IS HERITAGE OLD FASHIONED? RENEWING IMAGES FOR TOURIST-HISTORIC CITIES

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Resumo

No artigo discute-se o valor do património histórico urbano para as atuais formas de produção e (re)criação dos imaginários turísticos das cidades, atentando nos efeitos do turismo em Coimbra e Salamanca – duas cidades médias da península ibérica. A análise centra-se nos modos como as cidades usam e reatualizam as suas imagens e significados, transformando-os em instrumentos ativos de estratégias de desenvolvimento turístico. Nesta linha de questionamento, avalia-se a importância turística do património e discute-se a criação de novos imaginários enformados pela retórica da criatividade do espaço urbano.

Palavras-chave:

património; promoção local, imagens turísticas, turismo urbano, criatividade.

Abstract

The paper focuses on the value of historic urban heritage to the production and re-creation of cities' tourist imageries, considering the effects of tourism in Coimbra and Salamanca – two Iberian medium-sized cities. It analyses the ways in which cities use and update their images and significations, rendering them active instruments for tourist strategies. The article assesses the tourist importance of heritage and discusses the creation of new imageries shaped by the rhetoric of creativity in urban spaces.

Keywords:

heritage; place promotion; tourist images; urban tourism; creativity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern occidental societies are increasingly societies on the move, shaping the strong transnational interactions that have intensified in the last two decades. These societies are, therefore, marked by striking changes in the experience of mobility and travel. In this context and because of the strong consolidation of western capitalism, tourism has become more and more important, from various angles. In our time, tourist activities are politically seen as a potential factor for urban regeneration and social and economic development of cities. The various processes of creation of urban images and narratives, associated with the development of the tourism sector, are increasingly relevant both for tourist experiences and for the ways in which cities redefine their identities, reorganize themselves physically and symbolically, define their political agendas and, finally, strategically face other cities (Gomes, 2012).

Urban heritage has always been one of the most valuable resources in terms of attracting tourists to cities. Nevertheless, urban marketing strategies based exclusively on the history of places now seem to have been overtaken by new promotional rhetoric involving the diversification of places visited, combined with more creative uses of urban spaces. It is not surprising, therefore, that so many historic and monument cities throughout Europe are turning towards the (re)creation of new tourist imageries.

This article focuses on two cities which appear to be particularly clear examples of these changes – Coimbra and Salamanca, which in recent decades have structured their tourist offer around their history and monuments, in particular their university heritage. However, in both urban contexts attempts by official promoters to diversify the tourism offer and renew the images of the cities are now evident, redeeming or (re)inventing new attractions for local tourism.

Within this analytical framework, tourism may be seen as a creator of an *abyssal line* – in the sense theorised by B. de Sousa Santos (2009) – separating the city on which it confers visibility from the one it makes invisible. In the light of this concept, new images of cities are confronted with those which continue to be promoted by agents in the private sector and an *ecology of knowledges* (Santos, 2006a and 2006b) is proposed to incorporate the various urban tourist imageries.

2. URBAN TOURISM AND HERITAGE

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, tourism markets became segmented and diversified. Alongside mass tourism, different types of offers emerged, and publics and expectations of tourism diversified. A particular type of tourism became important, namely one which unfolds in urban contexts, particularly those with substantial architectural, historic-archaeological and monumental features (Fortuna, 1999). At first on the fringes of mass tourism, cities and their historic centres later became one of the major tourist destinations, generating interest from producers and consumers (Page, 1995).

In the big European cities and, above all, the major cultural capitals, tourism has always been an important element in the economy and the urban environment in the modern age. Its strategic importance has frequently been emphasised by opportunities for social and economic renewal and dynamism, often lost as a result of deindustrialisation processes. However, it is perhaps in the small and medium-sized cities, above all those whose old centres have deteriorated in recent decades, that tourism has become particularly attractive within the context of local development strategies. Mainly in cities with limited economic opportunities, tourism has been seen as a significantly important alternative, supporting hopes of revitalising local economies by taking advantage of, and profiting from, local heritage and cultural resources.

