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*Keywords:* *hospitality in the city, cultural manifestation, public space, sociability, commensality, ethnic tourism.*

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# Cultural Manifestation and Ethnic Tourism: Hospitality in the Urban Public Space

## Manifestação Cultural E Turismo Étnico: Hospitalidade No Espaço Público Da Cidade

## Manifestación Cultural Y Turismo Étnico: Hospitalidad En El Espacio Público De La Ciudad

Fabio Molinari Bitelli [α] & Sênia Regina Bastos [σ]

*Abstract-* Considered an ethnic neighborhood, boosted by the occupation of Italian immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Bela Vista (also known as Bexiga) is the scene of cultural manifestations that expresses the vitality in the use of public space, becoming a tradition of the city of São Paulo. The neighborhood as a place of hospitality, gathers a set of ten cultural events that were catalogued over the years 2015 and 2016. This article focuses on one of those cultural events, the Italian festivity of Nossa Senhora Achiropita (Our Lady Achiropita). A celebration that by 2018 had been taking place for 92 years. Its aspects and dynamics were analyzed in order to identify the practices of sociability and commensality - treated in this study as dimensions of hospitality - as well as the potential of the neighborhood for ethnic tourism. Characterized as an exploratory research, the methodology of oral history was conducted via interviews with active participants or residents of the neighborhood, and through on site observation and bibliographical and documentary surveys. Among the results, the festive vocation of the neighborhood stands out as it shelters ethnic groups as well as cultural, popular and spontaneous manifestations, which are the locus of hospitality and touristic practices.

*Keywords: hospitality in the city, cultural manifestation, public space, sociability, commensality, ethnic tourism.*

*Resumo-* Considerado um bairro étnico, impulsionado pela ocupação de imigrantes italianos ao final do século XIX e início do XX, o Bexiga é palco de manifestações culturais que expressam a vitalidade no uso do espaço público, se transformam em tradição e impulsionam o turismo na cidade de São Paulo. Tratado como lugar de hospitalidade, o bairro reúne um conjunto de dez manifestações culturais inventariadas ao longo dos anos de 2015 e 2016. Desse conjunto, foi selecionada para discussão, a festa italiana da Nossa Senhora Achiropita, que em 2018 completou 92 anos. Analisou-se seus aspectos e dinâmicas com o objetivo de identificar as práticas da sociabilidade e comensalidade – tratadas nesse estudo como dimensões da hospitalidade – bem como o potencial do bairro para o turismo étnico. Caracterizada como uma pesquisa exploratória, utilizou-se da metodologia da história oral por meio de entrevistas com participantes ativos de tais manifestações ou moradores do bairro, observação in loco e levantamentos bibliográfico e documental. Dentre os resultados, destaca-se a vocação festiva do bairro ao abrigar diversidade étnica, bem como nas práticas culturais, populares e espontâneas, essas como lócus da prática turística e da hospitalidade na cidade.

*Palavras-Chave: hospitalidade na cidade, manifestação cultural, espaço público, sociabilidade, comensalidade, turismo étnico.*

*Resumen-* Considerado un barrio étnico, impulsado por la ocupación de inmigrantes italianos a fines del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX, el barrio de Bexiga es el escenario de manifestaciones culturales que expresan la vitalidad en el uso del espacio público, se convierten en una tradición e impulsan el turismo en la ciudad. de Sao Paulo Considerado como un lugar de hospitalidad, el vecindario reúne un conjunto de diez eventos culturales inventariados durante los años 2015 y 2016. De este conjunto, fue seleccionado para discusión, la fiesta italiana de Nuestra Señora Achiropita, que en 2018 completó 92 años. Se analizaron sus aspectos y dinámicas para identificar las prácticas de sociabilidad y comensalidad, tratadas en este estudio como dimensiones de la hospitalidad, así como el potencial del vecindario para el turismo étnico. Caracterizada como una investigación exploratoria, la metodología de la historia oral se utilizó a través de entrevistas con participantes activos de tales manifestaciones o residentes del barrio, observación in loco y encuestas bibliográficas y documentales. Entre los resultados, destacamos la vocación festiva del barrio al albergar la diversidad étnica, así como las prácticas culturales, populares y espontáneas, como el lugar de práctica turística y de hospitalidad urbana.

*Palabras Clave: hospitalidad en la ciudad, manifestación cultural, espacio público, sociabilidad, comensalidad, turismo étnico.*

## I. Introduction

Diverse are the attractions by which the Bexiga neighborhood in the city of São Paulo is considered a touristic destination. It receives a significant flow of visitors by virtue of: the Italian canteens located on May 13th Street, the antiques markets or the events at Dom Orione Square, the theaters, the centenarian bakeries that offer Italian

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goods or, most recently, barbershops, the cultural spaces, and the samba on the street and at nightclubs.

The territory occupied by black people and immigrants, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, it contextualized into the urban reality of the city of São Paulo that was already emerging like the metropolis that is today. In their floodplains (Saracura River) lived former black slaves and later, with the subdivision of the land and some essential urban development, received a large contingent of immigrants (mainly Italians). Over the years, Bexiga (or Bixiga) became known as Bela Vista, and even it underwent various transformations, it maintained much of its architectonic heritage and cultural diversity, through the presence of ethnic groups and the festive traditions supported by the cultural manifestations that take place within its limits. Although the scope of this study does not dwell on the analysis of the migrants, especially those from the northeastern region of Brazil, it is important to mention that they also participated in the constitution of the neighborhood by forming networks and nucleus within the community.

As such, there is not an official delimitation of the territory called Bexiga. It is inserted in the Bela Vista district that integrates the subprefecture of Sé and shares it with other seven districts[1]. It has the highest demographic density in the city of São Paulo (69.460 inhabitants in 2.6 km2 or 26.7 inhabitants/m2), being the third smaller neighborhood in area and the first largest in number of inhabitants (IBGE, 2010). Its architecture is notable; according to the study of the *Programa Patrimônio e Referências Culturais* (the Heritage Program and Cultural References) carried out in the Sub-prefectures by the Departamento de Patrimônio Histórico (Department of Historical Heritage; DPH, by its initials in Portuguese) of the city of São Paulo, more than 675 assets between isolated buildings and architectonical complexes were demolished by the *Conselho Municipal de Preservação do Patrimônio Histórico, Cultural e Ambiental* (Municipal Council for Preservation of Historical, Cultural, and Environmental Heritage; CONPRESP, by its initials in Portuguese) of the city of São Paulo, in accordance with Resolution number 22/2002[2] of December 10th, 2002.

