

Cultural change in contemporary Portugal

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Foreword

Social change is a prominent feature of modernity. Of course, no society – even the most traditional one – is immobile, immune to evolution and transformation; every society is situated in history, subjected to the effects of time, space and human activity. Still, the pace and perception of change in modern era is qualitatively different: change is usually perceived as a positive fact (and not a threat); dynamism and progress represent largely disseminated goals; changes in all the social systems, from economy to politics and from society to culture, occur in a such a high velocity and such a vast scale that they configure a radically new factor in the history of humankind.

Arts and culture can be seen as very relevant fields to examine the complex dimensions of social change, in the contemporary age, at least for two reasons. First, because of the strong dynamic processes that permeate them: regarding the institutional framework, the labour conditions, the markets of goods and services, or the trends and paradigms in literature and arts, the deepness and velocity of on-going transformations are quite striking. Second, since, as any other human artifact, change is a social construction, artists and intellectuals play an indispensable role in representing, assessing, and interpreting social change: it is virtually impossible to understand this one without taking into consideration the way fine arts, or cinema, or music, or poetry and fiction do recreate it.

The editors and contributors of this book dedicate a large part of their academic research to the study of social change from a cultural perspective. How does change occur in the art world, which specific elements it presents there? How changes in social context impact the characteristics and evolution of the art world? What are the main drivers at stake, how are they perceived by artists and cultural institutions? How do public policies respond to these drivers, or anticipate them, or even generate them? And so on. We try to approach these issues from the point of view of social sciences, putting in practice a productive dialogue between sociology and other disciplines, like economics, political science, history and anthropology, and carefully distinguishing the analytical and the normative components of research, both necessary for a full understanding of contemporary cultural change.

This book deals with all these issues isolating Portugal as a case study. The purpose is to discuss *general* problems in what regards cultural change in contemporary societies taking the Portuguese situation as a relevant *example*, that deserves a proper investigation, comprehensive, holistic and data-based. The aim is not to offer a full description of that situation, complex and singular as it is, but to use its study as a methodological device to approach broader topics. That is why the book intends to reach an international audience of researchers and students.

Portugal is indeed a pertinent case for empirical work. From 1926 to 1974, it experienced the longest political dictatorship of the 20th century in Europe. A rural and traditional society, with very low cultural capital, and ruled by patriarchalism and authoritarian powers, was simultaneously a support and a consequence of that political regime. The country was still a colonial empire, the last one on earth, and was leading a long war against the liberation movements of its African colonies. In 1974, a military coup toppled the government, and initiated a revolutionary transition to a democratic regime, that was formally established with a new Constitution, in 1976. Meanwhile, the Colonial War was over; Angola, Mozambique and other former colonies became independent states. In 1986, another major change occurred: Portugal became one of the 12 member-states of the European Communities, the ancestor of the current European Union. The consequences were huge, in social and economic terms, but also for the art world and for cultural policies, not to mention national identity. So, change was late but intense; and it implied a radical reconfiguration of the geopolitical, institutional, economic, and cultural positioning of this medium-sized, peripheral, homogenous European country. The way its history proceeded, in the transition to the 21st century and in the first quarter of this century, was dictated by the interaction of all these factors – and one can see it clearly, both in periods of expansion and in periods of crisis and fiscal adjustment.

To apprehend the interplay of these factors, the book considers several structures, events and processes, and privileges various analytical dimensions and points of view. The way culture resonates social revolution – and cultural change accompanies the dramatic transformation of political and social arena – is examined in chapter 1. It deals with the cultural dimensions of the Carnation Revolution, that is, the democratic revolution that took place in Portugal between 1974 and 1976. The new regime had to propose and disseminate its own elaboration on national history and heritage, in radical opposition to the one the former dictatorship had imposed by rather authoritarian means. As any other political regime, the Portuguese democracy faced the remnants of the past, and reinterpreted them, forming a new collective memory. So, it can be an interesting case to discuss the general issues of history, heritage, and memorialisation. That is the purpose of chapter 2.

The institutionalisation of democracy, the accession to the European Communities and a certain economic stabilisation established the ground for an effective modernisation of public policies. Cultural policies were an obvious example, and we can date a quite positive trend since the middle of the 1980s. Chapters 3 and 4 describe two developments that crucially informed that trend: networking, as a strategy to disseminate cultural facilities throughout the territory, and to articulate their activity; and the key role that local authorities (municipalities, according to the Portuguese terminology) played, from that period onwards, in public cultural policies, consolidating a fruitful partnership with the state and, first, launching, then adapting their own model of intervention. Again, these are two developments that marked many countries in Europe. Among others, the Portuguese case provides an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the conditions and outcomes of those developments, and the way they interact with other features of cultural policy. Highlighting the Portuguese evolution from the 1980s until now, one can, drawing from a significant amount of data, assess their effectiveness as a tool to expand policies, and as an asset to mobilise in times of stagnation, thereby improving the resilience of artists and art organisations.

Chapter 5 narrows the focus to point out a specific policy, the one related to cinema and audiovisual. Always considering the European context, and contrasting it with the North American model, the attention paid to non-commercial exhibition (and the activity of film societies) is used as a parameter to discuss, analytically and normatively, the balance between public support for production and the regulation of distribution and exhibition – a crucial issue in the definition of European policies for the cinema sector.

Chapter 5 delves into the dialectics between economic and cultural value, so present in the sociology and the economics of culture. Policies tend to be modelled differently, according to the relative importance one ascribes to each term. But the articulation of economy and culture takes a larger meaning when we take a comprehensive approach to social development, considering the whole of the needs and responses of a given human community. Since the 1970s, there is an interesting literature on this approach, reviewed in chapter 6, and expressions like ‘cultural development’, ‘sustainable development’ and ‘human development’, coming from diverse theoretical perspectives, converge in showcasing the holistic configuration of this process. It can be demonstrated at the general level of national policies; but a particularly relevant scale, both for observation and practical action, is the local one. Culture, in its broadest sense, as a set of traditions and habits that define the identity of a community, as its heritage, and as an art world, is really a collective resource

that can be translated into strategies of local development, namely in rural areas. Again, Portugal provides a good case for analysis and international comparison.

Chapter 6 considers the role a theatre company has been playing in such a process, in the Northern region of the country; and chapter 7 takes, for the same purpose, the example of a summer rock festival. In the first case, a lasting partnership with local authorities and sponsors provides the ground for the accomplishment of a project that is, simultaneously, an artistic endeavour and a community-based strategy of social development. The analysis of the rock festival reveals how creative and sustainable tourism can serve as a catalyst for rural revitalisation, demonstrating the capacity of cultural events to generate effects that extend far beyond their immediate economic impacts. Together, these chapters suggest some methodology for researchers and local planners to fully benefit from the cultural turn in development studies.

Additionally, chapter 8, discussing data from the same rock festival, follows the 'making of community' – a key feature of festivals and their juvenile audiences – through the massive use of digital technologies and communication platforms, like the so-called social networks. The contemporary 'festivalisation' of culture has improved the effectiveness of these massive events, in terms of artistic domains, networking and global impact.

Chapter 9 examines the indie rock scene from another point of view: the strategies of professionalisation put into practice by music makers and mediators. Drawing on longitudinal research from 2005 to 2020, the chapter reveals how Portuguese indie rock participants have developed several distinct career typologies as adaptive responses to precariousness. Therefore, seen from the perspective of festivals and other massive gatherings, or from the way protagonists try to build up their careers, the pop and rock scenes help us understand the velocity and deepness of cultural change in contemporary societies. Again, the use of empirical data strengthens our theoretical capacity to understand and our practical capacity to cope with such an unprecedented transformation.

Finally, chapters 10 and 11 define the subject of research not only in terms of space but also in terms of time. They isolate a particularly dramatic conjuncture: the consequences of the financial crisis of 2008-2010 in Portugal, leading to an international bailout, and the correspondent program of fiscal adjustment. It was a very drastic, front-loaded program, from 2011 to 2014, and it severely hit the whole of Portuguese society. Chapter 10 explores the ways Portuguese artists dealt with this difficult circumstance, that is, the symbolic representations they produced about it. And chapter 11 explains how previous improvements in the organisation of cultural entities, as well as reciprocal cooperation in management and programming, helped

the Portuguese art world to be resilient and overcome the crisis, paving the way to the subsequent cycle of growth and expansion. The focus is on the toolbox art worlds can use to respond to adverse circumstances.

Except for chapters 1 and 11, unpublished, all the other chapters are based on papers previously published in scientific journals. When the data they used referred to previous stages of cultural development in Portugal, it was updated for this book; the same goes for monographs and references. That is, namely, the case of chapters 3, 4 and 6, thus substantially revised vis-à-vis the originally published article. The list below indicates the previous draft of each chapter and the journal (or the book) where it was first published. The authors wish to thank all the journals and publishers for their very kind permission to use the material in this book:

Chapter 2 was previously published in *Sociologia, problemas e práticas*, n. 104, 2024, pp. 9-21.

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An early version of chapter 5 was published in *International journal of cultural policy*, vol. 29, n. 6, 2023, pp. 733-751; here minor changes were made.

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Chapter 7 was previously published in the book organized by Ian Woodward, Jo Haynes, Pauwke Berkers, Aileen Dillane, & Karolina Golemo, *Remaking culture and music spaces. Affects, infrastructures, futures*, 2022, London: Routledge, pp. 137-149.

Chapter 8 was earlier published in the book organized by Paula Guerra & Pedro Costa *Redefining art worlds in the late modernity*, 2016, Porto: University of Porto – Faculty of Arts and Humanities, pp. 39-67.

Chapter 9 was before published in the book organized by Rainer Prokop & Rosa Reitsamer (2023). *Higher music education and employability in a neoliberal world*, 2023, London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 185–196.

Chapter 10 was previously published in *Sociologia, problemas e práticas*, n. 86, 2018, pp. 27-43.

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Chapter 8 is based on a set of three projects: 'Urban cultures and youth lifestyles: scenarios, sonorities and aesthetics in Portuguese contemporaneity', undertaken between 2005 and 2009; 'Urban polycentrism, knowledge and dynamics of innovation', carried out between 2010 and 2013; and the already mentioned 'Portugal ao Espelho'. The first two were funded by FCT, and the third was funded by FCG.

Chapter 9 draws on the research about 'Urban Cultures and youth lifestyles' (see above), and 'Do It Together Again: Networks, flows and spaces in the construction of careers in the Portuguese independent scene', both funded by the FCT.

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When red carnations infiltrate the sociology of arts: an essay on popular culture and social change

Augusto Santos Silva

1. The Portuguese transition to democracy

Portugal lived under a dictatorship and was engaged in a colonial war until 1974. That year, a military coup led by very young, middle rank officers (mostly captains and majors), toppled the Government, and launched a political transition aiming at three goals, known as the three Ds: democratisation, decolonisation, development. Popular appropriation immediately transformed this coup into a revolution, and for a year and a half (from April 1974 until November 1975) intense debate took place on the design of the new political and economic regime. Meanwhile, the war ended, and all the African colonies became independent countries. Finally, in 1976, a new Constitution was approved, defining Portugal as a multi-party democracy and a Welfare state; the Parliament was elected and the first Constitutional Government, led by Mário Soares, was appointed. The President, the two regional assemblies and all the municipal bodies were also elected, thus concluding the foundation of the new regime. The objectives of decolonisation and democratisation being accomplished, a new path to development was then initiated, with the candidature and eventually, in 1986, the formal membership to the European Communities. Since then, the Portuguese people have been dealing with the various political alternatives to pursue the combination of liberal democracy and social and economic development, with major achievements and no less important blockades and pullbacks.

This is the shortest possible version of the Portuguese history of the last 50 years. This chapter is an invitation to see it from the perspective of culture and lifestyle.

2. Before the Carnation Revolution

Salazar's regime was very conservative and traditionalist, always trying to avoid any risk of diversity and change. It considered any movement of a certain openness as a threat, even if directed towards political allies, like the United States – for instance,

Coca-Cola was forbidden in the continental Portuguese market. However, the regime could not stop all the internal effects of the Post-War dynamics in Europe. Furthermore, decisions taken by the dictator himself, such as the colonial war, inevitably produced bold consequences in terms of ordinary people's social experience and patterns of behaviour.

Among those effects, one must underline the massive experiences of emigration and war in Africa. More than 1.5 million Portuguese abandoned the country to work abroad: 9 hundred thousand, between 1957 and 1974, to France (Pereira 2012); but many others to Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland (and also to Canada, United States, Venezuela and other countries, in what regarded the Atlantic archipelagos of Azores and Madeira). They were generally young adults, coming from the working class, peasantry, and Northern rural areas. From 1961 to 1974, almost one million young men took part, as soldiers, in the colonial war in Africa. Immediately before and after the independence of Angola and Mozambique, in 1975, more than a half a million of Portuguese people, that lived there, returned to Portugal.

If we consider mass movements, these were the three main sources of novelty experienced by a rather rural, low educated and premodern population: the contact with Europe, as workforce, and the contact with Sub-Saharan Africa, either as settlers or as military. From distinct and partially contradictory angles, all of them posed challenges to Salazar, to his successor, Marcello Caetano, and to the three main pillars of their regime, the Army, the Catholic Church, and the entrepreneurial conglomerates closely affiliated to colonial and economic policy. Nevertheless, these were not the only changes at stake, during the 1960s and the beginnings of the 1970s. Demographically less pervasive, but extremely relevant from the social and political point of view, was the evolution of social structure due to increments in manufacture, tourism, and the banking system; and, most of all, the emergence of students as a critical collective actor.

During the Portuguese dictatorship, youngsters studying at the University represented a clear minority: when new universities were launched, in 1973, the number of university students were a small part of the respective age group. But universities were already cultural and political laboratories. They were contexts of rapid socialisation into the ideas, sentiments, attitudes of the European youth, as well as familiarisation with the books, movies, music, clothes and ornaments the latter was consuming. From 1962 onwards, the regime was regularly challenged by opposition movements originated in Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto, the three cities hosting universities. At the same time, a small but influential cultural industry emerged, built around non-conventional activities, aligned with European and North American models but disapproved by national authorities, such as rock festivals, jazz, political

song writing, experimental cinema, modern theatre, and literature. Marxism, feminism and anticolonial thought significantly influenced, then, the social awareness of the younger, educated generation.

3. A radical change

It is important to consider all these movements that were pushing different sectors of the population away from Salazar's representation of Portugal, conceived as a small, humble home, isolated from modernity and protected by authority, invested by God and history in an intercontinental, colonial mission, fighting communism, democracy, Enlightenment and Western moral depravation. In society, almost nothing starts from scratch. And the first consequence of the democratic revolution, in April 1974, was that it gave room to all these movements: not only to the political forces and ideas oppressed by the authoritarian regime – that are not the subject of this chapter – but also to the symbolic and behavioural changes, that is, the transformation of values, attitude, self-presentation, social interaction and consumption patterns.

The liberation inherent to the fall of the dictatorship was, first and foremost, the liberation of exactly what and whom had been prohibited. The songs, films, plays, novels and essays that were forbidden or subjected to censorship; the facts and opinions that could not be reported on television, radio and newspapers; the hairstyling, clothes, drinks, body language that were considered indecent; the public gatherings, meetings and free occupation of urban streets and squares, that were banned and deemed illegal: all these kinds of social participation, creative activity, self-expression and group formation suddenly came to light and conquered the public sphere. Thus, in the middle of the 1970s, democratic transition happened under a quite festive atmosphere, suggesting an endless set of possibilities and repertoires of action.

The red carnation was rapidly elected as the icon of this vibrant, inclusive way of undertaking political change. On the 25 April of 1974, early in the morning, a soldier participating in the military coup asked a working-class woman in the street for cigarettes. She had none and, instead, offered him and his companions the carnations she carried. The carnations were used to decorate their rifles' pipes, symbolizing the peaceful purpose of the coup, thus becoming the very icon of the 'Carnation Revolution'. They were white and red. But in the process of their definition as a political icon, only the red ones were retained, highlighting the progressive orientation that was pervading the ongoing transformation. Joyful, peaceful, and progressive – that was the self-representation of the democratic revolution, and how it was perceived by the public opinion.

It was also radical, meaning that it questioned almost all grounds of personal and social life. Gender relations, labour, land ownership, power in the classroom, housing

and urbanism, healthcare, wages and pensions, management, neighbourhood, religious beliefs, mass communication, freedom of speech, arts, all were issues for proposals and acts of vindication: all were arenas for the dialectics between tradition and modernity, continuity and disruption, reproduction and innovation, that characterised the second half of the 1970s in Portugal. In Habermasian terms, the gap between the 'system' and the 'lived world' reached its minimal level (see Habermas 1987). In that sense, because everything was being re-founded, the Carnation Revolution was itself a *cultural* process, through which ordinary men and women were seeking, and discovering, new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

Moreover, arts and culture were instrumental for the revolution. They were seen as providing tools to overcome some of the structural handicaps of the Portuguese population, such as illiteracy, patronage, unfamiliarity with cultural goods, strong dependency vis-à-vis a pre-Vatican II Church. Many artists, performers, teachers and students actively engaged in programs aimed at raising the 'collective conscience' of lower classes, in rural and urban areas, in a rather top-down political campaign, led by the military and left-wing activists, that used culture as a potent means of ideological indoctrination (see Almeida 2025). Consequently, the criteria to assess any work of art relied on its 'social usefulness' – let us say, a kind of 'marginal utility' to the collective process of revolutionary awareness. This functionalist approach to culture became hegemonic in the political and cultural fields: from music to cinema, from literature to theatre, the point was to measure the added value provided by art to the redefinition of ordinary people (namely, the working class in farms and factories, and the peasantry) as a 'historic subject'. Form was, therefore, less relevant than substance to assess the quality and significance of art; empathy with lay audiences was far more important than the interaction with cultivated connoisseurs; and the more didactic the more legitimate cultural performances would be.

