

How Social Justice Planning Can Address Urban Inequities through Social Housing: from Theory to Practice




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Abstract

As cities grapple with rapid urbanization, vulnerable communities often bear the brunt of uneven spatial development and socioeconomic disparities. This article examines the potential of Social Justice Planning (SJP) to mitigate these urban inequities through strategic interventions in social housing. Using a qualitative methodology, the study reviews existing literature on communicative planning and the Just City approach, and analyzes city plans from New York, London, and Amsterdam, focusing on their alignment with social justice principles. The Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter (LMHC) is also assessed as a contemporary case study in Portugal. Key findings highlight the role of SJP in promoting equality, diversity, and democratic engagement within urban planning. The research underscores the importance of community-driven solutions in social housing, contributing to the discourse on creating inclusive cities that prioritize the well-being and fairness for all residents.

1. Introduction

Urban environments worldwide grapple with persistent challenges related to socioeconomic disparities and spatial injustices (Brelsford et al. 2017; Nijman and Wei 2020). As urbanization accelerates, the imperative to develop effective strategies for mitigating these issues becomes increasingly urgent. In this context, this article explores Social Planning theory, focusing on the intersection of social justice principles and the implementation of social housing initiatives. The overarching question guiding this study is: how can SJP serve as a transformative force in addressing urban inequities through the tangible vehicle of social housing? In other words, how does this theoretical framework manifest in practical applications?

Within the broader spectrum of urban interventions, social housing emerges as a critical instrument for realizing the goals of Social Justice Planning (Carmon 1976). By providing affordable and inclusive housing options, social housing addresses the physical need for shelter, decreasing the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of marginalized communities (Legacy, Davison, and Liu 2016). While theoretical discussions on SJP abound, the efficacy of these principles is mostly evaluated through their practical applications. The transition from theory to practice represents a crucial juncture in understanding the true impact of Social Justice Planning on urban inequities through social housing initiatives (M. Atuesta and Davis 2020a). By analyzing case studies and a contemporary Portuguese reference on the subject of this research, this article aims to bridge the gap between conceptual frameworks and practical outcomes, offering insights into the challenges, successes, and nuances of translating SJP into actionable measures within the domain of urban housing.

Social Justice planning theory encompasses several key elements. Firstly, it recognizes the importance of planning to promote social justice and improve people's lives. Secondly, it emphasizes the promotion of equality of outcome and treatment, recognizing the worth and dignity of all individuals and fostering participation, particularly among the most disadvantaged (Barnes, Gell, and Thomas 2010). Thirdly, it recognizes the dilemma of representational power faced by planners, in which their credentials and knowledge can make them agents of social justice but also place them in a position of influence concerning the communities they serve (J. Uitermark and Nicholls 2017).

In addition, social justice planning theory considers the institutional conditions that enable participation and overcome oppression and domination (Cardoso and Breda-Vázquez 2007). Nonetheless, it recognizes the ongoing tension between democracy and justice in a given social and historical context. Finally, it highlights the need for a critical analysis of the practical implications of the theory and its potential conflicts with other urban development priorities. The article is structured as follows: (1) a brief literature review on Social Justice Planning and the importance of public participation and deliberation, exploring the communicative planning theory and the Just City approach; (2) an assessment of city plans in three different urban settings under the Just City principles; (3) an analysis of the LMHC to investigate the practical implications of implementing Social Justice Planning theory for addressing urban inequities through the lens of social housing in Portugal; (4) a discussion of the effectiveness of social housing strategies, including its challenges and limitations; and (5) a summary of the key findings, implications, and contributions of this research.

2. Social Justice Planning

The emergence of Social Justice Planning is a critical response to the authoritative inclinations inherent in socialism and the subsequent ascendance of democratic movements on a global scale (Cardoso and Breda-Vázquez 2007). This theory represents a confrontation with the dominant ideology that accorded primacy to economic expansion at the expense of equity considerations (Campbell 2013). Consequently, an explicit interrogation of the legitimacy of decisions framed within the capitalist superiority, particularly those favouring powerful social groups such as bureaucrats and corporate actors, has been amplified (Klein 2007).

During the 1960s, there was a notable assimilation of deliberative democracy concepts, leading to the widespread acceptance of citizen participation in urban planning (L. Sandercock 2005). The rationale behind this shift lies in the acknowledgment that a robust democracy necessitates public involvement in decision-making processes, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of the most marginalized populations, to ensure equitable outcomes (Judith Eleanor Innes and Booher 2000). This transition gave rise to communicative or collaborative planning as a praxis focused on the public interest.