Each year, its streets become a scenario of cultural and popular manifestations that provide vitality to the neighborhood by attracting residents, visitors and tourists alike. Some of those cultural manifestations are: the celebration, in one of the main streets of the neighborhood, of the anniversary of the city of São Paulo on January 25th; with more diligence, also at the beginning of the year, the Samba School Vai-Vai instead of carrying out its practices in a shed, as is usual in the other Paulista schools, it does so on one of its three-way intersections; the Block Parade of Esfarrapados, the oldest one in the city, visits the street each Monday of Carnival; and during every weekend of August, two blocks on the May 13th Street and stretches of the Luis Barreto and São Vicente Streets are closed for the festivity that honors an Italian saint from the Calabria region, Our Lady Achiropita, that is the object of this article.

This study attempts to identify the practices of sociability and commensality in the festivities of Our Lady Achiropita, as to dimensions of hospitality, and as a tourist attraction, through the ethnic characteristics of the festivity and the neighborhood. The article argues that from the optic of hospitality (LASHLEY, 2004; CAMARGO, 2004) and tourism (BOULLÓN, 1997; VERA, 1997) the relations of the stranger/unknown (in the figure of the visitor and/or tourist) with the community enable the practices of sociability in public spaces (SIMMEL, 1983; FRÚGOLI JR., 1995, 2007). Regarding the commensality, Selwyn (2004) and Boutaud (2011) were used as reference, when investigating the ethnic and cultural character of the food offering, whose trade is the main tourist attraction, not only at the festivities, but as a result of the large tradition in the offer of Italian restaurants there established, influence, that allowed to emphasize on the features of ethnic tourism (HALL & RATH, 2007; COLLINS, 2007) also as theoretical referential.

An in-depth analysis of the Our Lady Achiropita festivity is further justified because in addition to his relevance and tradition, there are other factors present such as: longevity (in 2018 took place the 92nd edition); time of occurrence (it lasts from four to five consecutive weekends); number of visitors/tourists (around 20.000 people per weekend); the participation of the residents of the neighborhood, by involving them both in the production and fruition of the festivity; and finally variety of foods influenced by Italian culinary.

In the development of the research, besides the field observation, oral story was used as a methodology, by interviewing subjects who witnessed and/or experienced events, conjunctures, institutions, lifestyle and other aspects of the contemporary history of the neighborhood, in this way "a close relation with categories such as biography, oral tradition, memory [...]" (ALBERTI, 2013: 25) takes place. The information gathered in the interviews was added to the historical source, distributed over the text, which helped fill some gaps in social-historic information. Photographic records, complemented the field visits and supported the occupation of the public space in the manifestation investigated, as the locus of the practices of commensality and sociability, as well as allowing the visualization and identification of the symbolic

[1] The Subprefectureof Sé integratesthedistricts Bela Vista, Sé, República, Bom Retiro, Cambuci, Consolação, Liberdade and Santa Cecília.

[2] The resolution that provides the area, the list of properties and assets demolished is available at: http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/upload/49c99_22_T_Bairro_da_Bela_Vista.pdf. Access on 5/07/2018.



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characteristics of this touristic-cultural space (BOULLÓN, 1997; VERA, 1997).

The fieldwork focused on the 89th and 90th editions of the Our Lady Achiropita festivity, period during which people involved in the organization were contacted, benefiting the collection of data related to the origin and evolution of the manifestation. The interviews, analyzed qualitatively, were recorded in audio, lined in a semi-structured screenplay, with an exclusive focus on the festivity of Archiropita, conducted with the representative of Public Relations for this festivity in 2015 and a resident who had lived in the neighborhood for about forty years by 2016, whose own contribution was based on the memory of his experiences.

## II. The Italian Immigration and The Origin of the Bexiga Neighborhood

Located in the middle of other neighborhoods of previous urbanization, its initial confinement between marshy and river floodplains fields, whose rural properties were used as lodging, contributed to its late emergence. Propriety of the Portuguese Antonio Bexiga, the large area of farms or the fields of Bexiga "had as limits the lowlands of the Piques, from the current Saint Amaro Street extending to the proximity of Consolação on one side and Brigadeiro [Luis Antonio] on the other, prolonging to the spur of the current Paulista Avenue" (LUCENA, 1984: 29).

The origin of the neighborhood converges with the period of great expansion of the city of São Paulo. The division into lots goes as far back as 1878, transforming a floodplain that served as hunting place, a refugee for fugitive slaves and residence of infected people with smallpox, into a neighborhood. Between the proprieties set there, Bexiga stood out as an important landing for troopers, by the way that it connected the capital to the city of Santos (LANNA, 2011; LUCENA, 1983; MARZOLA, 1985).

At the end of the 19th century, issues such as the internal abolitionist pressure and the high costs in the slave trade between provinces, made slave labor unviable, stimulating the use of free workers. Coffee growers from Sao Paulo, arguing the lack of skills presented by the nationals, opted to introduce foreigners. At that moment, Italy, immersed in an economic crisis, seemed prepared to support this migratory movement, also stimulated by the Brazilian government, which pressured by coffee farmers, subsidized the arrival of large-scale European immigrants (ROLNIK, 1994):

> In 1881, the government began paying half the transportation costs, from Europe to the farms; in 1884, fully reimbursed the farmers for their payment of tickets and, in 1885, three years before abolition, began directly to subsidize the cost of transportation of immigrants. "[...] the fear generated by the epidemic threat, especially yellow fever, drastically reduced the number of immigrants. Between 1890 and 1899, about 120 thousand immigrants arrived in Brazil each year. Between 1900 and 1904, annual inflows fell to 50,000 (ROLNIK, 1994: 38-39 – free translation).

