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ID 1486 | FROM KNOWLEDGE OF THE TERRITORY TO THE SPATIAL PLANNING CULTURE

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ABSTRACT: Consolidating the paradigm of territorial governance (with civil society increasingly and more actively participating in spatial planning) with the assumptions of sustainable governance comes up against the lack of robust knowledge of the territory and a civic spatial planning culture, both from civil society as well as political and technical decision-makers. In this context, it is proposed as a starting question how it is possible to develop a greater awareness on the territory and a robust civic spatial planning culture for both in these new “actors” and the political and technical decision-makers so they see it as a common good and a scarce resource, ensuring its sustainable development. Underlying this question is another of no less importance: what is the role of school education, more specifically the Geography discipline of secondary school, in the processes of collective learning about the territory and spatial planning culture? After the theoretical study of the concept of territory, spatial planning and territorial planning culture, these are confronted with a representative sample of civil society through questionnaires applied to: - Secondary school students (who have not yet intervened in the reconfiguration of the territory), with or without frequency in the Geography discipline (in order to verify to what extent the geography, of this level of education, provides a better knowledge of the aforementioned concepts); - Parents/guardians, representative of the adult population, who have already intervened, consciously or unconsciously, in territorial reconfiguration, but who do not have direct responsibilities in spatial planning.

KEYWORDS: territory, spatial planning e spatial planning culture

1 OPERATION

With the purpose of assessing the knowledge that the civil society has of the territory, spatial planning and spatial planning culture concepts, two questionnaires were conceived and were applied to two universes of

analysis: school population, without intervention in the territory, and citizens, who may have already intervened in the territory (parents guardians).

The questionnaires are based on the theoretical basis, presenting three sets of affirmations identified as the territory concept (first group), spatial planning (second group) and the spatial planning culture (third group), that allow the understanding the organization of the questionnaire as a whole. Before each affirmation, the respondent chooses between "totally disagree" (1) and "totally agree" (6). It also includes option 7 that corresponds to "I do not know". The decision of the respondents is decisive to know the territorial culture of each of the universes of analysis.

It should be noted that the difference between the questionnaire of the students and that of the parents guardians is based on the reduction of affirmations in each thematic group (table 1).

Theme	Territory		Spatial planning		Spatial planning culture	
	Students	Parents guardians	Students	Parents guardians	Students	Parents guardians
Affirmations number	28	18	8	6	20	15

Table 1 – Affirmations number by theme. Source: Sample - Own survey (fieldwork conducted in 2016)

The selected sample focuses on secondary schools located in the cities of Viseu and Aveiro. The choice of these municipalities, belonging to the NUTS II Center, is based on the fact that, i) according to the PNPT, both are part of the Leiria-Coimbra-Aveiro-Viseu strategic polygon with the potential to contribute to a competitive, integrated economy and open; ii) are the two NUTS II municipalities with positive demographic trends between 2001 and 2011, and ii) have a resident population in 2011 (77 463 and 99 593, respectively).

Of the 358 questionnaires applied to the school population and parents guardians, 190 were considered valid, in the case of the first universe, and 138 in the second one (53.1% of the predicted sample, in the case of the first, and 38.5%, in the case of the second).

2 THE CIVIL SOCIETY VS TERRITORIAL CULTURES

2.1 "TERRITORY" COMPONENT

In the last decades, "territory" has become an important mechanism of political and social intervention, but the divergences (and ambiguities) in the intrinsic uses and meanings, make it a polysemic term.

In order to deepen and improve the concept in both samples, we propose affirmations about the multiple perspectives of the territory concept - such a) as physical support, b) as a political-administrative space, c) resources source (territorial asset/ scarce resource and common good), d) as living space and e) as a system.

In order to know the territory conceptual perspectives prevailing in civil society - the school population (without intervention in the territory) and adults (parents guardians), two criteria were used:

- i. a group of ten affirmations - top ten - which obtained the highest percentage values (agreement or disagreement) and, in this case, reflect a position of agreement with the conceptual perspectives presented;
- ii. the frequency with which, in this top ten, the affirmations associated with each of the conceptual perspectives of territory arise;

It is concluded that the three groups - students with or without Geography and parents guardians - present themselves with different positions between the territory conception (table 2).