History and temporality have always been major ingredients of cities' appealing qualities. Hence historic and

monumental cities have become one of the main tourist attractions since the 1980s. Due as much to the importance of visual culture as to the significance of the historical factor in these cities, their historic and monumental architecture has become a prime feature of local identity and also the resource that arouses the greatest interest and curiosity amongst tourists. It concerns built historic heritage, but also the socio-cultural, artistic, linguistic and human heritage expressed in diverse ways in the cities of today (Fortuna, 2006). In other words, as a tourist attraction factor, heritage is as much related to physical aspects as a built material heritage, as it is to the socio-cultural aspects of urban contexts, as an immaterial, cultural and symbolic heritage.

Within this process, the market value that has become associated with cities has transformed their past into a present-day product. As C. Fortuna (1999) comments on Coimbra and Évora, in this way everything in cities becomes tradable and commodifiable: the tourism «industry» objectifies and commodifies cities and monuments, nature and landscape, customs and sentiments. As A. Huyssen (2003) also affirms, at least in terms of a European context, the past and the celebration of urban memory have proved valuable resources in promoting tourism in cities.

3. Recreational areas[1] and the two sides of cities

History, heritage, architecture and local cultures have been transformed into increasingly attractive tourism products. This gradual process has led local authorities to invest progressively in the conversion of these elements into profitable tourism resources. L. V. Baptista and J. J. Pujadas (2000) point out that in these kinds of contexts cities are often under pressure from state and private operators aspiring to present them as *welcoming cities* that are open to the world. Within this framework we are witnessing the concept of *recreational territories* or, in other words, places or landscapes which have either been predefined for recreational purposes, or have been the target of an economic reassessment that envisages making them attractive in recreational terms (Baptista, 2005).

Creating *recreational* and *touristifyed* territories involves, in my view, two closely connected aspects: on the one hand, the physical production and reorganisation of urban space and the activities concentrated within it and, on the other hand, the (re)creation of city's imageries and promotional images. The city as an entertainment and spectacle territory emerges from this, as the result of actors working in urban planning, architecture, political decision-making, tourist promotion and many other contexts involving interventions in the urban environment.

Because of the importance conferred on tourist activities in cities, agents in the tourism sector have become increasingly influential in the production of urban space, both indirectly through the influence and pressure they exert over decision-makers and urban technical staff, and more directly by virtue of their symbolic work on the production and diffusion of cities' significations and images.

In the private sector, tour operators emerge as the main link between tourist supply and demand. In addition to playing an important role in establishing places as new tourist destinations, operators also influence tourist patterns of taste and preferences by publicising attractive images of places (Richards, Goedhart and Herrijers, 2001).

Given that cities are not only material or lived spaces, but are also objects of imagination and representation, with their *revered* areas, their *shrines* and, conversely, their *forbidden* areas (Lopes, 2001), the work of this varied group of professionals necessarily includes the selection and foregrounding of certain characteristics and narratives of the city and its history, which implies forgetting or undervaluing other characteristics and other narratives.

1 - Translation from the original Portuguese expression: "territórios lúdicos".

C. Boyer (1995) speaks of a "political economy of *imageability*" to refer to the way in which the strategies and campaigns designed to promote cities produce and disseminate images of places. It is an economy which differentiates, ranks and segregates, to the extent to which, in their merchandising and publicity-orientated selectiveness, the images, as well as the practices involved in the production of the urban space, create a material and symbolic segmentation between "figured" spaces and "disfigured" spaces of the city. The former are urban development spaces, whose planning, design and architecture provide them with a strong visual identity. The latter are abandoned areas in a state of urban decay. Sheltering marginal groups, activities and lifestyles or those which are out of tune with the predominant logic of socioeconomic development, they are forgotten and hidden by the processes which ordain the creation of city images.