The scenario of immigration in Brazil in the late 19th and early 20th centuries establishes a unique moment in national history: the end of slavery, the decline of the monarchy, the beginning of the Republic and the strong settlement of urban centers[3]. The urban expansion converted the city of São Paulo, induced directly or indirectly by the outburst of coffee plantations, into a city of immigrants. Where according to demographic data from the early 19th century, "the black and mulatto element, slave or free, constituted approximately 54% of the local population" (FERNANDES, 2008: 36-37). Even after the introduction of the liberated black in the city of São Paulo, Fernandes (2008: 33 – free translation) still stood out the European immigrant:

> [...] the freedman faced the competition of the European immigrant, who did not fear degradation by confronting the black and absorbed, therefore, the best opportunities for free and independent work (even the most modest ones, such as shine shoes, sell newspapers or vegetables, transport fish or other utilities, explore the trinket trade, etc.).

Despite the preexisting occupation of blacks, it was the Italians who most actively imposed their habits and culture in building the lifestyle in the neighborhood. The historical entry of Italian immigrants in the city of São Paulo comprehended large numbers; the most intense time of arrivals was between the years of 1886 and 1899, the period in which the group came to represent 57% of all the immigrants who contributed in the country (TRUZZI, 2016: 21). However, the vast majority went inland of Sao Paulo, to the expanding coffee plantations, mainly in the west of São Paulo, a region served by the Paulista and Mogiana railroads, responsible for the output of the production to the port of the city of Santos.

Other periods of significant waves of immigration occurred during the first and second post-war period[4]. The entry of 44.148 Italian immigrants into the temporal cut of 1947-1980 was presented and analyzed in the research carried out by Salles and Santos (2011). They were inserted into the labor force in urban activities mainly due to the industrial modernization of the city of São Paulo (with emphasis on the automobile, electronic, chemical and pharmaceutical sectors).

[3] The abolition of slavery occurred in 1888 and the Proclamation of the Republic the following year.

[4] Between 1900 and 1949, nearly 500,000 Italian immigrants were registered in the city of São Paulo (TRUZZI, 2016).



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In terms of the regions of origin and cities of preference of the immigrants, Trento (1989: 59-60) clarifies in his study on Italians in Brazil that the greater participation of those who emigrated without a family and settled down in the urban occupations came from three regions of the south of Italy (Campania, Basilicata, and Calabria). They opted to stay preferentially in that territory, conferring on the neighborhood an identity resulting from the activities performed, because this population rooted the old tradition of seasonal displacements to work. Lanna (2011: 120) highlighted three characteristics, which particularly influenced the construction and fixation in the neighborhood: (i) the fact that they did not belong to the contingent of subsidized immigrants dissociates them to rural coffee production; (ii) the majority of the immigrants were young men who traveled alone. However, "traveling alone" did not nullify family participation in the decision, proof and consequence of this were the links kept with the country of origin and the flow of future emigration: and (iii) the thousands of Italians who went to Bexiga, constituted a diversified group, from farm workers to smallholders. It is important to emphasize that despite these diversities, they tended to migrate to cities and regions where they would find members of their communities of origin (JENTSCH, 2007).

As they settled down quickly, the immigrants contributed to the rapid formation of immovable heritage indicating that they arrived in Brazil with some financial resources and because of this, "their presence can be considered as an aggregating element and referential in the creation of hosting networks for the thousands of immigrants who arrived in São Paulo at the beginning of the 20th century, and that would make Bexiga an Italian neighborhood, a Calabrian neighborhood" (LANNA, 2011: 122 – free translation).

The format of dwelling was detailed by Lucena (2013) with the use of mansions, built since 1914, later subdivided into numerous residences:

> The ground floor was reserved for the owner of the building, the lower and upper floors and enlarged on the bottom were intended for family members and descendants. Thus, the room numbers have been multiplied; the Italian-style mansions extended their functions, giving origin to the tenements. The Italian immigrant, to get an increase in the budget or to improve his survival, rented some rooms in his house. Therefore, many properties were born as tenements and others became over time in this type of housing [...] (LUCENA, 2013: 84-85 – free translation).

It is important to point out that the tenement, as a housing style, was never a choice, but perhaps one of the few possibilities, considering the difficult condition of the urban life for some social groups. The neighborhood resists still by maintaining the format of detached housing, which directly influence the way of life, through the appropriation of the public space for private use and realization of its cultural manifestations.

## III. Hospitality and Public Space

The concept of hospitality has been found in certain mythologies and religions and it converges in the practices associated with the acts of receiving, hosting, feeding, and entertaining. When Montandon (2011: 31 – free translation) describes hospitality as "a way of living together, governed by rules, rites and laws", he listed some statutes for the relation between visitor and host; the time of hospitality is, detailed and indicated as a series of scenes "that included, among others, arriving, reception, taking a seat, feasting, saying the name and nationality, lying down, bathing, gift-giving, goodbye".

The practice of hospitality occupied a central role in pre-industrial societies. Therefore, the failure in the duty of welcoming neighbors and outsiders was socially disapproved (LASHLEY, 2004). With unwritten laws and implicit ethics, "hospitality is an interpersonal communication process, charged with non-verbal or verbal content that constitutes ritual formulas that vary from one social group to another, but which in the end are just read as desire/refusal of human bonding." For its part, the ethical aspect is reinforced when it is used to minimize or eliminate aggression/hostility; in other words, a kind of appeasement ritual.

The domains where hospitality occurs are classified and presented by Lashley (2004: 5-6 – free translation), using the social, private and commercial instances: the first one, the social "considers the social scenarios where the hospitality and the acts related to the condition of hospitality take place along with the impacts of social forces over the food production and consumption, drinks and accommodation", the private instances are related to the offers in the domestic field, inside the home, densifying the relationship between host and guest and the last one, the commercial, refers to the hospitality offering as an economic activity and includes the activities of the private and public sectors".

