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Modern estates and the production of Lisbon's suburbs: from the planned to the lived neighbourhood

Sandra Marques Pereira[*] and Madalena Corte-Real

Abstract

Alto da Barra and Portela are two modern estates designed by the same architect and located on two sides of the periphery of Lisbon: the west side, Costa do Sol, where the river meets the Atlantic and the east, with no label, which is upstream. The estates were planned and built in the same period (1960s to 1970s), the height of Lisbon's urban development. This article presents a comparative analysis of these estates: their plans, implementation, social appropriation and resilience, by exploring the sociological profile and place-attachment perceptions of their inhabitants. The analysis also contextualises the development of the estates within the consolidation of these two quite different Lisbon peripheries: the west side traditionally highly valued in relation to the east. An intensive methodology was developed—case studies of the two estates—combining quantitative (survey, inter-census analysis) and qualitative (interviews and documentary analysis) methods. In addition to the differences between the two estates, which were largely due to their specificities in terms of geographic location and status, both reveal significant feelings of place-attachment and a rejection of the suburbia label.

Keywords: Modern estates, Lisbon Metropolitan Area, Peripheries

Introduction

The development of Lisbon as a metropolis began under the right-wing dictatorship of António Salazar during the 1950s and reached its peak during the 1970s, which was the decade of the revolution (1974) and decolonisation. The factors conditioning this process were many, highlighting the urban planning and housing policies, transport network and morphology of this territory that was marked by a geographic singularity: the wide Tagus estuary that divides the metropolis into two—the north, which includes the city of Lisbon and which for this reason developed earlier and more intensely, and the south.

The northern section consists of four peripheral extensions: two inland and two beside the river—one on the west, where the river meets the Atlantic, the other upriver on the east. Reproducing what seems to have been a spatial and status differentiation of many cities internationally—related to the uneven distribution of air pollution and wind patterns—these two axes feature an 'eastern' extension that is poorer and more disadvantaged than the more highly valued 'western' extension (Heblich et al. 2021).

On planning policies,[1] the development of the Lisbon metropole was shaped by several municipal plans prepared from the 1940s on (Gonçalves 1981; Lobo 1995), including a regional plan at the turn of the 1960s[2] (Nunes 2013). However, few of these plans were ever implemented (Cavaco 2009: 114). As a result of the extreme regulatory ineffectiveness of the state and the

*Correspondence: s.marquespereira@iscte-iul.pt

DINÂMIA'CET—Centro de Estudos Sobre a Mudança Socioeconómica e o Território, ISCTE—Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Av. das Forças Armadas, 2W4-d, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal

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[1] Developed following the regulatory drive by Duarte Pacheco, a key figure in New State planning policy.

[2] The Lisbon Region Master Plan (1964).

lack of focused public investment, the general design of this territory depended largely on the private sector, which was the main actor in house building (Cavaco 2009; Guarda 2016; Pereira 1994), with illegal construction one of the main forms of urban expansion (Allen et al. 2004; Ferreira et al. 1985; Soares 2003). However, the importance of formal private developments is undeniable: some were integrated into focused plans that were generally the responsibility of large property companies, such as the modern estates that appeared during the 1960s (Ferreira 2010; Martins 1973; Nunes 2011), and others, such as single buildings, which were often constructed by the less 'sophisticated' figure of the builder. Both were implemented from the pre-existing nuclei of the peripheries and along the public transport, railway and road links (Barata-Salgueiro 1983, 2001), with proximity to Lisbon being the determining factor.

Facing these dynamics, this article has a double purpose. First, to provide a comparative analysis of two modern estates—Portela, in the eastern riverside periphery of Lisbon, and Alto da Barra in its western periphery, both of which were designed by the same architect—in terms of their plan, implementation, life trajectory and social appropriation. For this, our focus is on the social profile of the residents and their perceptions and views of their neighbourhoods, which are important elements for understanding the resilience of these housing models that have long been subject to intense criticism. Second, to contextualise the development of these estates as part of the consolidation of these two quite different (in symbolic, architectural, functional and social terms) peripheries.

We developed an intensive methodology that involved case studies of the two estates, articulating multiple methods designed and conducted in a comparative approach: a documentary analysis of the plans and their descriptive memories and other documents, such as property adverts; inter-census analysis (1991, 2001, 2011), surveys (Portela n=354; Alto da Barra n=114)[3]; and interviews

with residents[4] (Portela: 10; Alto da Barra: 20). The survey questionnaire and interview scripts were quite similar in both cases.

The article begins with a contextualization of the territorial evolution of these peripheries during the twentieth century, followed by a brief characterization of large modern estates in Portugal. After that, a presentation and comparative discussion of the estates is made: here, the justifying principles of the plans and the ways they were implemented—in architectural and urban terms, but also in relation to their target population—are the focus of the analysis. A comparative approach of the inhabitants' social profile and their perceptions on the estates and larger areas of residence is then discussed. We conclude with a final reflection on the contributions of this article to the urban development literature.