4. A new cultural landscape

This was the prevalent atmosphere in Portugal, in the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution of 1974 and throughout the remaining years of the 1970s. Liberation and experimentalism were the keywords. But not focused on the formal aspects of the artistic work, nor on the endogenous dynamism of the art world, since the main trend was to open this world, abolishing the boundaries that usually separated artwork and social activism, by means of a language and content that could be intelligible and meaningful to larger, popular audiences.

This process happened in a context characterised – due to the Salazarist hostility vis-à-vis culture – by a very weak institutional structure for the arts: few art schools, and very peripheral in relation to the core of the education system; residual profes-

sionalism; only two television channels, both state-owned; a very fragile entertainment industry and, of course, no significant room for independent theatre or cinema. So, in 1974, it was really urgent to create such a structure, in a democratic way, founding a cultural policy and demanding the Government's attention to education and arts. Meanwhile, artists had to find ways to produce and perform, to search for funding, to reach audiences, to attain a minimal level of professionalisation. It was time for 'doing it yourself' in a very specific manner: as 'do it yourselves, collectively', that is, 'do it ourselves'. It was time to act the way Walter Benjamin, and not Theodor W. Adorno, advocated (see Benjamin 2017a; Adorno 2003).

Certainly, there was a lot of experimentalism, in the sense of discovering and testing new manners of doing things. But not a strictly formal one since the main goal was to ground art in social life. New ways were indispensable, in fine arts and cinema, overcoming conventions that enclosed paintings and sculptures in museums, far away from ordinary people, or depreciated realistic movies and the genre of political documentary. And indeed, the Carnation Revolution gave room to artistic installations, interventions in public space, happenings, and film directors like Rui Simões and Alberto Seixas Santos brought the faces and voices of workers to the screen. At the same time, singers and actors – and even chamber groups and orchestras – used all sort of facilities (schools, parishes, trade unions, local associations, etc.) to perform comedies, epic dramas or classic Portuguese playwrights in popular contexts, or to seduce and motivate people with revolutionary songs. However, the overwhelming tendency was to destroy elitism, tearing down the conventional walls separating the arts and ordinary people. It was to achieve an *external* revolution – a revolution in the relationship between artists and audiences – and only subsidiarily an *internal* revolution – one oriented towards the language and grammar of artwork. Didacticism and political campaigning dominated the former, and the consequences were very effective. On the one hand, several elements of, let us say, a national or European canon, in theatre, literature or music, were finally brought into light, thus allowing a larger audience to discover authors like Bertolt Brecht, or even Portuguese classical playwrights such as Gil Vicente and Almeida Garrett, or modern ones such as Luís de Sttau Monteiro and Bernardo Santareno. Some folklore was revisited and recreated in a minimally cultivated variant, both in the Northern region and in Alentejo. On the other hand, the politicisation of cultural forms was a powerful means of improving social awareness, citizenship, and collective engagement, disseminating a broad political message framed in democratic, progressive, participatory values.

In comparison, the attention paid to more formal, internal, endogenous elements of the artistic practice was less important. That does not mean it was non-existent:

the mid-1970s were also a time of radical questioning of academic traditions, for instance the one led by the poets Melo e Castro, Alberto Pimenta and Maria Teresa Horta, novelists like Maria Velho da Costa, and several painters and sculptors involved in provocative public art. However, the visibility and influence of this kind of experimentalism were quite residual, due to the hegemony of the quest for public discourse and political conscience, rather than for formal art.

The outcome was actually some tension between different approaches to the social role of art. One can see it in theatre and in 'popular music'. Since its foundation in 1973 (the year before the Carnation Revolution), by two extraordinary young actors coming from the university, Luís Miguel Cintra and Jorge Silva Melo, the company Teatro da Cornucópia has combined progressive politics and an endless pursuit to artistic novelty (see Serôdio 2001). Its influence was obvious, still shadowed by the emergence of an assumed militant theatre (for instance, Teatro da Comuna or, since 1976, Teatro A Barraca). Among songwriters, the most prestigious figure was Zeca Afonso, a hero of antifascist resistance, who started his career as a singer of the traditional music of Coimbra university students (the Coimbra *fado*), and then evolved to a highly elaborate body of original music work, with influential lyrics, by himself or important Portuguese poets. His songs were subjected to censorship, and several of them became anthems for the young opponents to the dictatorship. The military movement chose one of them, *Grândola, vila morena*, as the final passcode for the launching of the coup, the 25th of April 1974. It obviously became the popular anthem of the Revolution, the very symbol of democracy – and still is.

Zeca Afonso's leadership was never contested by colleagues and followers: he was really the icon of progressive political engagement in music. Personally, he never abandoned a demanding quality standard, and therefore he never considered the formal aspects of music only instrumental or peripheral to political message and campaigning. But several of his companions took a rather diverse pathway, focusing on 'cultural action', as the name of a newly created group so eloquently expressed: music as a means to reach people whose awareness one should raise. That *Grupo de Ação Cultural*, as such, and individual musical activists like José Mário Branco and Tino Flores disseminated some of the iconic songs of the Carnation Revolution, including the one that stated 'A song is a weapon/ And I didn't know./ It depends on the rage/ And the accuracy' (Grupo de Ação Cultural, 1975; see also Anacleto, 2021, and Castro, 2022). (Notably, Sérgio Godinho, being more of an activist than Zeca Afonso, maintained high-quality standards in lyrics and melody; artists like Fausto and José Mário Branco eventually moved onto this level of standards).

5. Silence and absence as part of a revolution

The interconnection of art and politics, the move from cultural institutions towards the public space, and the communion of artists with audiences seem to be the three main traits of the atmosphere of urgency and transformation that framed the aftermath of the Portuguese Revolution (the 25th of April 1974), in cultural terms. To some extent, it was a realisation of the programme Walter Benjamin had proposed, in the 1930s: a cultural revolution that questioned the (for him) bourgeois values of beauty, harmony, form and heritage; that took advantage of the 'era of technical reproducibility', thus enlarging the reach of art; that extended the perimeter of art to the so-called minor arts and crafts; that proposed a radical questioning of the social and cultural history and deemed the past through the revolutionary envisagement of present and future (see Benjamin 1992, 2017a, 2017b). The Adornians did exist, preferring to denounce the manipulatory effects of mass culture and advocating for a rigorist, high-brow stance; but they were a clear minority. Criticism was key, as it is in any revolution: but it was a social criticism of culture, in a Benjaminian way, not a cultural criticism of political domination, as the one proposed by Adorno (see Adorno 2003; DeNora 2003a: 1-34).

Criticism is always an ambivalent process. It highlights some aspects of reality, be it in a negative way – by questioning conventions, hierarchies, privileges, rules and rulers – be it in a positive way – for instance, by identifying and commending the creativity of folk people. But criticism also silences several aspects of reality, and this latter mechanism is as important as the former. This is particularly evident during revolutionary processes, when the silenced events cast a shadow on the prospects of change.

We have already suggested that the most significant experiences escaping the Salazarist control, in the 1960s and on the eve of the 1970s, were the emigration to European countries and the experiences of soldiers throughout the Colonial War. None of these facts was enunciated as a relevant theme for public debate during the revolutionary years of 1974-1976.

Novelist Olga Gonçalves was a quite unique case of literary inspiration rooted in the realities faced by the Portuguese in Germany and France (see Gonçalves 1975, 1978); we had to wait until the end of the 1970s and the 1980s to see Portuguese emigration celebrated and reconceptualised as 'Portuguese Communities' abroad (see Teixeira & Mendes 2020); and it was only in the 21st century that a young Luso French film director, Ruben Alves (2013), addressed this phenomenon in a fresh, positive way, that motivated large audiences (*La cage dorée*). Until then, the predominant approach to emigration, within the Portuguese culture, was a

lament over such obvious manifestations of peripherality, poverty and nostalgia (*saudade*) representing exactly the past the revolution wished to overcome – and forget, if not deny.

On the other hand, it was a young novelist, António Lobo Antunes, himself a medical doctor enlisted as conscript into the Colonial War in Angola, that finally evoked in literary terms that terrible experience of hundreds of thousands of young males, and its long-lasting sequels when, demobilised, they returned to 'normal' life (see Antunes 1979a, 1979b, 1983). In 1981, a female writer, Wanda Ramos, evoked her experience in Angola, her motherland and the context of her failed marriage to a military (Ramos 1981). But it was only in 1988 that another female writer, Lídia Jorge, extensively described the experience of wartime from the perspective of women accompanying their husbands who were fighting in the North of Mozambique (Jorge 1988).

Additionally, an even thicker silence fell over the massive return of Portuguese families living in Angola and Mozambique following the end of the war and subsequent independencies (see Ribeiro 2004, Pires 1987). More than a half million men and women, of all age groups, many of them belonging to the lower and middle classes, hastily returned to a 'mainland' they had abandoned decades ago, or in which they had never been. Although, eventually, the integration of these 'returnees' into the Portuguese society was remarkably successful, and very positive for the territory, the local economy and social fabric, it was not incorporated or problematised by the cultural activism of the mid-1970s. Only in 2011, with the publication of a novel by Dulce Maria Cardoso, based on her own experience as a 'returnee', this silence ended (Cardoso 2011).

So, the vibrant and festive atmosphere of the Portuguese democratic transition proved to be uncomfortable to cope with events that were seen as traumatic, such as being forced to fight in a colonial war or to leave one's homeland in search of a better job, events that epitomized past misfortune. It also proved to be uneasy to face social groups that could negatively assess the Carnation Revolution, such as the 'returnees', and many emigrants influenced by the reports on alleged communist attacks against property and authority, conveyed by various international media. It was as if the democratic spirit was not prepared to absorb the complexities of non-black-and-white situations, to be polyhedral rather than two-sided.

Melancholy, a soft, silent pain, should mark the ambience of post-revolutionary years – namely from 1976, the year of the institutionalisation of the liberal democratic regime, to 1986, when the country joined the European Communities. This was a period of political instability, economic crises, and some setback in social rights. Regarding arts and culture, the heavy limits that socioeconomic conditions inflicted to the structuring of an art world in Portugal, the fragility and discontinuity of cultural

policies, the budgetary constraints of public funding, the low level of cultural consumption, the obstacles to the consolidation of art professions and institutions – all these factors converged to pale the image of the cultural revolution of the mid-1970s, and to crystalize the sense of disappointment, failure and revolutionary nostalgia that was so influential in plays, movies and music of the late 1970s and early 1980s (and we can also observe it in novels by Lobo Antunes and Lídia Jorge). And it is not a paradox that such a mood would prevent Portuguese artists and intellectuals from deepening the critical investigation into several crucial dimensions of the country's history, such as racism, colonisation, and migration. Beyond a formal, definitive condemnation (of the colonial rule, and its racist, imperial manifestations) or lament (for the massive Post-World War II emigration), there was little room to admit aspects and responsibilities that could not be immediately reduced to Salazar's decisions. A vast area of our history and social structure was left aside until very recently, when, namely under the pressure of Afrodescendants living in the Lisbon urban area, it finally became an issue, in politics, museums and monuments as well as in dance, music, films and plays.

6. Cultural change as a part of a revolution

Three arguments can be presented to explain this focus on the cultural features of the Carnation Revolution. First, we are celebrating (in 2024-2026) its 50th anniversary, and this alone would justify such an option. But second, the transformation that occurred in the mid-1970s was the great disjuncture, the breakaway that opened room for the development of a Portuguese art world: a set of cultural institutions, venues and practices that still is the one we live in, nowadays. If one does not understand the turning point of the 1970s, one cannot apprehend the subsequent dynamism and evolution of Portuguese culture and arts. Suffice it to note some of the most relevant moments in popular urban culture, from the 1980s onwards, such as the emergence of the so-called Portuguese rock; the influence of punk music; the re-discovery of folk forms, urban like Lisboa's *fado*, or rural like the Alentejo's *cante*; the industry of concerts and summer festivals; the international affirmation of Portuguese cinema; the New Dance movement; the expansion of photography, urban art, comics, short movies, animated feature films, documentaries, interdisciplinary performances, and other forms traditionally neglected. All of these were offspring of the radical changes that were ignited by the democratic transition in all dimensions of culture and arts: from 1976 until our time, higher levels of education and the generalisation of university training among youth; the enlargement of audiences and the increase in mass consumption of entertainment goods and services; the implementation of cultural policies, establishing the role of

state, regions and municipalities in providing a public sector and funding for heritage and arts; the formation of a national network of cultural facilities; the rise of an independent sector, rather marginal and fragile, but existing and influential; the increment of art schools, at secondary and tertiary level, and a new dynamics of professionalisation; the succession of different generations of artists and cultural mediators, and the consequent enrichment of the cultural field; and the process of internationalisation, both in what regards the openness of Portuguese institutions and players to the European and world system, and in what concerns the power of attracting, to our venues, students and professionals coming from abroad, namely from other Portuguese-speaking countries. In my opinion, an analysis of all these trends that skipped the careful consideration of the founding moment of the Carnation Revolution would not be as comprehensive as it could be.

And yet the third argument is the one I prefer, to justify this brief remembrance of the cultural transformation of the 1970s. I do think that the cultural scene of those days can serve as a useful background in dialogue with which one can actually design a research program on current cultural dynamics. The dynamics we can observe in European and North American countries, but also throughout many other regions of the world, as a lot of research on music, cinema and audiovisual is making clear.

How is it that the consideration of the evolution launched by the Carnation Revolution and the democratic transition, in Portugal, can help us review our modelling and outline a deeper research program on the juvenile, urban, popular culture of current societies?

My answer will be a twofold one. On the one hand, by providing a dense empirical case, in which some of the most important drivers of a new interrelationship of art and society, acting intensively and simultaneously, can be observed. We can thus find and test, concentrated in time and space, the conspicuous interplay of multiple variables from which we can draw pertinent postulates and hypotheses to new research: a heuristic usefulness, then. On the other hand, by calling for a scientific attitude that combines intellectual engagement with analytical distance in addressing the complex dialectics embedded in the work of artists on history and politics: an ethical input, if we may say so.

7. Political process and cultural transformation

Let us, then, reap some red carnations to smell the scent of cultural transformation – and its pertinence for our own epoch and context. At least three distinct avenues could be explored: culture as social practice; art and community; art and transgression.

One of the most powerful drivers in the Portuguese cultural scene of the mid-1970s was the radical enlargement of the meaning of culture, and the attempt to overthrow the barriers that usually separated arts and everyday life. The purpose was to enrich the cognitive and symbolic toolkit of ordinary people, empowering their agency. Particular attention was therefore given not only to the accessibility of goods and services institutionally encoded as cultural artifacts, but also, and mainly, to every person's ability to absorb, redefine and re-use those artifacts (also by means of decoding and recoding them, as Stuart Hall 2006 has underlined) as his or her personal resources into action. 'A song is a weapon', as stated in the famous song composed and sung by José Mário Branco, that has been already quoted.

Overcoming the boundaries between formal art consumption and the whole of social practice, cultural symbols and materials could be 'afforded' as ingredients, resources of people's agency – exactly as Tia DeNora highlighted, in her research on music-in-action (DeNora 2003a, 2011); and as the instruments and processes of 'mediation' (in Hennion's sense, 1993) became critical for such an accomplishment. The sociology of culture can see here a vast source of inspiration to research on social uses of arts and culture – on the way actors affiliated to different classes, peer groups, generations, genders, territories, incorporate symbols and forms into their own identity, self-presentation, lifestyle, expectations. In that sense, popular music (such as, for the youngsters, pop, rock, punk, hip hop, funk, R & B, and so on) is probably the most critical vector of group identification, in our societies (see, for instance, Featherstone 1991, Gomes 2012, Guerra 2013).

If we now return to the Portuguese experience of the mid-1970s, another feature must be emphasised: the process of cultural education and improvement was not conceived, in those times of vibe and vertigo, as solely or fundamentally individual. On the contrary, the keywords were 'group', 'class', 'collective'. Heritage belonging to everyone, everyone being both entitled to access it and responsible for preserving it, and as the same could be said about contemporary arts, conceived mainly as public goods (in the economic sense, non-exclusive and non-rival), culture was seen as a formidable means to *make community* (e.g., social conscience, national identity, *res publica*). However, the reverse was also true: according to the Portuguese activists of the 1970s, the sense of community should prevail, either within the art world or in its relationship with audiences and the public sphere, since the construction of a new, democratic, liberated and liberating cultural scene was a collective task, only collectively achievable.