This duality allows tourism to be considered an *abyssal* activity, in the sense theorized by B. S. Santos (2009)[2]. If we consider the influence of tourism on the city, we may imagine it as creating a *line* between the tourist city (the city visible to tourists) and the real city (the living city, partly invisible to tourists) (Gomes, 2011a and 2011b). Every tourist imagery implies a certain closeness and a certain distance from the real city. Out of this closeness and distance emerges the tourist city on 'this side of the line', with its *shrines*, famous places, official history, heroes and traditional, architectural and monumental valued assets. This is the city that is presented as authentic, which has tourist value, is easier to sell and has more market appeal. Conversely, on 'the other side of the line', the city which is not seen as sufficiently attractive to be merchandised is hidden. Alternative versions of the history and culture of the city are hidden as invisible elements, distanced by their *forbidden* or forgotten status.

The distinction between the two sides of the city is, firstly, symbolic, to the extent that it is rooted in the promotional tools that spread tourist images and qualify the city as a tourist destination. Postcards, maps and tourist guides, for example, are produced in order to display certain photographs of the city and not others, recount selected excerpts of the history of the place, reveal certain words and not others, and suggest certain possible urban experiences amongst many others. The same may be said of other types of tourist promotional materials, namely that they do not actually describe the city but instead present an idealised city based on its most attractive images.

Secondly, it involves a physical border. E. B. Henriques (1996), referring to Lisbon, draws attention to the fact that not all areas of the city are involved with the same status in the formation of an urban tourist image. Organised tours reveal particular areas of a place and deter tourists from other parts of the city, avoiding certain places to reach tourist spots.

Finally, it is also a political division, since political attention and investments are concentrated in the most *touristifyed* areas of the city. Symbolic and material hierarchies ultimately organise the political discourses and strategies for cities as well, and these translate into distinctive approaches on the part of planners and political decision-makers.

These boundaries are not, however, definitive or irreversible. On the contrary, they are constantly being transformed and re-shape themselves as tourist preferences change too. The volatility of tourism offers and tastes seems to be indeed one of the definitive characteristics of modern tourism. Nowadays tourists are reinventing the actual tourist experience: they are no longer interested only in the tourist attractions that focus more on visual appropriation, but now aim to hear, smell, taste and experience the touches of culture. The *tourist gaze* which J. Urry (1990) refers to, as a predominantly receptive activity, is no longer sufficient to satisfy tourists. This attitude is being replaced by a reflexive stance, in which the tourist is simultaneously the source and the object of contemplation, both consumer and producer, audience and enactor[3].

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2 - According to Santos (2009: 23), there are "radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of 'this side of the line' and the realm of 'the other side of the line'".

3 - This new notion of tourist experience naturally needs to be viewed in relative terms, given that different types of tourist

Throughout recent decades, heritage has been one of the most important resources for attracting tourists. However, this idea, structured around the history of territories only, seems now to be overtaken by new rhetorics, enhanced by increasingly aggressive city marketing strategies. Within this context it can be affirmed that, with regard to tourism, we now find ourselves in an *experience economy* (Richards, 2001: 57) rather than a service economy.

This is precisely what new tourist proposals based on the rhetoric of the creativity of urban space points out, calling for the incorporation of new experiences capable of offering tourists more than a merely passive *tourist gaze*. Adjusting to the sphere of tourism the language and categories that shape the discourse surrounding the vitality of the creative economy, this rhetoric emphasises the need to promote opportunities for tourists to develop their creative potential through engagement and active participation in ways of life and experiences typical of the places visited (Richards and Raymond, 2000).

