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Deposited in *Repositório ISCTE-IUL*:

2023-03-28

Deposited version:

Accepted Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Medeiros, E. (2022). Urban participatory planning approaches in capital cities: The Lisbon case. *European Planning Studies*. 30 (6), 1144-1161

Further information on publisher's website:

[10.1080/09654313.2021.1973379](https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1973379)

Publisher's copyright statement:

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# Urban Participatory Planning Approaches in Capital Cities: the Lisbon Case

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## Abstract:

This paper assesses participatory urban planning in Lisbon, based on the ongoing urban development plan. The results of the qualitative analysis on the urban governance and participatory process covering a two-year period (2010-2012), in which the urban development plan was discussed, suggest a highly participatory urban planning process, involving not only individual citizens, but also schools, NGOs, business, academia, surrounding municipalities and several other types of stakeholders. How far the common citizen influenced the development of the final version of the urban plan is, however, open for debate. On a positive note, there is clear evidence of institutional learning and democratic openness from the presented case, which can serve as a good example for other capital cities on how to organise urban planning participatory processes.

Keywords: Participatory Approaches, Urban Development Plans, Lisbon, Urban Governance, Urban Planning.

## 1. Introduction

Participatory planning is intended to make planning processes more effective, by integrating crucial inputs from citizens and all sorts of stakeholders. Crucially, via these participatory planning approaches, citizens are provided with the opportunity to learn more about urban planning priorities, whilst providing the opportunity to reshape them (Meléndez & Parker, 2019). These approaches enable sharing of information and knowledge processes with the benefit of all involved (Hasse & Milne, 2005). Ultimately, participatory planning is a feature of democratic processes, sustained by decision-making and consultation approaches, as well as the representation of public interests. Increasingly gaining support in urban policy making, participatory governance arrangements embrace wider opportunities for political participation, empowerment and civic education (Tahvilzadeh, 2015). The outcomes of participatory planning, however, must be usable and easily accessible to all interested (Hemmersam, 2015) and, for some, new forms of affective spatial production are required (Fabian & Samson, 2016).

Participatory planning has been established in several countries in recent decades, and mostly state-driven (Harrison et al., 2021; Rogers, 2016), which acknowledges the existence of social groups with different perspectives and needs, is an essential counterpart of rational planning (Cameron & Grant-Smith, 2005). By providing meaningful opportunities for local communities to deal directly with crucial planning issues (Friendly, 2019) participatory planning opens an avenue to a more decentralized and deliberative democratic process (Damurski & Oleksy, 2018). Likewise, this process enables planners and policy-makers to better understand the activity patterns within territories (Fouracre et al., 2006), despite the challenges involved in this process (Damay & Delmotte, 2010).

The rise of social media networking and the use of mobile technologies (Ertiö, 2015; Kleinhans et al., 2015) can offer a new set of possibilities, as frames of involvement to hard-to-reach groups in the process of participatory planning (Nadin et al., 2020). For instance, web-based spatial forums can provide crucial help for citizens to share their ideas regarding urban plans, and, at the same time, provide planners with a fundamental tool to implement a bottom-up approach to urban planning decision making (Mansourian et al., 2011). Ideally, participatory planning activities should be delivered by a combination of both physical and virtual channels (Münster et al., 2017),

This article assesses the urban participatory planning approaches in a specific case-study: the development of the ongoing Lisbon Urban Development Plan (Plano Director Municipal - PDM). Drawing mostly on spatial planning literature, the article introduces ongoing spatial planning and territorial governance processes in Portugal and related participatory approaches to better frame the Lisbon PDM case-study presented. In line with mainstream spatial planning participatory approaches,

the proposed analytical framework accommodates a range of key interplaying factors in accounting for the intensity levels of citizens' and stakeholders' participation in the design of urban plans. The article intends to compensate for the virtual absence of research on urban planning participatory processes in Portugal. To guide the research, two main research questions are posed:

- What were the various participatory mechanisms designed in the Lisbon case study?;
- How were the inputs from these various mechanisms used in the decision-making process?