Meanwhile, this community-oriented stance had to be articulated with the individual dimension inherent to creating and performing: writing a book, imagining a scenario, writing a lyrics or composing a melody, interpreting a character, singing for

an audience, filming, painting, dancing, always involve a radical singularity, a sense of originality and authorship. Even on the consumption side, such an individualisation is conspicuous, since (as Lahire 2004 pointed out), each individual set of cultural practices, being the result of multiple, socially determined, patterns of education, taste, and choice, may represent a rather heterogeneous, unique, assemblage. The 'society of individuals' described by Norbert Elias appears in a particular and particularly effective way in the arena of cultural production and consumption, which is a powerful driver of the 'individualisation process', the modern construction of the reflexive self and his or her identity (see Elias 1993, Giddens 1991).

This is, indeed, another large avenue for sociological research: how, in a certain context, given concrete circumstances of time and space, the artwork performs a role in group formation and inscribes itself in a scene partially defined by artists themselves. Again, popular music is perhaps the clearest example: sharing information, attending a concert, belonging to a fan club, wearing similar clothes and using similar ornaments, publishing a fanzine, all have to do with socialisation and group identity, as with aesthetic experience. And since new technologies of information and communication, along with international mobility, enable us to overcome physical distance, the 'local' group formed around a given art or pattern of consumption can unite people located in different countries and continents, and can include millions of individuals, in a post-national, cosmopolitan way (see Appadurai 1996). Whatever the level and scale you choose for your analysis, a properly sociological approach to arts and culture must consider not only their role in the wider configurations of social practice (the first avenue suggested by the consideration of the Portuguese case I tried to describe here); but it has also to reflect the different forces of individualism and affiliation – and, in the latter, to ponder the interplay of ingroup and outgroup (identities can be competitive), of group and society at large (many identities are defined against social order or 'the system' of social rules and institutions). Therefore, it is extremely important to focus on what 'your' really means, in the 'do it yourself' strategies that are so pervasive in the youngsters' cultural reception and production: is it yourself, individually, or your group, your band, your fan club, your usual audience, your community of values and activism?

A third direction of sociological research that I think the Portuguese case suggests in a very sharp manner is the exploration of the complex ties between, on the one hand, artistic language and form, and, on the other hand, the social, political and cultural establishment. Artists frequently solve this question by means of a *doxa*: one that postulates the transgressive nature of *any* work of art and deems any further investigation as unnecessary. Creativity would be the twin sister of rebellion, claiming the autonomy of a person, small group or specific cultural

scene vis-à-vis social order, common sense, hierarchical institutions, patterned behaviours, the Flaubertian 'received ideas', and other real or imagined symbols of conformity and establishment.

And indeed, this is one of the main reasons for the recurrent prominence of intellectuals and artists in revolutionary conjunctures, like the Portuguese one in the mid-1970s: their status, attitude and language are particularly functional to rationalize disruption and radical change. Furthermore, as Bourdieu (1992) explained, there is an objective affinity between the subaltern position of the cultural field within the structure of power and the political interests of non-hegemonic classes. As many studies on, for instance, the rap or the punk scenes in authoritarian regimes have shown, popular music can put in place a very potent artillery against oppression, censorship, and social control, because of its embeddedness in youth, because of the way it mobilises lyrics, melody, public gathering, and body language, and mainly because of its underground, anti-systemic orientation. Cultural liberation and political confrontation can easily stand shoulder to shoulder.

Still, change means something more than protest, outcry or even destruction: it also means trying to set up alternatives, and ultimately impose new structures, rules, and institutions. Again, this dialectic is crucial for sociologists of culture, since it raises issues that extend far beyond the schematic contrast of canon and novelty, core and periphery, industry and craftsmanship, social integration and tribal identities.

First, at a certain threshold, musicians or filmmakers ought to contact and eventually cope with the prevailing, national or international, system of cultural production and distribution. The way they do it (or refuse to do it) defines decisive aspects of their career as artists. Private or public organisations, media and the entertainment industry, cultural facilities, capital and technology, and the core institutions of any art world are always, directly or indirectly, playing a role, even in scenes clearly referred to the underground paradigm of cultural fabric. Namely in pop, rock, and indie music, one must consider the ability of the cultural establishment to harness and co-opt personalities, goods, services, symbols and habits emerging from its margins – even monetizing them, taking them as sources for significative profit. As labels, 'anarchy', 'revolution', 'transgression', 'non-conformity', can be instrumental for enlarging general audiences or reaching specific segments, and the gap between marketing language and real substance should not be ignored.

Second, the focus on attitude, celebrating any kind of defiant gesture vis-à-vis any kind of 'system', and claiming that dissidence is a value regardless of its fundamentals, content, or purpose, can be the shortest route to a catch-all libertarianism, where far-right, far-left and neither-right-nor-left movements can all find support and complicity. In several moments in the history of Western popular culture, the

grandiosity and hypervisibility of political proclamations for freedom, anarchy, and against any public authority, have hidden very old-fashioned stances, for instance in terms of gender relations, sexuality or even ethnicity. Suffice it to note the continuous hegemony of white men in the rock scenes, the strong influence of the patriarchal representation of family and community, the apology of violence; or, in the case of the Portuguese conjuncture of the mid-1970s, the fact that there was no female protagonist of the 'music of intervention', that is, the one engaged in a politically progressive social transformation. Moreover, the nihilistic perspective that motivated a large number of young Europeans involved in cultural underground scenes, throughout the post-1960s decades, was not very far away from some of the sentiments that eventually fuelled the rise, among young men, of the right-wing extremist opposition to liberal democracy, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. The criticism of 'mainstream' can indeed provide a common ground to different variants of radicalisation, ideological fundamentalism, and political extremism. Labelling something as libertarian and underground is by no means a criterion to stop our own analytical inquiry into its characteristics and orientations, and the way it relates to social trajectories marked by the hegemony of youth, physical looks and stamina, or the pervasiveness of alcohol and drugs, not to mention the rules of industry and a particularly demanding star-system.

8. Conclusion: on distance and proximity

This is exactly the juncture at which the ethical input I anticipated, earlier in the chapter, can prove useful. Emotionally, it is hard to avoid a sympathetic, celebratory tone in addressing processes like the 1974 Revolution in Portugal, and the subsequent cultural transformation. In a certain way, red carnations, its symbols, could be seen as roses (commonly considered as symbols of purity and love) with the politically proper colours. It is impossible not to be grasped by all the liberation energy then provided: political, economic, sexual, cultural liberation from old habits, dictatorial rules, isolation, and social oppression. Only a torrential stream could extinguish the thirst accumulated for decades of the authoritarian regime, as Sérgio Godinho (1974) stated in a famous song, *Liberdade*. And, indeed, one can emphasise the desire of individual liberation (alone or, mainly, within a group or a generation) as a crucial characteristic of many music scenes. However, as Hannah Arendt (1963) once explained, liberation and liberty are quite different things: some of the most influential revolutions modernity has experienced were effective movements of liberation that did not evolve towards open societies and free regimes. That is why (speaking for a brief moment in normative terms) we need, in democracy, not one but two crit-

icisms: the revolutionary questioning of rules and institutions; and the democratic interpellation of the revolutionary pathos and its outcomes.

I close the bracket, as this is an academic essay. Based on sociological theory, it can be said, and must be said, that distance and proximity are both crucial. If the Weberian *Verstehen* – the ability to understand a social configuration of meaning in its own terms – is really a prerequisite for all sociology of arts and culture (not to mention all sociology), the same applies to the analytical distancing that allows us to highlight the shadows and look for the latent, invisible, oblivious components of that configuration. As the Portuguese Carnation Revolution exemplifies so clearly (even being one of the most inclusive and peaceful revolutions of the 20th century), there are always areas of silence (as we saw, all that could put into question the narrative of revolutionary unity and progressivism, such as emigration, the lived experience of the Colonial War, or the dramatic, hasty return of Portuguese from Africa). Inevitably, there are lunar surfaces, repressed facts, ignored issues that any inquiry worthy of its name must investigate, in order to reach a comprehensive panorama.

The proximity between researchers and subjects of research, in the sociology of arts and culture, is quite usual, and in many ways beneficial. As a matter of fact, artists and mediators can be seen as subjects in the two senses of the word: as realities to be known and as cognitive actors, as observed and as observers. The proximity is still heightened when we go into the dynamic territory of independent art, underground culture, and practices of cultural affordance, linking so closely art and self-identity. The research program on the ‘do it yourself culture’ and punk scenes is a sound testimony (see, for instance, Bennett & Guerra 2019a). Indeed, as I tried to suggest elsewhere (Silva 2021), it seems impossible to consider literature and arts as simply Durkheimian ‘facts’, or Marxian ‘superstructures’; they are an integral *part* of any inquiry aimed at understanding them, being simultaneously analysed and analysts.

Distance still is essential, and the dialectic between proximity and distance is a *sine qua non* condition for intellectual achievement. The principles and tools of social science instate a distance regarding the issues to be considered, and this favours a holistic, multifactorial analysis that illuminates different domains and encompasses a multiplicity of players and variables. Gaining distance helps objectivity and comprehensiveness.

There are two types of distance. One leads to arrogance. Drawn from either a positivist or a militant perspective, it assumes the asymmetry between the Comtean or Hegelian interpreter and the subject of interpretation. It is, therefore, a distance that goes from an upper point (the observer) to a lower point (the observed). The only way to surpass it would be, as Walter Benjamin argued, to practice a critical assessment of

the latter, one that should eventually surpass its 'archaic' elements, save the 'future carriers', and transform them into useful materials for our current intellectual and political initiative (Benjamin 2017b). 'Revolution', 'modernity', 'transgression', 'radicality', 'postmodernity', 'counter-hegemony', or any other label you prefer to apply, would be the criterion for a judgement that always considers the observed as the one to be assessed.

The other type of distance, the one I think we need, leads to intellectual humility. In a sense, it is the other face of proximity, on the same coin. Here, distance does not imply superiority, but simply otherness. We observe from different perspectives, we elaborate from different axiomatics, we use different tools: we, the scientists and researchers organized in academic communities; we, the artists, mediators, activists, consumers that form a cultural scene. The difference will always, to some extent, exist – there is a certain hiatus between the respective purposes and languages, a gap that cannot be annulled, as the two spheres cannot be dissolved one into the other. Fortunately. But that same difference asks for intercommunication, translation mechanisms, crossings and intersections, even common grounds, based on inter-questioning, reciprocity, mutual enrichment, the humble and open-minded attitude of he or she that realizes the bounded nature of her repertory and assumes the need to contact other repertories.

That is really the 'Angelus Novus' (Benjamin 2017b) we must refer to, in my view. One that cannot be redeemed by any obsolete ideation of history as a linear, progressive evolution, who is always dragged by the windstorm of current times. But with no academic or ideological legitimacy to judge, only to approach, to interpret the Other – to offer an attempted, provisional, reversible overview of vibrant realities and endless processes, those we accurately name arts and culture.

The symbolic politics of cultural heritage: a view from Portugal

Augusto Santos Silva

1. Introduction: interpreting history and heritage

Heritage is a critical political issue for more than one reason. The foundations of any political regime have also to do with the kind of interpretation that is provided about who constitutes the nation, what defines its national identity and which history it refers to. The assemblage of objects and symbols presented as past achievements that must be preserved, acknowledged and admired in the present requires a quite sensible and delicate work of selection and codification (see Guillaume 1980, Davallon 2018). And the collective memory that this work tends to endorse is a key element of the consensus that supports any minimally stabilised social order.

Furthermore, the politics of memory and historical identity is crucial for regimes appealing to forms of legitimacy that are alternative to the democratic rule of popular sovereignty and electoral competition. That was the case of the dictatorship that Portugal continuously experienced from 1926 to 1974, under Oliveira Salazar and, in the last six years of that period, under his disciple Marcello Caetano (see Gomes 2011; Rosas 2012; Cadavez 2018). For such a conservative authoritarian regime, the manufacturing of a unique and indisputable interpretation of history and national identity, and its compulsory dissemination throughout the educational apparatuses, the leisure and media system, the civic rituals and the public space, was the very basis of legitimisation. The 'national, cultural heritage' was then a canon elaborated by state agencies (in clear partnership with the Catholic Church). It included or excluded historical characters, events and structures, and it echoed, silenced or reinvented traditions according to the political principles and needs of the dictatorship. In particular, the ancient grandiosity of Portugal, during the 15th and 16th centuries, when it pioneered the European 'maritime expansion', was presented as both the justification for the increasingly obsolete maintenance of a colonial empire in Africa, and a sort of compensation for the rather archaic economic and social structure that

the regime had frozen. Salazar's Portugal was conceived as a necessary return to the traditional, pre-modern society that a century of liberalism (from 1820 to 1926) and the prospect of democracy had put in danger. This continuity – and not the popular support – was its *raison d'être*. Consequently, the codification of what was to be considered as 'genuine' national traditions, as historical 'milestones', as 'distinctive' characters, events, monuments and memories to be glorified and preserved was a crucial political issue. The ideology of national heritage was at the heart of the regime's foundations. No pluralism, no controversy and no dissent could be admissible in that very symbolic field.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the deadlock of the Colonial War in Africa (1961-1974) was the main factor of the fall of the dictatorship in 1974. A military coup led by young officers was immediately transformed by the popular adhesion into a quite radical social and political revolution, from which the country evolved into a parliamentary democracy, in 1976, joining, ten years later, the European Community (currently, European Union). One of the main features of that radical turn concerns the reading and evaluation of national history, and of the heritage it created and transmitted.

This analysis overviews the democratic turn, in just one particular aspect: the interplay of heritage and memory. The focus will be on the symbolic and ideological elements of cultural heritage, leaving aside other aspects, no less important (and partially considered in other chapters of this book), such as those relating it to the arts, the economy and the urban or regional development (see, for instance, Filipe *et al.* 2018). First, we will examine how the Portuguese democracy has reconstructed, both in the field of social representations and in the field of public policies, a national consensus regarding the interpretation of national history and identity. Then we will consider the functional role of the new interpretation in the redefining of the Portuguese placement in the world system. Finally, some conclusions will be tentatively drawn from this case study.

2. Building a new consensus on history and heritage

Three ruptures vis-à-vis the authoritarian canon characterised, in the late 1970s and the early 1980s (the years of the revolution and institutionalisation of the democratic regime), the re-codification of cultural heritage.

First, the radical questioning of the framework and main ingredients of the authoritarian vision on national history and heritage. This implied the deconstruction of allegedly permanent traits of the 'Portuguese way of being', such as Tridentine Catholicism, traditionalism, rurality, peacefulness, passivity and melancholy. It also implied the strong criticism of the colonial era and the devaluation of the meaning and importance of the early modern 'Discoveries'. Finally, it implied the unveiling of

the manufactured nature of the authoritarian canon, since, for instance, (a) several of the main 'historical monuments' were in fact deeply rebuilt in the 20th century, (b) the central elements of the official history were false, and (c) the 'folklore' that supposedly defined the rural traditional culture to follow and promote was itself the output of a quite clear selection and reformatting of particular elements, undertaken by state agencies and the Church.

The second break assumed by the first years of the Portuguese democracy was a huge redefinition of the nature and scope of heritage, identity and social memory. This redefinition operated in two directions. On the one hand, areas formerly taken as impertinent or irrelevant were retrieved and integrated: the everyday life of the working class; urban and industrial structures; modern arts; cultural diversity and political antagonism. In terms of knowledge and preservation, this meant the emergence of new disciplines and organisations, such as industrial archaeology, anthropology, social and economic history, and a systematic treatment of archives, archaeological and monumental sites, and museums. On the other hand, in this as in many other fields, democracy involved pluralism; and this was really a radical breach in respect to the former authoritarian policy. Instead of a rigid, unique canon, strictly defined by the ideological apex of the regime and to be assumed and conveyed, in a top-down manner, by all public institutions – from schools to churches, from workplace to leisure, from university to mass media, from government to the local arena –, the new democratic environment gave floor and dignity to the public florescence and expression of several readings and representations of national history, collective identity and cultural heritage. Suddenly, none of these nouns could be said in the singular form: as a whole, history was composed by heritages, identities and memories – plural and diverse, contradictory and convergent.

The third break was the *de-ideologising* of heritage. This does not correspond to the denegation of the political and ideological dimension of the social representation and public administration of heritage. As we shall see later, the Portuguese democracy would succeed in establishing a new and strong consensus on the meaning and value of the country's history and heritage. The point is that Salazar's regime had overinvested in the ideological definition of certain symbolic and material elements as a national, uniform, and long-lasting tradition. This was indeed one of the totalitarian features the regime assimilated. Monuments as the Batalha Monastery (built to commemorate the victory against Castile in the 14th century) or the Guimarães Castle (associated with the first king, Afonso Henriques); characters as Henry the Navigator; real or fictional events as the 'Fátima apparitions (of the Virgin Mary)' or the supposedly existent 'Sagres school' (preparing the maritime expansion); traditions as the urban popular music of Lisbon ('*fado*'), all were metamorphosed into

true fundamentals of the history and ‘temperament’ of the Portuguese, in relation to which Salazar could represent the clearest continuity and the highest achievement. Any attempt to question this interpretation, in scientific, technical or political terms, and any reluctance to adopt it as the guideline for education, ceremonial parades or other forms of socialisation, were immediately treated as subversive and unacceptable challenges to the established order and ritual.

