estudoprévio
revista do Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura, Cidade e Território da Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa

EN | D04 | EP25 | December 2024

City and Society. Reflections and episodes of urban change in 50 years of democracy in Portugal

Ana Brandão
ana.luisa.estevao@iscte-iul.pt
Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon, Centre for Studies on Socioeconomic Change and Territory (DINÂMIA'CET), Lisbon, Portugal.

To cite this article: BRANDÃO, Ana – The city and society. Reflections and episodes of urban change in 50 years of democracy in Portugal. **Estudo Previo** 25. Lisbon: CEACT/UAL - Center for Architecture, City and Territory Studies, Autonomous University of Lisbon, December 2024, p. 223-236. ISSN: 2182-4339 [Available at: www.estudoprevio.net]. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26619/2182-4339/25.10

Received 19 September 2024 and accepted for publication on 28 October 2024.

Creative Commons, license CC BY-4.0: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Resumo

A 25 de Abril de 1974, Portugal estava já a entrar num processo de urbanização acelerada da sociedade e do território que se prolongou nas décadas seguintes, dando origem a um país urbano, desigual, e com expressões diversificadas dessa urbanização. Assim, tanto a instauração da democracia e das instituições democráticas se fez num período onde as transformações da sociedade estavam particularmente ligadas às transformações das cidades; como a consolidação da democracia, da ação do poder central e local democrático se fez respondendo (e muitas vezes tentado responder) às mudanças socioeconómicas e territoriais.

Assente na relação entre cidade-sociedade, o texto vai percorrer as profundas alterações ocorridas ao longo do período democrático, acompanhando quer diferentes políticas urbanas desenhadas e implementadas, quer as dinâmicas de transformação territorial que tiveram lugar em resultado ou apesar das políticas existentes. Esta leitura transversal é complementada com episódios concretos – intervenções, debates, políticas - em Lisboa, procurando as relações entre as transformações urbanísticas e as alterações sociais e económicas dos últimos 50 anos nas cidades (e no território) em Portugal.

Palavras-chave: Planeamento Urbano, Cidade, Mudança Urbana, Democracia

estudoprévio
revista do Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura, Cidade e Território da Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa

EN | D04 | EP25 | December 2024

City and Society. Reflections and episodes of urban change in 50 years of democracy in Portugal

Abstract

On 25 April 1974, Portugal was already beginning a process of accelerated urbanisation of society and territory. This continued over the following decades, giving rise to an urban, unequal country with diverse expressions of this urbanisation. Thus, both the establishment of democracy and democratic institutions took place during a period in which the transformations of society were mainly linked to the transformations of cities, and the consolidation of democracy and the action of democratic central and local power took place while responding (and sometimes trying to respond) to socio-economic and territorial changes.

Based on the link between city and society, the text goes through the profound changes that took place during the democratic period, following the different urban policies designed and implemented at each moment and the dynamics of territorial transformation that took place due to or despite the existing policies. This overview is complemented by concrete episodes - interventions, debates, policies - in Lisbon, looking for the relationship between the urban transformations and the social and economic changes of the last 50 years in Portugal's cities (and territory).

Keywords: Urban Planning, City, Urban Change, Democracy

Introduction

The five decades of Portuguese democracy have been characterised by accelerated urbanization of society and territory. Rural ways of life have almost disappeared, the economy has been tertiarized, the urban population has increased significantly and become concentrated mainly along the northern and central coastal strip. The cities have expanded and the models and forms of urbanization of the territory have become more diverse.

Although the network of major agglomerations has been established in Portugal for a long time; due to a certain inertia the most extensive urbanization is relatively recent. It and began in the middle of the 20th century and has been increasing since then. In the 1990s, Teresa Barata Salgueiro (1992) referred to an ongoing process, one that was very rapid and not particularly steady or widespread. The structural transformations of the territory were also related to those of society – increased urbanization, motorization and the emergence of new forms of settlement accompanied the socio-economic

development. This was characterised by higher incomes and consumption, changes to the economic base of cities as a result of the expansion of the tertiary sector, and a change in ways of life and mentalities. Although these are common (at least) throughout the Western world, in Portugal they have specific features relating to time and context. Sometimes these reflect the later impact of external influences, [1] but also the intense or unique nature of certain phenomena.