Two distinct suburbs in the Lisbon metropolitan area: west/east

Lisbon's western zone consists of Oeiras, which borders the capital and in which Alto da Barra is located; and Cascais. In addition to having a waterfront, both have a significant inland area (Fig. 1). For a long time, two cumulative valuation criteria have stood out: the waterfront, and within this, the seafront was much more highly regarded than the riverfront. In Lisbon, investment in the recreational relationship with the river is a recent reality that began in the 1990s, particularly with Expo 1998 (Castro et al. 1997).

Given its geographical characteristics, rail links, and proximity to Lisbon, the western seafront has favoured the elites since the end of the nineteenth century (with its beach and thermal spas). With the creation of the Propaganda Society, by the end of the 1920s, the 'Costa do Sol' (Sun Coast) branding highlighted a change in bathing practices towards the more indulgent and playful beach experience to the detriment of its therapeutic function (Machado 2000; Martins 2011).

Recognition of the area's exceptional nature was the justification for developing the country's first regional plan (which began in 1933 and was approved in 1948)—the Costa do Sol plan—which assigned the area two fundamental functions: tourism and quality residential (Pereira 1994). The plan suggested some functional and social differentiations within

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[3] In Portela the survey was conducted in 2014 and in Alto da Barra in 2020. A specialized company carried out the questionnaires through direct personal contact with the inhabitants (door to door), a process that was supervised by the researchers. In Portela, and given that the neighbourhood practically coincided with the parish, the sample was calculated from the total population of the parish (11,809). In Alto da Barra (a much smaller neighbourhood), this calculation was done based on the population of the correspondent statistical sub-section unit (560). In both, this calculation aimed for a representative sample with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of less than 5%. In Portela, this objective was achieved (N=354), unlike in Alto da Barra, where due to the pandemic only 114 could be carried out. In both cases, the fieldwork was preceded by contacts with members of the residents' associations. A letter explaining the project, the survey and the process of its application was distributed to the population in order to get their participation.

[4] Following the survey, in-depth interviews were carried out to explore in a comprehensive way the perceptions and experiences of the inhabitants. The selection of the interviewees was based on diversity, in terms of age (Portela interviewees were born between 1935 and 1980 and in Alto da Barra between 1930 and 1996) and residential trajectories. In both cases, snowball was the recruitment technique used to reach potential interviewees. It should also be noted that in both cases, at the end of the project, a presentation of the results was made to the residents of the respective neighbourhoods. To guarantee anonymity, the names used do not correspond to the real ones.

Fig. 1 Lisbon metropolitan area—north

the area with consequences in the status hierarchy of its territories: the three localities closest to Lisbon were labelled 'suburbs'; the following four, in one of which Alto da Barra is located, were designated beach areas for the middle-class and weekends; then Parede, which remained a beach for therapeutic/medical purposes; and finally, Estoril and Cascais (the towns more distant from Lisbon, more 'Atlantic', where there was already important investments) were to be an elegant beach centre and luxury tourism area (Lobo 1995; Pereira 1994).

At a time when cars were uncommon and highly valued assets, the plan highlighted their importance through a key urban and tourist infrastructure project—a scenic road (Fig. 2) called the 'Marginal', that followed the example of the southern European rivieras (Robert 2004). The 'Marginal' was built along the coast and connected all the towns from Lisbon to Cascais. It opened in 1940 (Henriques 2003), when Portugal, and Lisbon in particular, was a transit point for thousands of refugees fleeing war-torn Europe. This was also the year of the Exhibition of the Portuguese World (Corkill and Almeida 2009), a celebration of the New State's colonial empire that was taking place in the west of the city on its border with Oeiras. Its re-evaluation as a leisure area resulted in the removal of several factories to the east of the city (Folgado and Custódio 1999: 10).

The Costa do Sol in general, and Oeiras in particular, did not escape the demographic pressure resulting from the expansion of Lisbon's metropole between the 1950s and 1970s. The growth in demand for housing in Oeiras was accompanied by an increase in the proposals for changes to the Costa do Sol plan to incorporate new collective housing areas to replace existing single-family

Fig. 2 Panoramic road by the waterfront ('Marginal') in Oeiras (1950s) Source: Municipal Archive of Oeiras (PT/MOER/MO/NF/002/000082)

Fig. 3 Panoramic View of the industrial area in the eastern axis extending from Lisbon (1950). Source: Municipal Archive of Lisbon (PT/AMLSB/SPT/000195)

housing or for buildings in rural areas reconverted into urban areas (Quaresma 2009: 82), which were essentially aimed at the middle classes (Nunes 2011, 2013; Seixas 2021). The restrictions and control actions that were developed to maintain the attractiveness of the coastline, which was threatened by water pollution during the 1970s and 1980s, channelled housing pressure inland (Pereira 1994).

If leisure and high-quality housing were the western side's keynote, then on the eastern axis, extending from Lisbon to other municipalities along the Tagus (Loures and Moscavide/Sacavém, where Portela stands), were settled around industry (Fig. 3). The industrialisation of this area took off in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued expanding right up until the 1970s. (Folgado and Custódio 1999). Factories, warehouses and workers' villages were created in rural areas that had consisted of farms and convents, which were gradually incorporated into the periurban fabric. The investment in accessibility and transport (river, railway and road) was essential in retaining and developing this characteristic.