In a contemporary exploration of justice, John Rawls (2001) argues that justice hinges upon the interplay between equal opportunities and equitable conditions. Within his conceptualization of justice, Rawls advocates for public policies geared towards the fair allocation of benefits and the mitigation of disadvantages, with the explicit aim of avoiding disproportionate concentrations of power and wealth. Notably, the author adopts a utopian stance in advocating for the underprivileged when proposing a reduction in material inequality without complete elimination.

Post-modern planning begins to raise the specter of the collaborative approach when it places planners as "problem solvers" capable of adopting ends of equality and social justice (Allmendinger 2017). In this sense, Leonie Sandercock (1998) emphasizes the need to include

different social groups in political participation, allowing the public interest to become a matter of civic culture, pluralistic and open. The author assumes that "hidden" voices can change existing processes and outcomes by appealing to some overarching concept of justice.

2.1. The Communicative Planning and the Just City

Communicative or collaborative planning emphasizes the significance of democratic deliberation and advocates for bottom-up approaches in the decision-making process (Sager 2002; Agger and Lfgren 2008). This theory focuses on discursive interaction and anticipates that involved stakeholders will redefine their interests through exposure to different points of view. According to Patsy Healy (1997) people can be reflexive and become aware, changing their behavior to accept the dominant power. The author also problematizes power relations "outside of dialogue" as permeated by illegitimate power, in contrast to the possibility of "consensus building" and "collaborative rationality".

Within this model, the planner assumes the role of a mediator, seeking consensus by incorporating diverse forms of knowledge, truth, and self-expression (Forester 1999; Healey 1997; Hoch 2007; Judith E. Innes 1995). Supporters of a deliberative approach contend that planners should engage in listening, particularly marginalized groups. John Forester (1999) places planners as agents of hope, asserting their capacity to effect positive change by mitigating the misuse of power and fostering a more equitable urban environment for disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, Forester predominantly views power as a necessary evil or negative force, positing that its presence distorts communication within the planning process.

On the other hand, Susan Fainstein's "Just City" model presents a convincing framework for urban planning, emphasizing the pursuit of justice and equity in the design and development of cities (Susan S. Fainstein 2010). This approach includes the communicative method but distinguishes itself by attending to both the procedural aspects and the ultimate outcomes of urban planning. According to Fainstein, the Just City should prioritize the fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits, ensuring that all residents, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have access to a decent quality of life.

At the heart of her argument is the recognition of planning as a political and ethical endeavor, with planners playing a crucial role in shaping cities that reflect principles of justice, reinforcing material equality, democracy, and diversity (Susan S. Fainstein and DeFilippis 2016). The incorporation of diversity ranges from mixed-use to mixed-income, from racial and ethnic integration to widely accessible public space (S. S. Fainstein 2005). Also, Fainstein's perspective underlines the need for inclusive decision-making processes, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among urban populations.

Communicative planning and the Just City are two different approaches in urban planning studies. Communicative planning focuses on the communication process and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning process (Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008). It stresses the importance of creating a non-hierarchical and systemic communication model that mobilizes resources, supports urban development and finds common solutions (Aldás and Pinazo 2013). Differently, the Just City approach emphasizes the principles of democracy, diversity and equity in urban justice, highlighting that deliberation should produce just outcomes (Susan S. Fainstein 2010).

The communicative planning and the Just City model grapple with challenges related to scale, as planning decisions are typically confined by jurisdictional boundaries, thereby circumscribing their applicability to relatively small geographic areas (Susan S. Fainstein and

DeFilippis 2016). Another shared characteristic between the two approaches is their endeavor to reconfigure discourse within the realm of spatial planning, aiming for an equitable distribution of power and resources across the city. This concerted effort seeks to ensure universal accessibility to the built environment, thereby enabling advantageous outcomes for economically deprived minority populations.

