

PREFACE

In a world in constant upheaval with a myriad of problems, highly diversified and dynamic territorial mosaics do, however, still persist such as those within Europe. Their potential is manifold, inspiring strategies aimed at progressive, intelligent and inclusive development, in an attempt to go beyond the historic prevalence of economic and commercial interests. Other approaches have been established, particularly addressed at environmental and sociocultural issues, leading to policies focused on the conservation of landscapes, the safeguarding of heritage and the revitalisation of social frameworks.

This latter aspect, though, requires more urgent attention, given the rise in migratory flows throughout the continent, and the spread of social inequalities, while antagonisms at several levels are being revived. There is an urgent need to foster greater solidarity and responsibility, highlighting the social dimension in public and private strategic policies. There is also the need to encourage convergences and the renegotiation of the conflicts that are largely at the root of continuous population flows. Even though they were initially vehemently rejected, these migratory flows are starting to be regarded as opportunities, particularly with regard to the structural rejuvenation of the European population.

At the same time, progressive environmental degradation is unquestionable, with the destruction of scenarios that are the mainstay of human life, as they undergo progressive mutation/destruction, a reflection of climate change, among other factors, and human intervention. This problem has been addressed at different scales, since the sustainability of these ecosystems, cultures and traditions, their very distinctiveness, starts at the local level and continues throughout the European space until it reaches the global level. This, however, implies the convergence of global policies and the emphasis on environmental and social strategies.

These issues should, then, be seen as a means to foster more responsible and balanced development, allied to policies aimed at preserving ecological, economic, cultural, religious and political diversity. The framework of development should be innovative, addressing for example, a circular economy or a bioeconomy, based on digital resources, on increasing literacy, on education and on training. These measures will also lead to greater efficiency in the management of endogenous resources, rooted in more sustainable, inclusive, innovative and intelligent development and, thus, in territorial cohesion.

As long as these goals are not achieved, we are obliged to continue to reflect on these topics, on their complexity and diversity, correlating the European space with other spaces, such as the Lusophone, particularly Brazil, with which joint projects and strategic aggregating studies have been developed. Thus, this edition of the "Overarching Issues of the European Area" aims to address these issues through multiple approaches, in a multidisciplinary and interuniversity setting, as it counts on the participation of renowned authors from several countries, who present new readings and reinterpretations of local, regional, national and global dynamics, as the only means to intensify effective cohesion and generalised, holistic revitalisation.

The principals set out in the “Sustainable Development Goals” upheld by the UN are gradually being implemented, covering areas ranging from climate change, economic and social inequality, to innovation and technological development, as well as peace and justice. It is urgent to deepen our understanding of these issues, focusing on strategies that can contribute to their mitigation. It is therefore imperative to publicise these studies in the 2018 edition of “The Overarching Issues of the European Area”. For this purpose, and given the multiplicity of existing problems, visible at different scales and with different variables, we have divided this edition into four parts.

We begin by presenting studies that focus on the social dimension, giving the first part its title, “Society, Culture and Education”. From the topics presented, it is easy to see that, although social issues are gaining in strategic importance in different parts of the world, obstacles still persist, evident, for example, in public demonstrations and protests, as Célia Taborda Silva notes in the case of Portugal. But focus is also brought to bear on resilience, the importance of neighbourliness, of creation and the preservation of ties of solidarity that improve society and overcome cultural differences or create integrative strategies, as explained by Laura Sakaja, with regard to Zagreb (Croatia).

Furthermore, training and information remain essential, but associated today with a new educational reality, which is inclusive, as well as multidisciplinary, as we can see in the European area. Obviously, each member country maintains its cultural specificities, but curriculums and programmes are more standardised, as noted by Stella Dermendzhieva and Tamara Draganova for secondary education in Bulgaria. Education has an undeniable impact, as it is anchored in more coherent approaches to social and economic problems, as well as cultural ones that favour social inclusion, embracing previously neglected social strata. These approaches contribute to mitigating educational and social needs, to consolidating territorial cohesion and land use planning, while young people are encouraged to analyse these problems at different scales, as Paulo Lemos (in co-authorship) shows, in a school experiment about the city of Porto. In fact, this same author (always in co-authorship) emphasises this didactic perspective, but also adds to the equation sustainable development, the importance of anthropic intervention and its effects.