The transition to democracy occurred at a time when the urbanization had already begun, but also contributed to its development. This was not only because the social and economic reorganisation intensified, but also because democratic institutions were set up and public policies outlined in response to and as part of an attempt to drive forward the ongoing socio-economic and territorial transformation. This article looks at the profound changes that took place during the democratic period from the perspective of this binomial city-society. We examine, on the one hand, the urban policies outlined and put into practice, and on the other, the dynamics of the territorial transformation that occurred as a result of, or despite, the existing policies.

Since it is not possible to perform an in-depth cross-sectional study or a systematic review of these changes,[2] our aim is to cross-read the urban transformations and the main social and economic changes of the last 50 years in the cities (and territory) in Portugal, and seek concrete examples - interventions, debates, policies - in Lisbon.

Legacies of the dictatorship, the revolution and the transition to democracy

On the 25 April 1974, Portuguese cities were experiencing a period of transformation. The exodus to the large cities and demographic growth gave rise to the expansion of the urban fabric and changes in their social profiles. The housing crisis was a serious problem for broad sectors of the population. Tertiarisation of the economy was also evidenced by the first signs of industrial decline and increased employment in services. These transformations were further challenged by a significant influx of people from the former colonies. This increased the pressure, especially in large urban centres, during an intense revolutionary period.

Although, at times, there were robust policies and actions in relation to planning[3], infrastructure and equipment, the cities inherited from the dictatorship were characterised by severe shortages, especially in the expansion zones of the main urban areas. The most pressing of these was housing. More or less out of sight, extending from the city limits to the neighbouring areas or extensive non-urbanized areas at its edge, shanty towns and informal urban settlements were the population's response to the strong pressures on urban development in large cities and the absence of suitable housing. Added to this was the problem of overcrowding in central areas. These informal solutions increased in a context where the State was unable to provide formal solutions, nor to control these settlements, and they were tolerated for this reason. In the aftermath of the April Revolution, demonstrations and occupations were just two of the visible signs of a severe crisis resulting the shortage of housing (and decent places to live).

The period after the revolution was characterised by a great deal of instability at various levels (political, social, economic, etc.), but also by the establishment of a democratic system and institutions, including the public administration and local government. It was in this context that legislation was drawn up which laid the foundations for the democratic

urban policies and programs which directly promoted public housing. This responded to the urgent needs of the population. The most iconic was the SAAL (Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local - Local Ambulatory Support Service). However, public support quickly moved from “support for bricks and mortar” to “support for people”, that is, financing the purchase on the open market of housing for families (FERREIRA, 2014).

Accession to the EEC and the modernization of the country

After the instability of the first years of the democracy, with economic and financial crises and interventions by the International Monetary Fund in 1977 and 1983, the country entered the 1980s with the prospect of accession to the European Economic Community, which took place in 1986.

In the post-revolutionary period, the affirmation of democratic principles and the path towards European integration coincided with greater openness. This resulted in the liberalization of customs, democratization of tastes and new patterns of consumption (Gomes et al, 2012). The path towards accession involved several economic and financial changes which had repercussions in the cities and territory (Pereira; Silva, 2008). These included increased foreign investment and a more flexible economy, higher family incomes, access to credit and the increased consumption of goods and services, but also the restructuring of the construction sector and financial capital investment in this area. Specifically, access to subsidized credit was a strong incentive to purchase housing. It encouraged the acquisition of owner-occupied housing and second homes, as well as property for rental and land for construction. Alongside these reforms, the impact of entry into the European Community was evident in the form of cohesion funds, substantial support and funding from a series of interventions - especially in the decades that followed – on the urban and territorial infrastructure. This included construction and upgrading of all kinds of public facilities, urban renovation and renewal projects.

In the case of the local authorities, consolidation of their land operations was apparent from the priority allocated to providing basic infrastructure and essential urban services that were lacking in many areas: piped water, sanitation, roads and streets. All of these were supported by the creation of a series of Technical Support Offices (Gabinetes de Apoio Técnico, GAT). These were decentralized structures providing local technical training which made it possible to train qualified technical teams and develop projects tailored to the territory. The higher revenues available opened up new areas for ~~investment in~~investment in real estate and private urban development in a period when the incipient territorial planning system had no operational capacity to organise the ongoing urban expansion, which was accelerating.

