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URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF LISBON'S EXPO'98
The Polis Programme

TRANSFORMAÇÕES URBANAS PÓS A EXPO LISBOA'98
O Programa Polis

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to present preliminary results of an ongoing research about the impacts of the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition on the Portuguese architecture and urban planning promoted on the last decades. Specifically, the study addresses the Polis Programme of environmental and urban requalification of medium cities, a national level urban regeneration initiative developed in the aftermath of the mega-event in Lisbon. The research analyses the programme set-up and implementation in order to draw conclusions on the programme achievements and its connections to the Lisbon exhibition. Results point a newfound interest in public space, with new typologies and uses, improvement efforts of the cities' image and technical know-how dissemination. Based on these findings, the paper furthers a discussion on the contemporary repercussions of these events and programs.

Keywords: mega events, urban policies, environmental recovery, public space.
Research line: 1. City and project.
Topic: Urban design and public space.

Introduction

World exhibitions and other mega events have been addressed as a stimulus for urban development and urban regeneration. Investments in infrastructures, facilities, marketing promotion are usually associated with opportunities for local reputation improvement, land redevelopment and investment attraction. In Lisbon, the 1998 World Exposition (EXPO'98) marked the beginning of a period of change, particularly visible in the renovation of the city riverfront.

Beyond the impact of the mega event that transformed the East post-industrial areas of Lisbon, an ambitious strategy was launched by the government and municipalities using the technical know-how of the EXPO'98, to renovate urban areas. Environmental requalification was the flag of several interventions supported by European Funds, implemented at the national scale, in the scope of the Polis programme, launched in 2000 with the main goal of contributing to the urban regeneration of other cities of Portugal.

This paper is part of a research project aiming to study the legacy of the EXPO'98 in the last 20 years. At a national scale, the research addresses the Polis programme of environmental and urban requalification, as part of a critical view on the mega event repercussions. The research focuses on the programme set-up and implementation to discuss its achievements and connections to the Lisbon exhibition.

The paper is structured as follows. A brief European and Portuguese urban policies background frames an overview of the Polis programme origin related to EXPO'98 and a general description of programme structure and scope. Then, an analysis of the data collection is presented with some examples, followed by an outline of the programme's results. Finally, the conclusion highlights a few correlations between the EXPO'98 experience and the Polis programme.

1. Polis Programme: origins and layout

1.1. European and National Background

In Portugal, the 1990s was a decade to set-up a comprehensive planning system, with several legislative initiatives and programmes to support planning instruments production. Following the 1990 Decree-law nº69/90 that institutionalised municipal planning, the government restricted access to European funding to municipalities that had not complete the Municipal Master Plans (Landeiro, Sá, & Trigueiros, 2006). In line with this effort, the programme PROSIURB (Programme for the Consolidation of the National Urban System and Support for the Implementation of the Municipal Master Plans, 1994-1999)[1], with the purpose to enhance the development of medium-sized cities, set the obligation for cities to develop a strategical plan.

The approval of the 1998 Law for the Policy in Town and Country Planning (Lei nº 48/98, 1998) defined for the first time a comprehensive Land-Use Planning System and legal framework. The (late) set-up of Planning System includes the definition of the different programming and executing plans at different territorial levels — national, regional, municipal — encompassing some of the existing spatial plans and creating new ones.

In 1998, the National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES) for 2000-2006, sets an important discussion on the role of cities in the development process in Portugal. The document was a reference for the Polis Programme, highlighting the importance of the urban environment, emphasising the need for integrated operations; and also pointing out for partnerships with the municipalities and local offices.

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[1] The programme had the support of Structural Funds (15%).

The implementation of urban development programs and initiatives at the national level is directly influenced by the European Union with the financial support of "European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the several Community Support Frameworks (CSF)" (Cavaco, Florentino, & Pagliuso, 2020). That was also the case of the Polis Programme. As urban environment and urban governance issues gained importance within the European environmental2 and sustainability policy, funds were available for urban regeneration actions in the scope of the 3rd Community Support Framework (CSF III) for the period 2000-2006. This was considered a key opportunity to promote public initiatives in the field of the urban environment, which could hardly be supported exclusively by the State budget or the budgets of the municipalities (Baptista, 2008).

1.2. The EXPO'98 as a standard

The Polis Programme was established in 2000 by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, as an urban rehabilitation and environmental improvement programme. It intended a "demonstration effect" on how to intervein on urban settings with the principles of environmental and urban qualification recently established by the European directives. In line with the PNDES, the programme addressed the important role of cities and urban requalification to the nation economic and social development .

The programme was set in an optimistic perspective, greatly attributed to the aftermath of the EXPO'98. As the organisation of the venue and the exhibition spaces was combined with the definition of new post-event uses, the EXPO'98 operation enabled the reconversion of a 350 hectares industrial site into a multifunctional urban area. It marked the beginning of a period of change, particularly visible in the renovation of the city riverfront. Despite major investments in infrastructure, public space design was the main element of the new urbanity, with new typologies and establishing standards for urban design quality.

The exceptional nature of the operation required a regime of exception, with new instruments and procedures. To coordinate the entire intervention, the Parque Expo SA was created, a public company (with the State and Lisbon municipality as shareholders), concentrating powers and competencies of central and local authorities within the operation area (Cabral & Rato, 2003, p. 215). Overall, the urban development success was portrayed as a national feature that must be cherished and disseminated over the country. Hence the launch of the Polis Programme, replicating the EXPO'98 experience within the "new urban quality paradigm, involving significant environmental quality components" (Partidário & Correia, 2004, p. 416).