In comparison with this rather aggressive authoritarian arrest of history, the new democratic institutions and environment of the late 1970s provided the floor for an effective de-ideologising. On the one hand, heritage became more a matter of study, care, dissemination and usufruct than a moral, religious and political ground: it would typically be a subject for knowledge, technical inquiry and practice, professional expertise and labour. On the other hand, monuments, sites, art collections, crafts, traditions, and so on, could be more easily conceived as assets and opportunities for social investment – a cultural richness the community could apprehend and use in the context of its social and economic development, and symbolic affirmation.

These three ruptures allowed the Portuguese democracy to reconsider, in a substantially new form, the most critical issues of national history, and to gradually build an alternative consensus on their meaning, value and relevance for the present and future of the country. This means quite an important work on memory and identity. It redefines the way in which the past can be reinterpreted and extended in the collective representations – that is, how history can be transmuted into memory. It also affords social representations to consolidate elements that contribute to drawing, at the same time, the collective unity of the nation and its singularity regarding the other nations – that is, history supporting identity (see also Medeiros 2013).

But how could the contemporary presence of the past, through cultural heritage, help elaborate a democratic view (inherently plastic and plural) of national history and identity? How could it favour the consolidation of social memories freed from the authoritarian predefinition of what was and what was not politically acceptable in that history?

Among the critical historical issues that such an effort should deal with, the following three were particularly relevant. The first one was colonialism – a constant of the Portuguese history from the 15th until the very late 20th century. The second issue was the contrast between the *grandeur* of early modern times – the ‘Era of Discoveries’ – and the subsequent ‘decadence’. The third one was the way democracy should deal with the canon of values and traditions that Salazar’s regime had invented or reformatted. For each of these topics it is worthwhile to observe how the new consensus was gradually formed.

The logic of inversion with regard to the colonial past dominated the first years of the democratic regime. Wherever the authoritarian state had seen glory, pride and responsibility, the new one saw shame, dishonour and oppression. Specifically, the terrible conditions of the decolonisation (with the massive return of half a million people to Portugal, in 1974-1976, and the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique) were explained as the inevitable consequences of the refusal of Oliveira Salazar and Marcello Caetano to timely negotiate and compromise. The social memory of this long colonial period of the national history (lasting five centuries) was then marked by a negative sentiment, one of whose consequences being a sort of resistance to taking it as a topic of public discourse or artistic elaboration. These were imprisoned in the dichotomy between the radical deconstruction of the entire colonial era, reduced to illegitimate occupation and endless exploitation, and some variant of the 'luso-tropicalist' approach – the idea, initially due to the Brazilian writer Gilberto Freyre, of the uniqueness of the Portuguese presence in Africa and America, based on a 'soft' and 'close' relationship with autochthonous peoples.

We had to reach the 1990s to see the emergence of a new intellectual and emotional framework to deal with colonialism and postcolonialism. First, there was a gradual move in the conception of the Portuguese 'legacy' in Africa, Latin America and some regions of Asia. If the dictatorial regime of Salazar focused on religious proselytism and 'civilisation' (that is, the so-called 'white man's burden'), democracy would underline language and culture. 'Lusophony' became seen as not only the real, durable outcome of the Portuguese historical presence in several continents, but also and foremost as the remaining hyphen between former colonisers and former colonised nations. In 1996, the foundation of the CPLP (Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries) provided an institutional ground for cooperation, based on equality of rights and dignity. But it was the process of East Timor's independence, in the years of 1999-2001, that in a certain way closed the debate: the massive adhesion of the Portuguese people to this cause acted as a kind of re-encounter with their own history and the redemption from their past responsibilities. Portugal had been a colonial state; but the joint effects of democratisation, decolonisation and the subsequent turn to an international cooperation based on common language, shared history and convergent interests, allowed for the redefinition of the course of events, value and meaning of the past. Colonial heritage and the social memories associated with the colonial experience could be reconsidered in a cultural and future-oriented manner.

This turn was one of the forces that led to the reassessment of the tension between *grandeur* and decadence that had hegemonized, at least in the 19th and 20th centuries, the narratives and arguments on Portuguese history. Along with

Spain, Portugal had pioneered the great historical European move towards the 'New World', in the early modern times. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the first line of the European 'maritime expansion' was there, the Iberians being the discoverers (from a European point of view) of new routes and new lands and the rulers of vast empires. From the perspective of 20th century societies, this put two fundamental questions.

The first was: how far could one distinguish the 'Discoveries' from colonialism – that is, how to separate the social and technical achievements that completely transformed the world's geography, from the subsequent colonial enterprise, marked by territorial conquest, economic exploitation, slavery and genocide? Salazar's regime could not accept the split between these two sides of the Portuguese 'historical destiny'; several of its democratic opponents also tended to refuse it, merging the two processes in the same shameful past. In terms of social representation and public discourse (since scientific research had already established the distinction), the dissociation was operated by the Portuguese democracy mainly during the 1980s and 1990s. And the Universal Exhibition that took place in Lisbon in 1998 would be its most important expression (see Ferreira, 2005). Commemorating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Vasco da Gama in India, launching a new maritime route through the South of Africa, the exhibition focused on the sea as its general theme. It thus crystallized (as a public discourse) and disseminated (as a narrative and iconography for mass consumption) a positive reinterpretation of the Portuguese history. Its main axes were threefold: the emphasis on the excellence of the scientific and technical dimensions of the Discoveries, and the novelty of its cultural outcomes; the demonstration of the mediating role thus performed by the Portuguese between the 'Ancient World' of Eurasia and the 'New World' of Sub-Saharan Africa and Americas; and the key relevance of the oceans to the present and immediate future of the world as a whole.

The second question put by Portuguese modern history was the contrast between a glorious past and a rather mediocre present. Indeed, some of the most influential thinkers of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries – in the Enlightenment, liberal or democratic traditions – had pictured the evolution between the early modern age and their contemporary circumstances as decadence, mainly due to the excessive power of conservative forces (some of them generated by the Expansion itself). For Salazar's regime, there had also been a moral decline, but due to the excessive influence of such malefic things as liberalism, laicism and market economy; it was then necessary to return to the 'genuine' temperament and 'natural' role of the nation. This rather mechanistic opposition was overcome by the European integration of Portugal, in 1986. On the one hand, the issue was reframed – the most relevant topic being, not the comparison of the current situation to the far past, but its compari-

son to European standards. The benchmark was not in the past, but in Europe; the pertinent discipline was not the ideological debate on history, but economics and economy; the question was not the reasons for 'decadence', but the causes for the 'development lag'. And on the other hand, European integration – the access to the (by then) restricted and rich club of the European Community, marking a definitive choice by the Portuguese society for democracy, market economy and welfare – was itself a promise of solution, or a key element in addressing the national problems.

The postcolonial emphasis on language as the main global legacy of Portuguese modern history, and the rescue of the cultural, scientific, technical and innovative dimensions of the Discoveries from its imperialistic envelope, established a solid ground on which the Portuguese institutions and public opinion gradually converged towards a consensus on the representation and appreciation of past history. No question that such a consensus must be submitted to critical scrutiny: for instance, the neocolonial element (or risk) of 'lusophony' is quite evident. However, there is no place in this chapter to proceed in that sense (see, for instance, Almeida 2000). Suffices to say that this re-interpretation of history, that was effectively consolidated in the transition from the 20th to the 21st centuries, did impact public opinion, education, the mass media – and, of course, in the ritual ceremonies and speeches of political institutions and authorities. A new form and a new content for social memories about the recent and ancient national history were thus provided, functioning as a powerful framework for the group and personal expression of manifold experiences (see Sobral 2012, Loff 2015, Calafate 2016).

This has direct and indirect consequences for the conception, administration and usufruct of material and immaterial cultural heritage (see Filipe *et al.* 2018). Deprived of the former role of an ideological apparatus, the religious practices and artefacts acquired a new relevance in cultural, anthropological, economic and touristic terms: Fátima ceased to be the very national myth, remaining nevertheless a mass and meaningful event. Several traditional elements of the Portuguese folk culture, that Salazar's regime had converted into essentialist devices of an alleged 'national character', were rediscovered and revalued for their specific artistic and social value: this was much notably the case of the Lisbon '*fado*' song, re-appropriated and re-invented by young generations of interpreters and listeners, whose classification by UNESCO as 'intangible world heritage' in 2011 was massively celebrated. Disinvested of the role of sacred altars of the 'Nation', the historical monuments and sites would be re-invested as cultural assets, a rich asset the country owned and could use for civic, social and economic purposes (see Peixoto 1997). That is to say that the 'ways of being' and 'traditions' (as immaterial heritage), and monuments, collections, crafts, urban and rural settlements, historical vestiges, archaeological sites,

ethnographic objects and arts (as material heritage) could and have been gradually redefined, in the democratic context, in a totally different way, by comparison with the authoritarian regime's canon.

3. Relocating a nation

One should not minimise the impact of the process of building an interpretive and normative consensus on history, national identity and cultural heritage, as the one undertaken in the Portuguese democracy since the 1980s, and summarised in the previous section. Memories, as the reconstitution and reconfiguration of past events and the reinterpretation and incorporation of their traces, are social facts and social factors. It was critical for the democratic redefinition of cultural heritage and its value for contemporaneity, both in terms of collective representations and in terms of public policies and practices, to re-elaborate the content and the inscription of some basic memories: what to think and say about the past national achievements, such as the 'Discoveries', what to think and say about the colonial dimension marking several centuries of history, what to think and say, in a given generation, about the codification of facts, characters, vestiges, as 'national traditions' inherited from previous generations. The very possibility of implementing a new framework for policy, administration and professional expertise regarding cultural heritage, depended on the success of a new general and widespread representation of history. One that would be radically different from the former authoritarian ideologising and politicisation, and sufficiently comprehensive and plastic to include plural and diverse narratives, attitudes and practices. My hypothesis is that Portuguese democracy did succeed, at least until the huge crisis of 2010 onwards, in producing and disseminating such a representation (see also Fishman 2019).

This representation operates along the axis of time, providing a framework to reconfigure the relationship between past and present – between what Portugal has been and what it is in the current circumstances (more precisely: between what we now think Portugal has been and what we think it is nowadays). But this is not the only axis. As this section will try to assert, the socially hegemonic representation of history and heritage that democracy has elaborated, established in new terms the placement of Portugal in the world system. Geo-history is, therefore, also relevant, the two axes of time and space coming together.

Specifically, the reconsideration of the national past also means the reassessment of the national contribution to global history. The 'transnational' dimension of Portuguese heritage and historical memory is another key to understanding how the Portuguese democracy gradually built its own vision and strategy in the symbolic and cultural field.

Three main ideas shape this vision. One is the association of the 15th century's Discoveries to a first 'globalisation' – as they opened the European space and widened human communication through navigation and trade, permitting the structuring of a first world order irreducible to the ancient Eurasian civilisations. This new order included Africa and the Americas and thus rebalanced the long-established frontiers and exchanges between Christian Europe, the Muslim civilisation and India, China or Japan. It also fostered the emergence of the first world economy. Aiming to escape the Salazarist link between Discoveries and Empire, the democratic reinterpretation relocates the Portuguese experience in a somewhat global 'encounter' of civilisations (see Thomaz 2021).

The second key idea is the nature and scope of emigration. The strong and continuous presence of emigration in the Portuguese history, from the late medieval times onwards, and going beyond the border of the Portuguese empire (see Hespanha 2019), served as an indicator that the role played by the Portuguese people was not only that of conquerors and rulers, but also the role of voyagers, tradesmen, settlers, pioneers. In this reinterpretation, the apparent ease in contact and interaction in different places, populations and cultures (from Japan to Brazil, from China to Africa, from India to Europe) would partially explain the long-lasting Portuguese influence, either in the former colonies or in other states.

Therefore – third aspect to take into account – the legacy to be praised should be the cultural one: first of all the language, the Portuguese language that became a global one, uniting independent countries of four continents; then the milestones and traces of the Portuguese presence throughout the world – as materialised in folk traditions and patterns of behaviour, or in religious beliefs, or in urbanism and architecture; finally and most importantly, the new cultural forms resulting from the interchange between Portuguese culture and other 'populations' cultures, be they 'natives', that is, indigenous, or displaced populations (as the African slaves in Brazil), or other European, Muslim or Asian communities. The suggestion was that, long before the postmodernist narrative, Portugal had already cultivated or favoured some kind of hybridisation, intermixing different ethnic, national, linguistic and symbolic origins and giving floor to the emergence of fresh, hybrid forms.

So, a new 'portrait' of Portugal was gradually drawn: a small but 'global' nation, historically open to alterity. A nation located in Europe but linking Europe to other continents and fostering the 'encounter' and 'crossing' between several civilisations; the motherland of a population used to cross borders, to migrating throughout the world; and one relatively open to a multilateral interplay of influences, of which Brazil would be the iconic illustration.

Again, this positive turn in the hegemonic representation of history and identity was drawn against the Salazarist closeness and traditionalism (so well expressed in the formula 'proudly alone' that the dictator coined when the Colonial War began, and the country became more and more isolated in international terms). 'Openness', 'universalism' and 'plasticity' emerged as the key values for the new representation, on which the Portuguese democracy based its public policies regarding heritage. From this point of view, the Portuguese architectural and archaeological heritage was especially noticeable. Among other elements, the importance of the Roman vestiges (in Braga or Conimbriga), the relevance of the Muslim long-lasting presence in the south (with the small town of Mértola redefining its identity as a crossroads of Christian and Muslim influences), the rich Romanesque and Gothic monuments, illustrating the European references of mediaeval Portugal, the splendour of the baroque either in Portugal or in Brazil, and its influence in Goa, the traces of Portuguese military and religious architectures in four continents, the marks of Portuguese urbanism, all constituted 'evidence' of that 'global', 'universalist' and 'cultural' orientation of the Portuguese 'singularity'. All suggested a sort of 'easiness' in the relationship of this peripheral extreme of the Old Europe with the Others, and its 'belonging' to a wider, virtually universal symbolic order. The successive classification of several urban sites and monuments as 'world heritage' since 1983, and the emblematic political decision, taken in 1995, to abandon the ongoing construction of a big dam to save the Palaeolithic engravings of the Côa Valley, have been critical to this re-reading and re-presenting (Gonçalves 2001, Silva 2014). They metamorphosed the value of the national heritage into a 'transnational' logic and scale.

4. Conclusion: the social representation of heritage as a political issue

The scientific, technical and professional elements involved in the study, the preservation and the public access to cultural heritage should not be overlooked. It is constituted by a large and dispersed number of immaterial elements, architectural buildings, archaeological remnants, artistic objects and other ingredients of museum collections and, surely, the global structure of territories, towns and cities – that is, it comprehends many artefacts and identity markers of groups, communities, and mankind. The consequences for scientific and professional work are immense. Neither should be ignored or belittled with regard to the functional usefulness of these cultural products and materials for the process of social integration and economic development in which societies are engaged. And, of course, one of the very foundations of the public focus on heritage is its role as a source of inspiration for contemporary artists and arts, in any cultural field, heritage being the effective pres-

ence of a social and cultural history to which the contemporary creation (indeed tomorrow's heritage) directly or indirectly refers.

None of these dimensions can be put aside. Research on heritage, its administration, the relationship with the respective communities, its affordability and meaning for different audiences, the value it adds to economic and social development, the dialogue it favours with contemporary arts, its role in popular and institutional symbols and narratives, all these dimensions deserve a careful analysis and an informed debate, as the challenges they address to science, arts and policies are very acute.

However, prior to all these dimensions, there is a more general and a more fundamental question: how is that 'thing' that we tend to call 'cultural heritage' constituted and how is it codified? Who defines heritage as heritage, when and by what means; and what kind of links it draws with social memory and collective identity? How is heritage used as a material – a very important material indeed – for symbolic, ideological and political practices and processes?

Considering the Portuguese case, this chapter tried to highlight the centrality of the issue of the social representation of cultural heritage (and the consensus that can be formed regarding it) for the symbolic legitimisation of a regime and the foundation of its social and cultural policies. The relevance attributed to history, its 'codification' into heritage, the elaboration and dissemination of a framework of meaning in relation to it, the formation of a collective memory, are indeed 'arenas' of social practice, power and hegemony.

The Portuguese example is a good one, because it makes it easier to apprehend the political and ideological importance of heritage when comparing contrasting visions of the former authoritarian regime of Salazar and those of the new and current democratic order. In both cases, cultural heritage is a matter of politics and ideology. Heavy ideological constraints characterised Salazar's regime, to which democracy opposed an emphasis on the cultural nature and value of heritage. Still, culture is the ideology of the current representation of heritage. Everything else – from research to preservation and exhibition – depends on the consistency, strength and impact of the social reinterpretation of historical heritage.