Methodologically, the article draws mostly on desk-based research of planning strategic related documents, and in-depth interviews with officials from the Lisbon Municipality and 13 stakeholders involved in the elaboration of the current Lisbon PDM, with an agreement to remain anonymous. Moreover, face to face interviews of approximately one hour with five academic experts provided crucial information on spatial planning and territorial governance processes in Portugal at all territorial levels. These interviews were conducted between September 2016 and October 2017 via a semi-structured questionnaire covering the degree of participation and influence of each stakeholder in the design of the Lisbon Urban Plan, and the participatory tools used to communicate their positions. Except for the interview with Lisbon municipality officials (around two hours) which was conducted face-to-face in the municipality installations, the stakeholders' interviews (around 20 minutes each) were conducted in a more informal manner, via phone contact. The stakeholders that were willing to be interviewed were selected from a list of entities provided by the municipality which stated their position in the participatory phases of the elaboration of the Lisbon PDM. The questions were centred on assessing: (i) the reasons behind the decision to contribute to the elaboration of the plan (ii) what tools used to engage with the Lisbon Municipality (iii) how satisfied these entities were with the participatory process and (iv) in what measure their participation contributed to the final plan. The data from the interviewees' responses were collected and organised in a table of contents by question, to facilitate the analysis of the many different perspectives, thus allowing us to triangulate the results of various interpretations.

From a conceptual standpoint, this paper presents a novel organised typology to assess the intensity of the urban participatory planning process for the citizens and cities involved, based on existing literature on such participatory approaches, which will be further discussed in the next section. Section 3 introduces territorial planning and governance processes in Portugal, for the reader to better understand the context of the presented case-study of Lisbon. This is further explored in the last section of the article, followed by a conclusion. The selection of Lisbon city as the central case-study for this analysis is justified by it being a European capital, a city studied by the author for many

years since the research institution is located in Lisbon, and one which has experienced, in the past decades, a large urban transformation due to the availability of access to larger financial resources (Oliveira & Pinho, 2008).

## 2. Participatory planning approaches. A literature review.

Before undertaking the analysis of the selected case study, it is important to summarise what is the current scientific thinking on participatory planning approaches through an in-depth literature review. By and large, participatory planning approaches are supported by a pro-active dialogue commonly established by dynamic networks of involved actors, open to discussing different perspectives and goals of strategic planning (Marzukhi, 2020). In essence, the concept of participation entails a spirit of engagement, involvement, collaboration, and inclusion (Myrvold & Wergeland, 2018). For some, empowered participative governance processes have the potential to enhance citizen power and deepen local democratic processes, leading to institutional strengthening, reinforcement of representative democracy and positive social change (Tahvilzadeh, 2015). According to Santo (2007), meaningful public participation should be regarded as a crucial prerequisite to promoting public interest in planning activities (Santo, 2007), to transform social and power relations via shifting the planning focus away from planners (Fenster & Misgav, 2014), and to foster sustainability and social cohesion (Çahantimur & Öztürk, 2020). Certainly, by facilitating knowledge/information exchange, as well as software and model sharing, participatory decision-making processes can be used to reduce uncertainty in spatial planning related decision-making (Mansourian et al., 2011).

As expected, participatory planning approaches entail different degrees and intensity of collaboration and dialogue, understood as the willingness to share information and resources with others. Moreover, these approaches depend on the openness of the 'control partner' to absorb collected inputs from the participatory process (Irby et al., 2013). Other than that, the support for effective citizen participation requires an operative collaborative geospatial infrastructure which can be used to collect, visualise, process and interpret inputs and non-spatial and spatial planning information into policy decision-making processes (Poorazizi et al., 2015).

In this framework, sound urban governance processes stipulate that urban data can be made available to business and citizens for enhancing decision making (Hemmersam et al., 2015). Another key point to note is the need to acknowledge the social diversity and different age and cultural backgrounds of potential participants, which requires the selection of appropriate and inclusive public samples (Cameron & Grant-Smith, 2005), which is never an easy process (Damay & Delmotte, 2010). Moreover, in view of their complexity, participatory planning processes require increasing

responsiveness and adaptability which include not only collaborative planning procedures, but also transition management and design thinking approaches (Raynor et al., 2017).

Critics portend that participatory planning does not translate into the originally envisioned democratic panacea, and also that the end results from these processes remains underrealized and fuzzy (Meléndez & Parker, 2019). Moreover, past experiences have demonstrated that, quite often, public participation in planning processes is not as democratic as expected (Marzukhi, 2020) and that, more often than not, it does not have a significant positive impact on policy responses (Tahvilzadeh, 2015). Besides, there is a lack of evidence supporting the effectiveness of public participation processes in planning processes (Santo, 2007). Hemmersam et al. (2015) suggest it may raise false expectations among citizens or even excessive fatigue due to systematic demands for involvement. Indeed, Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005) argue that consultation forums and decision-making processes are far from being neutral and universal. Analogous ideas emerge about the limitations to linking participatory planning processes with official legal procedures and the production of high-quality spatial solutions (Damurski & Oleksy, 2018). Other critics have delved more deeply into the lack of tools to assess the effectiveness of participatory planning processes (Nadin et al., 2020). Under this panorama, participatory planning processes require a constant critical reflection on their limitations and potentials in each specific context (Leino, 2012), as “empirical evidence suggests participation by itself does not foster trust” (Åström, 2020: 84).