Even though this refers to a very specific tourist demand, together with other demands that are equally specialised and specifically orientated (towards heritage, artistic scenarios, the ethnic flavour of places, local gastronomy, etc.) they constitute the preferred targets of urban tourism investors, precisely because they correspond in general to the wealthier categories of tourists with greater consumer power. From this perspective, creative tourism appears to be merely one more new version amongst many in which the association between tourism and culture is unfolding (Ferreira e Gomes, 2012). In order to elaborate on this new version, consultants, tourism developers, urban planners and marketeers are seeking to reinvent distinctiveness for cities, which ultimately alter the frontiers between the tourist city and the real city, between the "figured" spaces and "disfigured" spaces of the city. In the attempt to reposition cities within the tourism markets, many of these professionals are now rebalancing the historic and heritage value of cities and assessing other symbolic investment potentials.

4. THE VALUE OF HERITAGE AND NEW TOURIST IMAGES OF CITIES

The cases of Coimbra, in Portugal, and Salamanca, in Spain, point towards these strategic changes in the ways cities are being promoted. The importance of tourism is especially evident in the Spanish case, given that, since 2001, the country has been the second biggest tourist destination in the world and, since 2004, the country which generates the second largest income from international tourism. In Portugal the economic and socio-cultural importance of tourism is also well recognised, together with the strategic role that has been attributed to it in strategies and policies for the development of territories. What links the two countries is not only the importance which tourism has acquired in their recent history, or the similarities between their respective profiles in the international tourism market but also the flows of tourists who move between both countries, the circulation and mimicry of tourism development models within the Peninsula and, with regard to cultural and urban tourism, the competition between Iberian cities to attract Iberian and international tourists.

Coimbra and Salamanca are both cities endowed with a long history and university tradition: the former is documented as having over two thousand years of history and is one of the oldest cities n the country; the latter has approximately two thousand seven hundred years of history. Both were founded as primitive sites on the hills overlooking the Mondego and Tormes rivers, respectively. They were occupied by the Romans, Visigoths and Muslims before being reconquered by the Christians.

An important period in the history of the two cities occurred later, in 1218 in Salamanca and in 1290

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experiences will correspond to different tourist segments. Even so, from the point of view of structuring and organising tourism, this is a trend that merits consideration (Ferreira e Gomes, 2012).

in Coimbra: the creation of the *Estudos Gerais* which later gave rise to the Universities of Salamanca and Coimbra. From very early times the two institutions were centres of attraction for thousands of students from various corners of the world. Both also contributed towards consolidating and spreading the Portuguese and Spanish languages, becoming important European centres for innovation and the production of knowledge. During the last three or four decades, the tourism promoted in Coimbra and Salamanca, which is structured around the history of these cities with special emphasis on their monuments and enhanced by the importance of the university institutions – both in terms of the historical and monumental dimensions and the rich cultural trajectory of the universities – seems to have been a successful formula. This is indicated by certain data[4] on the experiences and preferences of tourists and visitors[5] to these cities.

Amongst these tourists, prior knowledge of Salamanca seems due, above all, to the university and the city's set of monuments[6]. The status of Salamanca as a World Heritage City, although less well-known, also appears to be an important factor in previous knowledge of the city[7]. In Coimbra, the University and its monuments, as well as the Portugal dos Pequenitos theme park emerge as the places which the majority of tourists have already heard about[8]. They are also the group of places which are most frequently visited in each of the cities[9], shaping a tourist experience that is very much centred on the historic and monumental aspects of the cities, particularly in relation to the two universities.

It is perhaps due to their awareness of this excessive concentration of tourists on a limited number of monuments that the official tourism developers in both cities[10] are now investing in diversifying the existing offer, pursuing the promotion of new experiences that are not limited to the traditional contemplation of the monumental heritage.