The Polis Programme constituted the first national programme to associate urban regeneration with an environment qualification, expressed in the slogan "a new way of living the cities". The Polis timeline (see Fig. 1오류! 참조 원본을 찾을 수 없습니다.) follows the financial support of the CSF III (2000-2006).

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[2] The development of an urban agenda in Europe can be traced since the publication of the "Green Papers on Urban Environment" in 1990 by the European Commission, the first document referring environmental issues on European cities, establishing guidelines to a Community Strategy.

Year	Government	EU funds	POLIS programme		
			Coordinator	Date	Main Events
		II Community Support Framework (1994-1999)			Reunion of the Working Comitee to the preparation of POLIS Programme, formed by central government members, central government agencies representants, coordinator nominee of the programme and director of ParqueExpo.
2000	XIV Government António Guterres	III Community Support Framework (2000-2006)	Francisco Nunes Correia (Programme National Coordinator)	May	**Polis Programme Approval**
				August	**First Polis Society - Viana do Castelo**
				September	Viseu Polis Society formed.
				October	Beja e Vila Real Polis Society formed.
				November	Bragança, Castelo Branco, Vila do Conde, Leiria Polis Societies formed.
2001				Jan-Dec	Albufeira, Guarda, Cacém, Vila Nova de Gaia and Coimbra Polis Societies formed.
				April-July	**Cities submissions in public tender to the second stage of First Component and the Fourth Component of Polis Program.**
2002	XV Government José Manuel Durão Barroso			August	First Site Plan approval on Viana do Castelo.
				September	Inauguration of first Polis Project - Fervença River Requalification on Bragança.
2003				Jan-Dec	Tomar, Chaves, Silves e Portalegre Societies formed.
2004	XVI Government Pedro Santana Lopes		João Manuel Pereira Teixeira (Programme National Coordinator)		**Three Programmes of Urban Requalification are launched by the Ministry of the Cities, Urban Planning and Environment disput the finnancial support of Polis Programme.**
					Polis Programme is taken of the scope of the Environmental Ministry to the Cities Ministry
					Beja POLIS Society Dissolution with all operations completed.
					Matosinhos Polis programme completed.
2005	XVII Government José Sócrates		José Pinto Leite (Programme National Coordinator)	September	Extension of the Polis programme deadline in Viana do Castelo until 2007.
2006					
2007		QREN (National Strategic Reference Framework) (2007-2013)		February	**Exhibit "Viver as Cidades" (Living the cities) Nine Polis operations are completed:** Viseu, Beja, Vila Real, Matosinhos, Bragança, Castelo Branco, Vila do Conde, Leiria and Porto
				October	Angra do Heroísmo, Valongo/Ermesinde, Tavira, Elvas, Guarda, Portalegre, Guimarães and Coimbra operations completed.
2008					Chaves Polis completed.
2009				December	Cacém, Tomar, Covilhã and Vila Nova de Gaia operations completed.
2010	XVIII Government José Socrates				
2011				August	Announcement of ParqueExpo dissolution.
2012	XIX Government Passos Coelho		Cândida Pestana (Team Coordinator)		
2013					
2014		Portugal 2020 (2014-2020)			**Process of ParqueExpo dissolution began.**
2015					

Fig. 01 - *Polis Programme Timeline. Own creation.*

The general layout and programme goals and methodology were defined with the direct involvement of ParqueExpo in collaboration with the related ministries. The programme recognizes the national scenario of unplanned urban expansion and territorial inequalities, identified by Félix Ribeiro (1999 apud. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros no 26/2000, 2000): the decay of historical centres, architectural heritage deterioration, unplanned expansion of peripherical areas without infrastructural and social structures, ageing population on urban «centres» and newer generations pushed to peripheral areas, growing traffic congestion, lack of green areas and public spaces caused by mass construction or private transportation impact. The goals of the Polis Programme are set to tackle these issues:

> "(i) develop large-scale integrated urban renewal operations with a strong environmental component,
>
> (ii) develop actions that would contribute towards renewal and revitalization of urban centres, foster the multi-functionality of these centres and reinforce their role in the surrounding region,
>
> (iii), support other urban renewal initiatives that would make it possible to improve the quality of the urban environment and valorise the presence of structural environmental elements, such as riverfront and seafronts,
>
> (iv) support initiatives aimed at expanding green zones, and promote pedestrian walkways and cycle lanes and condition automobile traffic in urban centres" (Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nº 26/2000, 2000).

1.3. The programme layout

The Polis programme was structured into four components:

1 - Major integrated operations of urban requalification and environmental improvement.

2 - Operations in cities which are partially designated as UNESCO World Heritage Cities.

3 - Urban and environmental improvement in social housing areas within the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto.

4 - Complementary measures to improve urban and environmental conditions in cities.