That reinterpretation – plastic and dynamic as it may be (and, in a democratic context, as it must), allowing for multiple and diverse discourses in its interior – is a powerful factor of the normative consensus on which any society tends to rely. That is the consensus built around the hegemonic representation of values, beliefs, historical narratives and icons, collective symbols, emblematic characters, shared memories. The representation of heritage contributes in a crucial manner to this hegemonic representation, since it re/defines, re/creates, re/constructs, re/'invents', re/appropriates things and symbols that (a) can be treated as meaningful and (b)

can be described as of collective ownership. Any step in this production is a choice: something to be valued and something to be disparaged, something to be voiced and something to be silenced.

Heritage is never only the presence of the past in the present. It is the changing result of the dialectics between that presence of the past in the present and the current reconstitution of the past. There lies its absolute centrality for the symbolic politics of our era, that is, for the political discourse and confrontation over values, symbols, events and narratives that, in each moment and group, define a certain identity and frame a certain memory (see Traverso 2015, Passerini 2015). If one wishes to undertake historical archaeology, putting into context the material evidence of the past, one should not skip the archaeology (also in the sense of Foucault 1969) of the symbolic contemporary reconstruction of the past.

Cultural networking: rhetoric, policy and practice in Portugal

Augusto Santos Silva

1. Introduction: network as a concept and a guideline

Network is a rather recent concept. Its general use dates from the 1990s onwards, especially with the publication, in 1996, of Manuel Castells' *The network society*. It may be seen as the outcome of convergent developments in both the organisational theory and sociology. It stands in opposition to hierarchy, closeness and rigidity, and this is perhaps the main reason for its fortune, both in analytical and in normative terms.

Network can be defined as a structure: the pattern of configuration and evolution of a given system. It proposes a less vertical description of the power and communication relations that constitute such a system, pointing out the horizontal interactions that cross-cut hierarchy and eventually transform it in a non-hierarchical form of managing people and coordinating resources and activities. Indeed, critical to the concept of network is the idea that exchanges can be facilitated and coordination can be guaranteed by players situated at the crossroads of multiple interactions – the nodes – and not necessarily located in the formal apex of a pyramid; and the idea that the multifaceted ties between elements – the connections – are more relevant to the structuring and performance of the system than the formal distribution of resources and authority.

Openness is the second key feature of this model of organisations and social systems. Network is an accurate term to characterise them whenever they do not require a strict delimitation of time-space and a univocal definition of borders, clearly separating the internal and the external, that is, the given system and its environment. It suggests that an evolutionary move, a dynamic and adaptive force and plasticity are basic organisational ingredients.

Flexibility is another trait assumed by the network model, for obvious reasons. If hierarchy is not a necessary condition for coordination and supervision, and if formalisation is not a necessary condition for stability and continuity, then the

patterns of structuring can change quite often and quite rapidly, according to the needs and goals at stake, and allowing multiple forms of adjustment between the players and their context. The size and shape can vary, network organisations being flexible enough to face physical, technological, economic or social transformations, endogenously or exogenously driven, in the most efficient ways.

Such structures do exist, and late modernity typically fosters their emergence. Horizontal, open, flexible forms of coordinating human beings and human agency have proven well in the field of firms and markets, communities and territories, cities and states – hence the current ‘network society’. Network is a pertinent concept helping to describe and explain this new reality.

Additionally, it is a sort of device to implement it. By networking one enunciates not only the procedural dimension of network (networks-in-the-making), but also the strategy to build and maintain networks: the set of techniques put into practice to design the configuration of a given organisation, whatever its scale, as a reticular, open and flexible social structure. The normative joins the analytical.

Network and networking are keywords in current cultural policies, both as realities to describe and goals to achieve. It is worthwhile to reflect on their meaning. To be useful, the reflection should respect three stages: (a) the descriptive content of those concepts; (b) the evaluative assumptions and (c) the programmatic orientation associated with them.

When describing a cultural entity as a network, one generally emphasizes all or some of the following characteristics. The first one is territorial dissemination: network suggests some kind of spread throughout a territory and some sort of anchorage in that territory. It opposes centralism, that is, the concentration of resources in a single, central institution; and favours an approach based on more flexible geographies, that allows various nodes, connections and forms of interaction. So we speak of heritage sites network, or we identify the networking of theatre companies, in order to signal the multipolar territorial inscription of such cultural facilities and assets.

The second characteristic is expansion: a network is a non-finite structure that can include new elements, or lose others, permanently or episodically, meanwhile preserving its logic and potential. It opposes the conventional way of launching an administrative structure by legislation and formal, homogeneous, one-shot implementation, practising the alternative method of gradually consolidating an ensemble of elements that adhere and participate at different times and with different rhythms, thus progressing in the making. A regional network of museums, for example, can begin by a few of them, cooperating for a common objective, or sharing resources, or articulating collections and exhibitions, and then include other partners, in quite a flexible and dynamic movement.

Third, multi-level coordination is a key component of networks, as they aim to describe cultural realities. Instead of a circle, whose graphic representation indicates the clear existence of a single centre, that irradiates its energy through a bi-dimensional space and can progress through successive concentric circles, the image of a network suggests, not only multiple centres (the first characteristic) and dynamic spacing (the second one), but also the cross-section of different sources, paths and directions of energy. It underlines the interplay of multiple agents, at multiple levels of organisation and activity: for instance, the co-presence of national government, regional bodies and local authorities in the design and implementation of cultural policies; or the convergence of the institutional focus on heritage preservation and the economic approach to urban heritage as a driver for tourism development.

Closely linked to this characteristic is the fourth one: partnership. It adds a share of responsibilities, costs and benefits in governance to the coordination. Therefore, network stands in the opposite position of the pyramid, the hierarchical configuration that distributes agents into clearly defined levels of status and power, the upper ones being in charge of making decisions, planning and assigning tasks, and supervising the operations. Alternatively, the network governance takes advantage of the existence and articulation of different partners, such as national or local bodies, or cultural administration and artists, or cultural and urban development departments, and the like. Partnership means that ones will not be seen as the decision-makers and the others as the practitioners or the ones as the providers and the others as the clients, but that all represent stakeholders and players whose interests and activities must be globally taken into account.

Two last characteristics are also relevant for this analysis. Informality is more easily associated with network configurations than with hierarchies and closed systems. Whenever one observes the key role played by informal interaction between the members of a given system, or between those members and their counterparts in the respective environment, one tends to apply to that system, *ceteris paribus*, the concept of network. Networks are, of course, institutions, as they are sets of rules and forms of consolidating and reproducing those rules. But they are less formal institutions than the average ones, since they open space for the plasticity and vividness of informal communication and mutual adjustment of agents, in Henry Mintzberg's (1979, 2023) sense. Agency tends to predominate over institution.

The organisational and practical consequences can be very important. Networks constitute, virtually or effectively, collective actors. Their internal configuration as a complex of individuals, groups, routines, devices and institutions, may be 'translated' into practices and strategies that really influence social structures and processes.

Howard S. Becker's (1982) description of the cooperative, multi-professional nature of an 'art world' was already an insightful interpretation of such mechanisms.

Considering these six characteristics that are generally attributed to networks – territorialisation, openness, cooperation, partnership, informality and collective action – the frequent positive evaluation of networking and networks should not surprise. They are assumed as more 'friendly' structures (than the conventional, hierarchical and formal ones) regarding creativity and innovation. Ideas germinate, grow and circulate more easily through them. Procedures by trial and error are more feasible, exploring experimentation, assessment, rectification and gradual generalisation. Norms can be less strict and appeal to voluntary adhesion, instead of establishing orders and sanctions. In such an environment, it is more plausible to identify opportunities as soon as they occur, to admit different kinds of players and interplays, to discover new protagonists and to respond very quickly to unexpected events. Flexibility improves systemic adaptation. Heterogeneity increases the amount of available assets. And informal, horizontal relationship fosters the development and dissemination of that crucial resource for communities and organisations that we name as social capital.

My purpose here is not to discuss the validity of these assumptions, but only to alert the reader to their evaluative character. As such, they are important ingredients of cultural practices. But they cannot be considered as ontological or logical certitudes. Unfortunately, the confusion of advocacy and analysis is a rather common trait of cultural research. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that attributes like innovation, creativity or ingeniousness, far from being inherent to any network society or organisation because of their 'nature', are *possibilities* that may or may not be found in empirical realities – and that is a matter of empirical research to find them.

The same goes for the last stage of our preliminary reflection on the application of the concept of network to cultural domains, that is, its links with policy guidelines. In that context, and as it has been used in Continental Europe throughout the last decade of the last century and the first three decades of the current one, the insistence on networking is tied to the explicit or implicit laud of the Anglo-Saxon paradigm of cultural policies. Following the typology proposed by Chartrand & McCaughey (1989) and excluding, for its irrelevance in democratic Europe, the Engineer-State, this conveys the idea that the classic French-like model of the Architect-State should allow more space for the indirect, less centralised, less formal mechanisms of the Patron-State, as it happens in the United Kingdom, and of the Facilitator-State, as in the United States. Or, in the terms of Cummings Jr. & Katz (1987), networking would be more akin to the indirect administration of Anglo-Saxon countries than

to the direct administration of Continental Europe. Cultural policy and cultural management could benefit from a move towards the network approach, precisely when the general trend seems to be the weakening of national governments, the permanence of budget constraints, the decrease in state funding of arts and the blatant need for cooperation and partnership between the various levels of public administration and with civil society (see Bell & Oakley 2015: 109-140).

Again, this is quite a different approach, compared to the analytical framework provided by sociology and organisational theory. Here network becomes an argument, a rhetorical and logical means to justify a more or less structural change in political paradigms. This does not mean any depreciation: rhetoric is really a vital component of the democratic debate. But one should not blur the boundaries between analytical and normative discourse, and should not treat moral or political assumptions as if they were straight logical or empirical evidence.

The sociologist's duty is not to forget the intersection of knowledge and action, nor to ignore the ideological devices embedded in action. However, he or she must not take these devices for their apparent value, considering them as well-established principles or concepts. Network is both a conceptual tool and a political motto; as a motto, it must be submitted to theoretical and empirical analyses. It should not be taken for granted, but critically scrutinised. What does it mean, in the political and artistic discourse? How does it constitute a guideline for cultural policy and administration, and how does this guideline effectively influence real policies and real management? As a Weberian ideal-type, how can it help to understand different processes of social organisation? What conditions foster a network pattern of social and organisational structures, which strategies put it in practice, which outcomes may be pointed out?

To summarise in a single sentence: if networking does matter in current cultural policies, practices and discourses, it has to be addressed as an issue of research.

2. Networking as a device for national cultural policy

The purpose of this chapter is then to examine the content and functionality of the concept of cultural networking, considering the context of dense social and institutional processes and drawing on available empirical data. The assumption is that fruitful sociological comparison needs the consideration of real and specific cases, if one wants to avoid the mimesis of administrative jargon or the ritual repetition of empty generalities.

For this test, an interesting case can be found in Portugal. As in other countries, the idea of network and networking has been critical there, since the 1980s, for the definition and implementation of cultural policy. The accumulation of three charac-

teristics gave it a certain singularity. First, in 1986 Portugal joined the European Communities (now European Union), and this was a turning point for public policies, both in terms of guidelines and financial resources. Cultural facilities were also qualified to benefit from European funds; and eventually, in 2000, an entire programme dedicated to cultural investment was designed. Second, after a period in which the main concern had been the response to basic needs such as water and energy supply or urban infrastructures, the municipal authorities (democratically elected since 1976) could turn their attention to educational and cultural affairs. Their role as partners for cultural policies gradually increased, and we can speak of a qualitative change from the late 1980s onwards (see chapter 4). Third, the national government saw in this new role of the municipalities and in the developmental prospects associated with European integration the possibility to undertake a systematic coverage of the territory with public facilities like theatres, libraries and museums.

The consequence of these facts was the centrality, in action as well as in discourse, of the concept of networking and network. The meaning was quite conspicuous. A 'cultural network' would be (a) a set of facilities disseminated throughout the territory, (b) according to a common broad framework, translated into (c) some rules of construction, equipment, activity and maintenance. The rules were (d) defined by national departments and according to professional and technical patterns. Critical to the implementation of networks was (e) the cooperation between national and local authorities, based on (f) voluntary adherence and (g) the share of legal and financial responsibilities.

So the networking strategy pointed to territorialisation, partnership, technical regulation and variable-geometry. And this was really the guideline for the first national programme, launched by the government in 1987, and called the National Network of Public Libraries. The libraries, to be constructed or rehabilitated, were owned and managed by the municipalities. The national normative framework adapted UNESCO's rules, determining the requisites to be complied with, regarding size, content, professional staff and public services. The application of the programme was voluntary, and municipalities could benefit from a state funding covering a maximum of 50 per cent of the total construction costs. The responsibility to coordinate the Network, assessing the compliance with rules, providing training, circulating information and launching additional incentives for content development and computerisation, was assumed by a national department. In 2022, 303 of the 308 municipalities of Portugal have public libraries, and 245 of them are affiliated with the National Network (Neves 2024: 158-166).

The Public Libraries Network quickly became the benchmark for a new generation of cultural policies appealing to multi-level public administration, aiming to

cover the whole territory, based on voluntary participation and cooperation, and implementing a soft national regulation, aligned with international standards and investing in knowledge, training and the dissemination of best practices. Successive programmes followed this inspiration, in the inter-century transition. Closely linked to it is the National Network of School Libraries, launched by the Ministries of Education and Culture in 1996, and developed by the former. From 1987 until 2008, it has incorporated 2,077 pre-primary, primary and secondary schools (Costa 2010: 47-48); in 2017, it covered 2,461 schools (Castro Filho 2018: 24).

Meanwhile, the most ambitious programme has been, since the year 2000, the Portuguese Museums Network. It was preceded and prepared, in 1998, by the first extensive survey ever undertaken in Portugal. The survey revealed that only 29 per cent of the total number of 530 entities claiming to be museums complied with a minimal technical standard (and only 9 per cent observed the full set of the museological criteria, see Santos 2000: 156-159). Consequently, the launching of the national network was part of an exhaustive programme of accreditation, this double nature defining the singularity of the Portuguese experience, in international terms (Camacho 2014a: 255-256; Camacho 2014b: 226-231).

Differently from the Public Libraries Network, the Museums Network was not primarily concerned with physical construction and equipment, but instead with the professional management of the collections and exhibitions, and with the range and quality of the services supplied to visitors. The existence of educational departments, of curators and other professionals, the public access to collections and in accordance with museographic norms were among the preconditions for participation in the Network. Adherence was, of course, voluntary, and there was no distinction due to the property or nature of the museum: the 165 museums currently members of the Network include public and private entities, be they classified as national, regional, or local, or being under the responsibility of national government, autonomous bodies like regions and universities, or municipalities (Neves et al. 2022). The dissemination of information and the supply of training courses and materials are also crucial to the Network. Its coordination is assured by the national heritage department, but this does not mean any kind of formal authority over the members that do not belong to the state.

The articulation of networking and accreditation was indeed the very key for the success of the early stages in this network's development. The horizontal, voluntary, cooperative and incrementalist framework repelled rigid hierarchies and the bureaucratic tendency to treat formally and equally very different and plastic realities; and it allowed for interactive practices of sharing problems and resources and of reciprocal learning, with the technical support and professional leadership of well-

known and respected museologists. In a context of conspicuous political engagement, this provided the conditions for both quite a rapid expansion of the network and a qualitative jump, in a short lapse of time. In 2002, a new survey would indicate a notable progress of the standards of Portuguese museums: 56 per cent already met the minimal standard (they were only 29 per cent, four years earlier), and 22 per cent met the full set of rules (9 per cent in 1998) (Neves 2005b: 64-66). Of course, this progress is not a direct outcome of the Museums Network, whose implementation was at the very beginning; but it is an outcome of a broader political push of which the Network was a crucial element.

The comprehensive nature of cultural networking, as a public policy, is also to be found in failed experiences. That was the case of the first attempts to launch the National Network of Theatres (not to be confused with the national theatres managed by national government). After a sporadic move in the early 1990s, it was formally launched in 1998 by the Ministry of Culture. It got its inspiration from the basic principles of the former Libraries Network: cooperation between the state and municipalities, in order to rehabilitate existing facilities or to build new ones, throughout the territory, aiming to provide a set of appropriate venues for music, drama and dance, as well as for cinema. The Ministry funded up to 50 per cent of the construction costs, the local authorities being responsible for the other part, both with the support of private sponsorship and European funds. The Ministry also funded the first season of each theatre. Subsequent management and programming responsibilities would belong to municipalities, the legal owners of the venues (Centeno 2010: 118).

Several theatres were built or rehabilitated in the context of this policy, in the 1990s and 2000s, increasing substantially the scope and rhythm of earlier attempts to regenerate the Portuguese assets in this domain (29 new or rehabilitated theatres, in the first stage and the two lines of the programme, see Vargas 2011: 3-4). Yet, unlike the inspiring model, no common set of rules was previously defined, concerning physical structures, professional management, services to audiences and guidelines for season planning (Vargas 2011). On the other hand, the variable costs, namely due to the production and presentation of shows, concerts and plays, are much heavier than in libraries and museums, whose activity depends mainly upon collections, estates, and other permanent resources. Regarding performing arts, the critical dimension of networking is not the training and compliance with professional standards, and the mutual exchange of experience and information, but the circulation of companies, artists and works, as well as the practices of coproduction and other strategies to obtain scale economies. This is the core where the cooperative

nature of networking can prove the best, and its aggregate effects can impact the whole territory.