Thus, both methodologies can potentially create more equitable and inclusive neighborhoods by recognizing the value and dignity of all individuals and encouraging public participation in decision-making processes. However, according to Susan Fainstein (2000), just outcomes must outweigh communicative norms when the two come into conflict (**Figure 1**). Planners and policymakers can achieve this goal by creating and implementing a comprehensive city plan that takes physical and social issues, respecting the context-specific characteristics of each location. To effectively address the challenges disadvantaged communities face, particularly low-income populations, policies and design interventions must ensure access to proper housing and a suitable living environment (Turner and Elsinga 2005). However, they also need to invest in education, healthcare, leisure, transport infrastructure, etc., for all (Corburn 2017).

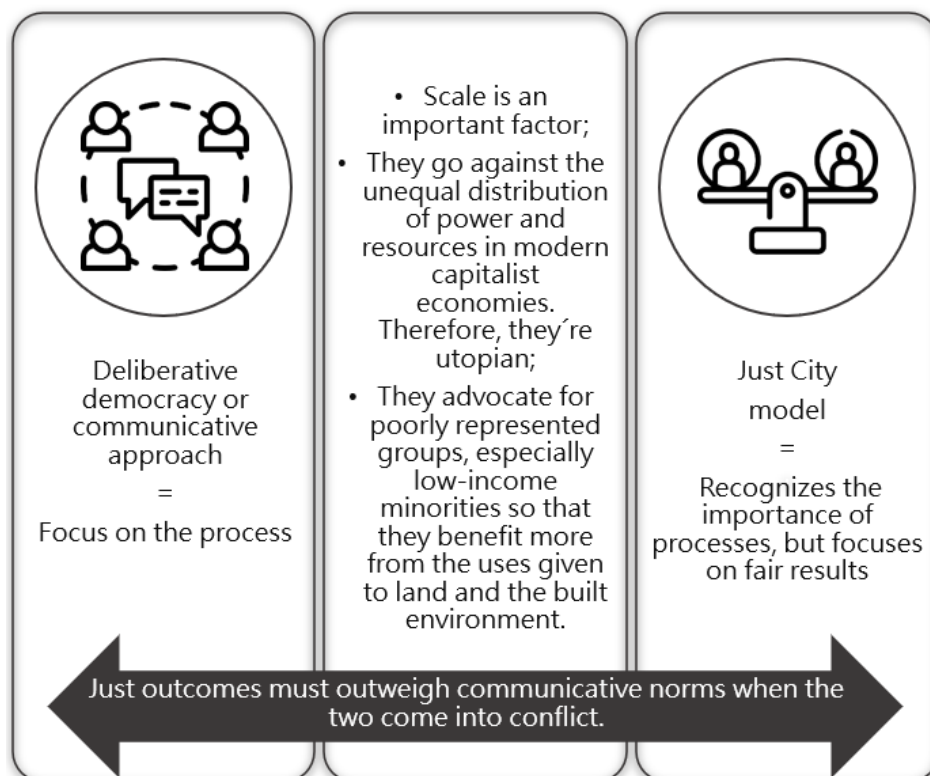


Figure 1: Differences and similarities between the communicative approach and the just city model.

Source: Author.

Regarding democratic participation, an enduring tension ensues between democracy and justice, contingent upon the prevailing historical and socio-economic context. Fainstein's perspective introduces an additional layer to this discussion, asserting that the comprehensive inclusion of all people in decision-making could render such endeavors arduous or untenable. Paradoxically, the theory of the Just City appears self-contradictory, positing that any deliberation lacking the involvement of those affected by a decision is inherently unjust.

In Social Justice Planning theory, a conflict arises as the three main components of urban justice (material equality, diversity, and democracy) do not inherently harmonize and often necessitate practical compromises. A noteworthy illustration involves the paradox wherein

genuine democratic deliberation requires fundamental conditions of equality. Once equality of opportunity requires prior equality of conditions, the results of collaborative processes may not preclude individuals from making decisions that prove detrimental to either themselves or minority populations. Moreover, this theory falls short of providing a clear solution for the realization of democratic procedures within the confines of a market capitalist system.

2.2. Social Housing as an Instrument for Spatial Justice

Susan S. Fainstein (2010) highlights the need for affordable housing as a key component of SJP. Planners and policymakers must seek to ensure that housing is accessible and affordable for vulnerable and low-income populations, especially in the face of gentrification resulting from land and housing dispossession and speculation (Espitia 2023). Social housing can be a strategic intervention for urban regeneration, reversing social and physical decline and contributing to urban welfare (Broers et al. 2022). It can also be a tool for socio-spatial inclusion, promoting the diversification of neighborhoods and a more socially integrated and harmonious cityscape (Beretić and Talu 2020). However, it is essential to ensure that social housing projects are well-located and do not contribute to the spatial drift of new projects towards outlying areas (Maria Atuesta and Davis 2020b).

