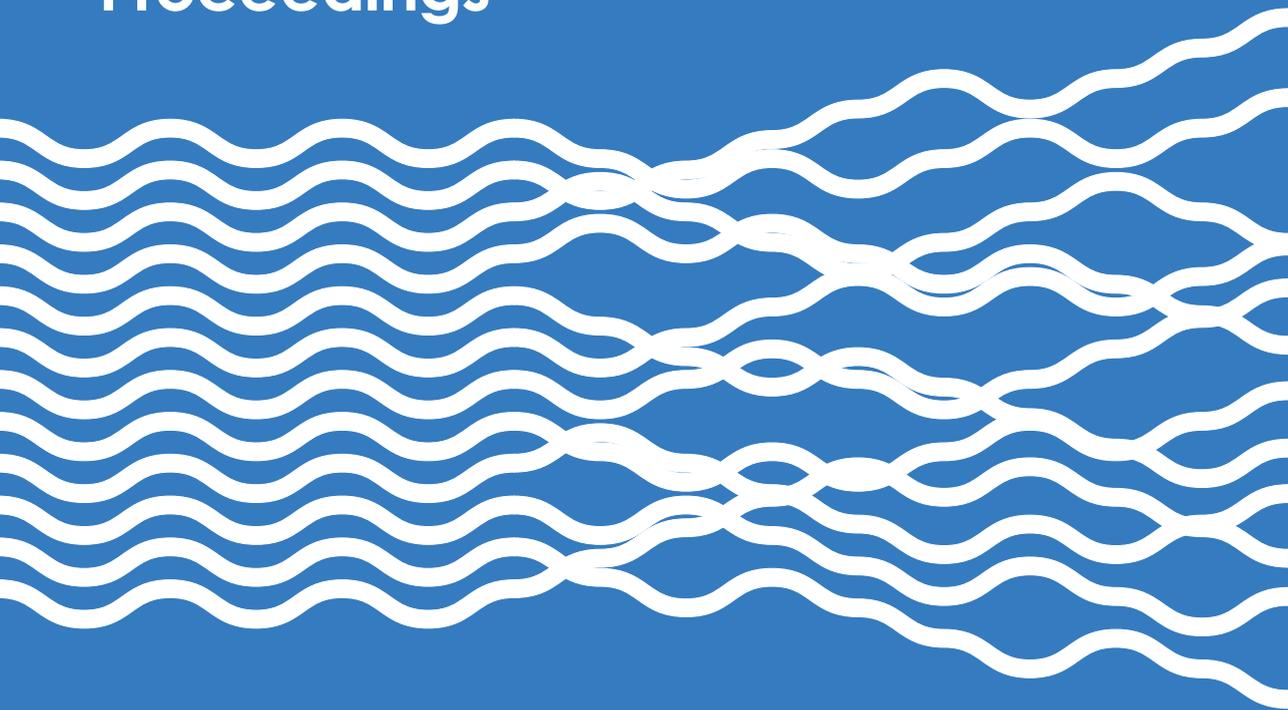


# Conference Proceedings

 Sharing Society



International Conference

# Sharing Society

**The Impact of Collaborative Collective Actions  
in the Transformation of Contemporary Societies**

May 23-24, 2019 • Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea • Bilbao, Spain

Benjamín Tejerina, Cristina Miranda de Almeida and Ignacia Perugorria  
Editors



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Universidad del País Vasco Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea





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## Multi-Scale Intersections of Collaborative Collective Actions in Urban Regeneration. Insights from the ROCK Project in Lisbon<sup>1</sup>

Roberto Falanga and Mafalda Corrêa Nunes

Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa

**Abstract:** *Collective collaboration between NGOs, associated and non-associated agents can capitalise knowledge, experience and expertise in initiatives for social change. This contribution focusses on forms of citizen engagement funded by international and local agencies for urban regeneration. Focus on the city of Lisbon allows to shed light on the multi-scale intersections between the international project “ROCK - Regeneration and Optimisation of Cultural heritage in creative and Knowledge cities” funded by the European Commission, and the programme for urban regeneration “BIPZIP - Bairros de Intervenção Prioritária Zonas de Intervenção Prioritária” promoted by the municipality of Lisbon. The international project and the local programme aim to engage foster collective collaborative actions for urban regeneration, with cultural heritage as the main driver in the ROCK project and socio-territorial cohesion as the core issue in the BIPZIP programme. Zooming in on the specific urban area of intervention between Marvila and Beato neighbourhoods, this contribution retrieves some inputs from the empirical knowledge collected within the ongoing research conducted by the authors in Lisbon. We argue that the lack of an integrated management between the project and the programme can be considered as emerging burdens due to limited multi-scale intersections between the project and the programme.*