The social dimension has indeed a profound impact, in particular through migrations, an issue addressed by Ileana Constantinescu and Adriana Motatu who focus on the Romanian context, alerting to its effects and to the aggravation of a disturbing scenario in mutation. A more intimate, experiential perspective in the Portuguese case is highlighted by Roseli Boschilia and Maria Natália Ramos, who focus on the impacts of migrations, both on the places of origin and on those that take in the emigrants.

Unquestionably, the previously prevailing perspective, which emphasised the environment as a great conditioner of human intervention, has been replaced by the predominantly economic viewpoint, where capital has manipulated the situation and coordinated world development. Fortunately, although in a still embryonic form and subject to heated debate from an economic point of view, the social and cultural dimensions are gradually garnering greater attention in an attempt to mitigate social inequalities and the lack of territorial cohesion. Thus, some revival is taking place, of what is local, distinctive and cultural in its multiple facets, as demonstrated by Diogo Miguel Pinto and Célia Figueiras, highlighting the case of the philharmonic bands and their contribution to the creation/preservation of local identities.

The sociocultural dimension is not, however, the only focus of this publication, although it is one of the main factors underlying sustainable, responsible development that combines tradition and innovation. This is evident in the second part of this volume called "Heritage, Tourism and Development". Based on eight highly differentiated perspectives, it is clear that the endogenous specificities have to be responsibly explored and preserved in a holistic manner, since the components to be integrated are multiple, especially when tourism is taken as a motor of revitalisation/development. This is the case with natural resources such as salmon, especially in fishing areas, where a combination of distinct but complementary dynamics interfere with the evolution of an economic sector and, consequently, of a typical area, as mentioned by Mary Cawley (Galway, Ireland); or architectural heritage, particularly the religious heritage, which would most probably become irreversibly damaged if it did not acquire a new function, as a tourist attraction, for example, which is the case in Bulgaria. This topic is explored by Athanas Dermendzhiev and Martin Doykov, as well as by Slavi Dimitrov. In fact, the potential of this sector is manifold, although, realistically, one must also consider the sometimes ambivalent impacts that arise, as María Dolores Sanchez Fernández (in co-authorship) mentions, exploring a Uruguayan case as an example.

This heritage, whether from a local perspective or broader territorial one, contains a wealth of history, which the tourist apprehends and explores, as do the scholars, as Manuel Joaquim Rocha and Nuno Ferreira mention, regarding the urbanisation of the Campo do Cirne (Porto) in the 19th century.

At the same time, problems are increasing in rural areas, especially in the peripheral ones. However, there too revitalisation strategies are being explored often based on tourism. And if, in the most problematic cases, abandonment and degradation already prevail, in others, especially in quality wine-growing areas, the scenario is quite different. Indeed, wine tourism, in a multifaceted and aggregating perspective, is unquestionably a development factor, as is evident in the case of the Douro Demarcated Region, studied by Isabel Borges. In fact, wine and vineyards, indeed winegrowing landscapes generally in their diversity, combine indelibly with the social frameworks and their evolution throughout history. They also facilitate sociabilities, as discussed by Ana Maria Binet who, in this example, goes back to the 19th century, taking the works of Eça de Queiroz as a reference. António Barros Cardoso also contributes to this perspective, when he emphasises how the "different", in this case, the 'vinho verde' ('green' wine) of Minho, went from of strictly local consumption, without any particular references, to a wine that has gained ground in Europe and the world, reflecting investments made in innovation and in quality and based always on the regional, autochthonous grape varieties and the local social culture.

Although the bottom-up perspective has gradually gained support, due to its potential and receptivity on the part of locals and authorities, for projects to be feasible, it is unquestionable that effective local and regional development has to be based on the coordination of a diversity of complex actors / interacting factors. One must also take into account the culture, local history and architecture, besides the oenological, gastronomic, landscape and economic-political dimensions. All these factors have to be viewed in a contemporaneous and responsible manner, because the future is not built by ignoring cultural and historical roots, which are indeed the most differentiating. These guiding principles stand out in the third part of this publication, under the title "Economy and Territorial Development".