Nevertheless, it was a time when there began to be important discussions about the decline and redevelopment of city centres, such as that following the Chiado fire in Lisbon. In the period after the catastrophe, there were discussions about what was causing the decay of one of the areas of the city centre. The discussion quickly moved on to the model to be followed for the reconstruction, either a more patrimonial vision or one reflecting the need to modernize. The dilemma was resolved when Alvaro Siza Vieira was selected to carry out the project planning. This was a reinterpretation of the Pombaline architecture, and part of a slow process of reconstruction that kept commerce and housing in the city centre, while promoting social reorganisation of the area.

Optimism and growth

In the 1990s, Portugal was fully integrated into the European community.

In 1992, the Belém Cultural Centre, a building to host Portugal's first presidency of the European Union (then the EEC), symbolized this and also the state's capacity to construct a major public building.

The era was marked by end-of-century optimism and also by continuity in economic policies to create an economic and social base which followed a European model while also being global and competitive. The focus was still on modernizing the economic fabric and infrastructure to support development - transport, accessibility, communications and energy - but also on support for urban functions (MATEUS, 2013).

The increased mobility determined the territorial transformation and led to the emergence of new urban morphologies and support for certain types of housing. The democratization and spread of car ownership among large sectors of the population was accompanied by significant investment in the road infrastructure. This reconfigured the spatial distribution of housing, and also organised the development of economic activity (production, distribution and consumption). Even in territories which the large arterial networks did not reach, the existing road network provided minimal support for the growing urbanization: "The road is the most commonplace element of the types and processes of urbanization in Portugal" (DOMINGUES, 2009). This dynamic, which was not linked to urban planning for this growth, facilitated urban expansion and but also fragmentation of the urban fabric, either into oil pattern centrifugal models or other more diffuse and extensive linear models.

In terms of planning, legislation to regulate the Municipal Master Plans (Planos Diretores Municipais, PDM), Urbanization Plans [Planos de Urbanização] and Detailed Plans [Planos de Pormenor] was approved. Following this, PDMs were developed within a short period of time for all the municipalities in the country. These established a set of rules for land occupation, which had been extremely haphazard until then (CAVACO et.al., 2022). For the first time, the whole territory - urban, urbanizable or rustic - was subject to certain rules.

Public intervention was particularly visible in this period in the form of a series of initiatives and programs to develop the territory (some with European funding). Objectives included: enhancing the facilities of medium-sized cities and a polycentric and more balanced urban network (PROSIURB - National Urban System Consolidation Program and Support for the Implementation of Municipal Master Plans [Programa de Consolidação do Sistema Urbano Nacional e Apoio à Execução dos Planos Diretores Municipais] - 1994); supporting urban regeneration and renovation in historic centres (PRAUD - Program for the Renovation of Degraded Urban Areas, Programa de Renovação de Áreas Urbanas Degradadas); and promoting urban development and economic dynamization in neighbourhoods and rundown areas of the AML and AMP (URBAN Community Initiative). Public investment in the direct development of housing resumed with the PIMP - Medium-Term Intervention Plan (Plano de Intervenção a Médio Prazo, 1987) in Lisbon and the PER – Special Rehousing Program (Programa Especial de Realojamento, 1993) in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto. These were intended to eradicate deprived neighbourhoods ("shanty towns"). The latter program was particularly impressive and successful in terms of numbers and speed. More than 30,000

homes were built in less than 10 years. This countered criticisms of the most frequent solutions to implement this: constructing large segregated social neighbourhoods which eliminated the need for urban and social integration in the consolidated city (SANTOS et.al., 2014).

Having covered, broadly, basic territorial requirements, public investment (with support from Europe) was redirected towards the construction of facilities - school, health, cultural, sports, etc. These new facilities both restructured existing urban areas as well as supporting new areas for urban development. Although one may question whether these actions were accompanied by the right public policies, or if they resulted in the type of development intended, they reflected the determination of the democratic state, both central and local, to produce urban territory.

The economic recovery and more disposable income for households led to the increased consumption of goods and services, along with significant innovations in the types of commerce and distribution. The appearance of large commercial spaces, supermarkets, hypermarkets and shopping centres not only changed Portuguese consumption and leisure habits but also the landscape and urban dynamics. Initially located in central areas, such as shopping arcades along the street, and later near major roads and more peripheral areas, shopping centres, like large facilities, often stimulated the creation of new central spaces and the associated urban development. These competed with the traditional centres, not only in terms of commercial activity (they were frequently accused of killing street commerce), but also leisure and recreational activities and even socializing. Mimicking traditional public spaces – streets, squares – they were handled and managed for convenient consumption. From the controversial debate about the Amoreiras development in the 1980s, (where the new program was combined with iconic postmodern architecture), to the normalization and spread of large stores in the main urban centres and metropolitan infrastructural nodes, the commercial centre became an essential part of urban dynamics.