Camargo (2004: 52) already classifies the spaces of hospitality through four categories: domestic, public, commercial and virtual. Where the public category "occurs due to the right to come and go and in consequence, of being assisted in its expectations of human interaction, thus being able to be understood both in the daily routine which privileges residents, as in the tourist dimension." Therefore, when considering the occurrence in the public space, this is a matter of interest for the analysis of the cultural manifestation, the social space of the public category (CAMARGO, 2004), or the social domain (LASHLEY, 2004).

When defining hospitality "as a privileged mode of interpersonal meeting by the attitude of the host toward the other", Baptista (2002: 157 – free translation) reinforces that hospitality has strong traits of human



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subjectivity when it refers to the reality out of itself, things of the world, nature or object, can be translated into knowledge, feeding or possession. Thus points to the importance of the place where it occurs. Baptista (2008: 6-7 – free translation) explains that "places of hospitality are places of urbanity, civic courtesy, responsibility and kindness. These are our places that invite the entrance of the other in the figure of offering for host, refuge, food, help or comfort". When the value and identity of places are not in their material potentialities, but in the way they are appropriated, perceived, enjoyed and shared, these places of hospitality are places of civility open to the other, unknown, strange/foreign.

The investigations related to urban hospitality rely on the fact of the existence of a place for hospitality, which fundamentally occurs, at the moment of the reception and in the physical space. Therefore, the cultural manifestations in the public spaces are understood as a result from the need of sociability and also as a consequence of the reception, such a scenario of a "[...] shared urban culture, founded on collective values, a culture that involves living with the opposites, involves diversity, exchanges and, more than anything else, the enjoyment of a city that has urban space as an active background perspective" (GRINOVER, 2013: 20 – free translation).

In approaching the importance to be given to the public space, Severini (2014: 89 – free translation) inquiries into who is the urban host, since it requires a thorough reasoning of the hospitality; and suggests to understand its characteristics and to know the owner of the space: "Theoretically the space of urban hospitality is the public space".

This effort to transform public spaces into places of hospitality requires careful attention not only to get conventional or artificial hospitality, such as that experienced in commercial places, but authentic hospitality which is essential to the human relationship and that favors the creation of links by awakening other dimensions such as sociability.

By verifying that the growth of metropolises is no longer achieved only by concentric enlargements and pointing to increasingly peripheral urban territories, it is possible to predict that certain spatial and functional forms may contribute to the destruction of the city's image as a public space. The decreasingly public character of these urban spaces collaborates so that they are less and less visualized as spaces of belonging or conviviality. In this sense, Grinover (2009: 11-12) states that the squares or gardens are no spaces for social interaction whose dynamic mechanisms are not anymore controlled by its actors: a street is no more a place, but only a link. The public spaces cease to be not only the formally compelling element of urban fabric but also their structuring role in the city's activities and social interactions.

The advances in the use of the public space in the city of São Paulo point out to its resumption by the residents, collaborating and potentiating the practice of hospitality in the city, as a tourist attraction and leisure practice as illustrated in previous studies by Bitelli & Bastos (2018). This is a trend also in the big Latin cities, such as Mexico City, Buenos Aires and Bogotá, according to the agency Edelman Significa, which released a market research, pursued with its own methodology and applied in the cities of four countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico), with the aim of drawing a Latin American profile. Realized in 2016, the research related to the city of São Paulo were compiled in a material called Cultural Connections São Paulo[5] which is available for public consultation. He cited, among the main results, the movements of the reoccupation of public spaces, attracting more and more people in search of leisure as well as cyclists or demonstrators of political and social causes.

After a one-year test period (between 2015 and 2016), one of the most frequented and well-known public spaces in the city of São Paulo, Paulista Avenue, began to be closed on Sundays, between 9 am and 5 pm, for exclusive use in favor of leisure, sociability and tourism. The action was the result of the *Projeto Ruas Abertas* (Open Streets Project) of the Municipal Prefecture of São Paulo, which also covered other areas of the city and discussed the decision through public consultation of the city's residents.

> The program aims to open to pedestrians and cyclists, streets and avenues of great relevance in the perimeter from 1 to 3 kilometers, on Sundays and holidays, from 10am to 5pm, as a way to promote a better occupation of the public space and expand the spaces of leisure in the city of São Paulo (SÃO PAULO, 2015).

Another space destined for public use is the Minhocão Park, thus renamed the elevated highway President João Goulart (formerly elevated highway Costa e Silva), an expressway completed in 1971, responsible for the east-west connection of the metropolis. It becomes a park when on Saturdays and Sundays is closed for free usage, it may be used for different purposes but with the predominance of physical and cultural activities, tourism, and leisure.

And, what does define public space? The fact that this space is not submitted to any authority, a space destined for free social use: "[...] the public spaces are regarded as places where citizens' rights to use the city should be assured, accessibility to memory, security, information, comfort, circulation, as well as visual access to architecture and urban structure" (SEVERINI, 2014: 89 – free translation), it is the space of common

[5] Full study available on: https://issuu.com/edelmanlatam/docs/cultural_connections_sp_-_port_-_fi. Revised on 6/18/2018.



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use (streets, squares, parks, avenues) and that is under the jurisdiction of the public power thus being able to undergo physical alterations at any moment in favor of the common good.

Frúgoli Jr. (1995: 37) highlights the potential of sociability in the public space by identifying a set of activities, codes and rules practiced by social groups, who make of the streets a space for their relationships, in order to compose and reveal, as a whole, dimensions which the author calls "street as a way of life" or "street culture(s)". As it differs from something that could be entitled "public culture", and identified that a plan with various types of occupation of the public space that implies some form of organization on the part of the institutions whose criterion of use of the space goes through something previously defined or minimally consensual, and that seeks first of all the "social visibility", like marches, public acts, demonstrations and street parties.

The conceptual summary presented relates the hospitality - that takes place in the social and/or public range – mainly, as a promoter of the initial reception of the subjects, capable of activating them for the relations of sociability and commensality that occur in this case, in the public space of the city. The cultural manifestations come out in the discussion as intermediaries of these dimensions of hospitality and later as facilitators of tourism.