Additionally, social housing can contribute to spatial justice by creating more equitable living conditions and challenging the dominant narrative of capitalization within urban infrastructures (Rodenbiker 2022). By strengthening social housing functions against economic functions, it is possible to promote social equity and sustainable housing policies (Andreas 2021). Overall, social housing can help create more just and inclusive cities by addressing the needs of marginalized groups and promoting social cohesion.

When applied to urban form, the Just City approach calls for intentional design and spatial planning that prioritize fair distribution of housing resources, thereby shaping the physical layout of neighborhoods. The notion of justice in urban form encompasses accessibility to amenities, public spaces, and essential services. Moreover, the intentional integration of social housing within the urban fabric challenges prevailing patterns of spatial segregation and contributes to the creation of mixed-use, socially diverse environments.

For instance, the Paradinha social neighborhood (Viseu, Portugal) has one access only, leading to its isolation and susceptibility to social segregation (**Figure 2**). In contrast, the São Roque da Lameira neighborhood (Porto, Portugal) displays good permeability, facilitating its integration with the urban fabric and promoting connections with its immediate surroundings (**Figure 3**). Consequently, morphological configurations have the potential to either reinforce or mitigate social outcomes.



Figure 2: Paradinha social neighborhood (Viseu, Portugal)
Source: Google Maps (2024a).



Figure 3: São Roque da Lameira social neighborhood (Porto, Portugal)
Source: Google Maps (2024b).

Social housing can promote social justice in urban planning by addressing challenges and creating opportunities. One challenge is the physical decay and stigmatization of large housing estates, which can lead to social exclusion and inequality (Espitia 2023). However, regeneration strategies and urban policies have shown positive outcomes in addressing these challenges and promoting social inclusion (Vila-Vázquez and Petsimeris 2023).

The issue of housing affordability poses an additional challenge that may be mitigated through the implementation of cooperative building models and the formulation of sectoral land-use plans tailored for housing provision. These models involve the participation of developers and commitment to building subsidized housing, providing affordable housing options for the

community (Legacy, Davison, and Liu 2016). By prioritizing justice within urban planning practices, it becomes possible to confront economic disparities, alleviate social marginalization, and restore social networks. This approach contributes to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive urban environment.

3. Examples of Social Justice Planning in Practice

When evaluating planning strategies in New York, London, and Amsterdam using the three components of the Just City (material equality, democracy, and diversity), Susan Fainsten (2016) exemplified the practical application of SJP theory through social housing. The PlaNYC initiative, titled "A Greener and Greater New York," does not specify the inclusion of social housing within its policies and strategies. The overarching objective of the proposal is to absorb economic and population growth by enhancing land use efficiency, with the ultimate goal of creating sustainable and affordable housing across all neighborhoods. While the proposed interventions advocate for mixed-use development through the provision of affordable housing, they notably lack stipulations to ensure the realization of mixed-income communities (New York City (NYC) Office of the Mayor 2007).

This oversight raises concerns, as an exclusive focus on land use issues and the rezoning of low-income areas may inadvertently exacerbate gentrification dynamics. Moreover, the persistence of rent regulation mechanisms and the existence of public housing provisions contribute to the perpetuation of consistent demographic compositions in areas accommodating disadvantaged populations. The absence of explicit measures addressing the socio-economic diversity within housing initiatives underscores a potential limitation of the social justice in the PlaNYC initiative.

Unlike New York, the components of London's plan are interconnected, concerned with affordable housing, the promotion of policies on education, health, safety, skills development and community services, and combating discrimination. The proposal addresses both social and physical issues, guiding urban growth and requiring housing to accommodate the expected population increase. In formulating a comprehensive strategy for London's development, the mayor has committed to promoting sustainable growth (Mayor of London, 2004), prioritizing social justice as a foundational instrument for addressing the challenges posed by population and economic growth within the city.

The London Plan Spatial Development Strategy (LPDS) shows a much greater commitment to overcoming disadvantages such as gentrification, poverty and unemployment of minority groups, and rising housing prices. The strategy forces entrepreneurs to provide amenities and support social programs and affordable housing in new developments to increase income diversity, given the likelihood that the cheapest units will be occupied by immigrant families, promoting ethnic diversity (Mayor of London 2004).