As for planning, Portugal's first two regional plans (developed during the early years of the New State) focused on these axes. However, unlike the Costa do Sol plan, the Moscavide-Vila Franca de Xira Regional Plan was not approved (Silva 1994), which can probably

be explained by the status distinctions between the two areas.

The railway line, private properties and state installations meant the river was inaccessible to the population (Pereira 2017). The riverside was reserved for productive activities, not for leisure, which reveals the mainly working-class social profile of the residents of this area. Residential development took place inland, behind the railway line. The weakness of planning, the absence of public housing for the lower social classes (of which this area had many) and the under-valuation of the entire area encouraged the construction of informal housing, which marked the built environment of this location at the beginning of the 1970s (Barata-Salgueiro 1977; Gaspar 1996).

With the bankruptcy of the industrial economic model in the 1970s, the entire riverside of this area was subject to progressive degradation and abandonment in a process that was not to be reversed until the end of the twentieth century.

Modern large estates and the suburbanisation of Lisbon

Modern large estates—a housing and urban planning solution for the masses—were the tools, *par excellence*, for the universal public housing policies of the post-war welfare state (Turkington et al. 2004). They were also an important housing solution in the context of the expansion of the metropole. Therefore, they were one of the residential models (in spatial and life terms) at the core of the European suburbs. Understanding their development in sociological and architectural terms is central to understanding their resilience and the social transformation of the suburbs and their lifestyles.

This housing model, which unquestionably contributed to improving the living conditions, democratisation and modernisation of several societies, was the object of many criticisms from the outset. The determinants of its (lack of) success are many and—although here exponentially due to their frequent combined and extreme application—they replicate many of those that are likely to contribute to the success or failure of other residential models: from the social profile of the residents, with estates housing larger concentrations of socially disadvantaged groups being more vulnerable, to the relationship with the urban fabric showing a clear and direct relationship between spatial and social segregation (Hess et al. 2018; Turkington et al. 2004; Rowlands et al. 2009).

Lisbon modern estates have particularities that are significantly justified by the inexistence of a post-war welfare state (which in the Portuguese case was made unfeasible by the dictatorship) and by the absence of a universalist public housing policy (Pereira 2016).

Fig. 4 Modern estates in the north of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, with plans from 1950–1970. Source: adapted from Guarda (2016)

In democratic Portugal, direct public housing supply remained 'residual' and intended almost exclusively for the poor (Allen et al. 2004). Still, the indirect (public policy of) subsidised mortgages was a central measure in supporting the middle classes and giving them access to homeownership.

This model emerged late and was largely promoted by the private sector that, by offering access to homeownership, favoured segments with some economic capacity or access to credit (Nunes 2011). This presupposed some bureaucratic literacy alien to the large community of poorly educated. Although an important part of the plans was conceived during the 1960s, as Fig. 4 shows, they were mainly implemented during the 1970s and 1980s. In Lisbon, too, these estates were decisive in creating its many peripheries.

Their expansion also marks the beginning of the professionalisation of estate agencies, often dominated by large economic groups that frequently focused on two segments of this market—holiday resorts and housing estates (Martins 1973). The professionalisation of the estate agency and the expansion of construction also presented an opportunity to architects: some of whom, like the author of our case studies (Fernando Silva, 1914–83), specialised in this 'product', initiating a (minority) dynamic of entrepreneurialisation of

architecture (Monteiro 2004). Even so, of the first modern estates built during the dictatorship, two public initiatives in the east of Lisbon (Olivais Norte and Sul) stand out.

As in France (Lefebvre 1960), so too in Portugal, where the modern *grand ensemble* did not receive a good press, it was referred to pejoratively in the media as *dormitórios* (dormitories) (Nunes 2011). In general, they intended to include infrastructures and facilities that imbued them with some autonomy; however, they were marked by their mono-functionality in practice (Cavaco 2009; Nunes 2007). Nonetheless, was this media image matched by the perceptions of the people who lived in these estates?

Portela and Alto da Barra: the master plan, differences and similarities

While they were both contemporary (both planned in late 1960 then constructed during the 1970s and early 1980s), designed by the same architect (Fernando Silva), both private sector and located on the immediate outskirts of Lisbon, these estates remain very different because of:

(i) Their location, which is a key factor in defining property values, the target population and the project itself in terms of design, morphology and density;
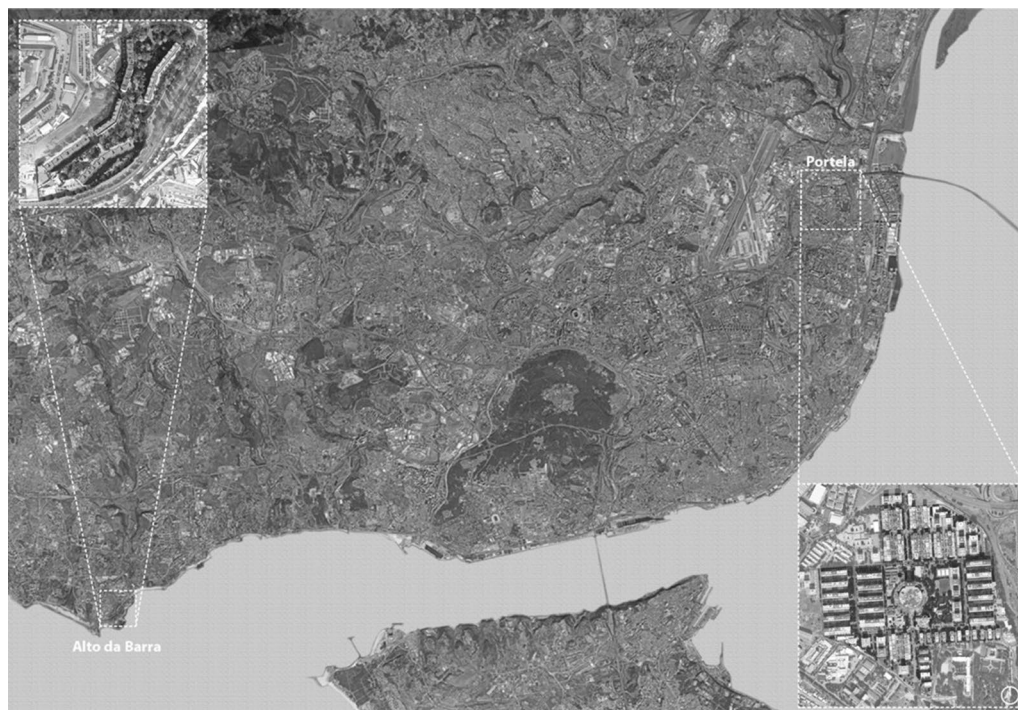
Fig. 5 Aerial photographs of the two estates and respective locations in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area

(ii) The pre-existence of binding plans that had an impact on the project options;

(iii) The profile and *modus operandi* of the developer and other actors involved in the process.

As for location, Portela, on the eastern outskirts of Lisbon, which at the time was a low-value location, next to the capital on the part of Loures municipality beside the Tagus. The neighbourhood's surroundings were very deprived in urban terms, being home to several slums.

Alto da Barra is located in the Costa do Sol, separated from the sea by the 'Marginal', an iconic infrastructure essential for constructing the area's image as a leisure zone. This road was a basic constraint on the estate as is noted in the plan: 'the area near the 'Marginal' should be a certain width, with high-quality and spaced outbuildings that take the landscape perspective of the 'Marginal' into account' (Silva 1962: 2). The estate was part of a vast plan for the area (which included detached houses and a small public estate), the original name of which, Casal da Medrosa, was incompatible with the ambitions for this new location, leading to it being renamed Alto da Barra as part of an estate agency marketing strategy that was unusual at that time.

Those and other requirements were also a result of the Costa do Sol plan, albeit not an essential consequence,

which was created precisely to enhance and safeguard the area's exclusiveness. The existence of a plan, together with the 'symbolic and social pressure' of building in an exceptional area, were significant constraints that did not exist in Portela.

These fundamental differences resulted in different challenges. In Portela, the challenge was how to condense into one estate the many qualities that would compensate for the weaknesses of this lower value land and separate itself from it. In Alto da Barra, the challenge was almost the reverse: enhancing the characteristics of high value land and creating a project that can stand out in that context without clashing with it. In both cases, the aim was to create high-quality estates consisting of apartments for sale (which was still unusual then, since most people rented) to people who could afford to buy (with prices higher in Alto da Barra than they were in Portela).

Different challenges require different responses (Fig. 5). In Portela, the solution adopted was to 'cancel out' the surroundings by creating an enclosure (Pereira 2016). The buildings were arranged perpendicular to the new centre, where modernity was marked by mass consumption, a novelty in Portugal. The shopping centre gave way to the town centre (Cohen 1996), which became an important element in the construction of this neighbourhood. In addition, the plan also accommodated 'all the necessary amenities in each sector: spiritual, cultural,

Fig. 6 General perspective of Alto da Barra

Fig. 7 Portela's high density

recreational and sport' (including schools) that would be capable of conferring the area some autonomy. This despite the assumption that labour would be dependent on Lisbon, with Portela defined as 'a typical example of a satellite nucleus in relation to the city' (Silva 1969: 3).

This enclosure of Portela contrasts with the 'extrovert' character of Alto da Barra, where the idea was to see-and-be-seen as well as to enjoy. The buildings were arranged parallel to and facing the two elements marking the zone—the most important being the sea, and the coastal road (Fig. 6). The 'excellent natural conditions of the place' (Silva 1962: 2), the insertion in Costa do Sol combined with its proximity to Lisbon, gave it a double potential: housing and tourism. This duality of use explains, to a large extent, some of the planned facilities (the swimming pool) and the focus on one-bedroom apartments in one of the housing blocks (block C). It is probably the peculiarity of this block that explains the large proportion of rented properties,[5] which contrasts with the rest of the neighbourhood and even with Portela, where most properties were owner-occupied.[6] Portela's strictly residential and family nature explain the prevalence of larger, mainly three-bedroom apartments.