## IV. Ethnic and Cultural Tourism in the City

In the conformation of the main capitals of the modern world participated contingents of immigrant (strategically or not). It is then impossible to disconnect the cultural influences of these ethnic roots. Cities such as New York (USA), Vancouver (CAN), Melbourne (AUS), and San Francisco (USA) were presented in Hall and Rath (2007) for gradually being proud of their Chinatowns, Little Italies, Greektown's, Saigons, Little Havanas, Little Odessa, Punjabi Markets and all kind of ethnic groups that take part in the urban space.

It is worth mentioning that, in 1880 it became fashionable (and practice of tourism and leisure) for New Yorkers of the middle class to frequent Chinatown; in 1938, Vancouver officially inaugurated its Chinatown for tourism; in the 1970s, Melbourne began to sponsor large development plans to boost these declining areas: Chinatown was selected as a symbol of cultural diversity and object of civic and tourist pride (ANDERSON, 1988, 1995, HALL & RATH, 2007).

Collins (2007), when dealing with cities in Australia, mainly from the commerce, identified some neighborhoods as ethnic precincts. With a very similar formation to the Bexiga neighborhood in São Paulo, it describes the Leichhardt neighborhood as the original home of the Italian immigrant community in the city of Sydney by the late 19th century, when in 1885 the first Italians established and opened their first businesses. But it was not until the 1920s that Little Italy became a community whose expansion was caused by the migratory wave between 1950s and 1960s.

For post-war Italian immigrants, Leichhardt offered cheap housing, proximity to unskilled labor employers, Italian shops, and other businesses. Religion and commerce were at the center of this flourishing community; the church and parish of Saint Fiacre, run by Italian speakers Capuchin priests, became the center of life in this area. As early as 1962, four Italian cafes were set in Leichhardt, which were soon joined by essential businesses to everyday life, such as grocery stores, restaurants, hairdressers, butchers, pharmacies, shops, bakeries, jewelers, music shops and nightclubs that by providing special assistance to the Italian group set there, could be characterized as ethnic commerce.

Consequently, the perception of the features of a set of neighborhoods (ethnic precincts) in the city of Sidney, Collins (2007: 82) defines them as the location of the immigration interface, ethnic diversity and tourism in the city. The social, economic, political and cultural dynamics have potentiated its historical development and its contemporary perspectives on tourism. "An important finding is that entrepreneur immigrants are central to the creation of ethnic precincts in the first instance, as well as to their long-term vitality and authenticity", thus arguing issues that have not yet been deepened about ethnic entrepreneurship, government policies, and regulations about development and marketing of ethnic districts for urban tourism.

Neighborhoods are spaces of relatively large cities where tourists and visitors can enter and get around. When some of these places receive names that refer to their residents and preserve their architecture and are easily recognizable, tourist circuits can be created. Boullón (1997: 174) complemented that, eventually, symbols are used within an area as thematic units and exemplified the presence of pattern in the buildings (from the format, style and height) to icons, ornaments or decorations in the streets of the neighborhoods, such practice is easily identified in the neighborhood of Bexiga during the festivity of Our Lady Achiropita (Figure 3).

When discussing on the tourist space theory, Boullón (1997: 64-65) emphasizes the presence and the territorial distribution of tourist attractions (heritage, equipment, infrastructure, etc.) and that among its divisions, the cultural space is that one whose original physiognomy part of the terrestrial fabric was altered by the action of man with the aim of adapting it to his needs.

Many countries have supported policies to keep (or transform) their populations homogeneously white and European for most of the 19th and 20th centuries. In Brazil, in the 19th century, it was verified a connection



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between the substitution of the slave labor for the free and the establishment of immigration policy[6], which aimed at "whitening" the population, an aspect that would be perpetuated for much of the following century. The favoring of the European immigrant, especially the Portuguese[7], resulted in the exclusion of other ethnic groups, pushed to the peripheries or segregated in certain regions of the city, resulting in the formation of impoverished and "dangerous" neighborhoods, as well as in the establishment of control measures. Even today, it is evident the heritage and practice of public hygienist policies in the city of São Paulo, which are covered up by marketing campaigns.

In contrast to public policies of the past - which were intended to hide the "unwanted", places that were considered as center for crime and disease, drug trafficking, criminals, prostitutes, and vagabonds - positive practices were adopted with the objective of (re) signifying territories endowed with historically rooted ethnic wealth. In that sense, North American and Australian cities experienced this process and today gather visitors attracted by specialty, clothing, music or food shops and typical ingredients in one of the innumerable restaurants of the ethnic neighborhoods. Both Hall and Rath (2007) and Collins (2007) agree that such entrepreneurship create a welcoming environment for international travelers who like to explore the "world in a city".

The fact that these streets and neighborhoods, previously considered as dangerous, are now a place of festivities or tourist destinations recommended in travel brochures, shopping guides, and on the internet, even being incorporated into the marketing campaigns of the cities, demonstrates that this is not just a passing phase. The reality of immigrants in many countries, when opening and operating tourist-oriented businesses, is defended by Hall & Rath (2007) as value creation ("dividend in diversity" or "ethnic advantage"). For these authors, the tourism more than other sectors of the economy, allows small entrepreneurs of ethnic minorities to develop even without specialized knowledge or substantial capital resources.

Finally, new patterns of production and consumption are developed in a market that demands cultural diversity and in this sense, tourism and migration are fundamental expressions for production and consumption and contribute to the socio-economic development of cities. As an example, the interrelationship between identity, image and the promotion of the neighborhoods fuels the links between ethnic groups and their territories; a process that can take many shapes, ranging from the offering of national and international cuisines to the commercialization of entire locations, the still embryonic case of Bexiga and other immigrant neighborhoods in downtown São Paulo, can follow the example of Chinatowns and the Little Italies of the world.