The social housing dimension within the LPDS for Greater London constitutes a crucial element of its overarching commitment to SJP. Central to this strategy is recognizing access to proper housing as a fundamental social determinant and social housing emerges as a targeted intervention to address prevailing inequities. The plan's definition of social housing extends beyond a mere accommodation solution. It is a deliberate endeavor to meet the needs of households with insufficient income to access suitable housing within their localities.

Comparing the three urban planning strategies, Amsterdam's proposal stands out regarding equality, diversity, and civic participation. The period from 1945 to 1985 was marked by an impressive increase in social rented housing, with approximately 90% of newly constructed housing falling within this category (Susan S. Fainstein and DeFilippis 2016). However, this

proportion has dwindled to 50% in recent times, prompting concerns about the city's ongoing commitment to social justice amid the forces of globalization and anti-immigrant sentiments (Van de Ven 2004).

In addressing these concerns, the city's social housing programs seek to promote diversity by implementing policies that advocate for the integration of various income groups and ethnicities in all neighborhoods. It is essential, however, to acknowledge the potential challenges associated with such mixing policies. While the intent is to create socioeconomically and ethnically diverse communities, Justus Uitermark (2003) cautions that these initiatives may inadvertently contribute to population control and facilitate a breakdown of social ties. Paradoxically, the individuals meant to benefit from these policies may resist them, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of such urban development strategies.

Susan Fainstein's conceptualization of the Just City centered around principles of equality, diversity, and democracy serves as a foundational framework for critically assessing urban development and planning. Drawing upon the experiences of New York, London, and Amsterdam, Fainstein delineates a set of criteria envisioning an urban landscape where these three pillars converge to foster social equity. While the experiences of these cities have been analyzed based on the standards outlined in the Just City model, it is essential to consider the specific historical and socio-economic context of each urban space. Local specificities can result in diverse interpretations of the general principles of the theory. The guidelines presented in Fainstein's work about social housing are illustrated in **Figure 4**.