On the total, 39 cities had the programme support, the majority (28 cities) in component 1, the one that mobilised more resources and greater operational capacity. At the launch of the programme, 18 cities were selected for this component (with no tender). Among others, the criteria for selection include: the potential for a demonstrative effect in a national panorama, the establishment of new centralities or poles within metropolitan areas, the improvement of sea and riverfronts, historical buildings and natural heritage, and "the contribution to the strengthening of Polis major 'flags':(the creation of green cities, cities of knowledge and entertainment, digital cities and intergenerational cities" (Partidário & Correia, 2004). Following these initial selection, 10 additional cities were select following municipalities application to a public tender within the same criteria as the first stage selection.
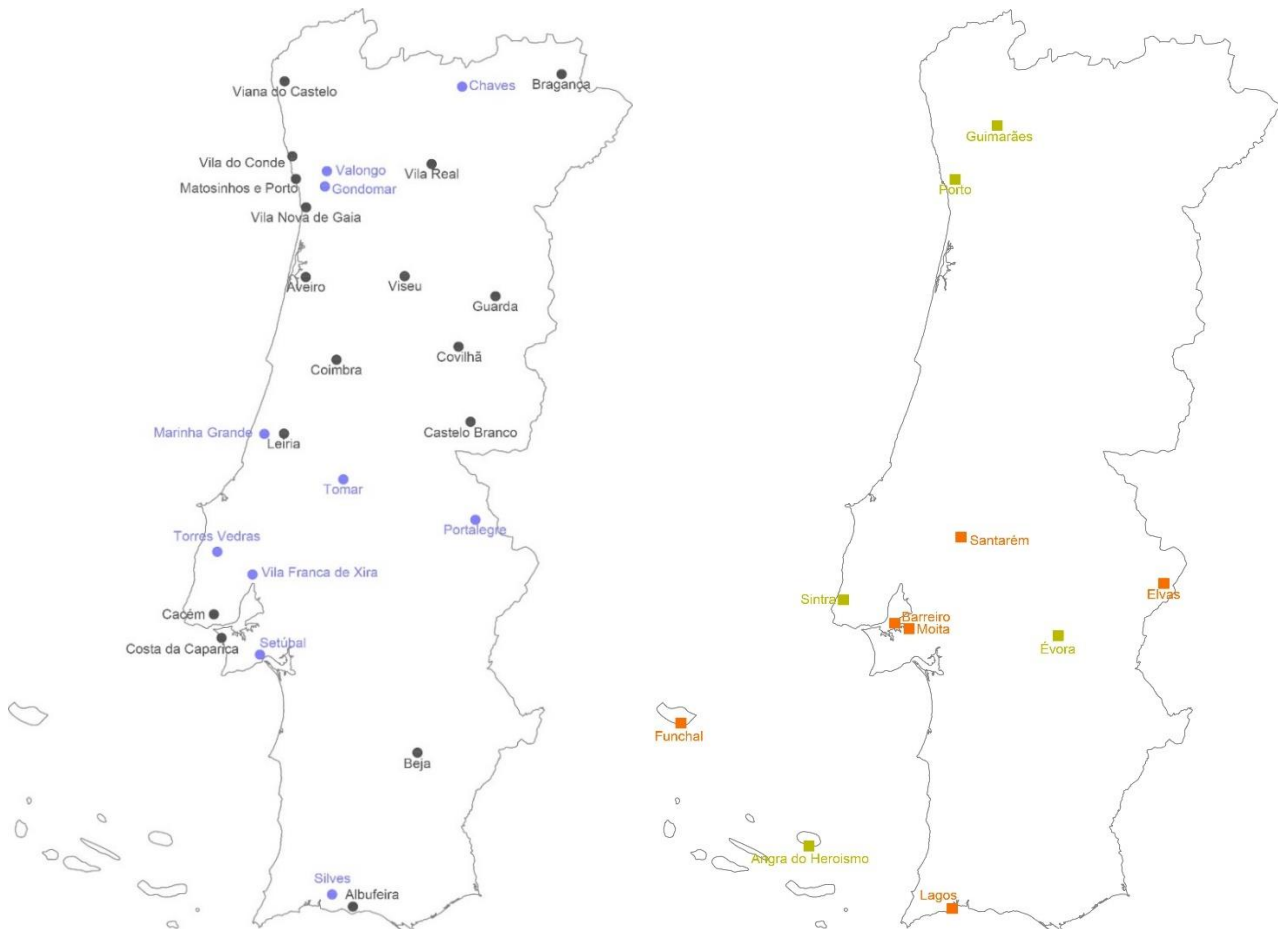
Fig. 01 Left: location of the 28 cities within the first component of Polis programme (18 first phase cities in black, the remaining ten in blue) Right: In green second component cities, in orange fourth component cities.

In the case of the major integrated operations, the need of a rapid programme execution validated the adoption of urban management enterprise, similarly to the EXPO'98 operation. The I model (Fig. 03) was based on cooperation between the City Councils and the State, on the form of Polis Societies (Sociedades Polis), public enterprises with management and decision-making functions, similar to ParqueExpo on EXPO'98 operation. On these partnerships the State had a social capital of 60% and the local authorities of 40%. Polis societies operated on a "special legal environment" with exceptional measures as tax benefits, Polis programme's declaration of public interest, and a special regime on urban planning instruments reflecting on reduced time for project approvals (Decreto-Lei 314/2000, 2000).

For each city, a strategic plan was prepared by the Parque Expo in collaboration with the local authorities. The strategic plan includes: an architectural and urban framework of the city, the goals and background of programme Polis at a national scale, the planning background of the city, the main goals of the operation, the operation strategy within the city socio-economic situation, the identification of the main projects and actions to be pursed, and the financial and scheduling plan. Each Polis Society was responsible for the execution of the plan. To ensure the implementation and monitoring of operation on the site, management enterprises