## V. The Festivity of our Lady Achiropita: Sociability and Commensality

It is considered that the cultural manifestations of people come from the need to make explicit their beliefs and routines through social practices carried out by groups belonging (or not) to the same society, community or ethnic group that developed together the same customs or habits, in order to guarantee its permanence, sometimes establishing a tradition.

The studies made by Lucena (2013: 215) identified the immaterial or intangible cultural manifestations of Bexiga as heritage, comprehending "artistic and religious manifestations, habits, customs, in addition to the facts and notable characters of the local history"; In the same way, the research on historical-cultural heritage carried out by Bastos (2004) resulted in the *Inventário Nosso Patrimônio Cultural* (Inventory of Our Cultural Heritage), whose methodology was divided into two parts: the first one inventors the tangible assets, by dialogue with the interviewees about the assets they considered significant in their region and the second part, questioned the same interviewees about cultural manifestations:

> Spontaneous cultural manifestations are charged with expressions that characterize the communities. Therefore, by creating mechanisms for dissemination and participation, the work of valorization, preservation, and re-use of Cultural Heritage is boosted; it constitutes a way of involving such a social group, allowing it to become aware of itself and to revitalize the cultural identity, permitting the sense of belonging to the community. On the other hand, the abandonment and devaluation of the cultural heritage manifest our cultural dependence. Bastos (2004: 260 – free translation).

Referenced in the investigation by Bastos (2004: 262-263 – free translation) as intangible cultural heritage, the cultural manifestations were identified as "popular feasts of a devotional character, spaces that are notable for the accomplishment of art fairs, others have stood out for the implementation of musical presentations, races, parades, among others." Within the celebrations of religious character highlight, the traditional celebrations of Italian origin, Our Lady of Achiropita, in Bexiga, Saint Vito Mártir and Our Lady de Casaluce, in Brás neighborhood.

[6] Senator Nicolau Vergueiro is credited to be the first to have the initiative to establish partnership and settlement contracts with European immigrants in 1847. It was followed by the establishment of a financing policy by the State, which enabled the subsidized immigration (1871) and the replacement of slave labor as a result of the abolition of slaves in 1888. (BASSANEZI et al., 2008).

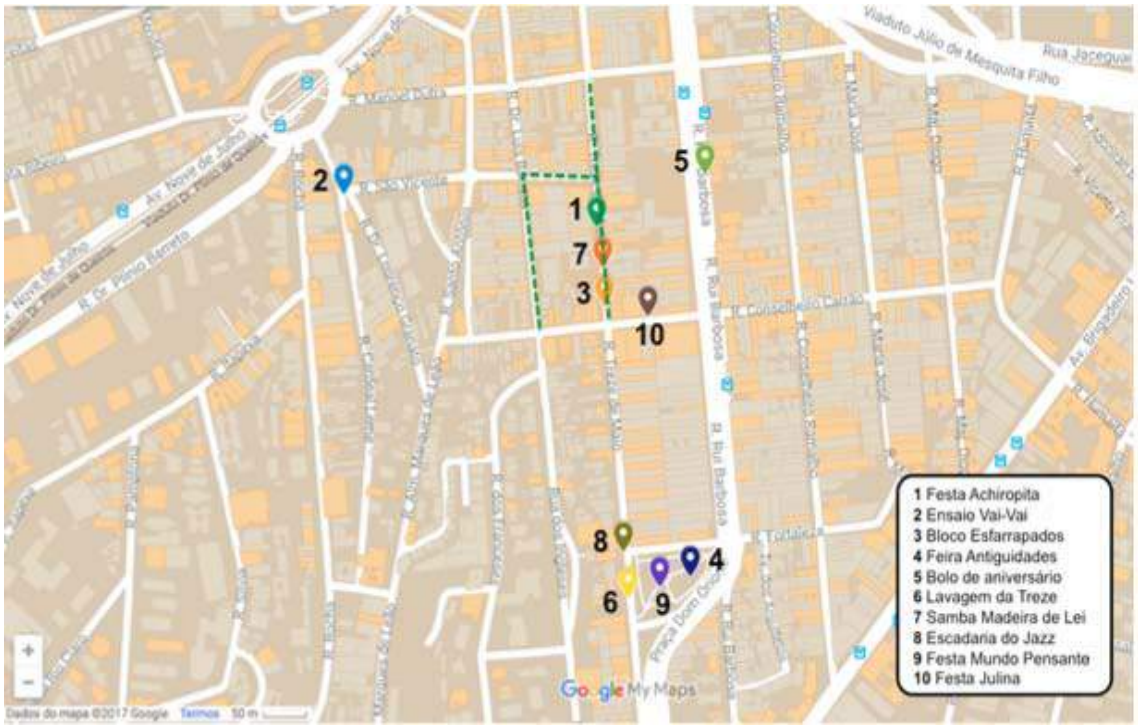
[7] Former colonizer, the Portuguese immigrant speaks the same language, professes the Catholic faith and does not constitute ghettos.



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In Figure 1 it is possible to visualize a set of ten manifestations inventoried in a previous study (BITELLI, 2017), however with emphasis on the manifestation that honors Our Lady Achiropita (indicated with the number 1 and with the routes it occupies: dotted green lines), it should be emphasized that the street also concentrates the Italian architecture, whose exterior facades of the buildings confer credibility on this Italian background, these are scenographic elements that serve as a tourist attraction.

By setting as the main object of this study the festivity of Our Lady Achiropita, it is necessary to introduce her history. The original image has been venerated since the 12th century by the Calabrian people in the southern Italian city of Rossano, where today stands the cathedral with the painting that inspired the statue honored in the church located on the May 13th Street in Bexiga, São Paulo.




*Source: Authors (2017)*

*Figure 1:* Location of the cultural manifestations, with emphasis (dashed line) on the roads where the feast of Our Lady Achiropita takes place

According to the interviewee Maria Emilia, granddaughter of Italian immigrants and active participants of the parish activities, the image exposed in the church was commissioned in Italy by the residents of the neighborhood, arriving in Brazil in 1904. By contrast to this information, Lucena (1983) reports that the image of the saint began to be venerated by the faithful around 1908, at the house of Joseph Falcone, on May 13th Street, the meeting place for novenas to worship Our Lady Achiropita.