The official tourism portal for Salamanca states that the city, in addition to dedicating itself to teaching the Spanish language, is turning to cinema, since "Salamanca has perfect scenery for making films"[11]. It is also an ideal city for conferences, being "by far the best choice" (Turismo y Comunicación de Salamanca, 2006). Here, tourists can add another dimension to their stay with a round of golf since:

"The city has expanded its offer without renouncing either its charm or the riches that have earned it these

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4 - The general data presented here to characterise the experiences of tourists in Coimbra is taken from a recent study (Fortuna, 2009) entitled "Fluxos Turísticos no Centro Histórico de Coimbra", developed at the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra by the Cities and Urban Cultures Research Group. The data for Salamanca was taken from the annual publication by the Turismo y Comunicación de Salamanca, S.A.U. company (2009) on the evolution, profiles and behaviour of tourists in 2008.

5 - It is worth stating that, in general terms, the socio-demographic profiles of tourists in the two cities are very similar, mainly featuring young people up to the age of 30 (with a small but significant sample aged 30 to 40), who have high levels of education and work in intellectual, scientific or technical professions.

6 - According to the most recent survey of tourists (Turismo y Comunicación de Salamanca, S.A.U., 2009), 95.4% of Spanish tourists and 80.8% of foreigners already knew of the University, whilst 73% of the former and 70.3% of the latter knew about some of the monuments in the city, such as the New and Old Cathedrals.

7 - According to the same data, 62.3% of the Spanish and 45.1% of the foreigners stated that they already knew about this title before visiting the city.

8 - 61.1% of the tourists already knew of the University, a percentage which includes 37,6% who stated that they knew of the Joanine Library and 17.7% the Sala dos Actos, both of which belong to the University group of monuments. 62,4% of the tourists already knew of Portugal dos Pequenitos.

9 - Specifically, the Plaza Mayor, the New and Old Cathedrals, the Casa das Conchas, the University and Pátio das Escolas Menores and the Roman Bridge in Salamanca; the University, Joanine Library, Old Cathedral, Santa Cruz Church and Arco de Almedina in Coimbra.

10 - I refer, in the case of Coimbra, to Turismo de Coimbra, Empresa Municipal and, in the case of Salamanca, to Turismo y Comunicación de Salamanca, S.A.U. These are both institutions which promote tourism and are directly linked to the local government. The information presented refers to items promoted in the official portals of these two companies: http://www.turismodecoimbra.pt/ and http://www.salamanca.es.

11 - Translation from the original Spanish expression: "Salamanca es un escenario perfecto para el desarrollo de rodajes"

titles. Family, cultural, language, gastronomic and conference tourism are some of the markets that have opened up in the city in recent years. The city's latest challenge is to turn Salamanca into a leading golf tourist destination[12]" (Turismo y Comunicación de Salamanca, 2006).

In Coimbra, in turn, according to the official portal promoting the city, tourists may now opt for nature tourism, with guided tours of the Choupal National Woods, boat trips on the River Mondego or routes which "allow you to discover the valuable natural heritage of Coimbra, consisting of a varied group of places from the point of view of ecology and scenery[13]" (Turismo de Coimbra, 2008). In addition, it is also possible to sample the new religious tours in the city, exploring the life and work of Sister Lúcia, discovering the cultural values associated to Queen St. Isabel, or finding out about the life of St. Anthony. Finally, in addition to a "Walk into History" through the city, tourists also may opt for a Themed Trip dedicated to Miguel Torga, or explore "Contemporary Coimbra", visiting "the most innovative and contemporary elements recently added to the city's heritage", with a special emphasis on works by designers of recognised national and international merit (*idem*).

Both cases involve the creation of new tourist images that make use of more than just the university and monumental heritage to promote the cities. This process incorporates some of the formulas from the rhetoric of creative tourism, not only through the diversification and integration of other distinctive tourist attractions, but also by opening up new forms of participative and experience tourism.

This does not mean that urban heritage is no longer responsible for attracting many tourists to cities. However, according to the challenges launched by creative tourism agendas, those heritages may be enriched, innovating the experience of those who visit the cities. This new interpretation of tourism thus leads to a rebalancing of the value of local historical narratives in the promotion of successful tourism agendas for the cities. It seems that nowadays, if cities do not update their tourist strategies they are constantly at risk of exhausting their attractive potential. And it seems evident that the formulas for success promoted by the rhetoric of creative tourism, being effective or not, are increasingly fuelling the work of the official city promoters.