Density is another trait that distinguishes the two neighbourhoods: in Alto da Barra, the Costa do Sol plan highlighted the occupancy rate issue, which is visible in its low density (34 buildings in five blocks and 476 dwellings in seven hectares) in contrast to Portela as perceived by Fig. 7 (196 buildings mainly in blocks and a few low towers and 4,557 dwellings in 45 hectares), as an option to enhance its profitability (Mota 1994). These differences are confirmed by the number of residents in the estates. According to the 2011 census (data for 2021 are not yet available), Portela had a population of 10,164, while Alto da Barra was home to 560.

There are also striking differences regarding the developer's profile and *modus operandi*. Portela's developer is a self-made man who entered the construction business after starting a business in Angola during the 1950s (Mota 1994; Pereira and Guerra 2018). The architect had an exclusive role as designer, unlike in Alto da Barra, where his influence and control were much more extensive due to his status as a founding partner of the developer, Mercator, which had a strategy based on precise objectives,[7] and which was joined in this project by the Luso-Swedish construction company, Luseca (Vinagre 2011).

Here, the architect's control required a great deal of investment in recruiting an expert team of individuals and companies with a recognised pedigree (ibidem), such as Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles, a well-known landscape architect in Portugal for his work and political and civic engagement in environmental protection. This, together with the limited social recognition of Fernando Silva, explains our survey result showing that residents are more aware of the landscape architect than they are of the architect.[8] The general lack of knowledge about the architect was also a conclusion of the survey carried out in Portela.[9]

Unsurprisingly, different ways of thinking and doing had obvious consequences for the final result. In Portela, there was a fragmentation in the plan's construction as the developer sold the 196 plots to 134 builders responsible for constructing the buildings (Miguel 2014). This

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[5] 60% of the residents of Block C in Alto da Barra are tenants, in the others blocks the proportion ranges from 10%–19%.

[6] In Portela 75% of the apartments are owner-occupied.

[7] In terms of location, the preference for 'areas of great expansion', mid-price, 'high standard and fast and modern methods of construction, quality of public spaces (Proconsulte, A—Notas sobre um plano de realização de empreendimentos habitacionais. s/data, p.5, Esp. Silva).

[8] 2.6% know who the architect is and 11.4% know who the landscape architect is.

[9] 3.6% know who the architect is.

non-compliance with the plan by the developer (which was also the result of a lack of legislation assigning the developer any responsibility, something introduced over the following decades) resulted in the architect losing control at this stage, which had two important consequences. First, the planned amenities and outdoor public spaces were not provided; second, there was great diversity in the interior of the buildings: from the materials used and the layout of dwellings. The exteriors of the buildings and the general structure of the plan remained relatively faithful to the original, which allowed for 'controlled' development of the estate over the following decades, largely as a result of pressure applied by the residents who, as early as 1975, formed a very active association that was able to put pressure on the local authorities and that even contributed to the area being designated an independent parish.

Mercator was responsible for all the planned works in Alto da Barra, including the buildings and the various facilities, which here were less ambitious (a shopping centre, a recreational area with a swimming pool and children's playground), and had a more peripheral status in the estate (the shopping centre was not intended only for residents of Alto da Barra). Figures 8 and 9 show how the fragmented construction in Portela contrasted with Alto da Barra: the Portela advert refers to the marketing of a single building (plot 74). In contrast, the one for Alto da Barra advertises the whole estate through Mercator. Even so, the facilities described were not built until after the architect's death in 1983, albeit with the important involvement of Mercator, which owned the land allocated for these developments (Vinagre 2011). A residents' association was also formed here, which, at the time the swimming pool was built (to which the children's playground and sports park were added), and at Mercator's suggestion, was transformed into a club (Alto da Barra Club created in 1993).

From the plan to the neighbourhood
Islands of social distinction
The historical context in which the two estates were occupied during the years after the revolution was marked by specific events, by a political and social environment dominated by the left and great instability. Of the events that took place, two are worth highlighting: decolonisation and the return of thousands of people of all social classes from the former colonies, and; the development of a short-lived movement of house occupations that (Bandeirinha et al. 2018), along with other factors, such as the political and economic instability, contributed to a fall in house prices. Despite this, the existence of a limited credit system that was hampered by high interest

Fig. 8 Portela building advert, 1975

Fig. 9 Alto da Barra advert by Mercator, 1978

Table 1 Residents (subsections) of Portela and Alto da Barra 1991, 2001, 2011

	1991	2001	2011
Portela	14,230	12,599	10,164
Alto da Barra	730	636	560

Source: Census, National Statistics

Table 2 Proportion of residents (resident population aged 21 and over) with a university degree in Portela, Alto da Barra, the respective municipalities (Loures and Oeiras), Metropolitan Area of Lisbon and Portugal

Portela	Alto da Barra	Municipality of Loures	Municipality of Oeiras	Lisbon Metropolitan Area	Portugal
49.9%	62.9%	15.1%	32.9%	21.1%	15%