were commissioned by a public tender and Parque Expo assumed this role in ten of them (the ones considered more complex).
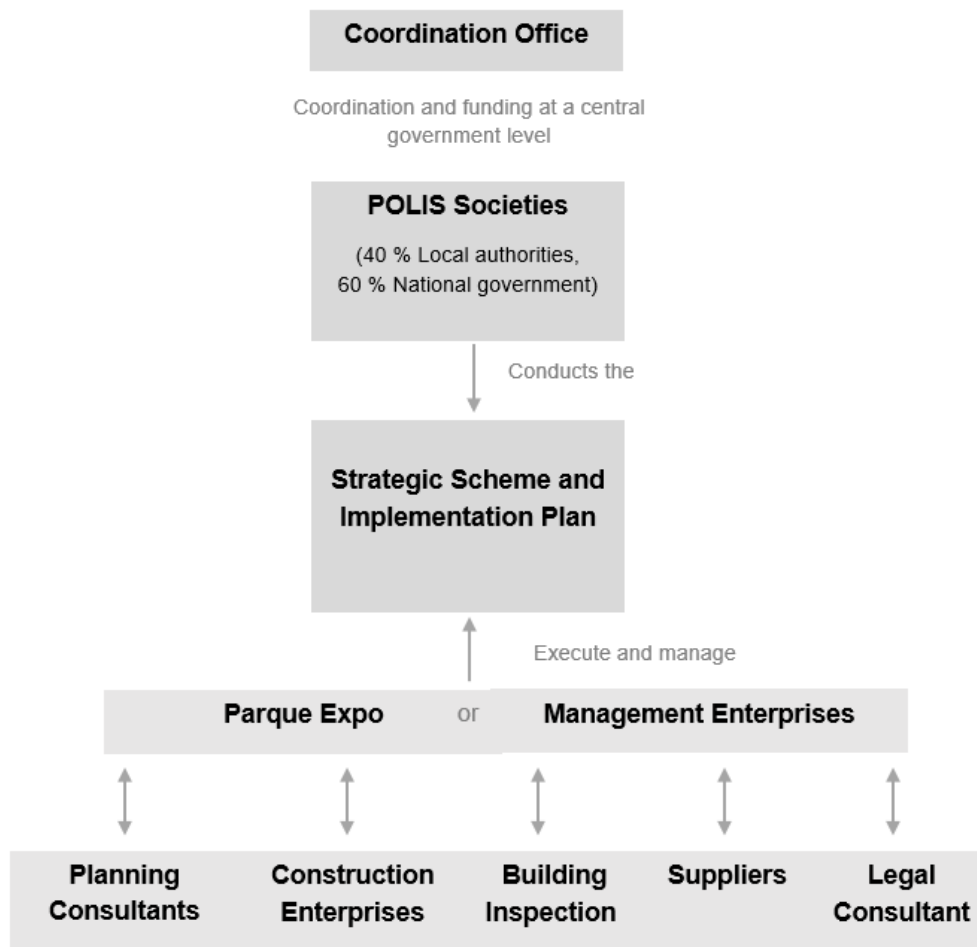

Fig. 02 - Organisational Model Scheme. Source: (ParqueExpo, 2008)

Overall, 22 Polis Societies[3] were created corresponding to 23 Strategical Plans, all in cities in the component 1. The other five cities in that component had smaller operations that did not justify such urban management schemes, such as the cities in the component 2, 3 and 4.

The estimated cost to the overall implementation of the Programme were 1,173 billion euros; the main sources of funding are national funding with 46,4%, European community funds 36,1% and self-financing with 17,5 % (Pestana, Pinto-Leite & Marques, 2009).

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[3] The Polis operation on Porto was delivered by the Porto 2001 society in charge of the 2001 European Capital of Culture operation.

2. Analysing the Polis Programme

The following analysis focuses on the 23 operations of the first component implemented under the model of a Polis partnership and a Polis strategic plan. The research comprises a survey of all the accomplishments of the Polis Program, namely strategies, urban plans and projects, including authors and dates. The methodology is based on document analysis of the programme documentation and other relevant bibliography combined with fieldwork for data gathering and photographic record.

2.1. Urban Planning Procedures

Polis programme officially began in 2000, in the same year nine Polis Societies were created (Viana do Castelo, Viseu, Beja, Vila Real, Bragança, Matosinhos, Castelo Branco, Vila do Conde and Leiria) with the corresponding Polis Strategic Plans approved and published. The remaining 14 Societies and Strategic Plans were created and developed in the following two years.

For each city, the strategic plan reveals a strong operational outlook, in fact, more according to an implementation plan, as it serves as a guideline for the entire operation (Fig. 04). Regarding planning procedures, it defines spatial plans to be developed, namely Urbanization Plans or Site Plans4, normally as the first goal to be pursed. Urbanization Plans (UP) and Site Plans (SP) are defined as non-obligatory municipal instruments of territorial management, UP are "defined as Zoning Plans and executed at the scale of 1:10000", and SP "delineate, in detail, the type and level of use for any specific area within the municipality," varying between 1:200 and 1:1000 (Landeiro, Sá, & Trigueiros, 2006).
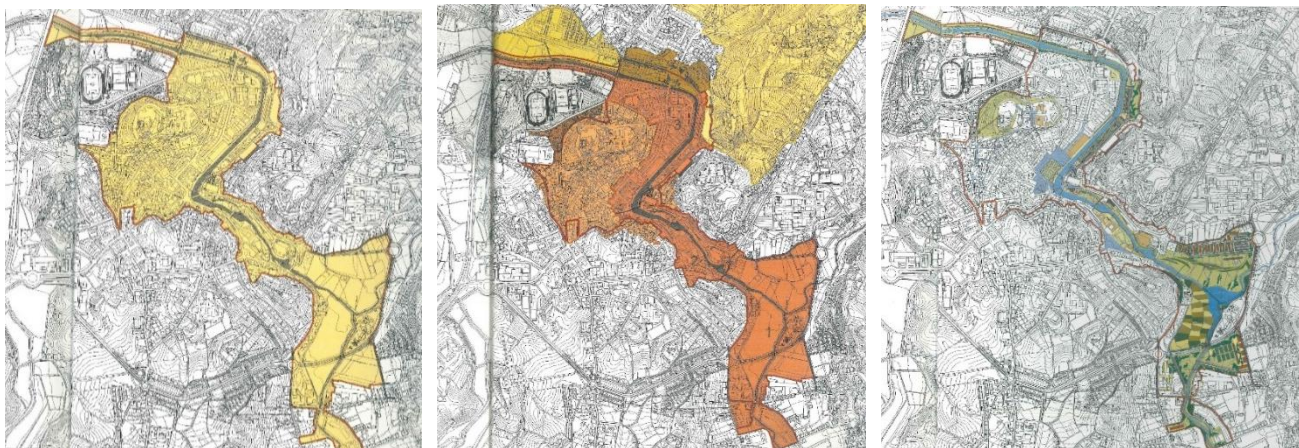