**Keywords:** *Urban regeneration; cultural heritage; socio-territorial cohesion; Lisbon*

### 1. Introduction

Worldwide, models of local governance are required to adopt new social, political, and economic strategies to tackle emerging challenges (Sassen 2002). Zooming in on growing inequalities and disparities in urban contexts, the governance of deprived areas raises the interest of scholars and international agencies, who reinforce the need for inclusive processes of urbanisation (Power 2000; Fraser 2008). Accordingly, public measures for the regeneration of urban areas that suffer from socio-spatial inequalities have been promoted by public and private agencies at multiple levels, with emphasis over the engagement of local communities in the design and implementation of innovative practices (Gaventa and Barret 2010). This global trend aligns with the wider attempts to incorporate values and mechanisms of citizen engagement in urban policymaking. However, concerns about the risks of manipulation through citizen engagement have been early posited by Arnstein (1969) and more recently by Cook and Kothari (2001). The instrumental use of CCAs in urban regeneration equally echo some of these concerns (Garcia 2004; Ferilli et al. 2015), as these may lead to the depoliticisation of communities' struggles and the over-emphasis over the implementation of politically irrelevant projects (Taylor 2007).

In Europe, the promotion of common values and mechanisms of citizen participation in urban governance tracks back to mid-1980s with the European Charter of Local Self-Government (CoE, 1985), and reaches greater visibility with the White Paper issued by the European Commission in 2001 (EC, 2001). More recently, the European Union and the United Nations have aligned on the promotion of a new Urban Agenda, which aims to foster greater citizen participation and multi-actor partnerships in local governance (Aitken, 2012). In parallel, international funding and programmes have aimed to enhance participatory tools through a wide array of opportunities (e.g. URBACT, Urban Innovative Actions – UIA, as well as funding provided through the framework programme Horizon 2020 and Erasmus plus). Against this backdrop, the implementation of collaborative collective actions (hereafter CCAs) in urban regeneration is seen as an opportunity to gather multiple actors around common issues to be solved with higher consensus in deprived areas, as well as boost the international competitiveness of contemporary cities.

While the coming together of different agents and agencies can be seen by decision-makers and governmental institutions as a cost-effective strategy for urban governance, concerns on participatory processes often lead citizens to look for alternative and antagonistic ways to reclaim their ‘right to the city’ (Groth and Corjin, 2005; Parnell and Pieterse, 2010). Against this backdrop, CCAs cannot help but account for the inherent tension between invited (or government-led) and spontaneous (or bottom-up) forms of participation. Complementarity and friction between different forms of CCAs stands at the origin of contested settings of participatory governance. Focussing on invited participation, scholars have abundantly discussed different ways through which these practices can be designed. For instance, sharing power between governmental institutions and citizens can be oriented to either one-way or two-way forms of deliberation, with the former providing narrower degrees of power to citizens when compared to the latter (Roberts, 2002). Related to that, the recruitment of participants further informs about the design of citizen participation, as it can be either open to all or selective and constitute the so-called ‘mini-publics’ of deliberation (Barnes et al., 2007).

Overall, Smith (2009) argues that major attention should be paid on the ways through which participatory initiatives address key democratic challenges, such as inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgment, and transparency. Therefore, deeper understanding should be fostered on whether “these designs actually promote rather than undermine the realisation of the goods we associate with democratic institutions” (ibidem, 14).

This contribution focusses on CCAs in urban regeneration promoted by international and local agencies through projects and programmes that aim to engage NGOs, associated and non-associated citizens. According to the main literature and evidence in this field, the constitution of local partnerships among multiple actors is aimed at reinforcing their “social capital”, as Putnam (2000) put it, by fostering the opportunity for community members’ ‘bonding’ along with opportunities to ‘bridge’ deprived areas with other sectors of society (Davies, 2002). Acknowledging that local partnerships refer to a specific institutional design that is being increasingly adopted by local and supra-local agencies, we consider it as a form to design and implement government-led CCAs. Both the EU-funded project ROCK and the BIPZIP programme promote the development of local partnerships and their action coincide in the urban area between Marvila and Beato neighbourhoods. However, when considering this territory, inputs retrieved from the ROCK project shows that some burdens emerge due to limited multi-scale



intersections with the BIPZIP programme.