In Europe, collaborative planning is particularly established in Nordic and North-West territories (Nadin et al., 2020) to ensure greater transparency to public policies (Carr, 2012). Similarly, in the United States, following a planning model rationale dominated by procedural and technical planning issues in the mid-1990s, the search for more participatory forms of planning with an increasing role of the public in urban planning emerged, as a “response to public outcry over their lack of involvement in large-scaled urban renewal projects; this shift amplified and mainstreamed the role of community participation in North American planning approaches” (Alawadi & Dooling, 2016: 282).

As expected, several of the previously mentioned urban participatory planning components are poised to have a positive impact both on citizens (including all types of stakeholders), and the city urban planning process by presenting opportunities for higher levels of influence in the design and implementation of urban plans. Likewise, it is expected that citizens will increase their knowledge on urban planning procedures and similarly increase their collaboration intensity with the urban planners (Fig. 1). Figure 1 is a conceptualization of my understanding of the key variables of participatory planning that help I hope is useful for others who research this process. Ideally, the urban participatory process would lead to or highly intense levels of citizens’ ‘empowerment’ (enabling them to fully

represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority), ‘collaboration’ (enabling them to collaborate with the municipality in designing and implementing urban plans with no limitations), ‘learning’ (enabling them to absorb all the necessary knowledge related to urban planning processes), and ‘influence’ (enabling them to effectively influence the urban design and implementation of urban plans). The contribution of urban planning participatory processes to the city has a high intensity when: (i) it incorporates a relatively high number of ‘citizen’s perspectives’ involving at least 10 % of the total number of the city residents, via a high democratic procedure in which there are no limitations to civic participation; (ii) it allows for fully strengthening the capabilities and institutional influence of interested stakeholders to set and achieve their own development objectives whilst increasing their influential capacity on urban planning processes vis-à-vis the municipality; (iii) it provides sound stability to how urban planning is implemented and how decision making is executed; (iv) full trust and transparency between all involved in urban planning is achieved; (v) social cohesion and sustainability planning goals are fully achieved and (vi) when inter and intracity collaboration potentials’ are fully explored.

In much the same way, urban participatory planning processes are expected to benefit the urban planning design and implementation process within a city council’s departments. For one, these benefits should be seen, for instance in increasing incorporation of the citizens’ feedback on the urban planning proposals to deepen the democratic process and strengthen institutions. Here, citizenship can be viewed as “a relational process of making membership claims on polities, people and institutions, claims recognized or rejected within particular normative understandings of citizenship” (Bloemraad, 2018: 4). In this case study, citizens include mostly interested stakeholders in urban planning. By heralding increasing participation of all sorts of stakeholders, cities could also benefit from the change of power relations between all involved actors towards, for instance, increasing the role of citizens in enhancing decision-making processes, and ensuring greater transparency of the process and trust among the stakeholders. Finally, urban participatory planning processes should envision increasing inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and foster inter and intracity collaboration processes.

Figure 1. Degree of influence in urban participatory planning components for citizens and cities.  
Source: Author elaboration.

### 3. Spatial planning and participatory processes in Portugal

This section aims to provide a background of spatial planning processes in Portugal, allowing for a better understanding of the context of the urban participatory approach verified in the research case-study (Lisbon PDM). This will start with a brief historical overview of these processes and follow by relating them to the use and relevance of participation mechanisms used in the decision-making planning process.

Immediately after the Second World War (1945), the Portuguese spatial planning system was supported by the implementation of successive Promotion Plans (1953-1958; 1959-1964; 1965-1967; 1968-1973; 1974-1979). With the approval of the 1976 Portuguese Constitution, a new institutional model was established for implementing economic and regional development policies, which required development plans to have a decentralised approach, with a strategic view based on a more balanced territorial development. In this context, a Medium-Term Plan (1977-1980) was presented, with a novel development vision more focused on social aspects: (i) satisfaction of basic population needs; (ii) unemployment reduction; (iii) reduction of the economic imbalance vis-à-vis other European countries; (iv) correction of regional and income injustices; and (v) preparation for EU membership. A subsequent Medium-Term Plan (1981-84) was implemented with similar goals of improving the quality of life and reducing the socioeconomic gaps between Portugal and the most developed EU Member States (Gaspar & Simões, 2005).