Fig. 03 Leiria Polis operation: Delimitation of the area (left), Identification of Site Plans (centre); Provisional Implementation Plan (right). Source: (MAOT & POLIS, 2000)

The analysis of the plans for the refereed 23 cities, encompassed 58 Site Plans and five Urbanization Plans foreseen, but of those only 27 detail plans and three urban plans were implemented. This difference can be explained by different factors: long preparation time of the plans, changes in legislation, lack of consensus for plans approval, execution difficulties (expropriations, lack of funding, etc.), loss of interest by the municipalities, etc. However, this does not mean that the actions of these plans were abandoned, as certain

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[4] It was mandatory that each operation had at least one spatial plan developed. This was related to an effort in applying the directives of the Land-Use Planning System but also an intention to control the urban development around the area where public investment was to be made.

projects (already well defined in the strategic plan) occurred independently of the approval of detail or urbanization plans. Such particularity applied to projects that could be commissioned directly, given their accordance to the instruments of territorial management in force or given the characteristics of the project, e.g. public space redesign only entailing public land.

2.2. Projects and actions

With a significant expression in the national panorama, the public investment translated into a variety of strategies and typologies of spaces developed according to the characteristics of each area. The overview on the projects and actions foreseen and executed shows that overall the actions are concentrated in: the design of new or existing public spaces – squares, gardens, parks, streets – within the city's urban fabric or in its limits close to waterfronts; the building of new or the refurbishment of facilities; mobility strategies carried out with the creation of bicycle lanes, pedestrian bridges, elevators, and parking facilities; environmental recovery actions mainly on riverbanks or seashores.

- **Urban Parks and Environmental Recovery**

In line with the main goals of the programme, most of the cities had projects on environmental recovery and urban parks alongside watercourses — 18 cities within the 23 cities analysed. Taking advantage on the potential of structural environmental elements, most projects designed new public spaces, specifically disseminating the urban park typology, while promoting environmental recovery of watercourses (sanitation infrastructures, depollution of water, habitat recovery, etc.). Such projects had the aspiration of building a positive urban image based on natural features and connection to local identity.

Most projects offered recreational spaces and sports facilities, in the proximity to historical and central areas, playing a significant role in the global urban dynamic. The Coimbra Polis operation (Fig.05) illustrates these regeneration actions mainly recuperating riverside areas for public space and recreational uses.
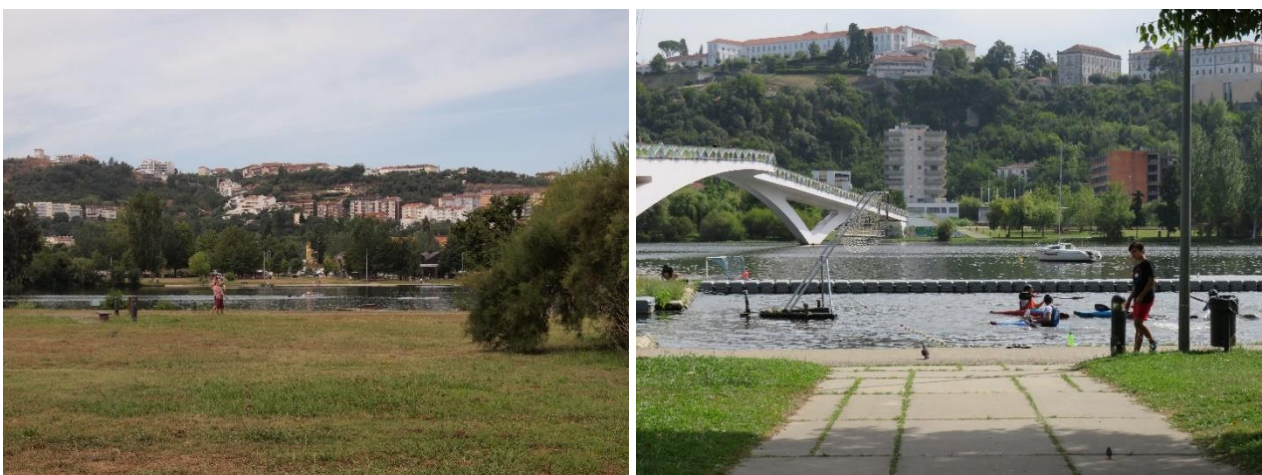

Fig. 04 Parque Verde do Mondego in Coimbra

Other approaches developed the structural potential of watercourses within the urban fabric, as in Vila Real or Chaves, while in cases of Leiria and Cacém there was an integrated operation combining infrastructural works, public space redesign and environmental requalification.

Leiria developed the strategy of valorisation of Lis river through a continuous green structure (Fig. 06) that connects the historic urban fabric with recent areas of expansion passing by agricultural areas. This continuous green structure is supported by bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths, sports parks, cultural and recreational facilities alongside the riverbanks, offering a new perception of the city bringing together fragmented urban and rural zones to one common structure.