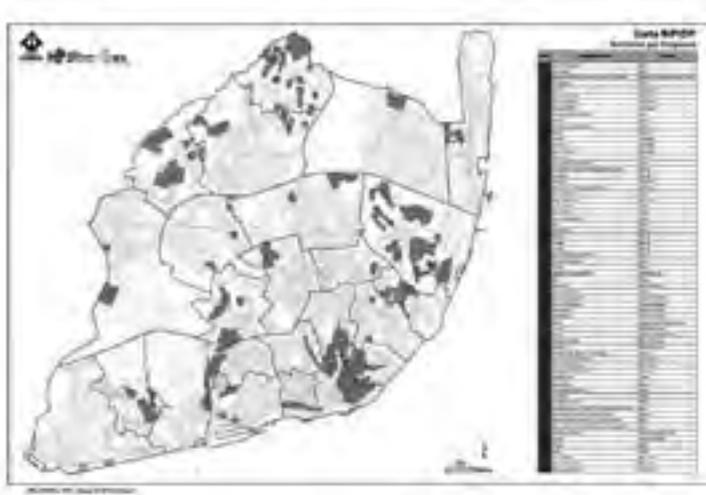
Empirical knowledge collected by the authors of this contribution is part of an extensive research conducted within the ROCK project at the Institute of Social Sciences (University of Lisbon). Light on the multi-scale intersections helps identify two main burdens that are discussed below. First, the risks associated to the effectiveness of governance in the urban area; second, the risks of self-selection and overrepresentation due to the overlapping of human resources in the field.

## **2. The ROCK Project and the BIPZIP Programme in Lisbon**

The ROCK project is funded by the European Commission within the Horizon 2020 framework, and started in 2017 by drawing on the model of “creative cities” (UNESCO, 2005) towards cultural heritage-led urban regeneration<sup>2</sup>. The international consortium involves ten European cities, composed of seven role models – Athens, Cluj-Napoca, Eindhoven, Liverpool, Lyon, Turin and Vilnius - which share their ‘best practices’ with three replicator cities – Bologna, Lisbon and Skopje. In the replicator cities, the project aims to bring together local residents, public and private agents into local partnerships organised through the so-called ‘living labs’ understood in this contribution as specific CCAs.

In Lisbon, the urban area of the project was selected by the local council because of its exceptional cultural heritage between Marvila and Beato neighbourhoods. Multiple historical layers range from the XVIII century “quintas” (villas) to the more recent industrial period, and compose a unique landscape for the goals of the project. Moreover, despite being close to the city centre, this area is characterised by significant physical barriers that have created a separation with the rest of the city. Public transportation is particularly undersupplied, and there are two railways crossing the neighbourhood that make internal mobility difficult and unattractive for visitors. More recently, this area has undergone great social and urban transformations that have contributed, in some cases, to improve living conditions and basic infrastructures in the area. In other cases, the massive intervention of big capitals has reinforced socioeconomic inequalities between the riverfront, with new entrepreneurial activities in the old factories and stores paired by financial fluxes in private housing investment, and the local communities living in social housing (Borghi et al., 2018).

Since 2017, the design and implementation of CCAs in the ROCK area relies on a wider and longstanding context of promotion of mechanisms of citizen participation on both local and national scales (Falanga and Lüchmann, 2019). Playing a leading role in this field, Lisbon inaugurated the first participatory budget implemented by a capital city at the municipal level in Europe, in 2007/2008. The local council has placed principles of citizen participation as a northern star of the political agenda and, together with the participatory budget, goals of citizen engagement have been incorporated in the BIPZIP programme, which is the most important participatory initiative for urban regeneration in the city<sup>3</sup>. The BIPZIP programme is based on the identification of 67 priority areas, showing critical trends in the socioeconomic, infrastructural, and/or environmental areas (fig.1). The municipal department of local housing and development issued the 67 areas into four typologies in the city master plan: social housing; historical centre; illegal housing; and other/mix<sup>4</sup>.