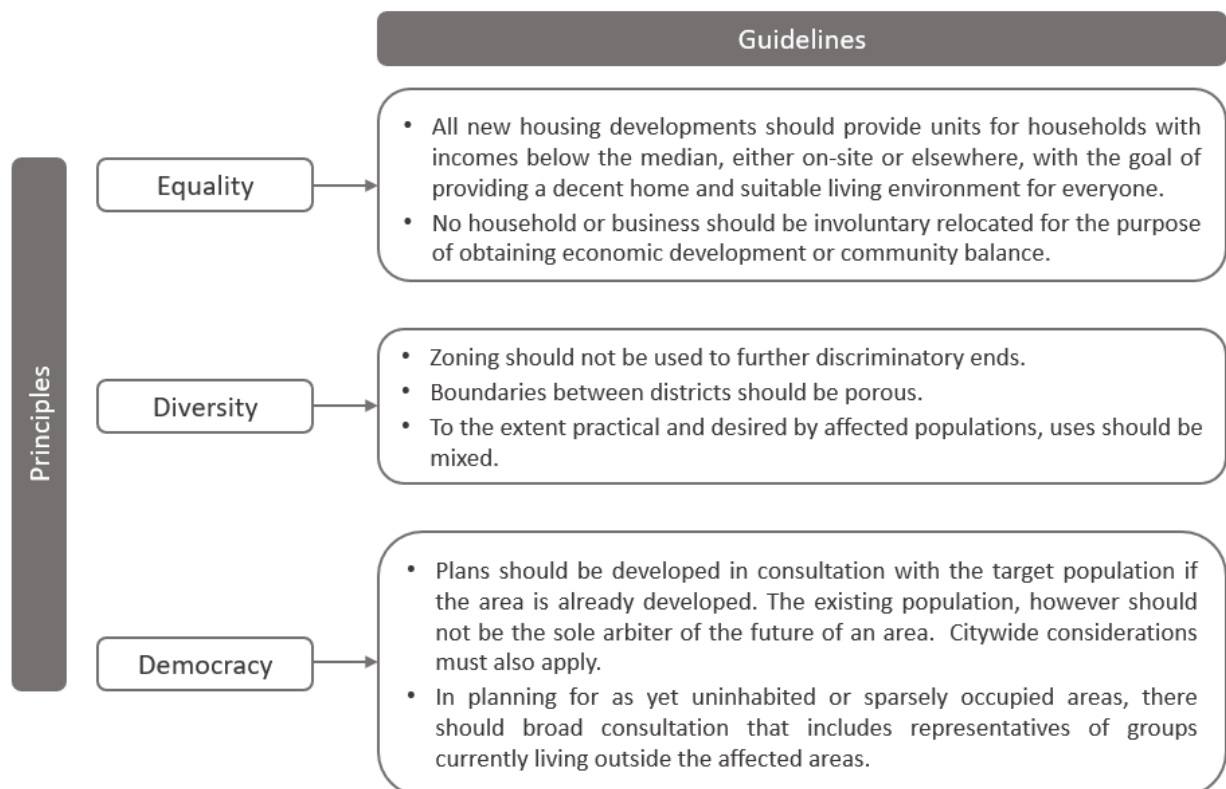


Figure 4: List of criteria for urban planning according to the just city approach.

Source: adapted from Susan S. Fainstein and DeFilippis (2016).

Additionally, the role of social housing within this paradigm emphasizes its significance as a concrete manifestation of these principles, acting as a decisive test for the efficacy of urban

interventions in realizing Fainstein's vision of a Just City. Analyzing these criteria within the context of social housing initiatives allows for a nuanced exploration of the challenges and opportunities inherent in translating theoretical frameworks into practical urban planning strategies aimed at addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering inclusive communities.

4. Reference Case: Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter 2023-2032 (Portugal)

Dated January 15, 1883, Bill no. 10-E stands as the inaugural proposition for a housing policy in Portugal. Within this historical legislative document, there is an emphasis on housing construction for the working class and economically disadvantaged segments of society. Notably, the LMHC posits the construction of housing as an essential instrument in addressing matters of social justice. The document underscores the role of this housing initiative as a strategic means to redress disparities in individual wealth, thereby mitigating the concomitant rise in extreme poverty.

Within the historical trajectory of Lisbon's housing policies, two pivotal moments emerge as paramount in shaping the current urban landscape. The initial turning point transpired during Duarte Pacheco's tenure, marked by a comprehensive expropriation policy. This policy notably endowed the municipality with a substantial reserve of urban land, a legacy that continues to exert influence on the contemporary housing situation.

The second crucial juncture unfolded in the 1990s, aligning with a nationwide initiative aimed at the eradication of shantytowns. This endeavor sought to uplift the living conditions of 132,181 individuals dwelling in abject housing poverty within these impoverished settlements. Devoid of basic amenities characteristic of the 20th century, such as access to water, sewage, or electricity, the eradication policy represented a concerted effort to address the dire housing circumstances prevailing in that era (**Figures 5 and 6**).



Figures 5 and 6: Demolition of the shacks in the Boaviasta neighborhood and the relocation of families to social housing.
Source: Lisbon City Council (2023b).

The Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter represents a third moment in the evolution of the city's housing policies, focusing on three main objectives. Firstly, it's concerned with increasing housing availability by establishing public-private partnerships. Secondly, it aims to enhance access to existing housing (including the private market) through the formulation of targeted policies. Thirdly, the charter underscores a commitment to the regeneration of overlooked housing, characterized by the meticulous identification and mapping of deprived urban areas necessitating heightened attention and investment. These multifaceted strategies collectively

aspire to address overarching goals such as poverty eradication, assurance of housing for families, and the promotion of urban sustainability (Lisbon City Council 2023a).

The LMHC delineates a comprehensive framework comprising 34 ambitious measures to achieve its three main objectives. The efficacy of these actions will be assessed annually by the National Statistics Institute (NSI) censuses, enabling a responsive approach to policy refinement. This periodic evaluation intends to help identify necessary policy adjustments to steer the housing proposal toward realization within a 10-year timeframe. Implicit in this endeavor is the overarching pursuit of the charter to engender a harmonious municipal housing system that transcends socioeconomic and environmental dimensions, turning the city into a more equitable and visually captivating urban fabric.

The thirty-four measures are grouped into three priorities for action: (1) increasing and improving the supply of housing; (2) reducing asymmetries in access to housing, which involves measures aimed at individuals and families to improve equity and fairness in access to municipal support for housing; (3) regenerating the forgotten city, improving the quality of urban life and making housing and habitats decent, healthy and safe, to build a more cohesive and balanced city.