Expo ‘98, the city of exception and entrepreneurship

In the late 1990s, preparations for the Lisbon International Exhibition, Expo’98, introduced changes in the city's production models. It highlighted now themes, such as leisure, the environment, an international presence, things which had not previously been a priority for local and central government. Its symbolism would be recognized: "the project of a new paradigm of Portuguese society" (BRANDÃO, 2005: 233).

It followed the line of the urban projects developed in other European cities, in river front spaces and/or motivated by major events, incorporated into models reflecting the competition between cities. The event was organised in conjunction with a more comprehensive urban intervention. This involved the creation of a new multifunctional central area for Lisbon, major investment in infrastructure, especially mobility. It was coordinated by a public agency created especially for pre- and post-exhibition management (Parque Expo), with special skills and procedures.

Expo’98 set new standards for urban transformation from the perspective of "quality of life”, especially in terms of the development of public space and environmental rehabilitation. The urban development model based around major international events was replicated in other initiatives over the following decade – Porto 2001 European

Capital of Culture, Euro 2004 Football, etc. – with very different results. It is a model still followed by some (see recent examples such as the World Youth Days or *WebSummit* in Lisbon) although these are more focused on economic gain than direct urban transformation.

The millennium transition - Quality of life and leisure cities

In 1998, the Framework Act of the Spatial Planning and Urban Planning Policy (Lei de Bases da Política de Ordenamento do Território e Urbanismo, LBPOTU) was published.[4] It was regulated by the Legal Regime of Territorial Management Instruments (Regime Jurídico dos Instrumentos de Gestão Territorial, RJIGT)[5] in 1999. The joint legislation defined the basis of the territorial management system, which was structured and organised on various levels, and also the territorial management tools for implementing it. Despite this, the creation of urban territory continued to be characterised by residential dispersion (with diversity in terms of typology and social class). This was associated with other aspects such as the relocation of production, tertiary concentrations and new forms of access. The dispersed pattern of urbanization went beyond the urban perimeters, on successive fronts which had in common discontinuity or fragmentation.

Based on this vision of a “disordered country” (BAPTISTA, 2008) topics such as the environment and urban development acquired greater relevance in public policies, especially the Polis program - Urban Requalification and Environmental Valuation of Cities Program [Programa de Requalificação Urbana e Valorização Ambiental de Cidades]. A direct heir of Expo ’98, the program replicated the concept of “quality public space” in a significant number of medium-sized and metropolitan cities. Urban and environmental redevelopment resulted in waterfronts, urban parks and historic centres. Even in cities that were not part of this program, projects inspired by the “Polis brand” were developed. Although there were a number of advances and setbacks, and criticism of the procedures and projects supported, the program introduced an important series of changes that were very relevant for the cities concerned. Despite having a common management model, the diverse urban contexts and local contingencies explained the different results achieved (PINTO; BRANDÃO, 2023). This “city of leisure” is associated with new lifestyles, patterns, and the spread of consumption habits throughout the territory, as well as the expectations of the urban middle class which increased during the democracy. More free time (together with other important social changes) and increased mobility made possible uses associated with leisure and outdoor activities — riverside walks, physical activity, cultural activities, etc.

The return to the centre and urban renewal

In the same period, a focus on the historic centres and urban renewal was promoted by several initiatives, both by central government, but above all by municipalities, which prioritized regeneration of the historic urban fabric and support for measures to restore private buildings. Several urban management mechanisms and tools were created[6] for this – urban renewal companies, urban renewal areas and operations – and tax benefits. These measures partly responded to urban expansion, as the population moved out of the historical areas, resulting in a lack of investment and decline. But they also benefited from the increased economic value of these territories, in keeping with the rhetoric of the

quality of the urban environment associated with tourism, leisure, creative activities, consumption and investment.

In some cases, especially in large cities, the trend was accompanied by young and qualified people moving back to the central areas. This brought new perspectives and led to new uses of central neighbourhoods, although it did not represent an actual “repopulation” of the city. In fact, despite the slogan "returning to the centre" and the attention paid to the desertification of the centres, the urban regeneration initiatives rarely paid much attention to living conditions and maintaining the existing population. Instead, they focussed on the physical regeneration of buildings and public spaces.