Being an EU Member State, Portugal was obliged to prepare a Regional Development Plan (Plano de Desenvolvimento Regional – PDR) as a framework to access EU structural funding. In this context, the first of these was approved (PRODR – 1986-1990) (Ferrão & Campos, 2015). In essence, this plan had a very generic character in order to cope with the EU funding guidelines (Ferrão, 2010). The subsequent PDR (1983-1993) presented a regional development strategy linked with the first programming period of EU Cohesion Policy (OECD, 2008). In this line, it advanced three main priority axes: (i) improve the efficiency of the productive system; (ii) prepare the human resources; and (iii) reduce regional imbalances. The following PDR (1994-1999) was not that different since it proposed to prepare Portugal for: (i) a new European context; (ii) a global competitiveness context; and (iii) an improved quality of life. The last PDR (2000-2006) was focused on supporting a new economic, social and environmental model, based on innovation, solidarity and sustainability (Gaspar & Simões, 2005).

In the meantime, the Territorial Planning and Urbanism Act (Lei de Bases da Política de Ordenamento do Território e de Urbanismo - Law 48/98) was approved in 1998, which designated



spatial planning as an autonomous public policy (Ferrão & Mourato, 2011). Another Portuguese spatial planning landmark was the approval of the National Spatial Policy Programme (Programa Nacional da Política de Ordenamento do Território – PNPOT) in 2007. This document established the major options for the spatial planning processes in Portugal, as well as the guidelines for the development of the sub-national (regional and local) spatial policy programmes (Medeiros, 2019).

Between 2007 and 2011, the Regional Spatial Policy Programmes (Planos Regionais de Ordenamento do Território - PROT), associated with the continental NUTS 2, were developed. Later on it was decided to divide the Lisbon PROT into two: the PROT for the Metropolitan Area and the PROT West (Oeste). This process reinforced the competences of the Regional Administrations on spatial planning procedures. Since then, however, only three PROTs have been approved (Algarve, Alentejo and West) (Ferrão, 2011).

By 2014, a revised Territorial Planning and Urbanism Act (Law 31/2014) was approved. With it, a new administrative level was added: the intermunicipal level. In addition, a clearer distinction between Programmes and Plans was provided. By 2015, following the approval of the new Act, a new Juridical Regime of Spatial Planning Instruments was implemented (Regime Jurídico dos Instrumentos de Gestão Territorial – RJIGT - Decree-Law 80/2015). It serves as the legal framework which defines planning competences at all four territorial levels: national, regional, intermunicipal and municipal. It also provides information on which entities hold such spatial planning competences and how they are regulated and overseen. Moreover, the National Commission of Territory (Comissão Nacional do Território - CNT) was created to supervise this instrument (Ferrão & Campos, 2015).

Specifically, at the local level, the Municipalities (Camaras Municipais - CMs) have the competence to determine, develop, implement, revise, and manage the PDM (Costa, 2019). These PDMs must be published in the Republic Diary (Diário da República), publicized in the media and on the Collaborative Platform of Spatial Planning (<https://pcgt.dgterritorio.pt/>). In compliance with the Juridical Regime of Spatial Planning Instruments, this platform is an official nationwide electronic platform, managed by the Directorate-General for Territory and intended to support the entities involved in the formation procedures of programs and territorial plans (DILP, 2015).

The supervision process for the development of the PDMs, since 2015, has been supervised by a Consultative Commission of Collegial Nature (Comissão Consultiva de Natureza Colegial), presided by the Regional Development Authority (Comissão de Coordenação de Desenvolvimento Regional - CCDR) (Almeida, 2013). In turn, under the terms agreed with the municipality, parishes have authority to participate in the process of drawing up the respective PDM, the related Municipal Urbanisation Plan (Plano de Urbanização - PU) and the Municipal Detailed Plan (Plano de Pormenor

- PP). In synthesis, the spatial planning programmes and plans for the local level are: the PDM, PU and PP:

- The PDM (Municipal Director Plan) defines the uses and activities of municipal land by establishing classes and categories for the various types of buildings;
- The PU (Urbanisation Plan) provides the frame of reference for the application of urban policies such as the land use regime and the land transformation criteria;
- The PP (Detailed Plan) provides a detailed definition of the occupation of any specific area of the municipal territory.

As previously explained, the local and intermunicipal spatial plans need to follow the strategic guidelines presented in the PROTs. In turn, the PROTs need to follow the guidelines established in the PNPOT (Ferrão, 2019). This process provides clear strategic interdependence between all of them. As can be seen, both the intermunicipal and municipal territorial levels have dedicated Urbanisation Plans which are complemented by the Detailed Plans (Papudo, 2007).