Source: Census 2011, National Statistics

rates and generally very low incomes reduced the range of potential buyers 'to certain groups with above-average incomes' (Pereira 1983: 738), a reality well expressed here by one Alto da Barra resident:

> *At that time, this was in 75 [...] we didn't know about or used credit [...] we didn't know how to deal with banks, so we either had the money to buy or didn't (Rita, born 1934, came to the area from the former colonies in 1973 and to Alto da Barra in 1976).*

In both neighbourhoods, there were important changes between 1991 and 2011, such as their progressive population decline (Table 1). It is clear from the 2011 Census that the residents of the two estates were much better educated than the average for their municipalities and the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, with more than 45% of the population of Portela and Alto da Barra having a university degree (Table 2).

Profession, which is strictly dependent on the level of education, is an important indicator currently used across multiple typologies of social class (Goldthorpe and McKnight 2004). Generally speaking, those individuals with higher levels of education are associated with the middle or upper classes. In fact, both neighbourhoods include a large number of these social groups. This finding is echoed in the residents' perceptions, for whom the neighbourhoods were a kind of 'tacit gated communities', which is consistent with the architect's original intention in designing the two plans.

> *…this was an enclave in the middle of all this, an island… (Eva, born 1948, came to Portela from Lisbon in 1979).*

> *this part was like we were the foreigners; it was completely different (Rita, born 1934, came to the area from the former colonies in 1973 and to Alto da Barra in 1976).*

In Alto da Barra, the perception of social distinction was not limited to the comparison between an 'us' (those of the neighbourhood) and 'them' (those of the surrounding areas): this duality also exists within the neighbourhood, and here the criterion for the social differentiation was tenure. On the one hand were the people who owned their homes, the genuine 'belongers', while on the other were the tenants, most of whom were in Block C, who were the 'outsiders'.

> *There are two types of residents here: those who live in rented houses and either stay here or leave after two or three months. Those who bought here many years ago and continue to live here, many also having children who bought houses who live here (Rui, born 1929, came to Alto da Barra from Lisbon in 2008).*

The surveys corroborate these findings about the social profile of residents (Fig. 10) and the differences between the two cases. While in both, the largest professional group was specialists from intellectual and scientific activities, Alto da Barra (in Oeiras, the municipality with the highest median income in Portugal), has a big advantage over the more socially heterogeneous Portela. In Alto da Barra, the sum of the two most qualified professional groups is 83%, 35% more than in Portela (48%). In socio-economic and cultural terms, a 'highly privileged population' was also one of the key selling points when marketing local shops (Galerias Alto da Barra).

These data show that, despite their similarities, the differences in social composition between the two neighbourhoods prove the status superiority of the Alto da Barra location over that of Portela: a superiority that was apparent from the outset in the different cost of housing between them. Having a highly qualified population was an essential condition for accumulating the necessary social capital for the development of a 'civic urbanism' (Kapucu 2011), which in Portela (through the residents' association) was its main instrument of consolidation. At the beginning:

> *There was nothing at all. It was just access to the eight five-storey buildings. I don't know if they had people in them or not, because there was very little movement, there was no electric light in the streets … it scared me at first, but then the house—I frankly liked, it grabbed me there a bit (Carla, born 1950, came to Portela from Lisbon in 1975)*
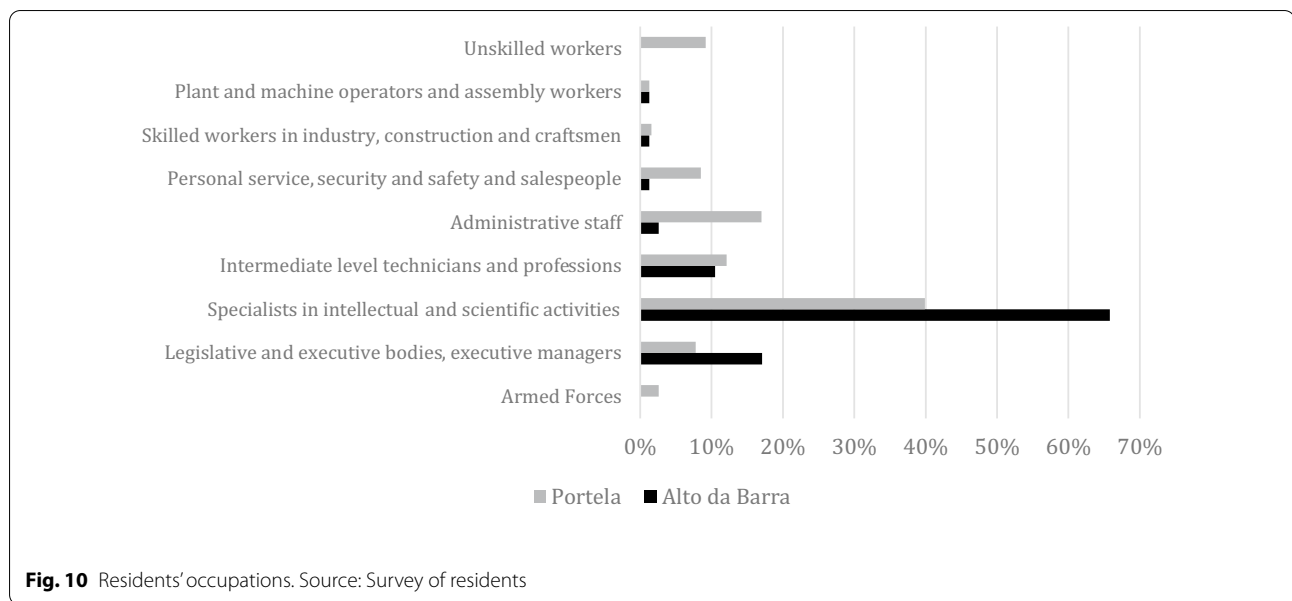
Fig. 10 Residents' occupations. Source: Survey of residents