**Figure 1. The BIPZIP Chart**

Source: Municipality of Lisbon

The BIPZIP programme was initiated in 2011 in face of long lasting socioeconomic inequalities exacerbated by the impacts of the global sovereign-debt crisis that erupted in 2009 (Falanga, 2018). Its main goal is to promote socio-territorial cohesion by supporting the implementation of short, middle, and long-term initiatives in the identified priority areas through funding local partnerships composed of NGOs, associated and non-associated citizens, and parish governments. While the programme is ongoing, the main outputs of the programme until 2017 conveyed 1015 local partners (out of 2159 local partners applying to the Programme), 270 initiatives, and almost €15 million provided for the implementation. A first look at the achievements suggests that the programme has become a main source of public funding for local partnerships in urban regeneration initiatives with some cases of successful international networking.

The design of the local partnerships is similar to the CCAs promoted by the ROCK project, which raises our interest on the potentialities of multi-scale intersections. In addition, some of the priority areas identified by the BIPZIP programme are included in the ROCK area, namely the “Quinta das Salgadas/ Alfinetes”; “Marquês de Abrantes”; “PRODAC”; and “Marvila Velha”. Despite this, however, multi-scale intersections between the project and the programme is limited and raises our major interest as researchers in the ROCK project.

### **3. Discussion. What Multi-scale Intersections?**

The discussion retrieves inputs from the empirical knowledge collected within the ROCK project by the authors of this contribution. Considering the coincidence of the project and the programme in terms of institutional design (similar CCAs) and area of intervention (Marvila and Beato neighbourhoods), our reflection focusses on two main burdens emerging from limited multi-scale interactions.

First, CCAs depend on the capacity of the sponsors to provide adequate conditions to local actors



to achieve goals of urban regeneration. On the local scale, the municipality of Lisbon is the main sponsor of both ROCK project and BIPZIP programme. Despite the differences in funding and strategies of action, the adoption of an integrated management plan in the coincident urban area is expected to capitalise the opportunities provided by the ROCK project and the BIPZIP programme. Considering that the ROCK project is managed by the municipal department of culture, while the BipZip is managed by the department of local development and housing, the reasons for limited intersections seem to rely on the political and organisational articulation. As Ferrão (2010) put it, the implementation of urban policies in Portugal often reflects weak efforts to connect administrative units and provide a more consistent model of governance. Likewise, this case shows associated risks to the limited attention to the design of integrated management plans that, in turn, could foster a more efficient use of the public resources provided through the project and the programme in the same urban area.

Second, limited multi-scale intersections leads to the emergence of an additional burden on the field. The overlapping of NGOs, as well as associated and non-associated citizens invited to participate to urban regeneration initiatives through similar institutional designs is expected to find significantly compacted human resources and local experts in the same urban area. Considering that the ROCK project and the BIPZIP programme call for CCAs to promote greater citizen participation, risks of self-selection, such as active citizens selecting themselves in detriment of wider community engagement are coupled by risks of overrepresentation of some local agents and agencies. At best, local communities can take advantage of a wider set of initiatives addressing multiple aspects of urban regeneration; at worst, local communities experience limited public regulation of the public resources provided for urban regeneration.

## **4. Concluding Remarks**

Empirical knowledge on the limited multi-scale intersections between the ROCK project and the BIPZIP programme in Lisbon, which similarly fund CCAs for urban regeneration, shows the emergence of specific burdens. Focus on the ROCK area between Marvila and Beato neighbourhoods, with four of the 67 priority areas addressed by the BIPZIP programme, helps highlight two main burdens. First, risks for effective governance of the urban area due to the lack of an integrated management plan in the urban area; second, the overlapping of human resources on the field invited to participate to similar CCAs for urban regeneration with associated risks of self-selection and overrepresentation.

These burdens are discussed by taking advantage of the ongoing research conducted by the authors as members of the ROCK project at the Institute of Social Sciences (University of Lisbon) and will be further explored and validated in the next months. Towards this end, contributions on similar cases as well as wider debate on the role of multi-scale funding of CCAs in urban regeneration can help us improve the analysis and understanding of the inputs retrieved from Lisbon.

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## 6. Notes

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- 2 More information at: <http://rockproject.eu>
- 3 More information at: [www.bipzip.cm-lisboa.pt](http://www.bipzip.cm-lisboa.pt)
- 4 The programme received an award from the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy in 2013, for being a ‘good practice’ of citizen participation. Since then, the interest in this programme has grown at both national and international levels.