

Assessment of "social" and "economic" sustainability in peri-urban territories: a proposal of methodological framework and its application to Lisbon Metropolitan Area

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Keywords: Sustainability assessment; Economic and social sustainability; Peri-urban territories; Evaluation methodologies; Metropolitan planning; Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Carried out within the framework of the multidisciplinary research project PERIURBAN (Peri-urban areas faced with the challenges of sustainability: developing scenarios for Lisbon Metropolitan Area) this article aims to propose, discuss and implement criteria for assessing the sustainability of peri-metropolitan territories at the social and economic level, starting from its application to the specific case of 5 parishes in Lisbon Metropolitan area.

The peri-urban territories have gained a renewed interest in contemporaneity, in the face of the challenges of sustainability. However, the exploitation of its potential requires an approach that goes beyond the classic urban perspectives of a space to be consolidated and (re)developed. To that extent, a more comprehensive perspective is required, focused on their specific needs and their particular aptitude to contribute to an increase of the life quality of the population. Recognizing that the opportunity of these territories lies in the ability to integrate multiple sectoral policies and visions in the territorial planning process, the PERIURBAN project intended to develop scenarios with a view to identifying the main constraints and potentialities of the peri-urban areas, with the active cooperation of the stakeholders involved in its change.

In the first phase of the project a typology of peri-urban spaces in the Lisbon Metropolitan area has been identified, starting from a thorough diagnosis, at six different levels (Mobility; Identities and Experiences; Natural Elements; Territorial Functions and Topology; Land Occupation; Economic Activities), which made it possible to map, based on a cluster analysis, a set of different types of parishes in Lisbon Metropolitan Area, among which we have defined 5 types of peri-urban territories.

In a second phase of the project, and drawing upon a more detailed analysis, based on quantitative and qualitative methodologies (including, but not limited to, conducting interviews, the application of a survey and a discussion of visual material recollected and of visual observation made on the territories concerned), we proceeded to an in-depth study of 5 parishes which were assumed as representative of each of these clusters (Nossa Sra. da Anunciada; Sarilhos Grandes; Poceirão; Vialonga and Agualva), considering the challenges to the sustainability of these territories within the timeframe given by the project, based on a characterization of the current situation and a discussion with local stakeholders on scenarios for its future development. This analysis was based on an in-depth evaluation carried out at five distinct levels, which constitute what we've called "the pentagon of sustainability": the "physical" system; the "ecological" system; the "social" system; the "economic" system; and the "institutional" system. For each one of these "systems" a methodology was developed in order to access the conditions for sustainability in that particular field, and specific analytical tools were put in practice.

The work presented in this article fits in this phase of the work. We aim to present here the methodological process and the results relating to the evaluation of sustainability, at the present time, in two of those analytical dimensions: the "economic" and "social" dimensions of sustainability.

After a brief introductory section, in which a general framework of the problematics and the objectives of the work is made, the second section presents a contextual overview about the Periurban project and a explanation of its objectives and methodologies, including a brief reference to the first phase of construction of typologies of peri-urban areas on Lisbon Metropolitan Area, leading to the choice of

the representative parishes. Then, in section 3 the proposed framework for the assessment of sustainability in these territories is presented. The several dimensions of analysis considered in the social field ((i) Equity and access; (ii) Social cohesion; (iii) Social diversity; (iv) Identity and sense of place; (v) Wealth and quality of life) and in the economic field ((i) Capability of economic polarization/attractiveness; (ii) consistency of the productive structure and specialization base; (iii); Living standards, consumption and wellbeing; (iv) Degree of trust, uncertainty and expectations) are presented in detail, as well as the respective indicators and sub-dimensions which were used. Some practical issues regarding its implementation with regard to the sources of information used/available are taken in consideration and briefly highlighted. In section 4 the results of the practical application of this analytical grid to the parishes of Lisbon Metropolitan Area are discussed, through the presentation and analysis of the data obtained. Finally, in section 5, in a brief concluding note, the potential and limitations of this exercise are discussed, including some of the precautions to have with the use of the analytical framework which is suggested in this article.