Position	Students with Geography		Students without Geography		Parents guardians	
	%	Conceptual perspective	%	Conceptual perspective	%	Conceptual perspective
1*	96,8	Physical support	84,4	Resources source	94,9	Political-administrative space
2*	91,5	Political-administrative space	84,0	Living space	92,8	Source of resources
3*	91,5	Living space	81,3	Political-administrative space	92,8	Political-administrative space
4*	90,4	Political-administrative space	82,3	Living space	92,8	Living space
5*	89,4	Political-administrative space	80,2	Physical support	90,6	System
6*	88,3	Political-administrative space	79,2	Political-administrative space	90,6	Resources source
7*	88,3	Resources source	78,9	Living space	90,6	Resources source
8*	88,2	System	78,1	Political-administrative space	88,4	Physical support
9*	86,0	System	78,1	Resources source	88,4	Living space
10*	84,0	Living space	77,9	System	87,0	Living space

Table 2 - Territorial conceptual perspective, by priority. Top ten affirmations (first criterion)
Source: Sample - Own survey (fieldwork conducted in 2016)

But there are points in common.

- Considering that the territory perspective as a physical support has more relevance for the group of students with geography (taking into account the first criterion), it do not stand out in the three universes, when the second criterion of analysis is taken into account.
- In all three groups, the traditional territory conception as political-administrative space is still very much rooted when one thinks of territory.
- For students without Geography and parents guardians, although the territory view as a resources source (territorial asset/ scarce resource and common good) is more recent than systemic view, it is with the latter that both groups show to be less familiar.

In the case of the students with the Geography, and in a first analysis - by order of appearance in the top ten - it is evident that the territory perspective as physical support is the one closest to them (table 2).

But, with a more detailed analysis, these students reveal affinities, mainly, with the territory view that conceives it as a political-administrative space. In a less prominent place, they also conceive it as a lived space.

Both the conceptual perspective that regards the territory as a resources source and the one that sees it as a system are at the same level of importance because, taking into account the first criterion, is the first that stands out in relation to the second, but if the analysis is extended to the second criterion in which the roles are reversed (figure 1).

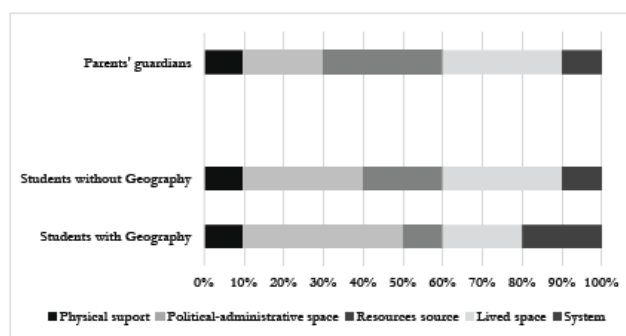


Figure 1 – Territory perspectives of top ten frequency (second criterion)
Source: Sample - Own survey (fieldwork conducted in 2016)

The territory view as a political-administrative space continues to be taken into great consideration, however, the influence of the postmodernist paradigm is undeniable, insofar as it is confirmed by these students, the territory conception as an identity Individual and collective support, anchored in a social space and a lived space, placing this perspective in the third position (taking into account the two criteria). As for students who do not have the Geography discipline, the options are different relatively to the previous group.

Taking into the top ten account, the territorial perspective that presents itself as the first choice is the one that regards the territory as a resources source. This trend is confirmed by the other analysis criteria (table 2).

The following are the perspectives that have the greatest consensus and which conceive it as a political-administrative space and as a lived space. However, administrative decentralization and the fact that there is not always an explicit administrative territory delimitation, makes this conceptual approach insufficient so, in order of choice, these students prefer the second.

This is reflected, on the one hand, in the exclusion of the affirmations associated with the concept of property, and on the other, in the approximation to the territory perspective as a lived space, an approximation that can be understood as an extension of the reference and valuation of the territory intangible heritage, mentioned in the affirmation that obtained the highest percentage value - "The territory is both a material heritage (land, forest, etc.) and an intangible heritage (language, culture, etc.)".