With the need to construct a chapel to house the saint Our Lady Achiropita, a commission was constituted in 1910, who come together to buy the land for this purpose. The mass and the festivity were celebrated on August 13th, 14th, and 15th, as a tribute to the patroness. "They took place on May 13th Street, began on the corners of Manuel Dutra and Conselheiro Carrão Streets, there were many tents, bands [...]" (LUCENA, 1983: 124 – free translation).

Once the annual periodicity of the festivity was consolidated, the commission used the money collected to buy the house next to the small chapel, signing in 1916 the first expansion of the chapel that initially was opened only for the festivities. From that moment, it started to be known as the Church of Saint Joseph of Bexiga and subordinate to the Divine Holy Spirit Parish of Bela Vista (LUCENA, 1984: 125). Some reports state that the origin of the name Saint Joseph is due to a contingent of faithful of another Italian saint, Our Lady of Ribalta, from the region of Puglia, in the city of Cerignolla: "Masses in Bexiga were so busy that they forced the priest to plan more than one mass per Sunday", which already characterized a devout and religious population.

Although the inexistence of official records on the completion of the works, perhaps because the church has been acquiring properties and promoting construction works since then, it was in 1949 that the



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cardinal archbishop, based mainly on the petition of the faithful, expedited favorably the request for the chapel to be officially dedicated to the patroness of the parish, Our Lady Achiropita.

The festivity has had significant transformations over the years, from its realization in the internal space of the church with only four tents until the community gave an impulse to it, then beginning to take place during each weekend of August. The size of the event, the occupation of the streets, the dimension of the production and the public assistance to the festivity are remarkable when it is compared to other traditional Italian festivals in the city of São Paulo, such as Saint Vito, in the neighborhood of Brás and Saint Gennaro festival, which occurs in the neighborhood of Mooca, both places characterized as ethnic (Italian) whose origins date back to the same historical moment of Bexiga (19th and 20th centuries).

In the editions of the Achiropita festivities of 2015 and 2016, the event occupied three streets of the neighborhood that were closed to the traffic of cars on Saturdays and Sundays. The number of 36 tents set there and offered typical food, drinks, sweets, and gifts, as well as a space destined for children entertainment such as bouncy houses, trampoline, etc., as shown in Figure 2.




*Source: Printed guide of the 89th festivity of Achiropita (2015)*

*Figure 2:* Map of the 89th party of Achiropita with the details of the tents

The festivity of Our Lady Achiropita is lived with intensity by the community and in rupture of the daily routine. There is a fixed panel in the street, delimiting the "entrance to the party", which illuminated, informs the edition, and the sponsors of the event. Every year, in August, the main street of the neighborhood[8], May 13th Street, where the church of Our Lady Achiropita is located, is taken over by aerial ornaments (figure 3) along the blocks where the festivity occurs, marking the festive tone of the community with flags in the colors of the Italian flag.

[8] May 13th, Saint Vincent, and Doctor Luis Barreto Streets.



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*Source: Authors (2015)*

*Figure 3:* Ornaments fixed on the streets where the festivity of Our Lady Achiropita takes place

The ornaments have been used since 1930 when the arches located in the two entrances of the street limited the public space to the access of any type of vehicle during a week. In this time the offering of food was already notable. However, the parish was not responsible for this; street vendors stayed nearby selling a restricted variety of items, such as popcorn and couscous (GRÜNSPUN, 1979). This aspect is also reinforced by the interviewee Sérgio Mamberti (resident of the neighborhood since the 1960s):

*Interviewee:* Here, Our Lady of Achiropita had a festivity that was modest in front of the church.

*Interviewer:* This modest party, do you remember when which was the date?

*Interviewee:* It has always been on that date.

*Interviewer:* And, did the festivity take place inside or outside the church?

*Interviewee:* It was at the door, like a bazaar. But it was something we would say that was modest; do you know what I mean? I do not remember the moment when this party took place for the first time; I know that about 30 years ago, it began to grow.

*Interviewer:* At that time, did the festivity last more than a week?

*Interviewee:* I do not think so.

*Interviewer:* Did it have food supply?

*Interviewee:* I think it had food supply, but it was a more modest thing (the fogazza), but it was all tiny, you know? It was a very strong festivity because of Achiropita church (Sergio was interviewed in June 2016).

It was between the years of 1950 and 1960 that the food trade began to be organized by the volunteers of the festivity. In the tents offered ham sandwich and popcorn produced by the women of the community, this way adding another tradition to the festivity besides the increase in the fundraising. The introduction of food to the feast only happened later "[...] which until then followed the style of a bazaar. The discovery of the interest of the general public in the food of the "mammas" resulted in its inclusion to the festivity which in the end, became a tradition" (AMARAL, 1998: 136-137 – free translation).

Since 1980, the festivity has developed the structured format that possesses today, according to the interviewed Maria Emilia, it had thirteen tents in total and approximately 200 volunteers; three years later, 22 tents were set with about 350 volunteers and in the late 1980s a restructuring occurred: a festivity team was formed, made up of parish couples. This organizational structure persisted with few changes until the last edition researched (2016).



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Source: Authors (2015)

*Figure 4:* A team working in the industrial-scale kitchen set up inside the parish dependencies

The dimension of the culinary production can be calculated by viewing Figure 4, at least nine cauldrons with the capacity to produce twenty liters (each one) of tomato sauce per day, to be commercialized during the feast. Amaral (1998: 130-131 – free translation) reinforces, regarding the types of food of ethnic influence, offered at the 72nd Festivity of Our Lady Achiropita in 1998: "There are served, also delicious Italian foods lovingly prepared by the "mammas" (Italian mothers, or who dominate the preparation of exquisite Italian snacks) of the community. From Tuesday on, every week, the "mammas" engage full time in the preparation of dishes such as *fogazza, fricazza*, *spaghetti* in the style of Achiropita, polenta, antipasto, pepperoni and melanzana in the oven, *sfogliatelli* and *canolli*, among several other very disputed foods"

The images presented in figure 5 show some people eating the typical dishes sold during the event. With the public space as scenery, there are no conventional or refined norms of etiquette, ceremony or hygiene (which does not mean the absence of them). According to the interviewee Maria Emília, the difference lies in the exclusive food available during the party; the pleasure of consuming it is related to the rupture of the routine, the possibility of leisure, considering that the annual occurrence of the festivity and the experience of eating "the best" (Italian food) in the "right place" (Italian neighborhood), strengthening the value through the ethnic product.