Given the multifaceted hypotheses to approach this parameter, territorial development, we begin by exploring critical aspects, such as those related to the fiscal policy of the European Union (Glória Teixeira and Marlene Carvalho), focusing on its impact on land use planning and on regional and national dynamics. Other re-readings have also been included, such as those associated with the current importance of borders, as evidenced by João Luís Fernandes. This is also the case with the collective socioeconomic organisations, in this case, in Brazil. The diversity, structure and organisation of these institutions are multiple, and it is therefore imperative to keep in mind that they are not always consensual and aggregating, since they have different and sometimes disparate consequences, particularly in social terms. One must bear in mind that, in a very difficult setting, the coexistence between resilience, resistance to innovation/change and adaptation to new organisational realities is a fact.

On the other hand, a focus on sustainable economy is also unquestionable in this edition, with a number of cases studies, but where diversity and complexity persist. Thus, there are more frequent references to the “circular economy” and its sustainability, as Ana Coelho points out, albeit sometimes involved in “lexical confusions”. Another example is the multifunctional purposes of landscapes and agricultural holdings as a development strategy, explored here in the case of Baião (northern Portugal) by Ana Rita Ferreira and Helena Pina. We cannot likewise ignore other components, to reevaluate the regional and local frameworks, such as mineral waters and the need to adapt related policies, as well as the respective regulations, as confirmed when we look at the aquifer sector in Brazil, compared here with the one that exists in the European community by Lúcio Carramillo Caetano (in co-authorship).

Another important component in territorial development and restructuring is transport and accessibility. This is the work of Francisco Rocha and Maria da Conceição Ramos, through which models of urban public transport management are analysed. In short, the multiplicity of territorial interference, the diversity of approaches, or even the explanation of the different impacts on the economy and society are in fact indelible and multifaceted. Hence, the urgency and pertinence of these studies.

Faced with this array of spatial components, and even though more focused on those of a social dimension, the difficulty is bearing in mind a scenario that should tend towards the sustainable. In this context, the growing importance of the environment is also indisputable. Based on policies that already have some history, they have been reinforced, on a global scale, by the United Nations in the successive conferences on this matter, namely in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, here explored by Leandro Dias Oliveira, who questions the effective consequences of these events and their ramifications.

On another level, the landscape has also changed under a multiplicity of pressures that are reflected on different scales. In this context, there are even didactic adaptations in their approach, as mentioned by José António Aldrey Vázquez and Daniel Del Rio Franqueira, on the study of landscapes, or the increasing emphasis on the recovery and preservation of geomorphological heritage, namely in Galicia (Manuela Costa-Casais, in co-authorship). They are, indeed, components to be valued as well.

In spite of previous examples where preservation/revitalisation of the natural heritage is irrefutable, given their intrinsic value, the problems accumulate, as the cases described show, since natural (or anthropic?) risks become more complex and continue to spread. Such a scenario is confirmed by multiple cultural landscapes, resulting, for example, from the leaching of these spaces, as evidenced by Mécia Mota, José Vieira and António Calheiros, or by the factors that underpinned the avalanche of Rigopiano

(Fantina Tedim and Vittorio Leone), or of the forest fires in Arouca, Portugal (Fernando Correia), and the need for greater investment in training and prevention. Fortunately, technical sectors, on the one hand, and politicians, on the other, have progressively become more aware of these facts, of the need for strategic changes, of cooperative and comprehensive governance strategies that can minimise these occurrences, such as hydrological disasters, as also mentioned by Alexandre Luís Vázquez-Rodríguez or Dominic Royé (this latter author, in co-authorship).

There are, in fact, many problems in the European area highlighted in this volume. However, the relevance of other spaces scattered across the globe have not been ignored and which, in many circumstances, are even more serious, more critical, fraught with social, economic, cultural and ecological problems that are most likely to be irreversible. It is urgent, therefore, to analyse the different territorial components from a scientific perspective, but which should also be propositive, in addition to being prospective and sustainable, the only methodology that will ensure the continuity and the preservation of global space.

With this publication, only possible with the collaboration of so many specialists from different geographical origins and several scientific fields, we hope to contribute to this endeavour, by providing informative / formative data that can effectively raise the awareness of all social strata regarding major problems on a global scale, increasingly more critical and devastating. There is still time to revert some of these effects, as the examples presented here have shown.

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