Regarding the territory vision as a lived space, it should be pointed out that it presents itself in a relevant position in relation to what it regards as political-administrative space, which shows that these students are close to the thinking line of the postmodern paradigm, whose space is conceived as influenced by individual and collective (social) experiences.

About the territory conceptual perspective as physical support, even if it is close to them, it does not have the importance that reached in the first group of students to be placed in a more modest position.

Although the conceptual territory perspectives as a resources source and as lived space are the ones that have more adhesion by the parents guardians, since they are ones that hold the highest frequency of affirmations in the top ten, which considers it as political-administrative space also has a prominent place (table 2 and figure 1), since it is this vision of territory that reaches the highest value on the part of these respondents.

As for the territory vision as physical support, it's here too, as in the group of students who does not attend Geography, it is little valued. The traditional territory conception as a political-administrative space is still quite ingrained.

2.2 "SPATIAL PLANNING" COMPONENT

The spatial planning was the exclusive domain of researchers, technicians and policy makers but, today, it is spreading to common sense, imposed by the Central Administration, by the guidelines of the European Community or disseminated by the media.

But does civil society use it with content?

Considering several authors and legal documents, it is intended to identify, in the two samples, common points in the conception and functions attribution to the term spatial planning, resulting in the knowledge that with what spatial planning perspective - land use planning and spatial planning - civil society identifies itself.

What is spatial planning? What is it for? Who is responsible for its preparation/ application?

These are the questions underlying the affirmations presented in the second part of the questionnaire in order to know what the students of the secondary education (eleventh year) and de parents guardians understand by the term spatial planning and what it implies.

According to the options taken, one intends to know under what perspective - land use planning or spatial planning - each of the two groups of students and parents guardians think about spatial planning, that is, with which they are more familiar and which is still far from universal, when it comes to spatial planning.

Although distinct, the affirmations in the questionnaire, belonging to the two sub-themes later, are analysed according to the same criteria: by the options of both groups of students and parents guardians - of agreement or disagreement - one realizes if they approach the of land use planning or spatial planning perspective.

Analysing the students' options, both groups assume spatial planning as "public policy", "defender of the public interest". However, in view of it as public function, while the Geography students and parents guardians assumes it, without any doubt, the group that does not have the discipline shows some ambiguity in their choices.

As for the second aspect all groups take less defined positions.

According to the criteria mentioned above, in terms of the spatial planning functions and the identification of those responsible for their elaboration and application, it is verified that there is a clear approximation to the spatial planning perspective of the three groups.

Two approaches are safeguarded from the perspective of land use planning.

The first, is when it is verified that in most of the students (with and without Geography) and the parents guardians, there is a strong propensity to consider that spatial planning has the regulating function of the space use and occupation. Here, there is still an influence of the modern paradigm and consequent technological territory vision, which lasts until the present day.

	Affirmations		
	Students with Geography	Students without Geography	Parents guardians
<i>Land use planning</i>	2	1	1
<i>Spatial planning</i>	4	5	4
Total	6	6	5²

Table 3 - Spatial planning perspectives – Land use planning and spatial planning by affirmations frequency¹

The other exception is when the behaviour of the two students group is analysed, with respect to the responsibilities attribution of those who elaborate/ apply it, where there is an approximation to land use planning, but in an unclear way, since the percentages are very close between agreement and disagreement (1.0% in the case of the students with the frequency of geography and 4.3% in the case of the other students group).

These two exceptions are a reflection of the stubbornness of the modern paradigm in keeping to the surface of the change "revolt waters" and consequent techno-rational territory vision, based on the rationalism of scientific knowledge.

At the level of spatial planning policies, the transition from land use planning to spatial planning is slow, witnessing even today the coexistence of the two territorial policies.

But if these exceptions may obscure the clarity of the analysis, since they demonstrate that there is still a strong tendency to "place" spatial planning from the perspective of land-use planning, it is clear that the three universes of analysis visibly identify with spatial planning vision (table 3). Following the presented and in conclusion, the generality of three groups considers spatial planning: as an integrating and global factor and as a rational utilization territory factor, with the underlying intention of developing it in a sustainable manner, making it competitive (valuing existing resources), safeguarding the quality of life of the population.