The Crisis, urban containment and small projects

At the beginning of the 2010s, the effects of the global financial and economic crisis were very evident in Portugal. A number of constraints (institutional, budgetary and economic) had a profound impact on the Portuguese urban and architectural landscape. A wave of austerity policies led to institutional reorganization and stringent restrictions on financing. Major projects (new Lisbon airport, high speed rail, etc.) were cancelled or put on hold. Previous investment in public infrastructure and facilities was questioned, public and private investment was sharply reduced, and the construction sector suffered a very severe downturn. The administrative reorganization of the parishes [freguesias] in 2013 redrew the map, but, apart from very rare exceptions such as Lisbon, did not reflect a new way of managing the territory.

Against this background, both the discourse and the policies condemned the previous model of urbanization, expansion, new construction and growth. Urban policies also enacted constraints on the economy and public and personal finances. There were legislative changes[7] to reform public land use policy in order to limit the urban perimeters, control dispersed settlements, and foster urban renewal and regeneration rather than new construction. Urban renewal thus gained a new impetus that was also backed by a series of measures to streamline[8] urban renewal and regeneration, financial support and tax incentives, and mechanisms to attract foreign investment to these areas.

In the case of Lisbon, the Lisbon Urban Rehabilitation Strategy 2011-2024 listed a wide range of measures and support programs for the activities of the municipality and the incentives for private intervention. These include, for example, defining the Lisbon Urban Rehabilitation Area (ARU) for much of the consolidated area of the city, extending the area of operations of the Urban Rehabilitation Society to the limits of the ARU and the “Rehabilita Primeiro Paga Depois [Rehabilitate First, Pay Later]” program to sell municipal buildings for rehabilitation by private individuals.[9]

In another sector, alternative responses to the crisis were tested. Municipalities sought differentiated investments, with very limited funding and greater proximity to citizens, by increasing initiatives such as participatory budgets and partnerships with civil society, such as the BipZip Program in Lisbon. Also, in the case of professionals in multidisciplinary teams, there were some attempts to overcome the limitations of privately commissioned projects and engage in small-scale exploratory practices by working with communities.

Tourism, the “new” economy of cities

The restricted investment and austerity policies did not result in a move away from the narrative of the competitiveness and attractiveness (of cities). On the contrary, in a period of limited resources, the ability to attract and secure investment was crucial.

Signs of economic and financial recovery appeared in the mid-2010s, with the increased importance of tourism and real estate activities targeting an international market. Tourism has become an essential activity for many territories, starting with the municipality of Lisbon. It occupies several spaces and areas of the city, but also impacts other metropolitan areas. Facilitated by low-cost airlines, ease of access and information sharing via the internet and social networks, as well as the increase in tourist accommodation on digital platforms (such as Airbnb), tourism in large cities capitalises on local assets – such as the climate, food, safety, hospitality, affordable cost of living – and Portugal figured prominently in a number of international tourism rankings (CRUZ; GATO, 2023).

Tourism in Lisbon benefited from a number of public and private investments in urban regeneration of the city centre and the redevelopment of public spaces. These contributed, among other things, to improving the city's image. Particularly the transformation of the riverfront, something that has taken at least two decades. This was boosted by the opening of new leisure areas by the river and its iconic architecture, including public facilities, service buildings and luxury residential buildings, which capitalised on the area’s distinctiveness.

The "colonization" of the city by tourism took place on a number of levels, the most visible being the dispute over residential supply, between the demand for housing to live in (rented or purchased) and investment in homestay local accommodation. This increased the pressure on housing markets and also real estate prices (PEREIRA, 2022). The commercial offer, which in certain areas became mono-functional, was reorientated towards visitors; with restaurants and shops selling typical products and souvenirs, and the presence of retail chains. Public spaces are visibly overcrowded and some modes of transport are congested at times. The local population protests against the touristification and its effects, although there has been little response from public authorities regarding limiting this.

