of actors are mapped and discussed in relation to the planning practices in the area and to the concepts of creative and cultural industries. The main focus are the transformation processes in the area, and the concept of urban regeneration from the political and bottom-up perspective. Therefore, the view of the narratives is used, to understand how they see themselves in the neighbourhood. The attractiveness of the territory, also with the proximity to the river is discussed and associated with the urban regeneration concept.

## Bibliography

- GARCÍA, B. (2016): Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration in Western European Cities. Lessons from Experience, Prospects for the Future. In *Local Economy* 19 (4), pp. 312–326.
- INSTITUTE OF SPATIAL POLICIES (2011): Study: Potentials of creative urban regeneration. Ljubljana.
- BAPTISTA L.S. AND P. MELÂNEO (2018): Lisboa Oriental. In: JORNAL ARQUITECTOS (2018): Epicentros pós-industriais: um futuro a Oriente. J-A #247
- LANDRY, C. (2008): The creative city. A toolkit for urban innovators. 2nd ed. London: Comedia; Earthscan.
- LESTEGÁS, I.; LOIS-GONZÁLEZ, R.-C.; SEIXAS, J. (2018): The global rent gap of Lisbon's historic centre. In *Int. J. SDP* 13 (04), pp. 683–694.
- LISBON CITY COUNCIL MUNICIPAL (2013): Lisbon - Creative Economy.
- MENDES, L. (2017): Gentrificação turística em Lisboa. Neoliberalismo, financeirização e urbanismo austeritário em tempos de pós-crise capitalista 2008-2009. In *Cad. Metrop.* 19 (39), pp. 479–512.
- NEVADO, A. (2015): The Eastern waterfront area of Lisbon: progress, decline and regeneration. In *Revista de Arqitectónica nr. 6. Coimbra.*, pp. 146–152.
- NEWBIGIN, J. (2017): New and changing dynamics. What is the creative economy? In *British council.*, pp. 1–120.
- PEREIRA, P. (2013): O Parque das Nações em Lisboa uma montra da metrópole à beira-Tejo. Lisboa.
- PRATT, A. C. (2016): Creative cities. The cultural industries and the creative class. In *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90 (2), pp. 107–117. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0467.2008.00281.x.
- SHAW, K. (2014): Melbourne's Creative Spaces program. Reclaiming the 'creative city' (if not quite the rest of it). In *City, Culture and Society* 5 (3), pp. 1–9. DOI: 10.1016/j.ccs.2014.07.002.
- SLACH, O.; BORUTA, T. (2012): What Can Cultural and Creative Industries Do for Urban Development? Three Stories from the Postsocialist Industrial City of Ostrava. In *Quaestiones Geographicae* 31 (4), pp. 99–112. DOI: 10.2478/v10117-012-0039-z.