¹ The difference between the questionnaire of the students and that of the parents guardians is based on the reduction of affirmations in each thematic group

Here, there is a government assumptions appreciation based on the sustainability paradigm, which presupposes the allocation of the best territory use, through a reflection on the capacity to resources use without compromising the futures generations.

2.3 "SPATIAL PLANNING CULTURE" COMPONENT

In view of the analysis of the various various spatial planning systems from land use planning to spatialplanning, it is concluded that the spatial planning culture goes far beyond the characteristics of structures,instruments and procedures.

In this way, territorial planning practices can not "turn their backs" to other factors such as values,political traditions, representations about planning actions and competencies, governance structures, etc.,producing different contexts regardless of the planner will.

This theme follows the previous one. If they sometimes seem to interfere, the pretension of their existence reflects the desire to know if the students and the parents guardian assimilate a new culture of spatial planning.

The answer to this purpose is based on the analysis of the affirmations grouped in the threesubgroups entitled "role of the State in spatial planning", "criteria for spatial planning legitimizing" and "activities of the technicians/ planners".

	Affirmations		
	Students with Geography	Students without Geography	Parents guardians
<i>Land use planning</i>	1	1	1
<i>Spatial planning</i>	11	11	9
Total	12	12	10³

Table 4 - Spatial planning cultures by affirmations frequency¹
Source: Sample - Own survey (fieldwork conducted in 2016)

Above all, it emphasizes, at once, the hegemony of the State, who persists in maintaining its ascendancy, intrinsic in common sense. This is confirmed by the approach of the three groups against this matter. However, other choices show that for them the spatial planning goes beyond the influence of the Administration, demonstrating that they are receptive to a strategic, integrated and visionary territorial planning.

Here, the consideration of spatial planning as public policy is reaffirmed by all groups, since they recognize in the State and entities within their jurisdiction, the legal competence to make decisions within the spatial planning.

The State is recognized as an authority, that it can use in its favour, not with authoritarianism, but as a reference, model, facilitator in the new forms of collaborative territorial planning, increasingly participated by other agents within its jurisdiction.

The techno-rational question is not neglected, since here also, the majority of the students of both student's groups and parents guardians, consider that the knowledge and technical contribution is essential in the territorial planning policies.

Observing the students' behaviour (with or not frequency of the Geography discipline), and the parents guardians, in general, do not observe significant differences, since all consider the State as legal support in the territorial planning policies production and implementation, confirming the general trend already observed, when the conception of spatial planning is accepted as public policy.

Noting the options of the two student's groups and parents guardians, in relation to the question "what are the objectives of spatial planning?", It is concluded that, here too, they are clearly next to the spatial planning

¹ The difference between the questionnaire of the students and that of the parents guardians is based on the reduction of affirmations in each thematic group

perspective, with coherence between the positions taken, with regard to the previous theme and the present theme.

The spatial planning conception, as an integrating factor, is reinforced, insofar as it is viewed in an interdisciplinary and integrated perspective, reflecting the perceptions and meanings of space, philosophies and planning traditions, cultural rules, norms, traditions and values, that is, the cultural contexts.

Manifestly, cultural diversity leaves the field of social sciences to assert itself as an essential element in territorial policies.

This influence is clear (even for those who persist in ignoring it), inherent to the territory interpretation and policies of spatial planning execution, by the decision makers/ technicians, with direct consequence on how the territory is ordered.

This fact had already been revealed in the first theme - Territory - where it was observed an approach to the concept of territory as a lived space, as a support of individual and collective identity, with more emphasis in the group of students without the discipline of geography and in parents guardians.

The sustainability paradigm is well present in all universes, when we speak about spatial planning. In other words, taking into account the political decision-makers and planning technicians actions, there is reinforcement of the concepts defended in the previous theme, agreeing that those territorial policies responsible should view spatial planning as an integrating factor, rational territory use factor, promoter of a balanced development, at different speeds, but do not forget that this territory is a scarce resource.