The housing crisis

Along with the rise in tourism and the economic recovery, the effects of the growing housing crisis became apparent. Significant changes in the legislation and the real estate market as a result of the crisis and the response to it, combined with an international context that favoured foreign investment in the domestic market, facilitated the transformation of property into a financial asset. Much of the investment was in luxury sectors or tourist accommodation, and this put pressure on the existing supply and increased prices, initially in the centres and then gradually extending to the surrounding territories. The crisis affected several sectors of the population, not only the most disadvantaged, but also the middle classes, university students, teachers moving to different areas, young people wanting to live independently, emigrants, etc…

A series of housing policy initiatives was launched in response – the New Generation of Housing Policies (Nova Geração de Políticas de Habitação, 2017) and the Housing

Framework Act (Lei de Bases da Habitação, 2019). There were new instruments for regulation and intervention (later backed by existing funding programs, such as the Recovery and Resilience Plan [Plano de Recuperação e Resiliência]. These were intended to ensure access to housing through affordable rentals for all, not only the most vulnerable groups, but also others, while maintaining a focus on urban regeneration. To date, it has been difficult to evaluate the tangible results of these measures.

In 2020, the **global pandemic** represented a new crisis that had significant territorial consequences, with incredible images of cities at a standstill and deserted streets. The lockdowns obliged people to engage with the domestic space in which work and leisure areas overlapped. The requirement to remain in place meant people were restricted to their neighbourhoods and the amenities there (or not). The sharp drop in face-to-face economic activity, the closure of non-essential commercial activity as well as of renovation projects, and the tourism shutdown, reduced the urban dynamics. Social and spatial inequalities became evident. In particular, evidence of the precarious housing of several sectors of the population (LAGES, JORGE, 2020), either due to overcrowded accommodation, precariousness of the housing itself or homelessness.

Reflections on the future of cities post-pandemic opened up new possibilities for reorganizing the urban system because the increase in teleworking meant less commuting. Other factors included the revival of local networks and spaces and the importance of open spaces for mental health, etc. Although many of these trends have been the subject of concrete policies and interventions, the return to “normality” by cities did not mean a paradigm shift in their day-to-day functioning.

At the end of the pandemic, the housing crisis became more acute and is becoming increasingly part of the public debate with reports, demonstrations, and stories of people from different social strata and social conditions. In the year commemorating the 50th anniversary of democracy, housing is once again a burning issue in Portuguese society. "The problem is no longer the lack of houses, but the difficulty of placing them on the market at prices that match the income of Portuguese people" (TRAVASSO, 2023).

Along with the housing crisis, several other territorial transformation dynamics are going hand in hand with the social and economic recovery of cities, especially in the large metropolitan areas. These include the growing importance of platform economies, online commerce, and hybrid work, which have an impact on forms of consumption and displacement in the city and the allocation of spaces to these functions. Also, the new migratory dynamics that fuel territorial and economic growth, alongside the growing social tensions or increasing relevance of soft urban mobilities and environmental awareness and activism.

Final Reflections. Urban Portugal and (some of) the remaining challenges

Portugal's transition to democracy came at a time of major transformation that has not slowed in recent decades. The social and territorial transformation is undeniable and can be seen throughout the country, although with evident local variations and particularities. Expansion followed by urban explosion[10] (and implosion) has resulted in “overlapping layers - from archaic to postmodern. These are very complex and have extremely varied geographies. Although a number of large (if few) social neighbourhoods were built, there were many more so-called "illegal” ones. Highways, logistics activities, shopping malls

and multiplexes, theme parks, golf courses, condominiums, etc., have colonized the *hinterlands* between cities, forming new *ad hoc* centres and urban highways, and merging with protected historic centres and ecological reserves." (PORTAS et.al, 2003).

The urban system that results from these processes is characterised by unequal territorial dynamics. The Portuguese archipelago identified by Ferrão (2003) at the start of the millennium is the result of the dynamics of transformation in the 1990s. The network comprising the Lisbon and Porto metropolitan regions, the Algarve urban coast and several small to medium-sized cities on the coast and in the interior remains, but it has a new design. The contrast between the coast and the interior is more blurred. Some medium-sized cities have lost momentum, while other city centres have gained new population (PINTO, 2023).

If for a long time the practice of urbanism and production of territory was characterised by a deficient or partial legislative and institutional framework, the democratic period sought to define (and adjust and readjust) the territorial and administrative management system. The municipalities acquired the power and the instruments to define the transformation of their territory. At the same time, central government established a strong policy of infrastructure and construction of facilities, but this was rarely implemented in a coordinated manner that went beyond a sector rationale. Despite this legal framework and transformative investment, the "meaning" and "place" of urban development largely remained (and remains) dependent on the priorities of the private sector and private interests. These naturally depend on economic and social, global and local dynamics.