> Certainly, there are people who come because of the food, because they are walking, because it is the most popular food that you can eat on the street and still is good, there are people who come because they know that only happens once a year, because they know that only can eat the fogazza there, in that place, there is no other place like that (Maria Emília, interview granted in August 2015).

The act of eating in groups includes diverse symbolic values; one of them "consists in the fact that the newcomer establishes the right to share the food that belongs to the group, a small but important act of hospitality, expressing her/his acceptance of others" (SELWYN, 2004: 27). By sharing the table or the meal with another, one of the most recognized forms of hospitality is reinforced, assuming than a ritual and symbolic meaning to the mere satisfaction of a physiological need. This form of sharing, exchange, and recognition is identified by Boutaud (2001) as commensality. Therefore, it is not just about eating, but eating in common and being seen eating under the eye of others (Figure 5).



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Source: Authors (2015)

*Figure 5:* Commensality - participants of the 89th Festivity of Our Lady Achiropita

For Montandon (2011: 31 – free translation) "One of the very first features that mark the host attitude is the gesture of offering food and drink", in the case of the festivity of Achiropita, by offering food (although commercial) goes beyond the visitors welcoming, indicates the permanence of identity of this social group, the promotion of coexistence, that occurs both through the production of the dishes as well as in the sharing of the meal during the celebration.

It refers to sociability, the proposition that the interaction between individuals and the definition of society as "being with the other, for another, against another that, through the vehicle of impulses or purposes, forms and develops the contents and the material or individual interests" (SIMMEL, 1983: 168). The phenomenon resulting from the liberation of individuals (of a society) from all the ties with these contents and interests can be named sociability. Another concept mentioned by the author is that of association, which was defined as the form (realized in countless ways) by which individuals assemble in units that satisfy their interests. These interests, whether sensual or ideal, temporary or lasting, conscious or unconscious, causal or teleological, shape the basis of human societies.

> [...] Specific interests and needs certainly make men come together in economic associations, blood brotherhoods, religious societies... all these associations are also characterized, precisely, by a feeling among their members, of being connected, and the satisfaction derived from it (SIMMEL, 1983: 166-168 – free translation).

Being the category of interests which differentiates association from sociability, "Sociability can only occur in the neutralization, even momentarily, of the differences of individual contrasts, in the absolute gratuitousness of its realization, in the sublimation of reality" (SIMMEL, 1983: 168 – free translation). It presents more interest in how relations within society take place, in other words, in the forms they assume in practice, rather than in their contents. Sociability is seen as the feeling of relating to other people and being pleased with that relationship. It should be a sentiment of satisfaction, of pleasure, being integrated into a group with the exclusive purpose of enjoying the relationship with other people.

The pertinence of relating sociability as one of the dimensions of hospitality with the festivity of Our Lady Achiropita as a locus is given by the accessibility of the cultural manifestation, since it includes those who belong mainly to the neighborhood (the community) and the visitor, without segregation. The inequality among participants is not perceived either, it is "lived in sort of games, in which one of the implicit rules would be to act as if everyone were the same" (FRÚGOLI JR., 2007: 9 – free translation), because when experiencing a reception, the result is the appropriation of what is offered: from the public space to the food, the last one, fundamental to the practice of commensality.

## VI. Conclusion

The occupation of the neighborhood by Italian immigrants, as well as the contributions or modifications in the course of its history, as in the case of the iconography that is present in the demolished architectural set, point out that such territories should be treated as identity subjects and ethnic reference in the city of São Paulo.

It is noticed that the interaction of the social groups that built, coexisted and stayed in the neighborhood of Bexiga favored the formation of a diversity that results in a peculiar culture, which takes place in the festive formation or in the use or interaction of its residents with the public space. Such factors that contribute to the tourist attraction and value chain formation, arise in the diversity of manifestations as a result of a lasting process of (re)adaptation, (re)appropriation, permanence and reinforcement of



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identity, according to Hall &Rath (2007) and Collins' (2007) discussions on ethnic tourism.

However, the festivity expresses, establishes and contributes to the formation of links between the community as an integral part in the process of initiating alliances among them, aiming to attract visitors. It is also considered that the public space of the neighborhood plays an essential role in the promotion of urban culture, because when it is used, it facilitates the initial reception of different groups, different cultures and their customs. When selecting the festivity of Our Lady Achiropita, as the specific manifestation, to identify and discuss the dimensions of hospitality, the relations of sociability can be analyzed. This perception is potentialized by the mutual participation of residents and visitors (tourists) through the practice of commensality (between the making and the eating), considering the substantial offer of food characterized by its ethnic influence and its exclusive availability during the celebration period.

The studies based on offer, demand, and efficacy have not been considered yet by the proposed interrelation between immigration, hospitality, and tourism in the city, using ethnic neighborhoods as an object. However, while pointing to similar examples in some North American countries and Europe, it was tried to reinforce the proposition that through the promotion of the neighborhoods, with their trade of specialties and manifestations, it would be possible to value underused central areas (of historical wealth) with tourist potential. Collins (2007) emphasizes the credibility of the tourist experience, stresses that authenticity is enhanced, for example, through the realization of ethnic festivals, community events, and celebration of national dates of the different ethnic groups. These aspects are present in the cultural manifestation studied.

Finally, in spite of the accelerated process of modernization that incessantly transforms the metropolises, as well as to phenomena such as globalization and acculturation, neighborhoods such as Bexiga, consolidate themselves as promoters of tourism into the city by offering different ethnic attractions, mainly referring to food and cultural manifestations.

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