In 2000-2002, the Ministry of Culture launched a new programme, named Diffusion Programme in Performing Arts, addressing this issue. Again, it was a networking strategy, involving the joined effort of the state and municipalities. A platform was constituted, under the auspices of the National Department for Performing Arts, collecting the contacts and proposals of artists and companies wishing to publicize their services, on a strictly voluntary basis. On the other hand, the interested municipalities registered their requests in the same platform. An intermediation was then put into practice, trying to match supply and demand, taking into account agendas and prices, and profiting from the possibility to organize itinerancies through several local theatres in order to cut costs for the buyer and to maximise advantages for the supplier. The national authorities also co-funded part of the costs of each show that exceeded the 50 per cent necessarily covered by the concerned municipality. The logic of this co-funding was degressive, that is, the part committed to the Ministry would gradually decrease along the programme.

This was really a network: voluntary adherence, decentralisation of decisions, coordination and dissemination of information, soft regulation, interactions between multiple agents and in different directions, territorial coverage, partnerships, and variable-geometry. According to the evaluation commissioned by the Ministry (Santos 2004), this was indeed a successful methodology. But it did not survive the huge budget constraints of the first years of the new century. It would eventually reappear, in 2006, under the same philosophy but on a smaller dimension, as a new programme 'Territory-Arts' (Centeno 2010: 333-334). Consequently, without the commitment to a common standard, with no institutional body invested in regulatory and coordination responsibilities and without a strong funding system to support programming and itinerancies, the Theatres Network did not manage to constitute a network, despite its name and purpose (Centeno 2010: 333-337, based on her analysis of 12 theatres).

Lessons were learned, and eventually, in 2019, a new National Network of Theatres and Cinemas was created by law, and then effectively launched in 2021. Two elements were decisive for its implementation: public funding available, on a competitive basis, to support programming, and the formal accreditation of each facility as a *sine qua non* condition for belonging to the Network and benefiting from funding. In 2023, the National Network of Theatres and Cinemas comprises 85 facilities, located in 78 different municipalities (Neves 2024: 171-173).

So, as both a rhetorical label and a methodological tool, networking has achieved a pivotal position in the array of instruments used by cultural policies, in Portugal

as in many other countries, from the 1980s onwards. Besides libraries, museums and theatres, it was put into practice in other domains concerning heritage and arts (see Silva 2004; Garcia, 2014: 15-17; Neves 2024: 157-182). Only to mention the networks that are coordinated at the national level, by the Ministry of Culture, there is a Portuguese Archives Network, since 2008 (in a certain sense anticipated by the Municipal Archives Network initiated in 1998): in 2022, it included 46 archives, in 34 municipalities. And as recently as 2021, a new Portuguese Network of Contemporary Art was legally created, and is being implemented since 2023, joined by 66 entities located in 36 municipalities.

The three main cases that were analysed, concerning libraries, museums and theatres, seem to demonstrate the possibilities and limits of networking as a national policy in quite an eloquent way. It was an effective step ahead in the 'multi-level governance of cultural policies' (Bonet & Négrier 2010: 50), inaugurating a fruitful partnership between national government and local municipalities, and eventually evolving to additional specific cooperation between municipalities belonging to the same region. It generated important scale economies, enabling the promoters to reach new and important sources of funding – namely, European funds and private patronage – and improving the cost-effectiveness and territorial range of public investments in cultural facilities. It compelled the national authorities (headed by a minister of Culture in 1995-2011 and since 2015, and by a secretary of state in 1987-1995 and 2011-2015) to move towards more flexible and inductive regulation (therefore less vertical, rigid and bureaucratic). It pressured institutions and agents to invest in qualification and compliance with higher technical standards. The overall effect is notably positive.

As other strategies, networking can use the available resources more productively and mobilize more easily the stakeholders. But it cannot make up for their absence or fading. When budget cuts dramatically hit cultural policies and departments, networking could in fact soften, but not *eliminate* their impact. There was also a fatigue in the course of implementation, the pace of expansion slowing down through the years, because of the diminishing marginal gains, the supervening cutbacks and also because of the discursive saturation of such a labelling (see the evolution of the Museums Network in Table 3.1, and the evolution of compliance with museological standards in Table 3.2). The turning points occurred when, in the context of fiscal austerity, the government's appeal to public/public and to public/private partnerships and the implementation of principles derived from New Public Management were viewed, especially by artists, as tricky arguments for reducing public expenditure, downsizing public administration, privatizing cultural services and de-prioritizing cul-

tural policy. Networks, which emerged in Portuguese cultural policy, in the 1980s and 1990s, as fruitful mechanisms to multiply and articulate participants and to improve efficiency and impact, turned out to be sometimes denounced as a screen disguising sub-investment and privatisation.

Table 3.1.

The evolution of the number of institutions participating in the National Public Libraries Network and the Portuguese Museums Network, 1987-2022:

Year	The Libraries Network, launched in 1987	The Museums Network, launched in 2000
1990	7	–
1995	54	–
2001	106	64
2003	119	114
2011	194	131
2015	209	142
2022	245	165

Sources: Silva 2004; Neves 2013; www.rcbp.dglb.pt; www.patrimoniocultural.pt.

Table 3.2.

The evolution of the museums, 1998-2009 (%):

% of museums complying with:	1998	2002	2006	2009
Minimal museological standards	29	56	62	58
Full museological standards	9	22	22	–

Sources: Neves 2005b, 2013.

3. Networking as a strategy for cultural resilience

The implementation and evolution of national networks of cultural institutions, in Portugal, documents in a rather sound way the ambivalence of such a tool for public policies. It has initiated a new form of articulating national and local policies, stressing the very entrance of municipalities as key players in the field of cultural policies. Indeed, from the mid-1990s onwards, municipalities would represent the main source of public expenditure in this domain (see chapter 4). The networking

discourse has also been a powerful impulse to motivate institutions, professionals and the administration to fully engage in communication and cooperation, jointly addressing modern and international standards of quality and efficacy. The networking strategy reformed traditionally rigid practices of central administration, making regulatory actions more flexible and supportive. It was the main instrument to promote decentralisation and territorial coverage, and, in that sense, it can be related to the policies of 'devolution' of powers to territories that emerged in Great Britain and Continental Europe, during the 1990s. However, networking is mostly a methodology: it has to do with the way of doing things. As such, it can maximise opportunities and resources, but it cannot replace them. So, when the upward trend of cultural policies stopped, in the first years of the 21st century, after a very short period of expansion, and Portugal returned to rather mediocre levels of symbolic, political and financial investment in culture, the functionality of the networking slogan to justify public retraction and push privatisation became also apparent. As an emblem for progressive and ambitious national cultural policies, networking lost a great part of its previous charm.

But the story does not end here. The need to find a way through hard times of fiscal austerity and political periphery compelled many agents to revisit the inspirational and branding effect of networks and to act according to networking rules. These agents include public and private ones, artistic and political, central or peripheral in their respective fields. If one draws on the useful model proposed by Bonet and Négrier (2010: 42-44), distinguishing four types of agents influencing cultural policies – institutions, markets, the non-profit cultural sector, and the political sphere – and reading these policies along the dialectic standardisation/differentiation and legitimacy/efficiency, the renewal of networking discourse and practice, in recent years, can be easily interpreted.

First of all, several political and managerial initiatives to reduce costs by rescaling activities and organisations can be, and in fact have been, conceptually presented as 'networking'. The initiatives included, among other ingredients: the formal cooperation, or even fusion, between big public institutions, as national theatres or companies, or central management bodies (see Vargas, 2021); the orientation towards multi-level public partnerships, involving for instance cultural and touristic departments, or national, regional and local authorities; the incentive to public/private partnership, shifting for example the legal nature of public services to foundational or other non-exclusively public regimes. This defensive or adaptive strategy, trying to compensate the financial restrictions with resource-sharing, is one of the observable procedures, noticeable at the political, administrative and institutional level.

Second, the outcomes of precedent interventions, that upgraded the available public cultural facilities, mainly theatres and concert-halls, but also museums, galleries and multidisciplinary complexes, and the training and certification, by arts schools, colleges and universities, of a younger and wider group of cultural professionals, like interpreters, directors, choreographers, managers, curators, technicians, or other sorts of artists, agents and mediators, set up new conditions for programming, producing and performing. One of the ways to develop such a work in a hostile fiscal context was exploring the possibilities of mutual communication, information exchange and partnership. The attempt to establish a scale of production and circulation of works and performances that could be more efficient and profitable, and the routinisation of joint efforts – involving, in the field of performing or fine arts, co-productions of plays, concerts or exhibitions and their itinerancy throughout multiple locations – logically led to the gradual configuration of common platforms, that is, networks. In the first two decades of the 21st century, one could identify these networks, in Portugal, in the field of heritage, fine arts, music, drama and dance.

Three traits differentiated them from the centrally promoted national networks of the 1980s and 1990s (resumed and renovated in 2019-2023). One was their bottom-up nature, designed as they were by the increasing practices of cooperation put into action by the institutions themselves – as it was the case with the co-production networks joining one or two state theatres, municipal venues and independent companies of various cities in the country – or by municipalities belonging to the same region, some of them already used to collaborate in other domains. The second distinctive feature was the predominance of horizontal cooperation, along a ‘branch’ of the world of art or a regional space, over the precedent asymmetric relationship between a municipality or agent and the central public administration. And the third difference lay in the context, a context of difficulties and survival, and not one of development and expansion.

The fact is that, methodologically, networking can prove effective both in periods of growth and crisis. It has been an effective strategy to cope with the severe financial situation of arts in Portugal, during the period 2011-2014 (a period of dramatic constraints to national and local budgets, due to the Adjustment Programme imposed by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund – see chapter 10). But it was already in place before that period, applying the logic of territorial decentralisation that had inspired the Libraries Network and the Museums Network, and responding to the less developmental stance regarding culture that characterised national governments, in the first decade of the 21st century, by means of stronger engagement from local authorities and increasing cooperation between art institutions. And it remained an adequate tool for the consolidation of a

world of art, in Portugal, after the end of the Adjustment Program. One can actually observe the survival and improvement of several networks, and the launching of new ones, since 2015.

Let us take a few examples. The first one is *Artemrede – Teatros Associados (Art-innetwork – Associated Theatres)*. After the conclusion of the rehabilitation or construction of a certain number of venues, the Development Department of the Lisbon Region (a government body) proposed to several municipalities a cooperative scheme to improve the planning of the activities of the new theatres. In 2005, an association was formally constituted; in 2018, it included 15 municipalities (see Lopes 2019: 83-96), 17 in 2025. Its role is being an interface in the supply-demand chain between these theatres and the artistic milieu, assuring coherence, cost-effectiveness and economies of scale to the theatres' programming. Thus *Artemrede* provides annually a catalogue of plays, concerts and other artistic shows, to be performed in at least three venues. Besides this function, it also commissions artists for specific productions and participates in co-productions with other partners. It organizes training for municipal and theatre staff, and cares for local education services and community projects involving amateur dramatics or other forms of popular engagement. So, a small technical staff guarantees the coordination of the management and programming tasks of several independent municipal theatres, acting as 'cultural mediators' (in their own words), facilitating contacts between theatres, between theatres and artists, and between theatres and schools, associations or local institutions. Simultaneously, the scale constituted by the union of 17 different municipalities represents an asset regarding applications for European funds (one of the main sources of revenue for *Artemrede*, the other being the contributions of the associates). This is rightly conceived as networking (see www.artemrede.pt; Lopes 2019).

Similar to this model is *5 Sentidos (Five Senses)*. This network was launched, in 2009, by five 'cultural structures', that is theatres and art centres, totalling, in 2014, 12 entities. According to them, the aim was 'to promote networking in cultural programming and artistic production'. The main outputs were, on the one hand, (a) co-productions of plays and performances and (b) artistic residences and workshops, and, on the other hand, (c) 'presentation circuits', meaning the itinerancy of works among the network's members. Two differences distinguish *5 Sentidos* from *Artemrede*: its nodes are theatres of various natures – state-owned, municipal or independent structures – and not the municipalities as such; and it is a thematic, not a regional network, ranging from Lisbon and Porto to North, Centre and Alentejo Regions and even including the Azores Islands (for a research focused on the first stage of the project, see Ferreira *et al.* 2016). On a rather different scale, as it comprehends five small municipalities of the Northern Portugal and, as a participant and the main sponsor, a local private en-

ergy utility, the *Comédias do Minho* (*Minho Comedies*) presents another distinct feature: in this case, the municipalities joined together to create, in 2003, a new professional theatre company (see chapter 6).

If one moves to heritage, another resource of cultural networking will be noticeable: its linkage to economic activities, especially tourism. Take, for instance, the Romanesque Route. In 1998, the six municipalities of Vale do Sousa, a sub-region in the Northwest, began to plan the joint exploration of their rich heritage in mediaeval churches, chapels, monasteries, towers and bridges built in Romanesque style. The formal launching of a professional team to coordinate the network occurred in 2006. Three years later, it was admitted in Transromanica, the Romanesque Route of European Heritage, an international network headquartered in Germany. In 2010, six other municipalities from a neighbouring sub-region joined the Route. Meanwhile, it was qualified for European and national funds, financing the rehabilitation and preservation works in several monuments, as well as the production of information and tourism materials. 'Cultural and landscape touring' is an explicit target of this inter-municipal initiative, and the provided services include visits to the monuments and sites, information on local history, folklore and gastronomy, roadmaps and practical tips for open-air activities, and the indispensable aid to tourists. 58 monuments and three interpretation centres, located in 12 municipalities, are currently part of the Route (see www.rotadoromanico.pt).

Other similar historical routes are being established, taking advantage of the richness of Portuguese heritage. Normally, municipalities act as protagonists, in partnership with the property owners (generally the Catholic Church, when it is not the state), with other levels of the cultural administration, with schools and universities, and also with official departments and private entrepreneurs in the appropriate segment of the tourism market. Archaeological sites (organised, since 1996, into a regional circuit in Alentejo and Algarve, see Neves 2024: 54-55); military defence lines and fortresses or groups of monuments territorially dispersed, but assembled by style (like the Cistercian Route, since 2019) or historical background (like the Jewries Route, in the Centre Region), are examples of this strategy. Within the Museums Network, several regional networks were also established (see Neves 2013: 27-29; Camacho 2014a). Again, network is an adequate classifier, used by promoters as a concept and an emblem: horizontal cooperation, joint efforts, a minimal common structure and soft regulation, multi-partner governance, openness and flexibility, technical benchmarking, and economies of scale.

Therefore, at this level of cultural policies – regional and local policies put into practice by multiple social and political actors, in quite a bottom-up manner – net-

working resisted a certain exhaustion of its former use as a key instrument of national, comprehensive and expanding cultural policies. Furthermore, it resurged as a pertinent micro-meso strategy to foster cooperation and gain critical mass. One of the terrains in which this resurgence is clearly observable, and in a positive outlook, is urban cultural policy (Bell & Oakley 2015: 76-108). It has to do with the governance of cultural 'districts' or 'quarters', assembling arts and creative industries in urban environments, and putting together, usually under the umbrella of a common brand and with the support of local authorities, individual artists and creative entrepreneurs, professional and economic associations, and public departments and policies. The two main cities, Lisbon and Porto, are the centres of such 'creative networks'; but they are spreading, in recent years, throughout the chain of middle cities (see chapter 4; Costa 2008).

4. Concluding remarks: networking and collective cultural action

The analysis of the Portuguese situation points out a balance between two main uses of the concept and method of networking. Adapting the terms of Valentina Montalto (2010), this is a balance between 'macro-policies' and meso/'micro-practices', between predominantly top-down and predominantly bottom-up strategies.

In the national networks launched by the government since 1987, municipalities and local cultural institutions have been invited to join in partnership, in a win-win interplay framed by national and international standards. Territorial coverage, institutional consolidation and national regulation based on cooperation were the key goals. In the regional and/or thematic networks that emerged or became more visible in the 21st century, the protagonists are either local political bodies and facilities, or specific cultural and artistic agents (individual or collective; coming from the institutional sphere, the non-profit sector or even from the cultural or touristic market). In many cases these two kinds of players do cooperate, with one another and all of them with national authorities. Territories, themes and/or personal relationships are the most important links that structure the networking. During the several critical circumstances experienced in the first two decades of this century, this qualitative rescaling was felt to be indispensable to survive the huge financial cuts and the general retraction of state and patrons regarding heritage and arts. But it also proved to be suitable for developmental strategies, before and after the big financial crisis of 2011-2014, both at the national and local levels of cultural policy. At the same time, because of its flexibility and gradualism, networking appears to cultural agents and institutions as an effective way of sharing assets, diminishing costs, maximising social impact and political lobbying, and organising cooperation. It also seems to be the most appropriate governance to improve and manage the urban 'creative industries'.