The challenges facing society (nowadays and in future) have obvious spatial and territorial expressions and implications. They may be imposed by the climate crisis and the need to decarbonize, by the limited natural resources and increasing pressure on them, by the digital transition, by migration and other conflicts. All of these will introduce important changes in the forms, dynamics and agents of urban development. How then to leverage a transition to more sustainable territorial models that also promote spatial justice and combat social and economic inequalities?

Despite the evidence, with a few exceptions, the definition and discussion of urban policies to address these complex and interrelated problems is far from being a priority or publicly debated. Even when, as in the case of housing, there are pressing social issues that infringe upon the public agenda, there is a failure to consider the actual territory. It is important to take into account the specific context, both in terms of the problems needing to be addressed and the resources available to bring about change. This would facilitate actual territorial planning that goes beyond sector solutions by consistently considering the economic, social and cultural dimensions.

As we celebrate a half-century of democracy, it is essential to reflect on which models of intervention and which urban and logical governance policies could respond to the new transformations, while also guaranteeing quality of life in the vast areas that have experienced urbanization in recent decades. One of the major tasks that lies ahead is to rethink centralized public planning in order to adjust it to reflect a diverse society in a time of major challenges (REIS; DRAGO, 2024).

But it is also important to open up spaces for debate and thereby help to encourage more informed and demanding public opinions, with a greater awareness of the expectations and options for action. Participation by an active civil society is essential in order to create

consensus, or in its absence, commitments on priorities and opportunities for the necessary investment and how these projects should be implemented.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the support of the Foundation for Science and Technology within the framework of the 2022.00352.CEECIND Research Plan (https://doi.org/10.54499/2022.00352.CEECIND/CP1750/CT0008).

Bibliography

BAPTISTA, Idalina – O Programa POLIS e o país 'desordenado': percepções sobre governança e planeamento urbano em Portugal. In CABRAL, Manuel Villaverde; SILVA, Filipe Carreira da; SARAIVA, Tiago (eds.) - **Cidade & Cidadania. Governança urbana e participação cidadã em perspectiva comparada**. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2008.

BRANDÃO, Pedro – **Ética e profissões, no Design urbano. Convicção, responsabilidade e interdisciplinaridade. Traços da Identidade Profissional no Desenho da Cidade**. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2005. (Tese de Doutoramento em Espacio Público y Regeneración Urbana.

CAVACO, Cristina; MOURATO, João; COSTA, João Pedro; PEREIRA, André; VILARES, Elisa; MOREIRA, Patrícia; MAGALHÃES, Marta – **Ordenamento do Território e Desenvolvimento Regional em Portugal**. Lisbon: Direção-Geral do Território, 2022.

CRUZ, Ana Rita; GATO, Maria Assunção– "Living like a local": Turistificação do espaço urbano em Portugal, alojamento local e resposta das políticas públicas. **Anais Brasileiros de Estudos Turísticos - Brazilian Annals of Tourism Studies**. 13, 2023, p. 1-11. Available at https://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10403084

DOMINGUES, Álvaro (coord.) – **Cidade e democracia: 30 anos de transformação urbana em Portugal**. Lisbon: Argumentum, 2006.

DOMINGUES, Álvaro – **The road street**. Porto: Dafne Editora, 2009.

FERREIRA, António Fonseca – Anos de 1970-1980: do Fundo de Fomento da Habitação ao Instituto Nacional da Habitação. In PORTAS, Nuno (coord.) - **Habitação para o Maior Número: Portugal, os anos de 1950-1980**. Lisbon: IHRU, 2014.

FERREIRA, Vítor Matias – Lisbon - **The Metropolis and Rio. Centrality and Requalification of Water Fronts**. Lisbon: Bizâncio, 1997.

FERRÃO, João – Dinâmicas territoriais e trajectórias de desenvolvimento: Portugal 1991-2001. **Revista de Estudos Demográficos**. 34, 2003, p. 17-25. Available at: https://www.ine.pt/xurl/pub/137970

GOMES, Paulo Varela; FIGUEIRA, Jorge; BAÍA, Pedro – **Anos 1980**. Porto: Circo de Ideias, 2012.