The objectives and measures have a territorial dimension, which LMHC seeks to address and map to recognize the spatialization of needs and actions in Lisbon. Mapping the city's housing shortages is essential to direct efforts according to the specific characteristics of each location. The charter aims to define minimum quality criteria to construct and maintain social housing to ensure its habitable and healthy environment. Also, it values the presence of young people in municipal neighborhoods, prioritizing their access to social housing, depending on their income, even if it is low, to diversify the population in these areas and support the autonomy of younger families.

In relation to the democratic component of the Just City approach, the LMHC contemplates the collaborative processes in its development, characterized by ongoing refinement through a cyclical progression encompassing four distinct stages: knowledge acquisition, definition, execution, and monitoring. In this context, the co-creation methodology facilitated active public engagement between diverse participants, including members of civil society, stakeholders, and experts. This comprehensive approach encompassed a series of consultations, events, public debates, and sectoral working meetings conducted during 2022 and 2023 (**Figure 7**).

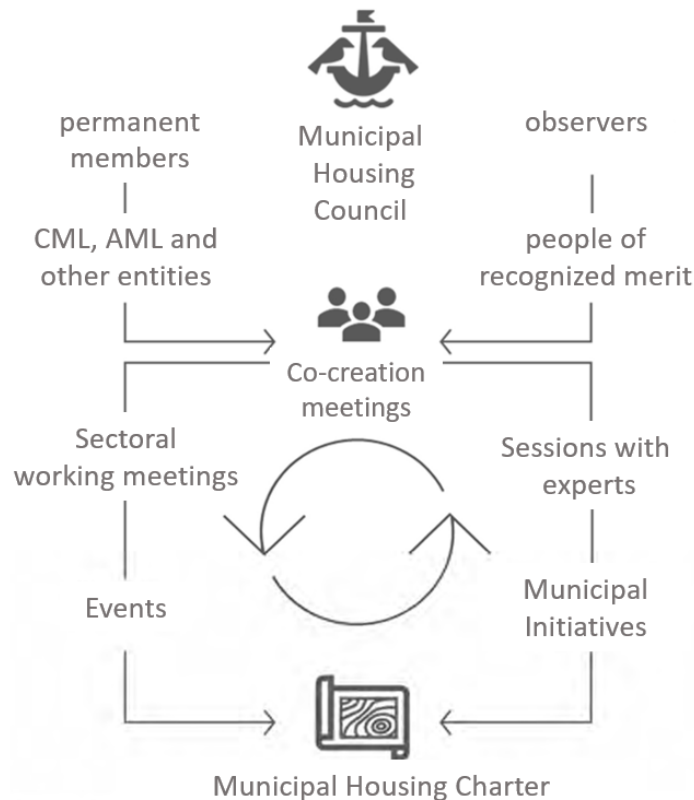


Figure 7: Schematic representation of the co-creation model for the Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter.

Source: adapted from Lisbon City Council (2023a).

These sessions serve as forums for individuals to share their knowledge and experiences. It also serves as a crucial platform to exchange and gather information, contributing significantly to a nuanced understanding of Lisbon's housing challenges and potential solutions. The cross-data and consideration of distinct perspectives of the general population and local authorities constituted an imperative phase in achieving an integrated and democratic vision necessary for addressing the urban housing issues. This participatory methodology underscores the importance of inclusivity and collaborative knowledge-sharing in pursuing effective social urban planning initiatives.

Regarding Social Justice Planning theory, Lisbon's housing policy stands out in the efforts to eradicate poverty and settle families. To redress spatial and socio-economic disparities within Lisbon's population, the housing charter advocates to enhance public and private housing stock quality, revitalize deteriorated habitats, and prioritize vulnerable populations or those requiring special protection. In addition, the LMHC aims to create a public, private, and mixed system for producing affordable housing by identifying, rehabilitating, and recovering empty, vacant, or abandoned houses to promote social cohesion in the territory.

5. Discussion

The interconnections between Social Justice Planning and the Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter 2023 illustrate the institutional commitment to promoting inclusive and equitable urban development. Central to this objective is the charter's explicit acknowledgment of housing as a fundamental factor influencing social justice. It recognizes the imperative role that adequate housing plays in mitigating disparities and improving the overall well-being of the populace.