Fig. 05 Polis operation in Leiria alongside the river Lis

The Cacém operation addressed a case unplanned suburban growth lacking essential structures, as proper sidewalks, decent road system and public spaces and green areas. Based on the same strategy of a green continuity alongside the watercourse, the project designed a new linear park together with a new road system layout. These actions are intertwined and integrated into a more qualified urban fabric.
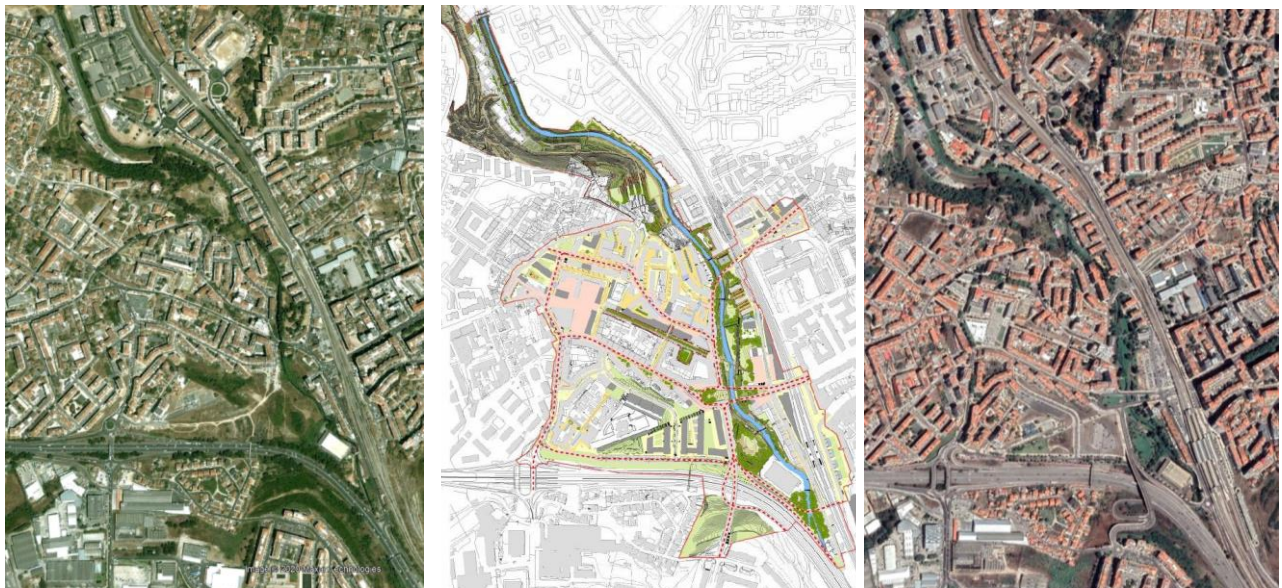

Fig. 06 Polis Cacém operation area: Before aerial view (Source: Google Earth, 2004), Urban design scheme; After aerial view (Source: Google Earth, 2018)

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XII SIiu

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Fig. 07 Polis Cacém operation: Linear Park alongside the Jardas stream

• Historical Centres

In the 12 out of the 23 cities, the Polis Programme took actions in the historical centres. The strategy normally included public space improvements as the redesign of squares, commercial streets projects, pedestrianization schemes allied with traffic reorganization, new street furniture (benches, public lighting, etc.); and new facilities (mainly cultural ones). In some cases, projects related to heritage conservation and local identity promotion were developed.

The Albufeira case is worth noting, combing a new city road system with the regeneration of the historical core, developed within the urbanization plan framework for the city. In the city centre, the operation combines the creation of new parking lots in the peripheries, with the pedestrianization of the main streets, the redesign of main squares and accesses to the beach, and refurbishment of buildings.
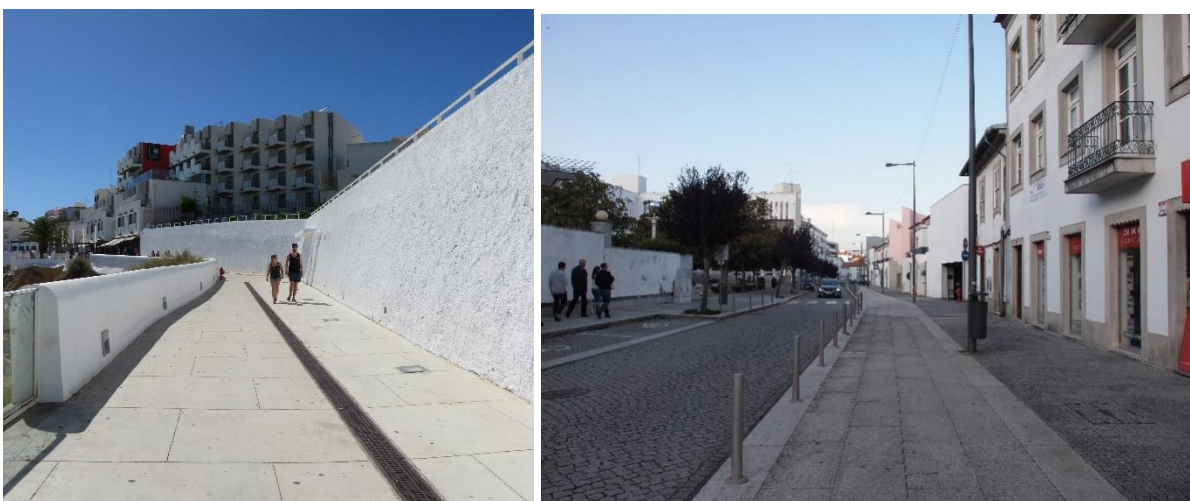

Fig. 08 - Polis Albufeira operation: Albufeira historical centre and Polis Viana do Castelo operation

- **Seafronts Interventions**

In addition to the environmental recovery and urban parks, actions in seafronts were delivered on the goal of urban environment improvement. Six cities include this category of projects, characterized by long extensions of redesigned public spaces on coastal areas, in case of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia combining with riverfront areas. Projects include the creation or extension of waterfronts promenades and beach accesses, parking, restaurants and facilities related to water activities such as nautical sports and/or fisheries activities. All projects include some kind of environmental action, being dune recovery works (Costa da Caparica and Vila do Conde), cliff consolidation (Albufeira), wastewater treatment and water depollution actions (Vila Nova de Gaia, Matosinhos and Porto), or environmental education facilities.