But the choices are not limited to the defence of sustainable environmental development. In order to achieve this balanced and sustained development, a prospective vision is required which, if it does not predict future transformations, can attenuate them.

As far as stakeholders are concerned, all agree that the participation of this is essential in spatial planning. It is confirmed here, that the two groups of students and the parents guardians view spatial planning based on shared responsibility.

2.4 THE GEOGRAPHY DISCIPLINE AS A DIFFERENTIATING FACTOR

Will the Geography discipline be a differentiating factor in the quality of the response between the groups of students (with or without Geography)?

When we observe the results, the conclusion is that there is no difference between two students' groups.

However, it is a conclusion little consolidated because:

- i) If one looks at the agreement and disagreement percentages, it is verified that difference between this two options is very close when we talk about the second group (without Geography). This means that these students have not solid positions about the subjects in analysis.

As subject's matter become more complex and less used in common discourse, this difference, between agreement and disagreement, becomes even more insignificant.

This situation is aggravated when the affirmations are related to the themes – spatial planning and spatial planning culture.

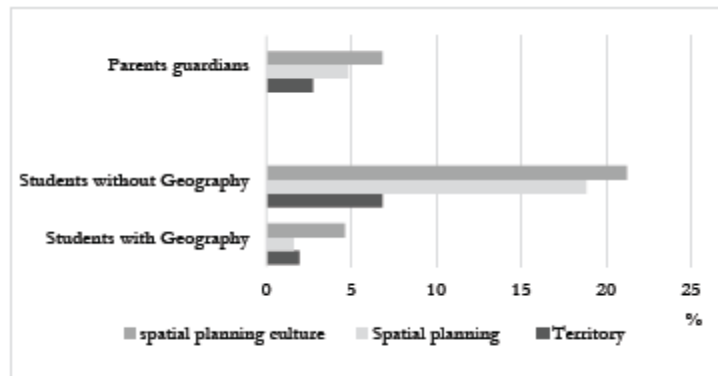


Figure 2 – “I do not know” percentages, in the three themes – Territory, spatial planning and spatial planning culture
 Source: Sample - Own survey (fieldwork conducted in 2016)

- ii) On the other hand, the option “I do not know” (7), reaches higher percentages in the group without Geography, demonstrating once again that these students show less firmness in their positions than students with geography (figure 2), and which is also aggravated when faced with the spatial planning and spatial planning culture subjects (18,8% e 21,2%, respectively), while the other group of students registers percentages of 1,6% e 4,6%, respectively.
- iii) With the Mann Witney Statistic Test, there is statistical evidence that Geography influences the ability to respond, because it is the students, who do not have the discipline, that assume to do not know what option to take before the affirmation presented. This situation is especially evident in the last two thematic groups - spatial planning and spatial planning culture.

Another inference could be gotten. In the present study, there has been an approximation between the positions of the students without Geography and the parents guardians, mainly regarding the conceptual perspectives of the territory.

From here we can draw two inferences.

- i) Both, only had Geography in the 3rd Cycle of the Basic Education (more specifically in the students’ case), or geography is "so far" from their lives that they are few curriculum content that they remember.
- ii) In comparing the "I do not know" option percentage values, in these two groups, it turns out that parents are more determined in their choices (figure 2). This could be justified by the transition from a representative democracy to a participatory democracy with the consequent need of a present State, but facilitator of the dialogue and moderator in the negotiations between the stakeholders (Where can these parents guardians be).

3 CONCLUSION

The group with Geography is more affirmative in their positions, which proves they know better the issues in analysis than the other students group. This fact demonstrates that the Secondary School Geography Programme contributes to a better understanding of these subjects. The political-administrative space territory perspective is yet consolidating in all students and parents guardians. But, the students with geography are closer to this territory concept than the others, which means that Geography discipline accentuates this concept of territory all over the School Programme, because it spoke about Portugal as a Nation and as a European member, and, consequently, about territory policies, which are often based on administrative boundaries. At the same time, this perspective is familiar for the students without Geography and for the parents guardians, which, as already mentioned, is associated with the traditional territory conception, in which the other group of students is no exception.

With more or less determination, in most of the subjects dealt with on spatial planning issues, all identify with the spatial planning perspective.