LAGES, Joana Pestana; JORGE, Sílvia (coords.) – **Crise Pandémica e Crise na Habitação - Mulheres em foco**. Lisbon: DINÂMIA'CET-ISCTE, 2020.

MATEUS, Augusto (coord.) – **25 years of European Portugal: The economy, society and the structural funds**. Lisbon: Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2013.

PEREIRA, Margarida; SILVA, Fernando Nunes da – Modelos de ordenamento em confronto na área Metropolitana de Lisboa: cidade alargada ou recentragem metropolitana?. **Cadernos Metrópole**. 20, 2012, p. 107-123. Available at https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/metropole/article/view/8657.

PEREIRA, Sandra Marques – Regulation of short-term rentals in Lisbon: strike a balance between tourism dependence and urban life. **Urban Research & Practice**, 15:4, 2022, p. 477-504.

PINTO, Paulo Tormenta; BRANDÃO, Ana (eds.) – **Os grandes trabalhos e o desejo da cidade de exceção**. Porto: Circo de Ideias, 2023.

PORTAS, Nuno; DOMINGUES, Álvaro; CABRAL, João – **Políticas urbanas: tendências, estratégias e oportunidades**. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003.

PORTAS, Nuno; DOMINGUES, Álvaro; CABRAL, João – **Políticas urbanas II: transformações, regulação e projectos**. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2011.

PINTO, Luísa – Ainda há ilhas de dinamismo no oceano despovoado que é o interior. **Público** 03/08/2023). Available at: https://www.publico.pt/2023/08/13/sociedade/noticia/ha-ilhas-dinamismo-oceano-despovoado-interior-2058284

REIS, José; DRAGO, Ana (coord.) – **O Regresso do Planeamento. Percursos e perspetivas sobre planeamento público em Portugal**. Coimbra: Actual Editora, 2024.

SALGUEIRO, Teresa Barata – **A Cidade em Portugal Uma Geografia Urbana**. Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1992.

SANTOS, Ana Cordeiro; TELES, Nuno; SERRA, Nuno – **Finança e Habitação em Portugal**. Coimbra: Centro de Estudos Sociais, 2014.

SCHMID, Christian; STREULE, Monika (eds.) - **Vocabularies for an Urbanising Planet: Theory Building through Comparison**. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2023.

TRAVASSO, Nuno – 5_Habitação. O Pilar que falta edificar. In CARDOSO, Margarida David (coord.) – **E Depois da Revolução, Cinco Décadas de Democracia.** Lisbon: Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation, 2023, p. 85-104.

[1] For example, whereas in developed Europe, the economic tertiarisation intensified from 1965-1975, in Portugal, this only occurred in the mid-1980s (FERREIRA, 1997).

[2] See also the articles "City and Democracy" (DOMINGUES, 2006) or "Urban Policies" (PORTAS et.al, 2003, 2011) in this publication, or the documentary series "Portugal um retrato social [Portugal a social portrait]".

[3] For example, the requirement to draw up General Urbanization Plans introduced in the 1930s, or the various policies relating to public housing.

[4] Law No. 48/98, 11 August 1998.

[5] Decree Law No. 380/99, of 22 September 1999

[6] SRU - Decree-Law No. 104/2004, of 7 May; Aru and ORU. Legal Regime for Urban Rehabilitation [Regime Jurídico da Reabilitação Urbana] - Decree-Law No. 307/2009, of 23 October

[7] The law establishing the general basis for public policies on soils, land use and urbanism, Lei de Bases Gerais da Política Pública dos Solos, de Ordenamento do Território e de Urbanismo, Law No 31/2014, 30 May, and the Legal Regime Governing Territorial Management Tools [Regime Jurídico dos Instrumentos de Gestão Territorial] (Decree-Law No 80/2015, 14 May).

[8] In 2012, Law No. 32/2012 of 14 August amended Decree-Law No. 307/2009 approving measures to speed up and streamline urban renewal.

[9] Later, it was considered that the program facilitated the conversion of residential real estate to homestay accommodation, to the detriment of attracting or retaining permanent residents in the city.

[10] The expansion of the city also creates difficulties in defining, naming, understanding the consequences of the urban phenomenon. It will be worth looking at discussions in the recent literature about the proliferation of the city designations that attempt to characterize them, or the interesting debate on the urbanizing planet and urbanization processes and patterns (SCHMID; STREULE, 2023)