This is, of course, a matter of discourse. The rhetorical might of words like network and networking is not negligible. They are fashionable, suggesting familiarity with the trendy ideology of information technologies, connectivity, social networks, digital economy and online politics. They anticipate the promised land of individual autonomy, horizontal relations, informality, cooperation and creativity. There is a fresh manner to exhort people to join and act together. They annul spatial friction, allowing for close contact and interaction even when people are physically distant. None of these discursive effects should be depreciated, since argument and debate are at the very core of democracy. But one must not assume them as necessary characteristics that exist whenever the 'network society' is at stake. They have to be put in relation with many other dimensions of social action and structure, such as empowerment, dominance, hegemony, inequality, hierarchy, tension and conflict (Castells 2007). And the resultant complex of social factors and outcomes must be investigated in concrete empirical figurations (in Norbert Elias' sense of the word, that is, as singular multi-dimensional situations, see Elias 1978).

Meanwhile, being an emblem, networking is more than a simple rhetorical device. It also defines a policy: it is a guideline and tool to implement a certain kind of public policies. Whatever the level from which originates, it distinctively attempts to articulate multi-level governance and to implement flexible organisational forms, generally territorially anchored. As such, it really constitutes a fruitful methodology for cultural public policies, in times of expansion as in times of restrictions. Its richness lies in the possibility of combining distinct political players – state, regions and cities; administrative bodies and institutions; market and non-profit sectors – and to cope in a more elastic way with the dialectic centre/periphery and standardisation/differentiation that so strongly informs cultural policy (Bonet & Négrier 2010).

Networking is also a practice. Conceptually, this is indeed its crucial element: a form of collective action based on flexible links and common goals. This action is distinctively embodied in a structure that opposes the classic pattern of hierarchical, closed systems – well defined and delimited from the external environment, and led by clearly established instances of decision (the pyramid's apex) – adopting the alternative pattern of open systems of social relations that crosscut vertical with horizontal fluxes, and allow for simultaneous and conflictive directions in the allocation of resources and authority, the communication flows and the exercise of influence and power. (Please note that a network does not imply the absence of power, but a specific 'geometry' of power relations).

These are, of course, Weberian ideal-types, the real situations being more or less distant from the abstract, general description, and usually combining the two models in hybrid mixes. But all the analytical and normative comparison of network and hi-

erarchy turns around this point: what is the most favourable framework for collective action and what is the most adequate governance to structure it?

Governance is therefore a key issue (see Stoker 1998). At the minimum, a network may only be a way to connect people, allowing communication between them. It is one of its basic functions, and one can easily see this in the increasing number of European and international networks, linking artists, art institutions and cultural agents (see Minichbauer & Mitterdorfer 2000: 2-4). It would be tedious to detail the obvious and numerous examples. Second, a network may be an organisational platform – a locus for contact, resource pooling and sharing, information exchange, reciprocal learning, and more or less continuous and wide-ranging cooperation in the activities of fundraising, artistic and technical production, economic management or in the circulation and distribution of goods and services.

But a network can also be an alternative way – alternative to the hegemonic institutional arenas – of constituting and developing a ‘coalition’ of cultural agents and cultural forms. In this sense, networking contributes to moving peripheries towards the centre or to transform peripheries into new centres. It may better preserve differentiation and diversity from standardising inputs, and counterbalance hegemony with strong social and territorial anchorages (see, for Latin America, Delfin 2012). In this case, the network tends to act as a *specific* player – not as if it were an individual, uniform subject, but as what it really is: an internally plural, heterogeneous, variable, yet coherent entity or movement. Both as a concept and a guideline for action, the networking idea proposes a form of structuring and a model of governance that draws the energy from plurality and diversity to propel collective praxis. That is why it deserves detailed empirical analysis and careful theoretical elaboration.

Cultural policies and local development: The Portuguese case

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1. The development of local cultural policies in a medium-sized, highly centralized European country

Within the European Union, Portugal is a medium-sized country. It has 10.3 million residents, 7.2 million of whom live along the coastal belt and 4.1 million in and around its two major cities: Lisbon and Porto. It is a highly centralized country. With the exception of the two autonomous regions of Azores and Madeira – two archipelagos in the Atlantic that together are home to about 500,000 Portuguese – the administration comprises only two levels: central government, assumed by the national government, and local government, split into 308 municipalities of all sizes, each headed by its city council (24 municipalities with more than 100,000 residents, six with more than 200,000 and one with more than 500,000)¹.

Since 1974, Portugal has been a political democracy. From 1976 to 1999, the local councils were chosen in local elections for a three-year term of office. Since 1999, the term has been four years. At the national level, two major parties have alternated in power: the right-wing Social Democratic Party (PSD – *Partido Social-Democrata*), a member of the European People's Party (EPP), and the left-wing Socialist Party (PS – *Partido Socialista*), a member of the Party of European Socialists (PES). Until 2019, there were three other smaller parliamentary parties, one right-wing, the Social Democratic Centre (CDS-PP – *Centro Democrático e Social – Partido Popular*) and two left-wing, the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP – *Partido Comunista Português*) and the Left Block (BE – *Bloco de Esquerda*). Since 2019, the political landscape has

¹ All values are based on the 2021 Census. To calculate the number of residents on the coastal belt, we considered the residents in the districts of Braga, Porto, Aveiro, Coimbra, Leiria, Lisbon, Setúbal and Faro.

become more fragmented, and in 2022 a far-right party (*Chega*) became the third party in the Parliament.

PSD and PS are predominant in the city councils, although the presence of the Communist Party is also significant, concentrated in the Alentejo region and the Greater Lisbon area, and CDS-PP has some influence in the Northern region. Table 4.1 provides the distribution of city councils by the various parties, comparing the current term of office (2021–25) with the previous ones.

Table 4.1.

City councils headed by parties and coalitions, between 2009-2013 and 2021-2025 (%):

Parties and coalitions	2009-2013	2013-2017	2017-2021	2021-2025
PS	42.9	48.7	52.3	48.4
PSD	38.0	27.9	25.6	23.4
PSD-CDS (+ others, if any)	7.1	6.5	6.2	13.6
CDS alone	0.3	1.6	1.9	1.9
CDU (= PCP + allies)	9.1	11.0	7.8	6.2
Other parties	0.3		0.6	0.3
Groups of citizens	2.3	4.2	5.6	6.2
	100	100	100	100

Source: National Electoral Commission.

Portugal has been a member of the European Union (EU, then European Communities) since 1986, and belongs to the Euro Area since its inception in 2002. In 2009, its per capita income was 80 per cent of the EU average, and in 2023 it was 81 per cent. The 2022 edition of the Human Development Index placed the country in the 42nd position, a lower rank within the category of ‘highly developed countries’.

Given these structural features, our aim is to briefly present the evolution of the role of Portuguese municipalities in the design and implementation of cultural policies, summarising the main assets and challenges. Our work will be based on the data provided by extensive studies on statistics and documents, and by case studies focusing on specific locations or regional areas, carried out by either the authors of this chapter, or others. The intention of this exercise is to show Portugal as an important case for sociological and economic research on the development of local cultural policies in the current European context.

2. Local policies: a structural element of public cultural policies

Let us consider the role of the municipalities in cultural policies since 1976. What stands out first is that the role has grown. Culture tends to shift from a 'non-place' in local policies to the status of 'priority intervention', having acquired a 'relatively central political position' (Azevedo 2007: 491, on the metropolitan area of Porto).

This development had two driving forces. For local power, the results obtained from providing basic infrastructure related to housing, health, distribution of water, energy and roads, which were the concern of the first elected town and city councils (in the 1970s and early 80s), permitted the gradual integration of cultural goals into their policies. For the national government, from the mid-1980s, the release of successive programmes to implement cultural facilities across the country meant the establishment of partnerships between national and local authorities for the construction and management of such facilities as libraries, archives and museums (see chapter 3).

The convergence of these two processes – the expansion of the political interest of town and city councils, and the desire of the national government to cooperate with them – boosted the decentralisation of culture for the very first time in Portugal. This trend was evident throughout the 1990s and the first decades of the 21st century. It did not put an end to the concentration of power that characterised the territorial distribution of resources and opportunities, mainly favouring the capital, Lisbon, and then the two metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto. But the trend contributed to the acknowledgement that municipalities were indispensable partners in devising public policies on culture – and this was a new concept in Portugal.

Table 4.2.

Local authorities and central government's expenditure on culture (2000-2023) (thousands of euros):

Years*	Local authority expenditure	Central government expenditure**
2000	339,879	277,881
2005	526,706	275,336
2010	433,943	366,493
2015	392,211	134,537
2020	470,475	222,021
2023	684,832	320,624

* 2023: Provisional data. ** State or national autonomous departments and foundations.

Source: Statistics Portugal.

This will become clearer with two examples. The first concerns the public financial resources invested in culture. Table 4.2 compares the expenditure of municipalities and the central government between 2000 and 2023.

The second example is related to the management of cultural facilities. Table 3 presents the relevant data from 2005 to 2023, showing the spread of those facilities throughout the territory.

Table 4.3.
Local cultural facilities, 2005-2023:

Facility	Year	% of municipalities reporting that they have the facility	Number of municipalities surveyed
Museum	2005	71	152
	2021	64	308
	2023	82	308
Library (or library services)	2005	90	152
	2022	98	308
Art gallery (or temporary exhibition facility)	2005	82	308
	2023	89	308
Theatre	2005	31	308
	2021	37	308
	2023	41	308

Sources: 2005: Neves 2005a, 2005b; Gomes *et al.* 2006. 2021-2022: Neves 2024. 2023: Statistics Portugal; ICA.

3. A predominant pattern in local cultural policies

The first thing to highlight in the empirical research is the increasing importance of culture as a topic of local policies, and, correspondingly, the improvement of the role of municipalities in public policies on culture. Since at least the mid-1980s, we cannot analyse these policies without taking into consideration the local players.

The second element is no less interesting. When we seek to identify the patterns of local action, one stands out among many, if not practically all the Portuguese municipalities, and it does not vary significantly across the distinct political guidelines of the elected parties. Notwithstanding some differences in terms of the political discourse on culture – Luísa Albuquerque (2011: 235–80) has suggested that right-wing municipalities focused more on culture as local identity, while the centre-left municipalities seemed to value more diverse cultural expressions and investment in public cultural facilities –, these differences do not outweigh the effect of a quite broad political consensus on the contents of local cultural policies (Silva 2007).

Table 4.4.

The predominant pattern of local cultural policies in Portugal:

Purpose of policies	Strategies
A. Preservation and enhancement of local heritage.	1. Promotion of material (monuments, archaeological sites, movable assets) and immaterial heritage (arts and traditions). 2. Intervention (alone or in collaboration with the national administration) in the preservation, recovery and management of heritage. 3. Support for local associations.
B. Development of local cultural assets (predominantly targeted at the local population or mostly to attract visitors and tourists).	4. Construction and management of cultural facilities (libraries, archives, museums, sites, concert halls). 5. Programming cultural events such as shows, festivals, festivities, often free of charge. 6. Partnership with local associations and commercial promoters of cultural events. 7. Holding regular events that project the town in the region and in the country, by enhancing unique traditions, expressions or motifs.
C. Education of cultural audiences.	8. Support for local associations. 9. Holding or supporting awareness-raising programmes and artistic education in schools.

It can be said that mainstream policies pursue three essential goals: the conservation and enhancement of local heritage, the development of the local cultural and artistic supply, and the training of new audiences for culture. To reach these widely shared goals, the municipalities have also largely shared the main strategies of action:

their own initiative and the support given to the initiative of others, namely investing in facilities and events; the construction of material structures; management and programming. Consequently, the hegemonic pattern in Portugal has been characterised by an array of matches between strategies and goals since the 1980s, when the municipalities were recognized as key actors in the implementation of public policies. Table 4.4. summarises this matrix.

Some features of this pattern arise directly from the typical structures of local political systems. If we bear in mind the rules of the four-year electoral competition (that is, the need to show publicly the 'progress' made and the 'works' achieved by each local council, and what can be done to recruit and obtain political support in the local community) we will better grasp the contrast between the focus on the medium or large-size facility (at a local scale), and the (lower) attention paid to its organisation and activity, or the significance of the relationship between political players and the leaders of local associations, or cultural agents. These rules also help us understand two other characteristics of this pattern of action: the prioritisation of short-term results, and the corresponding devaluation of planning, sustainability, and allocation of human resources and technical skills needed for long-term action.

Other standard features of Portuguese local power are better understood as a consequence of structural characteristics of the respective social system. Outside the urban areas of Lisbon and Porto, the cultural partners of municipalities are predominantly associations and schools; but the reason for this lies mostly in the frailty, in terms of number and duration, of the artistic and cultural agents, that is, the weakness or even absence of an artistic field. Furthermore, when considering public authorities, it is a similarly frail local cultural demand that leads political power to define art education as a priority for action, and to target school audiences.

Finally, some aspects of the pattern are explained by economic and spatial features. The key role assumed by the town and city councils throughout the territory beyond Lisbon and Porto is partially explained by the economic weakness of the local arts and creative industries. Additionally, the excessive dispersion of the administrative organisation in Portugal – with more than 300 municipalities, most of them small, and without a regional level articulating them to the national government – hampers the making of the critical mass that would be indispensable to implement cultural policies less dependent on localism and its rules of legitimacy and political competition.

4. The relationship between local policies and national policies: complementarity rather than competition

As mentioned before, the rationale underlying the predominant pattern of action governing local cultural policies in Portugal is not very sensitive to ideological differentiation; it can be documented in centre-left, left and centre-right councils. There are differences, certainly, but they do not put in question the structural elements of the pattern.

Meanwhile, a particular sensitivity to the evolution of national and European policies is part of that rationale (for an overview based on content analysis, see Gama & Costa 2021). It explains the fact that, since the 1980s, local policies have gradually assimilated new goals and strategies that complement rather than replace the pre-existing ones. Openness to external stimuli (political guidelines, fundings, good practices, mediators) is one of the strengths of the pattern of local action, and one of the reasons for its resilience. It has been remarkably expeditious in incorporating locally the general discourses and political banners on cultural issues. That was the case, successively or concomitantly, of mottos such as cultural democratisation; the new boost to popular traditions; the enhancement of heritage and cultural assets; culture as a leverage for development; the education of audiences; cultural tourism; networks; creative industries.

Local councils have also shown their ability to respond positively and in a timely manner to the challenges and investment opportunities, partnerships and assertions produced by national and European programmes – both in terms of goals and methodologies, and of technical and financial resources. The national networks of libraries, archives, museums and theatres – that were described in chapter 3 – demand an active participation of municipalities. The same applies to the European Cohesion Policy and the funds it provides for the preservation of monuments, sites and public facilities. Technical expertise regarding policy planning and evaluation is also pivotal in the development of local action.

These driving forces are more effective than the legal changes made to municipal competences in the cultural field, or the social and political composition of local councils. But it would be wrong to neglect these changes, which generally converge in the same direction. Over the years, municipalities expanded their legal and practical powers, ameliorated their technical structure, and took advantage of the evolution of the generational, professional and political background of mayors and councillors in charge of cultural departments. Whenever the elected officials are younger, have advanced academic skills, belong to technical and intellectual professions, and are familiar with the political discourse of democracy and cultural development, the chances to have a coherent cultural policy rise notably.

This is how the general picture can be described. There are many cases of innovation in cultural interventions, carried out by municipalities that are at the frontline of national trends, or adopt a bottom-up approach based on local resources. Still, most municipalities are mainly the recipients and implementers of external guidelines, coming from the national administration, European blueprints, academic researchers or consultants, and cultural intermediaries such as producers, programmers and curators. Far from being inconsistent to each other, the national and the local policies are, in general, cumulative (converging efforts resulting in more resources) and complementary (the municipality acting in areas where the government action is less noticeable) (Santos 1998). The effects of territorialisation and decentralisation are mostly visible in medium-sized urban hubs (Santos 1998, 2005; Fortuna & Silva 2002).

5. A pattern generating political and social effects

We have seen how a predominant pattern of local cultural policies has been established in Portugal since the mid-80s, when the country took consistent steps in decentralizing public cultural policies, and the municipalities, having generally reached a certain level of basic infrastructures (regarding water and electricity supply, as well as transport and communications), could undertake new responsibilities in the cultural area. The main goals were the preservation of heritage, the enhancement of cultural assets and the education of audiences; for that, city councils invested in public facilities, assumed the organisation of events, and launched partnerships with local associations and schools.

The pattern has proven to be, in its essential features, crosscutting political differences, achieving a high level of normative consensus and social legitimacy. It produced, and continues to produce, remarkable and lasting effects on social reality.

First, it contributed both to improving the presence of culture in the design and implementation of local policies, and to enhancing the role of these policies in the wider context of national cultural policies. The situation evolved from near-meaninglessness or irrelevance to tangible practices and results, even if of unequal reach and support.

Second, as described in chapter 3, the activity of municipalities has contributed significantly to the improvement of public cultural facilities in Portugal in the last four decades, and to a less unbalanced territorial distribution (Neves 2024: 199). Table 4.5 highlights the increase in the number of facilities organised into national networks with local participation.