The Juridical Regime of Spatial Planning Instruments details that there must be clear deadlines set down for updating pre-existing intermunicipal or municipal plans. This is done after a hearing of, respectively, the intermunicipal entity or other association of municipalities responsible for the territorial plan to be updated. Furthermore, the entity responsible for preparing the programme/plan must inform the territorially relevant regional development and coordination committee of the deadlines established for updating the territorial plans. Finally, it is important to state that development of the revised PNPOT (2018) was subject to intense public scrutiny and participation (DGT, 2018). The same happened for the revision of some PDMs, such as the Lisbon Municipality PDM, which will be further scrutinized in the next section. The general rule, however, is not so optimistic when it comes to wider public participation in the revision process of some PDMs (Oliveira, 2017).

The right to participate in the elaboration of spatial plans is clearly defined in article 6 of the Territorial Planning and Urbanism Act. In detail, this article states that all persons, individually or collectively, have the right to participate in the elaboration, revision, execution and evaluation of territorial programmes and plans. This can be done via different processes, which include the formulation of questions and suggestions to the public entity responsible for the elaboration of the plan/programme (PUBENT), as well as the possibility to propose the celebration of planning contracts and the intervention in all phases of the public discussion. Moreover, the PUBENT has an obligation to inform all interested in elaboration, alteration, revision, execution and evaluation of

these plans/programmes, as well as the opening of the public discussion phase and the content of the elements to be submitted to public discussion: (i) on their internet site; (ii) in the media; and (iii) on a collaborative platform of territorial management (Plataforma Colaborativa de Gestão Territorial - PCGT). Furthermore, the public discussion periods are opened by means of a notice to be published in the Republic Diary (Diário da República), which must predict the use of electronic means to participate in the public discussion, namely through a PCGT. These legal rights do not necessarily translate into a proactive and effective role of the common citizen in the urban planning decision-making process.

In Portugal there are extensive legislative provisions for the involvement of citizens and particularly stakeholders in the preparation and adoption of planning instruments. The requirements are followed closely in practice with much more engagement at local levels. At sub-national levels, engagement is mostly done through non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and political representatives. NGOs are very well established with a high capacity for engaging at all levels and have significant influence in the process. Citizen groups lead on the making of the lowest level of planning instrument. Often, private sector investors and developers take a lead on community consultation on major proposals. Certain stakeholders (e.g. those in close proximity to a development), however, have special rights to be informed of proposals. In the end, territorial governance beyond the formal spatial planning arrangements tends to take place among representative bodies – that is NGOs and local action groups rather than directly with citizens (Martínez, 2010).

At the national level, however, the degree to which citizens were generally engaged in spatial planning and territorial governance process was relatively small at the time the first PNPOT was released (2007). However, the ongoing preparations to update the PNPOT have included a survey to all interested in presenting their opinion regarding its strategic guidelines. Here, however, from around 3000 responses, only a small number were from ordinary citizens (DGT, 2018). According to the opinions of the national experts interviewed for this study, at the other territorial levels (regional and local) the involvement of citizens in spatial planning and territorial governance processes is generally weak and implemented by citizen groups (NGOs and others). Also, despite the legal obligations in involving citizens and stakeholders in the development and monitoring processes of spatial plans, this is still more of a theoretical than practical process. Moreover, in general, the spatial planning entities, at all territorial levels, do not yet incorporate co-decision governance models in their territorial governance processes (ESPON COMPASS, 2018). Even so, there is a general positive trend, at all territorial levels, in opening the avenues for a wider involvement of citizens in spatial planning and territorial governance processes. However, such intentions suffer from persistent low

levels of a ‘spatial planning culture’ within the Portuguese territory (Ferrão, 2011). The following section will focus on the Lisbon PDM case-study to answer the main research questions.

#### 4. Participatory mechanisms designed in the Lisbon case study

Lisbon is the Portuguese capital and its largest city. Within the Lisbon municipality dwell slightly more than 500,000 inhabitants. However, the territorial functional influence of Lisbon is extended to a vast surrounding territory (Lisbon Metropolitan Area) with around three million inhabitants (Medeiros et al., 2021). The history of Lisbon is marked by several key planning moments (Oliveira & Pinho, 2008). At one point, it was the capital of a vast global empire which led to its geographical expansion and placed it as one of the main capitals of the world (Page, 2007). In 1755, however, a huge earthquake (Chester, 2001) led to the reconstruction of the downtown historical centre of Lisbon (Baixa Pombalina), thus recreating a city centre with a unique urban plan. Over time, the historical centre was enriched with elements of ‘modernity’ (Santos, 2000). Today, it is an exceptional example of the continuous influence of several centuries, generations, desires and styles in one planned urban space. In this context, the Lisbon PDM dedicated a specific regeneration plan to this impressive part of the city which had suffered from the effects of low investment in urban renewal over several decades (CML, 2012). The Lisbon PDM strategy aims, amongst other things to:

- Recover, regenerate and socially balance the population of Lisbon through the promotion of urban renovation and regeneration;
- Make it a friendly, safe and inclusive city;
- Promote an environmentally sustainable and efficient city;
- Promote an innovative and creative city, capable of competing in a global context and generating wealth and employment;
- Create a model of efficient, participatory and financially sustainable governance.

As stated in the previous section, the legal basis for municipal plans in Portugal is the Juridical Regime of Spatial Planning Instruments (Decree-Law 80/2015). Here, PDMs are regarded as instruments of a regulatory nature which establish the land use regime, define models of territorial occupation and the organization of networks and urban systems and, on the appropriate scale, parameters of land use, as well as guaranteeing socioeconomic and financial sustainability and environmental quality. Under this juridical framework, such municipal plans directly and immediately bind public entities and private individuals. Furthermore, they propose a local

development strategy, which defines the strategic guidelines of the implementation and structured management of the municipality's development and competitiveness processes. In view of the legally mandatory participatory process to elaborate PDMs, the ongoing Lisbon PDM (since 2012) implemented the following systematic public discussions in several phases (Table 1):

Table 1. Lisbon PDM 2012 main public discussion phases.

Besides the aforementioned public discussions, which took place via physical presence in Lisbon City Hall facilities, the municipal webpage permitted the collection of opinions to all interested in manifesting their position on the elaboration of the Lisbon PDM. The same source informed us that along with the Lisbon PDM development processes, the municipality identified several stakeholder groups with potential participatory interest, which received a direct invitation to debate the PDM strategy with local officials. However, city officials' indicated that the participatory process was quite open to other interested parties, and indeed many others apart from those on the initial list joined in. Hence, the collected data revealed that all relevant groups were considered at different levels, and no stakeholders were excluded. There was also an organization of debates and local presentations during the preparation of the PDM. Interestingly, even local schools were involved in this process, to include actors from all ages. Moreover, there were online and direct participation mechanisms like exhibitions, conferences, correspondence by letter and e-mail, to involve all actors. Finally, the academic community was largely involved in the debate, alongside European networks (universities, state laboratories, municipalities) via the incorporation of several reflection exercises. As a general rule, from the city official's standpoint, the stakeholders' interests and ideas were taken into account by the Lisbon municipality in the development of its PDM. Moreover, they have been widely integrated into decision-making by means of participatory processes.

Based on the collected responses, there seems to be some evidence of institutional learning and intra and intermunicipal participatory processes in the development of the Lisbon PDM. For instance, training courses were provided for several agents within the municipality, regarding spatial planning procedures. In relation to its governance and participatory process, the discussion of the updated Lisbon PDM was considered by municipality officials as innovative, as all society sectors were involved in its development. For instance, there was an international conference with experts invited from European cities, with a goal to discuss the challenges and contexts, and assess if the city's concerns were aligned with the main concerns of other international cities. There was also a

Real Estate Trade Show, to publicize the PDM strategy and an exhibition in Lisbon City Hall. Furthermore, those in charge that were interviewed reported that learning happened.

From the interviewed stakeholders' standpoint, however, despite recognizing the existence of several types of mechanisms used in the decision-making process (online public participation – webpage; and physical public participation – general public sessions + private sessions with invited stakeholders), the degree of influence of their proposals in the elaboration of the final version of the PDM varies substantially, from a few (four) not sufficiently satisfied, to a couple which were relatively well satisfied. On average, however, the interviewed stakeholders recognised the advances made in the past decades on urban planning participatory processes in Portugal, as they now have the possibility to inform the authorities about their positions. Crucially, as regards the available participation mechanisms, the most effective was generally considered to be the private sessions with the municipality officials as they allowed for a more detailed and long discussion. In sharp contrast, the online platform was considered as the least effective participation mechanism, as no follow up response was provided. Again, according to the city officials that were interviewed, whilst the involved stakeholders received direct invitations from the Lisbon municipality, others were attracted by stakeholders' networks which publicized these processes. In view of this, it can be concluded that there was a visible democratic legitimacy throughout the PDM implementation process, since all elected political forces participated in it without any restrictions.

