

Editorial 47

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Issue 47 of the *CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios* completes the year of 2023 with a thematic dossier devoted to a topic that is at the top of the agenda, placing housing issues in broader contexts and beyond the economic and financial concerns. Entitled “How do we design a habitat? Influence and implications of urban design in territorial, social, economic and environmental sustainability”, this dossier proposes, in the words of guest editors Sara Silva Lopes, João Cunha Borges, Rui del Pino Fernandes and Teresa Marat-Mendes, “(...) to express the complex and multifold aspects that need to be contemplated when approaching the habitat notion”. Throughout its six diversified articles, a very interesting interview with Ermínia Maricato and the timely review of the book *Affordable Housing: Planning, Design and Policy Nexus*, this dossier offers an overview of the role of urban design in housing and habitat, providing a valuable framework for discussion.

Following up on the thematic dossier, five additional articles and a book review complement the issue. The first article, “Administrative Reform of Portuguese Civil Parishes 2013, Reflections from the case of the Algarve” is authored by Margarida Pereira, Alexandre Domingues, José Afonso Teixeira and Cristina Delgado Henriques. Based on a territorial analysis of the Algarve case, it discusses the administrative reform of Portuguese parishes in a very particular period of Portugal’s recent history, the “troika” bailout agreement for the Portuguese state following the sovereign debt crisis, in 2013. Besides the political, economic and legislative framework underlying the administrative reorganization process, this work adds valuable insights into the way it was carried out in the Algarve region, demonstrating nuances, peculiarities, perversities and other fine details captured through interviews with all the parish council presidents. With a clear potential to extract valuable learning from the operationalization of public policies, the authors conclude that the territorial reform, limited to the parish, devalued the functioning of the local dynamics, as well as the populations’ sense of belonging, needs and desires. In this sense, the state missed out on the opportunity to redesign coherent territories with the potential to improve efficiency in the provision of public services and, consequentially, territorial cohesion and community inclusion.

“Challenges to the planning of suburban territories: the planning of territorial development in Amadora” is the second article, on a related theme, additional trials of the suburban condition. Through the analysis of a territory as complex and diverse as the municipality of Amadora, João Cabral and Cristina Delgado Henriques propose an analytical framework of urban development and planning, seeking to demonstrate its potential to identify the main challenges underlying suburban formations. Understood as critical spaces for the expansion of metropolitan areas, these formations present particularities that are important to accommodate in more effective, comprehensive and integrated territorial and urban planning practices open to populations through bottom-up strategies.

Five authors (Rosário Mauritti, Sónia Pintassilgo, Helena Belchior Rocha, Sandra Saleiro and Jéssica Mendes) contributed to the third article, “International mobility for study purposes: flows and distribution of CPLP students in higher education and Portuguese territory”. Framed by the positioning of Portugal in the international mobility flows for education purposes, and focusing in particular on the foreign students coming from CPLP countries (Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries) attending higher education in Portugal, this work aims to identify their profile and

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characteristics to, among other analytical topics, discuss the potential benefits of their integration to the different types of institutions/territories. In addition to highlighting the reinforcement of Portugal's position in international mobility flows, this study stresses the role of Higher Education Institutions as strategic hubs in the promotion of innovation and retraining dynamics in territories, especially the most peripheral ones. In parallel, the analysis also shows how the presence of foreign students in different study cycles is essential to guaranteeing the sustainability of part of the higher education supply in different regions of the country.

“The potential of integrated transport modes: modelling the combined use of bicycles and train in Lisbon, Portugal” is the title of the fourth article, authored by Teresa Santos, Ricardo Nogueira Mendes and Rui Pedro Julião. Focusing on expanding cycling mobility beyond short distances, this article explores the possibilities of increasing accessibility through intermodal solutions in Lisbon, namely the joint use of bicycles and trains. Analysis supported by open data and GIS-based network and the three formulated scenarios show the advantages in combining the use of bicycle and train infrastructure, mainly for people living near train stations. While the methodology and presented results are very inspiring for planners, namely improving more soft and sustainable connections between homes and work destinations, the coupled use of bicycles and trains in Lisbon should also be encouraged beyond non-work trips.

Lastly, the fifth article offers a “Representation of the landscape in tile panels at stations and train stops in the Metropolitan Area of Porto and surroundings”, by Sergio Reyes-Corredera and Paulo Silva. In this work, train stations are analyzed from a heritage perspective, viewed as architectural and artistic references in their territorial contexts. Support is provided by the tile panels that decorate the stations in Porto's urban train network. Through these artistic/decorative elements, the authors emphasize their representative, didactic and symbolic significance for the territories where the stations are located and their populations, highlighting a source of knowledge in view of travelers, although often overlooked by hasty glances.

This issue closes with Hugo Pinto's presentation of António Covas' book , *Os territórios na Era das Redes: Cultura digital, ação coletiva e bens comuns*, edited by Sílabo in April of 2023. Focusing on the territory as a context for individual action and socio-economic development, as well as a key player in transformation, this work offers a rather skeptical reading of technology and technological advancement, according to Hugo Pinto's view. This argument is supported by his careful reading of the 35 texts included in the book, grouped into five major themes in the form of chapters, addressing highly topical issues – such as the digital transition, the smartification of the territory, or culture and creativity as a basis for development – framed within European policy and its regional application. The presentation of this book couldn't be more timely given the multiple transitions faced by contemporary societies, which require urgent and wide-ranging debates. If the information and knowledge society has not been able to promote a balanced, sustainable and equitable development in the territories, what kind of changes (political, social, economic, cultural) are necessary to prevent/reverse the multiple territorial asymmetries and vulnerabilities underlying the 'digital age'? António Covas' book provides the answers and Hugo Pinto's reading sparks the reader's curiosity.

This season calls for traditional greetings, so the editorial team of CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios extends heartfelt wishes to all our esteemed authors, dedicated reviewers, and cherished readers. May the coming year, 2024, be filled with excellence, inspiration, and productivity. Here's to a year of boundless creativity and scholarly achievements. Happy New Year!