Table 3 Resident population by nationality in the housing estates and Lisbon in the 1991, 2001 and 2011 census

	1991			2001			2011		
	A. Barra	Portela	Lisbon	A. Barra	Portela	Lisbon	A. Barra	Portela	Lisbon
Portugal	76.8%	97.3%	97.8%	84.1%	96.5%	95.3%	92.1%	97.4%	91.2%
Brazil	6.8%	0.4%	0.2%	1.9%	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	2%
Europe	5.5%	0.4%	0.6%	3%	0.5%	1%	6.1%	1%	1.6%
Others	10.8%	1.9%	1.4%	11%	2.7%	3.2%	1.1%	0.8%	5.2%

Source: National Statistics

But there are other differences, including those related to the trajectory of their residents. Combining the census data with the surveys, some observations are worth highlighting. First, in the period referred to in the 1991 Census (Table 3), Alto da Barra had a very large number of foreign residents (23.2%), in contrast to Portela (2.7%) and Lisbon (2.2%). This can be explained by the Costa do Sol's traditional vocation in welcoming foreigners with money, without forgetting the existence of nearby international institutions: NATO and St Julian's international school.

Both neighbourhoods also present important centrifugal trajectories (Lisbon-periphery), proving one of the multiple trajectories that made the peripheries (Pereira and Ferreira 2016). However, in both cases, this trajectory overlaps with others. In Alto da Barra, the proportion of individuals who already lived in the area (Oeiras or Cascais) is much greater than in Portela, where there was a significant number of residents from the former colonies.

This is not a suburb: on location and place identity

If location is the argument justifying this residential choice in both cases, its attributes are very different. They are in tune with the arguments used by the architect in the two plans. At Portela, the proximity to Lisbon, while dependent on the car, was the descriptive attribute of this priority. In this sense, the residents do not consider the neighbourhood a periphery or suburb,[10] rejecting its negative stereotypes (Harris 2018), but rather a place with its own identity. There is a relationship of functional dependence in relation to the capital that meets its definition in the plan as a 'nucleus-satellite of Lisbon' (1969): the best indicator of this dependence is the population that worked/work in Lisbon (60%), which is in contrast to the equivalent data for Alto da Barra (33%).

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[10] In the survey the respondents were asked if they agree, on a scale of 1(-) to 10(+), with the statement: 'The estate is a neighbourhood on Lisbon's periphery, like many others'. In Portela the mean was 3.31 and in Alto da Barra 2.81.

In Alto da Barra, proximity to the sea is featured not only as the neighbourhood's greatest asset but is also as the main part of its identity, which supports a certain life-style in which living is associated with leisure. The idea of the house as the focus of routine daily life (a time–space of obligations, repeated acts that are often stressful and unpleasant) is lightened by turning the habitat into a 'resort' or 'leisure zone': experiences that are made possible by proximity to the beach and the sea.

> *It gives me the feeling that we are on holiday most of the time, which is a great thing for those who come from work, from the city, to get here and find we are in a completely different and much more relaxed environment. I really like the sea, but I also like the garden. This has it all (Marta, born 1954, came to Alto da Barra in 1979, was brought up in the axis).*

Unlike Portela, in Alto da Barra, identity autonomy and the associated idea of a de-routinised lifestyle coast are, above all, attributes associated with its municipal context: Oeiras, which, for some respondents (as a rule those who already live in the area and not those from Lisbon, who tend to have a better appreciation of the city), has the advantage of being close to Lisbon without any of its disadvantages: the 'confusion, insecurity, traffic, stress, noise'—stereotypical attributes of the city that are based on the (often morally charged) symbolic urban/rural dichotomy (Olde and Oosterlynck 2021). Besides, it also has a functional autonomy visible in the proportion of respondents who work in Oeiras.

Although there are different levels of intensity and closeness in internal social relations, the estates show high levels of place-attachment. While the term village is used in both cases as a positive designation to define the estate, neighbourhood is used more frequently. Both are associated with identity, community, rootedness and high bonding social capital: read 'internal' social networks (Putnam 2000).