The impacts from these participatory processes can be witnessed by the systemic evaluation of this governance process by the Lisbon municipality (CML, 2013). The municipal officials indicated the need to consider different weights to the stakeholders' positions in relation to an overall strategy. In this regard, the influence from stakeholders with wider and longer-term collaboration with the municipality was higher than others. In all, the collected inputs obtained via the various participation mechanism used in the decision-making process to elaborate the Lisbon PDM led to an introduction of new themes and issues which were not initially considered in the PDM, and were afterwards considered as fundamental. For instance, mobility and environmental issues, such as green corridors, were more widely discussed, by involving surrounding municipalities. Again, new forms of local governance, and a stronger consideration for a more polycentric functional paradigm of the city and the metropolitan area were considered. Furthermore, a new strategic vision for the city's collective transport interface areas was implemented, in order to attract employment to those areas with stronger transport accessibility, and to encourage its use.

In a relative sense, it can be stated that there was a mix of representative and participative democratic processes involved in the Lisbon PDM. However, for the most part, according to the municipal officials, the participative processes dominated. For them, in relation to the remaining

operators, the changing paradigm from the 'building of new edifices' into a 'housing regeneration' paradigm, has forced some real estate stakeholders to adjust their initial priorities. Crucially, when the city regeneration strategy was discussed, the role of each actor was clearly defined. Hence, the confusing number of actors in past PDM development processes gave way to high levels of efficiency in the participatory discussion of the new Lisbon PDM.

In a wider territorial participation mechanism, several national and regional entities, as well as several recognized professionals (lawyers, architects, city planners and engineers, market operators), received the first version of the PDM for formal and informal feedback. Following this, the PDM was formatted with the inclusion of all contributions. According to the municipal officials, when the formal discussion was finalised, three levels of discussion and participation were designed for the municipal plan: (i) children received a comic book with simplified proposals for the PDM, which was distributed to all municipality schools; (ii) stakeholders from transport, culture, urban structures, environment, and several other sectors received a detailed presentation of the PDM; and (iii) local residents received a general presentation of the PDM.

Furthermore, several stakeholders (Association of Architects, Engineers, Landscape, and Geographers) promoted a non-official PDM discussion programme, which was also supported by the Lisbon municipality. Indeed, from the list of participants in the elaboration of the PDM (CML, 2012), all policy sectors look to have been involved in the Lisbon PDM elaboration debate. However, according to the municipality officials, three sectors had a wider discussion presence: (i) the environment, (ii) urban regeneration and (iii) transport-mobility. There were some conflicts between mobility and the environment sectors that were dealt with via political management.

Ultimately, all information and documents related to the development of the PDM were made available on online platforms (including Geographical Information System - GIS - shapefiles), which is a sign of the level transparency in the decision-making process in the preparation of the Lisbon PDM. Additionally, city officials point out that, for the local actors there were positive changes resulting from their participation in its development. These are mainly associated with the urban regeneration process, the completion of equipment networks, the modernisation of the public spaces, and the improvement of soft mobility modes. However, the same source pointed out that not everything was rosy in this urban participatory process. Here, for instance, one can mention the differences that arose between the transport and environmental policy sectors when debating the requirements for more individual parking spaces and the need to regenerate versus renovate parts of the city.

One positive example, presented by the municipality officials, on the long-term impacts of the Lisbon PDM is the intervention in the Mouraria neighbourhood, which led to its modernization at all

levels, and consequent positive changes in its image and living conditions of this neighbourhood - it was formally associated with prostitution and drugs, but is now an attractive area. Another positive outcome from this planning process was the proposal for a global strategy for the city, and a micro-strategy for policy sectors and for each city-sector, for the first time in a Lisbon PDM. Ultimately, this process led to an increased degree of efficiency in how resources were used.

According to the proposed urban participatory planning components for citizens and cities (Fig. 1), based on the collected information, it can be concluded that there was a relatively high positive collaboration between officials and stakeholders in developing this plan. However, there is little indication on how this participatory process led to increasing empowerment, influential roles and increasing learning about urban planning processes, especially for the common citizen. Indeed, it was found particularly difficult to effectively collect data on the participation of individuals in the preparation of the Lisbon PDM. This is in line with the critique provided by Meléndez & Parker (2019) on the underrealized and fuzzy participatory planning which does not translate into the originally envisioned democratic panacea. In order to unravel this need for information, further interviews would be required with a significant sample of citizens who actively participated in the development of the Lisbon PDM. Conversely, there are several indications pointing to the relatively high level of collaboration and influential role of several involved stakeholders which represent, for the most part, business organisations and academics.