The LMHC emphasis on collaborative deliberations aligns seamlessly with the principles of SJP. Through a co-creation methodology, the charter facilitates active involvement of the community in decision-making processes, allowing diverse voices to be heard. This inclusive approach ensures that the housing policies encapsulated in the document are reflective of the varying needs and aspirations of the population, particularly those segments historically marginalized or vulnerable. Consequently, the charter represents an evolving instrument that reflects a dynamic interplay of perspectives and considerations, fostering a democratic and participatory approach to housing policy development.

Furthermore, the LMHC cyclical drafting and revision process, structured around the stages of knowledge acquisition, definition, execution, and monitoring, resonates with the principles of Social Justice Planning by providing a systematic framework for continual assessment and adaptation. This approach allows for the identification of gaps and the incorporation of new measures to address emerging challenges, reinforcing the charter's commitment to an evolving and responsive housing policy.

In essence, the Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter of 2023 emerges as a tangible expression of SJP, where the pursuit of equitable housing opportunities and the amelioration of housing-related disparities become integral components of a broader agenda for societal well-being and inclusivity. Through its comprehensive and participatory approach, the charter positions itself as a catalyst for social justice within the urban landscape of Lisbon, exemplifying the intersectionality of housing policies and broader principles of justice and fairness.

The LMHC recognizes the social function of housing and the right of preference as an instrument to strengthen the municipality's housing stock. However, it is a strategic framework document that does not represent a budgetary commitment. Despite proposing to monitor the allocation of Local Accommodation licenses to contain the growth of this phenomenon in specific areas of the city, the charter does not include any procedure for recovering the homes lost to the business. Besides, the affordable housing production and management models proposed in the Lisbon Metropolitan Housing Charter are founded upon a tripartite housing system that involves public, private, and mixed interventions. However, it is crucial to recognize that this administrative approach may carry the potential risk of benefiting private individuals, leading to an increase in rents and enabling real estate speculation.

Nevertheless, the LMHC's objectives are not immune to potential threats resulting from contextual variables related to economic and geopolitical configurations. The current incapacity of the construction sector to respond to housing demands effectively poses a significant challenge, compounded by the repercussions of the war in Ukraine and the inherent instability of prevailing interest rates.

5. Conclusions

Through the literature review, the assessment of city plans of three different cities (New York, London, and Amsterdam), and the analysis of the Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter 2023, this paper investigated the practical implications of implementing Social Justice Planning theory for addressing urban inequities through the lens of social housing. This research reveals theoretical implications for the field of urban planning. However, the integration of social justice principles necessitates a paradigm shift, recognizing the interconnectedness of spatial, economic, and social dimensions. By embracing a more holistic perspective, planners can move beyond traditional models and engage in comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of urban problems.

The discussion regarding the practical application of social justice planning through social housing initiatives highlights the effectiveness of these strategies in fostering more equitable urban environments. Providing affordable housing not only addresses a fundamental human need but also contributes to the creation of socially cohesive and economically vibrant communities.

Despite the transformative potential, the implementation of social justice planning in the realm of social housing is not without challenges. This study acknowledges the limitations and complexities of translating theoretical frameworks into practical outcomes. Issues such as funding constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, and community resistance pose obstacles that planners and policymakers must navigate. Recognizing these challenges is essential for refining strategies and developing more resilient and adaptable approaches.

A central theme emerging from the analysis is the critical role of community engagement in Social Justice Planning. Thus, social housing initiatives must include participatory processes that empower local communities. The discussion delves into the dynamics of community involvement, emphasizing the need for planners to collaborate with residents, incorporating their insights, needs, and aspirations into the planning and implementation phases. This approach enhances the effectiveness of interventions and promotes a sense of ownership and pride within communities.

As we explore the intersection of social justice planning, urban inequities, and social housing, the discussion extends to future directions and policy implications. It calls for a continued commitment to research, innovation, and collaboration among policymakers, practitioners, and communities. Hence, integrating social justice principles into urban policies demands sustained effort to encourage public participation and enact systemic changes that transcend short-term political cycles.

This article synthesizes the theoretical and practical dimensions of how Social Justice Planning can address urban inequities through social housing. It underscores the transformative potential of this approach, acknowledges the challenges, and emphasizes the need for ongoing research and collaborative efforts. By embracing a comprehensive and inclusive approach to urban planning grounded in social justice principles, we pave the way for more equitable, resilient, and vibrant cities.

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