5. Tourist imageries for Coimbra and Salamanca

How will this work of renewing tourist images of cities translate in terms of the promotional work carried out by agents in the private sector? In other words, will these new images of Coimbra and Salamanca, (re)created by local state promoters be incorporated into the promotional discourse of the private sector tour operators? As a means of responding to this question, it is worth looking first of all at a *site* that is peculiar to the construction of urban narratives (Barreira, 2005) – guidebooks, which present the city through recommendations to visit particular places, ensuring that there are no detours from the planned mode of exploration.

In the *American Express Guide*[14] for Portugal, Coimbra is still "the old university city" which is worth exploring and is a good connecting point for other places in the Beiras region. It emphasizes the fact that the city was the birthplace of six kings of Portugal, was the capital until 1256 and is the site of the oldest university in the country. The description of the city highlights the entrance to the old city, the student *repúblicas* (residences)

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12 - Translation from the original Spanish text: "La ciudad ha ido ampliando su oferta sin renunciar ni a su encanto ni a la riqueza que le hicieron merecedora de esos títulos. El turismo familiar, cultural, idiomático, gastronómico o de congresos son parte de los mercados a los que la ciudad se ha ido abriendo en los últimos años. Convertir a Salamanca en destino preferente del turismo de golf es el nuevo reto de la ciudad".

13 - Translation from the original Portuguese text: "dão a conhecer o valioso património natural de Coimbra, constituído por um conjunto de locais diversificados sob o ponto de vista ecológico e paisagístico".

14 - As part of my PhD research, I am analysing various Portuguese, Spanish and other guidebooks but as an example for this text it would appear sufficient to analyse the narratives of the *American Express Guide* as it is one of the best-selling publications in international terms.

and the two cathedrals which stand in the shadows of the University. On the other side of the Mondego, two legendary figures are emphasised: Queen St. Isabel and Inês de Castro. In addition, there is the challenge to "Discover Coimbra", a text which begins by drawing attention to the affection that the inhabitants of Coimbra sustain by the Mondego, the "river of the poets", and it is supplemented with brief descriptions of eight monuments in the city. The University merits its own special text, explaining its history and its relationship to the student traditions.

The Spanish version of the guide, in turn, begins by affirming, in the chapter on the Castile and Leon region, that "at the heart of the monumental city of Salamanca stands the oldest university in the Peninsula"[15] (Inman, 2009: 347). In fact, according to the text of the guidebook, "the great university city of Salamanca contains the best collection in Spain of Renaissance and Plateresque architecture"[16] (*idem*: 358). The description of the urban area emphasises the fact that all the tourist attractions lie within an area that is compact enough to be explored on foot. Despite describing eleven monuments, the guidebook states that a visit to the university, the Plaza Mayor and the two cathedrals is indispensable (*idem*: 360). Moreover, these three features are the only ones to merit the title of *attractions*.

Secondly, it is worth looking at the cities' images that are promoted by a group of private operators working in the national and international markets, since it is also, and maybe above all, here that the images that identify and qualify the cities as destinations on the tourism markets can effectively be found[17].

In the texts of these tourism programmes, Coimbra is presented mainly as a *university city*. These materials inform the reader that this is not a city with a common educational infrastructure, but is instead an *illustrious university city*. Frequent references to the fact that the university is still functioning, thus invoking the image of a living heritage, are also interesting. Salamanca, in turn, emerges in these programmes as one of the first university cities in Europe. It is presented as a *historical and monumental city*. It is its historic centre which merits attention, due to the Baroque and Plateresque architecture, of which the Plaza Mayor is an interesting example. In either case, both in the guidebooks and in the texts of the tourist programmes, the two cities appear to remain simply historic university cities and there is no explicit reference to the new images in which the local state promoters are investing.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any tourist imagery involves proximities and distancing with regard to the real city. This being the case, neither the images advertised by local developers, nor those publicised by tour operators correspond entirely to the real cities, which amount to their inhabitants and users in general. Even so, certain interesting discrepancies appear to exist between these various imageries.