In practical terms, for the Lisbon city planners and officials, the contribution of the Lisbon PDM participatory planning process revealed the extent to which they were willing to deepen the democratic process of the city's urban development by being increasingly open to the incorporation of feedback from citizens of all ages and socioeconomic sectors. In the end, these rising levels of urban participatory planning approaches in Lisbon entail and ensure a greater transparency in urban planning and contribute to reinforcing institutional collaboration not only within the city limits but also with surrounding municipalities, and ultimately fostering trust among all involved stakeholders. How far these participatory processes will be long-lasting and robust is hard to tell. Indeed, far from signalling the beginning of a new era of highly participatory urban processes that all Portuguese municipalities could follow in the preparation of their new PDMs, the development of the Lisbon PDM can be seen as just another milestone achieved. It is crucial to point out, however that the opinions of a few experts contacted by the author on this particular urban participatory planning process indicate that, from the citizens and involved stakeholders' perspectives, it was not as intense, effective, collaborative, participatory and influential as one would expect.

In sum, the Lisbon PDM used various participatory mechanisms, including an online platform, meetings, public discussions, conferences and inter and intra municipality meetings to



collect the opinions of citizens and entities. Ultimately, inputs from these various mechanisms helped to shape the design of the Lisbon PDM. However, only a few influential entities (city associations in several domains such as transport, culture, urban structures, environment, etc.), which participated with higher intensity in the making of the Lisbon PDM, had a decisive role in its decision-making process.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis developed in this paper has stressed the potential positive effects and challenges associated with urban participatory planning approaches in Portugal, in particular, at the municipal level, based on the Lisbon city case-study. Rapidly gaining currency and relevance, urban participatory planning approaches are capable of successfully addressing citizens' and city planners' needs. The former should gain increasing civic empowerment, influence and learning experience from participating in urban participatory planning processes, by translating their needs and views into the final approved plan. On the other hand, city planners should gain a more complete and comprehensive overview of the city dwellers' needs in order to produce a more useful and relevant plan. Moreover, the incorporation of stakeholders' perspectives, if effective, can contribute to strengthening the democratic and governance process within the municipality, as well as ensure greater transparency and enhance decision-making processes in urban planning, and ultimately increase certainty in spatial planning. Many of these elements supported the theoretical framework of this research.

The policy measures that emerge from the analysis point towards an increasing recognition from the Portuguese legal planning system on the need to actively involve citizens and stakeholders in the preparation and adoption of planning instruments at all territorial levels. Despite not being an illustrative example for other Portuguese municipalities, in the case of the development of the Lisbon PDM, there is evidence of the willingness and openness of the city officials to implement sound and effective urban participatory planning apparatus to collect the opinions of a myriad of interested stakeholders to be incorporated in the final plan. In this specific case-study, various participation mechanisms were designed to ensure an effective participatory process involving all ages. More specifically, children received a comic book with simplified proposals for the PDM, local residents received a general presentation of the PDM and, together with interested stakeholders, had the possibility to attend public City Hall sessions and to use an online platform on the municipality web-page to present their opinions on the elaboration of the PDM. Additionally, international conferences, attracting international experts, and private sessions were held in Lisbon City Hall with selected

private stakeholders, with the latter ended up having higher levels of influence on the final version of the Lisbon PDM.

Crucially, in the end, it was not the ‘common citizen’ that contributed the most to shaping the development of the Lisbon PDM. As expected, a few representatives of city associations in several domains (transport, culture, urban structures, environment, etc.) had the most influence in aligning the PDM vision with their own interests. This influence is expressed in the definition of the PDM strategy, for instance, in the transport and environmental domain. Even so, online platforms provided the chance for the ‘common citizen’ to provide their own opinion on the PDM. Is this the case, even though their views may not have been taken into account, these platforms can be seen as a positive sign of a working and transparent democratic planning process. For the city planners, the Lisbon PDM participatory urban planning process was of great use since they had access to a wealth of inputs from all sorts of actors, not only from online platforms and forums, but also via events (conferences, for instance) which attracted the academic community, international experts and urban planners from surrounding municipalities. On the other hand, from citizens and involved stakeholders’ perspectives, there was not necessarily a strong participatory approach in the development of the Lisbon PDM. Future research on this topic would need to follow more closely how the contribution of each participating group of actors effectively contributed to changing the design of the PDM. For this, it is necessary to collect a much wider set of data which encompasses the individual participation process.

#### Acknowledgements:

The author is grateful for constructive comments and suggestions offered by the anonymous referees and the editor of this journal.

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