As an example of this category, Costa da Caparica operation intended to regenerate one of the main urban beaches of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, but due to different circumstances failed to deliver all the programmed projects. Nevertheless, the operation redesigned the waterfront alongside the central part of the city, while providing facilities, an urban park, parking, dunes recovery and seashore erosion control works.
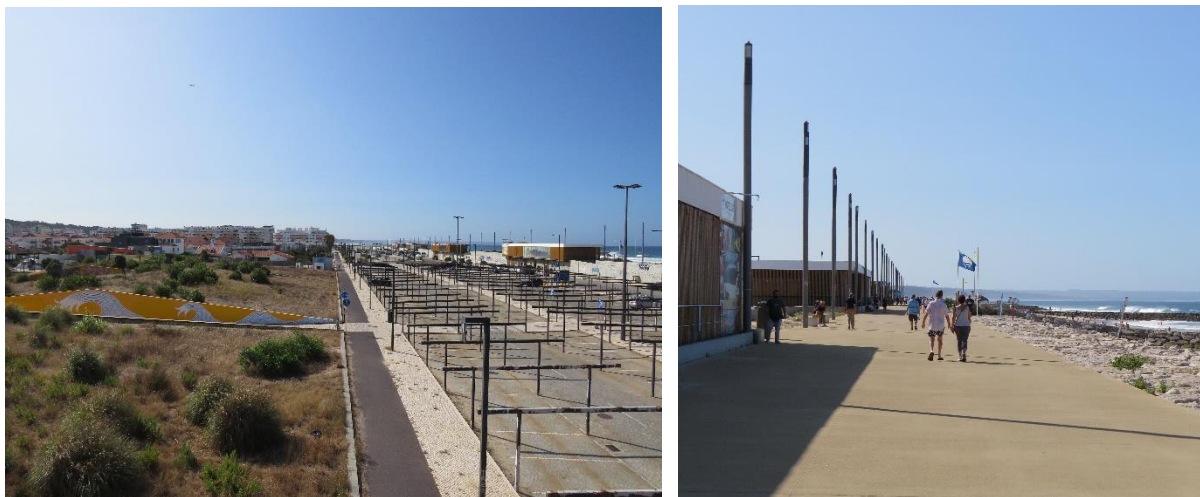

Fig. 9 – Polis Costa da Caparica Operation: Dunes and Parking; Waterfront Promenade

Vila Nova de Gaia operation included projects on a river and oceanfront involving new walkways, a new waterfront avenue and promenade with cycle and pedestrian paths, parking areas, and the redesign of the public space of a fisherman's village. The linear path acts as a systemic structure gathering urban nucleus, natural landscape and areas to be developed, aiming new opportunities of private investment and city image valorisation.

Fig. 10 Implementation Area of Polis Programme on Vila Nova de Gaia (Source: (Paiva, 2012)

Fig. 11 Polis Vila Nova de Gaia Operation: Pedestrian Paths and Waterfront Promenade

- **Common Features**

Regarding common features of Polis interventions, it is worth noting the introduction of mobility related projects in different operations, and the building of facilities related to the cities' regeneration strategy.

Concerning mobility, on the 23 cities analysed strategies to a reducing car dependence were applied, mainly with road redesign, street pedestrianisation and creation of parking (30 in 14 cities), but also developing an alternative to car mobility as the creation of bicycle lanes, pedestrian bridges and elevators.

The city of Covilhã stands out as an example. The work started with a Mobility Plan to improve city user mobility overpassing the typical sinuous streets and steep slopes of the city. The plan sets the implementation of elevators, funiculars and escalators and the respective public spaces qualification on their surroundings, combining with new pedestrian walkways and bridges (Almeida, 2010). The intention to 'flatten' the city has not been fully implemented due to budgetary restrictions and revisions. Only one pedestrian bridge out of the five proposed was built and only one lift was set the time frame of the programme. Nevertheless, Covilhã has proceed the implementation of the plan in the following years.

Fig. 12 – Polis Covilhã Operation – Santo André Lift ; Carrapateira Bridge and Garden Lift

Regarding facilities, as part of the Polis programme proposals, several ones were built concerning cultural (cultural centres, museum, libraries, multipurpose centres) and educational areas, public administration services and local facilities. The expropriations done to pursue some of the projects justified the few housing projects. Aligned with the environmental and educational goal, Polis Programme set the need to build an Environmental Monitoring and Interpretation Center for each operation (CMIA). Such facilities were built or installed on refurbished buildings to monitor the environmental quality of the air before and after the Polis intervention and to offer a previous absent service of environmental education intending the involvement of the local community. On the 23 cities, 22 centres were foreseen and 11 were built, but many have been adapted for other uses.

Fig. 13 – Left: Vila Real CMIA, Right: Housing in Viana do Castelo

2.3. A general outlook on the programme's achievements

Overlooking the 23 cities, it is possible to establish that the Polis Programme resulted in a diversity of projects, actions and design schemes, contingent of each city context and needs. It is worth pointing out the refutation of the reproduction of Expo'98 typology at a national scale. Despite this, as it can be seen in Table 01, it is possible the outline that most operations include the same categories of actions and are focused on similar areas of the city. In the 23 cities analysed, ten cities combined urban parks and environmental recovery actions with historical centre regenerations.