> *I consider this to be a village. [...] in Portugal, there is no neighbourhood like this (David, born 1937, came from the former colonies in 1975, and to Portela in 1979).*
> *It's a village, a Portuguese village [...] but it has a good quality of life because everything is close by (Paulo, born 1938, came to Alto da Barra in 2005, was living in the axis)*

Together, the urban design of the estate and existing facilities are factors that, in the opinion of the residents of the two states who refer to them, have contributed to this reality. Moreover, the associativism in both estates and their spaces/amenities is important in aggregating local social networks.

> *The fruit of this relationship that I have here in the association is that I created a group of friends … we meet and go on holiday… (Paula, born 1951, came from the former colonies in 1975, and to Portela in 1976)*
> *Since all commerce is centralised in this shopping, people get to know each other inside it (David, born 1937, came from the former colonies in 1975, and to Portela in 1979)*
> *Leisure time is spent at the club, people already know who they will meet there, people arrange things, call each other, send messages… (Luís, born 1963, came to Alto da Barra in 2005, was living in the area)*

The functional autonomy of Oeiras—which is largely the result of an urban competitiveness strategy (Cochrane 2006) developed by a controversial mayor in recent decades and which is focused on reinforcing its tertiary vocation in new technology business areas (Barata-Salgueiro 1997, 2001)—is highly valued by the residents of Alto da Barra and is linked to a sense of 'municipal patriotism'.

> *Jobs were created in this municipality [...] In economic terms, it is remarkable because it is no longer a dormitory, people come here to work: I mean, there is an exchange of people. It is remarkable (Alberto, born 1930, came to Alto da Barra from the former colonies in 1970).*

In Oeiras, the Costa do Sol brand is now complemented, if not surpassed, by another that is a result of marketing (Colomb 2012): the 'Oeiras Valley'. This new brand has ambitions to convert the territory into 'the next Silicon Valley, a place that attracts the best talent, ideas, and technology'.[11] Significant investments have been made in the area surrounding the estate in recent decades: improvements in the quality of seawater, construction of a boardwalk, a marina with restaurants, bars, an ocean swimming pool and, in 2018, a campus of a well-known Portuguese university's economics faculty (in the neighbouring municipality).

However, those improvements have not resulted in any significant change to the symbolic status of this territory, which has always been one of exception. Portela benefitted from the symbolic and material turnaround of the zone following Expo98 and the regeneration of this entire area, which was anchored in recovering the city's relationship with the river (Ferreira and Indovina 1999).

> *The Expo works, the construction of the Vasco da Gama bridge, this completely changed the neigh-*

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[11] Statement by the mayor of Oeiras, available at www.oeirasvalley.com

bourhood here, they built good accesses, then they removed a series of shacks that were here in the area. It clearly benefitted the eastern area [...] it is a modern area. The architecture of Expo is beautiful, and I think it gives another vision of the city (Eva, born 1948, came to Portela from Lisbon in 1979)

Expo98 and Parque das Nações, the new area of the city resulting from that event, which today commands some of the highest house prices in Portugal, represented a turning point in the geography of value in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area: the status dichotomy that strongly favoured the western periphery over the eastern began to fade.

Conclusions

By analysing two case studies in the Lisbon area, this article adds new insights to the existing literature on urban development by exploring key issues. These include: (i) the construction and development of the 'peripheries' and the role of modern estates within them; (ii) the confrontation between estate plans, their implementation and experience, namely the dynamics of placemaking and identity construction (Courage 2021); (iii) the processes of estate agent professionalisation and the corporatisation of architecture.

These issues are all interconnected, but some final reflections can be made for each.

The first issue takes us back to the permanent revisable character of the concept of peripheries, and particularly to the importance of location in determining the options open to developers, which have obvious impacts on (i) the social composition of the planned neighbourhoods, and (ii) the resilience of (apparently) anachronistic housing models, of such modern estates. 'Location' and its economic, social and symbolic value is mutable and depends, for example, on the existence of regeneration strategies in the respective territories.

The second issue, which is closely related to the other two, returns us to several topics, particularly the process of making liveable neighbourhoods, which seems particularly challenging in the suburbs. The insufficiency of institutional and legislative conditions regarding urban regulation in Portugal in the 1960s and 1970s was an obstacle to the effective professionalisation and accountability of estate agents (third issue). Under these circumstances, the urban development of many estates was postponed, left to the mercy of the agents involved: the local authorities (namely the municipalities) or residents. The case of Portela shows that the 'right to urbanism'—the development of public spaces and communal facilities—is not independent of the residents' economic and social power, more specifically, on their ability to

understand local needs, their lobbying capacity and organisational skills. In this case, the side effect of the residents' action was their involvement in placemaking the neighbourhood, which in turn reinforced their sense of belonging and 'collective identity'.

Finally, and still related to the third issue, this article offers another contribution: the importance of recognising the authorship of a residential architecture removed to anonymity. A recognition either by its residents, whose architectural illiteracy devalues the knowledge of who designed their estate, building and apartment, or by the mainstream architecture field that tends to ever state the value of the 'architect-artist' to the detriment of the 'architect-entrepreneur'.

Declarations

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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