Firstly, there appears to be an imbalance between the images promoted by the official agents – the renewed and therefore more dynamic images – and those conveyed in guidebooks and tourist programmes – the traditional and therefore more static images which continue to place special emphasis on the university and

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15 - Translation from the Portuguese text: no "coração da monumental cidade de Salamanca fica a mais antiga universidade da Península".
16 - Translation from the Portuguese text: "a grande cidade universitária de Salamanca tem o melhor conjunto espanhol de arquitectura renascentista e plateresca".
17 - This analysis is based on a set of programmes organised by tour operators from various countries which includes Coimbra and Salamanca, either as stopping-off points on a more extensive tour or as guides to the areas or even as specific programmes for one of the cities. Initially only programmes for Coimbra were gathered, as part of my Masters' dissertation, involving a collection of 150 texts. This has now been extended to my PhD research and includes the cities of Braga, Coimbra, Santiago de Compostela and Salamanca. The second collection contains already approximately 300 texts. A detailed description of the Coimbra programmes can be found in Gomes (2008).

the history of the cities. This imbalance seems to confirm that, in fact, cities are nowadays experiencing very strong competitive pressures and that, within this context, tourism – one of the major industries in the 21st century as it is frequently described in political and technical discourses – is attached with a regenerative potential in terms of their economies and social fabric. Given this, cities' official promoters cannot risk standardisation or stagnation of the local tourism appeal and the rhetoric of creativity therefore enters the promotional agendas – in Coimbra and Salamanca replacing the *passive tourist gaze* at monuments and contemplation of the university with contact with nature, sports or the discovery of religious features.

Secondly, if this imbalance is acknowledged, it would appear to make 'the other side of the line' in the tourist city promoted by the private operators larger than the tourist city now being promoted by the official agents. In other words, by integrating new elements into tourism, the tourist city, i.e. the one visible to tourists and visitors, has been extended and enriched. Elements that had previously been on 'the other side of the line' move over to 'this side of the line' – examples being the literary and religious elements in Coimbra and the teaching of Spanish in Salamanca. Moreover, new elements have now been created that have come to constitute new tourist imageries of the cities – such as golfing and conferences in Salamanca and nature tours in Coimbra.

The question at stake here is that of the power of tourism in terms of re-signifying places, to the extent that, acting on the history and memory of the city, the *absences* and *presences* generated by the *abyssal line* of tourism re-signify the identity of the city. The incorporation of other discourses within tourist imagery through an *ecology of knowledges* (Santos, 2006a and 2006b) – from which alternatives to the dominant discourse may *emerge* – establishes the possibility of reducing the circumscribed and selective nature of the tourist city. An *ecology of knowledges* would enable several versions of the *historic*, *university* and *monumental* city to emerge, together with many other versions of the city.

Through the incorporation of other plural elements of urban histories, cultures and traditions, and by the inclusion of different urban spaces, it is possible to imagine a plural and diverse tourist city with which the inhabitants of the city would develop a stronger sense of identification. Moreover, an *ecology of knowledges* would have equivalent importance on a political level, since through the incorporation of new tourist sites the terrain for economic and financial investments by local authorities would be equally enlarged – through the symbolic and material enlargement of the *tourist city*.

Even from the perspective of the tourism market, an *ecology of knowledges* would result in positive effects, given that the preferences of tourists and the logic of the sector are not static. As one tourist experience rapidly loses interest and is replaced by another, the successive incorporation of new sites, new elements and new attractions is a condition for success for a city which wants to establish itself as a tourist city.

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