	Urban Parks and Environmental	Historical Centres	Seafronts Interventions	Common features	
				Mobility	Facilities
Viana do Castelo	x	x		x	x
Viseu	x	x		x	x
Beja	x	x		x	x
Vila Real	x	x		x	x
Bragança	x	x		x	x
Matosinhos			x	x	x
Castelo Branco	x	x		x	x
Vila do Conde	x		x	x	x
Leiria	x	x		x	x
Albufeira		x	x	x	
Guarda	x	x		x	x
Cacém	x			x	x
Vila Nova de			x	x	x
Coimbra	x			x	x
Aveiro	x			x	x
Covilhã	x	x		x	x
Costa da	x		x	x	x
Porto			x	x	
Setúbal	x			x	x
Tomar	x			x	x
Chaves	x			x	x
Silves	x	x		x	x
Portalegre		x		x	x

Table 01 – Project Categories and City distribution

Another important aspect to highlight is that time was a key factor in Polis Programme. As mentioned, the funding from the CSF III obligated an expedite method of planning and implementation, consequently, normal time frames of planning were diminished. Strategic Plans scheduling had allocated a few months to the delivery of planning instruments as Site Plans and Urban Plans. This condition "discriminated" cities with previously outlined strategies, pre-commissioned studies and surveys allowing more informed actions. In general, this condition plays an important role in the operation implementation success, i.e. the capacity to fulfil the projects and plans outlined in the strategic plan, as the case of Leiria green structure shows.

As a downside, the inexistence of adequate previous studies or strategies resulted in poorly defined projects and actions and demanded that those planning efforts to be made in the programme timeframe and resources. Costa da Caparica case exemplifies this constrain in an overambitious operation. The proposal entailed nearly 650 hectares, covering urban areas as well as "irregular occupation of underserviced state-owned forests, farmlands and beach dunes" (Baptista, 2013) and protected national areas. The operation resulted in a prolonged execution and ultimately was discarded given issues related to expropriation procedures and incompatibilities of the various planning instruments. Furthermore, the interdependence between plans and projects made it impossible an independent project implementation.

On another perspective, the Polis programme entailed a multidimensional perspective on urban environmental improvement. Cases like the Cacém Polis gathered synergies between local authorities, central government entities, planning technicians and external players resulting on the feasibility of a structural project. Or as Albufeira, a city without significant previous plans, where the combination of a mobility plan with an urbanization plan provided a framework to tame urban expansion and improve the city mobility. In other examples, the Polis Programme supported regenerations actions and projects that were part of a wider city strategy (Vila Nova de Gaia and Viana do Castelo) acting more as a funding programme.

In the successful cases, Polis projects pointed out the relevance of an urban project driven strategy with the articulation of multiples entities and instruments, in most cases offering new tools to intervein in a city. Leiria case is an example how the urban project conceived on Polis Programme remains relevant, as the city recently persecuted the extension of the river requalification and the creation of urban parks and facilities.

As for the demonstration role that the Polis Programme intended, we identified a weak connection between each strategic plan goals and the proposed projects and actions, in the same way, the link between the economic and social development of the cities with the urban environment improvement is not easy to establish. This shows that the programme strategy was built based on the idea of multiplier effects, rather than a problem-solving strategy. Combining all these facts, an overall critical evaluation regarding the Polis Programme — the achievement of its general goals or a qualitative appraisal of the projects — is difficult to entail without further and more detailed research.

3. Conclusion

The analyses of the Polis Programme urban transformation between 2000 and 2007, showed how the experience of the EXPO'98 had impacts far from Lisbon: how it was translated to other cities context and how was incorporated in new ways of planning and designing the cities regeneration.

Against the background of the urban environmental improvement and sustainability agenda, the Polis Programme had a strong instrumental role, developing projects through an exceptional basis. The analysis showed that giving the site characteristics, the pre-established instruments and the contingencies of each case, the different operations resulted in very diversified outcomes, thus contradicting the preconceived idea

of a homogeneous replication of the EXPO'98 urban renewal. Notwithstanding, the implementation of the Polis Programme marked the cities with connections to the EXPO'98 experience. Namely: a newfound interest in public space design, with new quality standards and the dissemination of planning and technical know-how.

A direct link to the EXPO'98 experience and know-how is made through the Parque Expo public company, present in differences stages of the Polis implementation. Not only it sets the example for the urban management model of the Polis Societies — a public enterprise with State and Municipal participation — but its inclusion in the design of each operation and the management of 10 operations, allowed for the know-how and the experience of Parque Expo technicians to be disseminated nationwide and to municipal planning teams.

In respect to the actions on public spaces, it is verified that the dissemination of urban parks, waterfronts and linear parks embodying a city-nature connection now linked to urban quality. This is a transversal characteristic of the overall interventions and it closely related to the EXPO'98 event urban renewal. Polis Programme offers the replication effect of this idea with a proliferous widespread. From direct observation it was possible to verify that interventions implicated changes of consumption habits and lifestyle patterns in city users, outdoor leisure and outdoor physical activities are adopted and generate new dynamics and fluxes in the urban environment.

In the scope of the recent urban policies in Portugal, both the EXPO'98 development and the Polis Programme, represent unique cases, highlighting the exceptional (and difficult to replicate) character of the operations. Despite this, the multiplicity of projects, actions, know-how and outcomes that resulted from these experiences should be more deeply studied to understand the effective repercussions and to define better regeneration agendas and programmes.

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