Table 4.5.

The evolution of national networks of cultural facilities in Portugal (2012-2025) (number of facilities):

Public Libraries National Network (launched in 1987)	2012	2017	2022	2023		2025
Total number of libraries in the network	194	219	245	427		
Municipal public libraries	301			303		303
Portuguese Network of Museums (launched in 2000)	2012	2017	2022	2023	2024	
Total number of museums in the network	137	149	165	165	169	
Museums and palaces run by the Ministry of Culture	33		28		47	
Municipal Museums			74		78	
Museums run by regional government in Azores and Madeira	14		14		14	
Portuguese Archive Network (launched in 2008)			2022			2025
Total number of archives in the network			46			52
Archives run by the central state			18			17
Municipal archives			16			21
Regional archives (Madeira)						1
Portuguese Network of Theatres and Cinemas (launched in 2019; accreditation since 2021)			2022	2023		2025
Total number of theatres and cine-theatres in the network			84	85		99
Municipal theatres				69		92

Portuguese Contemporary Art Network (launched in 2021; membership started in 2023)				2023		2025
Total number of members in the network				66		76
Facilities run by the central state				2		
Facilities run by the municipalities				27		
Facilities run by regional government in Azores and Madeira				2		

Sources: IMC 2012, Neves 2024, Equipa da RPM 2024, DGLAB, DGARTES, RPAC.

Third, the principle of partnership has gradually extended to the area of programming. As a matter of fact, it started out typically by means of the collaboration between each municipality and the central administration. But eventually it also structured the cooperation between different municipalities or municipal facilities (often with the support and encouragement of regionally decentralized government services). Many examples could be offered: to consider only those already subjected to academic review, think of ‘Comum’ (*Common*), launched in 2004 and comprising seven municipalities of the Centre Region (Rebelo *et al.* 2007), ‘Artemrede’ (*Artinnet-work*), launched in 2005 (Lopes 2019, and chapter 3 of this book), ‘5 Sentidos’ (*5 Senses*), launched in 2009 (Ferreira *et al.* 2016, and chapter 3), or ‘Comédias do Minho’ (*Minho Comedies*), extensively analysed in chapter 6.

Fourth, with perhaps the exception of Lisbon (where many cultural entities are located), the complementariness and cumulativeness of local and national policies has benefited the country as a whole. Even in Porto, the second largest city, the importance of the municipality is obvious, either to exert pressure on the government to invest, or to ensure effects of scale through partnerships. The medium-sized coastal cities and the urban hubs of inland regions are other clear beneficiaries. And in small inland locations, it is the municipal intervention that mitigates the lack of institutions and the extreme frailty of local markets.

Finally, the political and symbolic role of culture has expanded. Since the democratisation of local power in 1976, the role of culture has shown its potential in the dynamics of electoral competition, political legitimacy, local marketing and in engendering social consensus – in particular, through networking among political officials and association leaders. Other dimensions were added: the representations of group

cultural identity as the aggregator and instrument of social mobilisation in local development processes; the economic potential of heritage and artistic attractions, particularly for tourism and small businesses; the ability to design and boost processes of urban gentrification based on this dual face of culture: heritage and creativity. In asserting the regional and national projection of cities and municipalities, culture has gradually become a 'brand'. Local policies have consistently turned to the processes of recognition and symbolic confirmation used in institutions such as UNESCO and the European Union. The identification based on a cultural marker continues to have a significant impact on competition for political centrality, people to live and visit, capital to invest. Events like the European Capitals of Culture, or labels as the World Heritage List, are really added value for local strategies: besides Lisbon and Porto, European capitals of culture in 1994 and 2001, Guimarães was capital in 2012 and Évora will be in 2027; and there are currently 17 Portuguese monuments or sites inscribed in the World Heritage List, as well as ten intangible goods. The same goes for festivals and other major events, in several fields, ranging from literature to performative arts, from cinema to fine arts. Table 4.6 presents the territorial distribution of current literary festivals; it is only one example, but rather eloquent.

Table 4.6.
Current literary festivals (2025):

Name	Location	Year of foundation
Vila Nova de Foz Côa Poetry and Music Festival	Vila Nova de Foz Côa	1984
Correntes d'Escrita	Póvoa de Varzim	2000
Poesia à Mesa Literary Festival	S. João da Madeira	2003
LeV – Literature on the Road	Matosinhos	2007
Escritaria Literary Festival	Penafiel	2008
Fronteira – Castelo Branco Children's and Young People's Literature Festival	Castelo Branco	2012

Livros a Oeste Literary Festival	Lourinhã	2012
Gardunha Literary Festival	Fundão	2014
Bragança Literary Festival	Bragança	2015
Tabula Rasa – Fátima Literay Festival	Fátima	2015
FOLIO – Óbidos International Literature Festival	Óbidos*	2015
Ovar Literay Festival	Ovar	2015
FLiD – Douro Literary Festival	Sabrosa	2015
Sertã Reading Marathon	Sertã	2015
Chaves Literature Festival	Chaves	2016
FLIQ – Querença International Literary Festival	Loulé	2016
FFIL – Freixo International Literature Festival	Freixo de Espada à Cinta	2017
Húmus - Guimarães Literary Festival	Guimarães	2017
LATITUDES – Literature and Travellers	Óbidos*	2017
FLII – Palavras de Fogo International Interior Literary Festival	Arganil, Coimbra, Condeixa-a-Nova, Góis, Lousã and Pedrógão Grande	2018
Lisboa 5L – International Festival of Portuguese Literature and Language	Braga	2021
UTOPIA – Literary Festival	Braga	2023

FLIM – Mealhada Literary Festival	Mealhada	2023
Entre Mares International Literary Festival	Portimão	2025

* Óbidos City of Literature (UNESCO) since 2015.

6. Factors of change in the predominant pattern of action

The pattern of action that emerged in the last quarter of the 20th century and formatted local cultural policies in Portugal produced effective results, so its consolidation is not surprising. It suits the reality of the Portuguese state – highly centralised, with an unbalanced spatial organisation, with no tradition of regional structures, and with a civil society which, in terms of European standards, is largely dependent on public authorities. On the other hand, it capitalised on structural features of the local political system – such as competition between parties, networking with local interest groups, and the electoral value of investments in facilities – to achieve significant progress in terms of the cultural resources available for local populations.

However, factors of change in Portugal in the transition from the 20th the 21st century have challenged this pattern of action. They are increasingly influential and operate at three levels.

The first is the local demand for culture. The restructuring of Portuguese society, associated with the processes of schooling, tertiarisation, urbanisation and reduction of inequalities between men and women, has a specific and expressive effect on the cultural field. One can observe a stronger presence of the younger, more educated, age groups, with urban references, in the design of cultural demand. Hybrid forms and mixtures can emerge, generating greater heterogeneity and plasticity of that demand: namely, the dialogue of performing and visual arts with creative industries, new combinations of art consumption and entertainment, of cultural practice and self-presentation, the juvenile appropriation of public space, the process of digitalisation, the growing role of social networks as platforms for communication and group identity (see Donnat 2009: 205–24). The point is that local cultural policies are no longer faced only with the classical challenge of expanding audiences; they also need to take into consideration the critical issue of multiple and diverse audiences, and the evolving standards of knowledge, taste and practice.

The second level concerns local dynamics in the world of art. Real situations can be very different, but in recent times a paradigm of professional or semi-professional expertise emerged in various Portuguese cities. This paradigm is based on logics

of territorialisation, mobilising concepts such as ‘urban scenes’, ‘neighbourhoods’, ‘districts’ and ‘cultural clusters’. Synergies between different branches of art and industry have been explored, through spatial concentration, creating specific identity markers, and through ‘atmospheres’ – that is, the collective ways of being, acting, producing and consuming, presented as inherent to those spaces. These strategies often take advantage of gentrification processes in city areas such as historical centres or former industrial areas; and seize the positive externalities generated, for example, by the construction of new cultural and leisure facilities. Alternatively, they elaborate on resources endogenous to certain communities and art businesses (for example, in fine and visual arts). In any case, their paradigm contrasts with the relationship between public authorities and groups of benevolent consumers and cultural promoters, which marked, for decades, the political action of Portuguese municipalities in terms of culture.

The third level concerns policies. In the 1970s and 1980s, the main goal of cultural policy, both at national and local level, was democratisation: freedom of creation and its accessibility to the public (including access to heritage, as past creation). This objective did not lose importance since it was not fully met (see Pais *et al.* 2022). But over the years, other themes and purposes were brought into the debate and the implementation of cultural policy: the role of culture as an integrator in urban and regional development processes; the added value of arts and artists for innovation-driven economies and, in particular, to the attractiveness of ‘creative cities’ (Florida 2005); the key contribution of culture and creative industries to wealth and employment, as emphasised by the economics of culture (Throsby 2003), and then underlined by the European Commission itself (KEA 2006); and the consequences for the design of public policies, questioning the long-term consensus established in countries, such as Portugal, on the grounds of prioritising public investment in the construction and management of infrastructures.

These reorientations of cultural policy gain new meaning and importance in a general context of weakening public policies and ideological appreciation of markets, entrepreneurship and civil society. In fact, the Post-War model of the welfare state had also advocated a strong state intervention in the cultural field, to preserve heritage, support creation and facilitate public access to the ‘spiritual assets’. But this model was challenged by financial constraints; and, to a certain point, the recent emphasis on the economic value of the cultural sector and the efficiency of patronage and the market, is either a defensive adaptation to the new era of neoliberalism or a rhetorical device to justify the retreat of the state. In any case, it is a big issue for public policy.

7. Towards another pattern of local policies?

Recent economic and sociological research, based on case studies, has highlighted trends in local cultural policies that go beyond the hegemonic pattern of action².

The first one is the combination of cultural policy – either the protection of heritage, or the construction and management of facilities, or even the support given to artistic creation – with other local policies. Some examples are the articulation with urban regeneration, with touristic promotion and with education. Such a comprehensive approach to culture, as a crosscutting element of the various sectoral policies, tries to integrate them by reference to the identity of local groups – what unites the inhabitants of a given city or municipality, what singles them out in comparison to others, and can be used as a factor of cohesion and competitiveness (for the empirical analysis see Silva 2000, Fortuna & Silva 2002, Babo 2010).

The second trend is the development of new forms of relationship among policy makers, associations, intellectuals, artists and cultural intermediaries; and the improvement of partnerships between cultural institutions and markets. This generates economies of scale and agglomeration, favours the achievement of positive externalities, and provides upgrading processes in the value chain. In general, the intention of policy-makers is to explore the dual value (cultural and economic) of cultural goods (Throsby 2003), and the interaction of human capital, cultural capital and social capital available in a given territory; to maximise the dynamics of creativity, innovation and initiative associated with specific urban quarters, places or localised artistic scenes; to foster public and private cooperation with a view to clustering artistic and cultural activities. It is an attempt to launch forms of governance able to take advantage of the local cultural resources, and to articulate them within the broader framework of local development (Costa 2002, Babo 2010).

The third trend is the redefinition of policy contexts. In the Portuguese case, it means to overcome the local level, understood as excessively confining public policies to the borders of each municipality. This can be done in three ways, which may be complementary to one another. One is to reposition a given town in the urban or regional area in which it is located, highlighting whatever best characterises its location. The second way is through cooperation with neighbouring municipalities,

² We will take into consideration the dynamics studied by Pedro Costa, in Lisbon (Costa 2002; 2008), by Elisa Babo, in Vila do Conde, one of the municipalities of the metropolitan area of Porto, and in Montemor-o-Novo, a small municipality situated about 100km from Lisbon (Babo 2010), by Paula Guerra, on urban scenes linked to rock music in Lisbon and Porto (Guerra 2013) and (for some aspects) by Carlos Fortuna, Augusto Santos Silva and others in various medium-sized Portuguese cities, namely, Viana do Castelo, Braga, Guimarães, Chaves, Vila Real, Bragança, Aveiro and Coimbra (Fortuna & Silva 2002; Silva *et al.* 1998; Silva 2000: 87-137).

to gain scale, established on the basis of voluntary association involving the sharing of resources, objectives and benefits. The third is to invest in partnerships with external players, be they institutions, events or creators, national or international – partnerships based, generally speaking, on thematic affinities or personal knowledge. However, the lack of intermediate forms of administration (between the local government and the national government) hampers the development of this last trend in Portugal – because it lacks the political and electoral incentives that we have seen work well at the municipal level (Azevedo 2007; Silva 2007; Babo 2010).

All in all, the proper way to address these realities and emerging challenges is probably to identify them as factors of change in the predominant pattern of local cultural policies. It is up to the empirical research to determine, case by case, their potential for transformation. Table 4.7 summarises these changes, actual or latent, in local policies. It modifies Table 4.1, in order to show the increasing complexity of cultural policies.

Table 4.7.

Ongoing changes in the dominant pattern of action in local cultural policies:

Purposes	Strategies for action
A. Preservation and enhancement of local heritage	1. Promotion of material (monuments, archaeological sites, movable assets) and immaterial heritage (arts and traditions). 2. Intervention (alone or in collaboration with the national administration) in the preservation, recovery and management of heritage. 3. Support for local associations.
B. Education of cultural audiences	4. Support for local associations. 5. Holding or supporting awareness raising programmes and artistic education in schools.
C. Development of local assets (predominantly targeted at the local population, or mostly to attract visitors and tourists)	6. Construction and management of cultural facilities (libraries, archives, museums, sites, concert halls). 7. Programming cultural events, namely shows, festivals, festivities, often free of charge. 8. Support for local associations and commercial promoters of cultural events. 9. Holding regular events that project the town in the region and in the country, by enhancing unique traditions, expressions or motifs.

D. Development of the local artistic and cultural environment	10. Attracting exogenous creators and cultural intermediaries. 11. Support for the professionalisation of artists and micro and small artistic-based companies. 12. Fostering the clustering of artistic and cultural activities. 13. Promoting economies of placement and/or urbanisation associated with the cultural and creative sector. 14. Promoting areas, quarters or cultural districts (located in the municipality or its surrounding urban/regional areas). 15. Integrating artistic and business representatives in the partnership and governance networks between municipalities and between public and private, local and supra-local institutions. 16. Encouraging generational renewal, modernisation and professionalisation of local cultural associations. 17. Investing in different events or in specific cultural niches or segments (such as festivals, residencies, programming of facilities, cultural mediation services), at the national and international scale.
E. Culture as a leverage for local development	18. Associating cultural policies to other sectoral policies (in particular in urban development and rehabilitation, tourism, attracting residents, social cohesion and education). 19. Investing in the cultural brand as a distinctive identity and element of regional or national assertiveness of the municipality. 20. Partnership with other municipalities, in order to gain economies of scale. 21. Enhancing the cultural discourse as a key element (or even framework) of political discourse.

8. The importance of the Portuguese case for research on public policy

Portugal presents several specific characteristics. Democracy became a reality in the second half of the 1970s. The accession to the (now) European Union took place in 1986. Almost half of the population lives in the two main areas of Lisbon and Porto. Except for the Atlantic islands, there are only two territorial levels of administration: the national government and the 308 municipalities, most of them small. The state is highly centralised. The country experienced a late but very intense process of modernisation, resulting in structural transformations in the economy, education, labour market, gender relations, secularisation, cosmopolitanism, and exposure to creative industries.

In this context, culture has become an issue of local policies, and local cultural policies were valued as a key player within the national plans to improve public facilities, assets and artistic events. Their consolidation was based on a model focused on three main purposes – heritage, supply and audiences –, combining the direct intervention of public authorities and partnerships with local associations and schools, closely following the national and European political guidelines, and taking advantage of the financial resources thus provided.

This was a functional pattern of action: instrumental to the political legitimacy of the elected officials, it complemented and converged with national policies, generating tangible progress in the cultural life of many towns, and making the territorial distribution of resources less unbalanced (see Neves 2024). Its key elements overcame the ideological and political differences within town councils, despite the obvious left- or right-wing nuances, and the controversies between modernists and traditionalists, or between advocates of classical cultural hierarchies and those seduced by creative industries. It benefitted, and continues to benefit, from a broad political and social consensus. In many municipalities, it continues to be a benchmark for political bodies and civil servants.

However, changes are occurring in many areas: social contexts, the territorial dynamics of the economy, value chains, markets for goods and services, the framework of public policies. Its implications for countries like Portugal were significant throughout the first decade of the 21st century – and became particularly dramatic with the crisis of 2008-2010 and during the Adjustment Programme of 2011-2014.

On the one hand, it is a fact that various forms of capital (human, cultural, social, creative) can be mobilized, through cultural policies, into local economies, improving their social and territorial anchorage. The symbolic value of culture can serve as leverage for innovation and development processes based on a richer exploration of immaterial resources.

But on the other hand, these opportunities exist against the backdrop of a marked slowdown in public policies, the retraction of the welfare state, the enhancement of markets and civil societies – and a conspicuous ambivalence in the management of these trends, ranging from a process of adaptation and even reinvention of public policies, to the other extreme, their radical denial, accompanied or not by a liberal rhetoric. Regardless of the specific form in each case, the issue of governance – decision-making, implementation, monitoring – becomes more critical in this new European and national context.

Based on our research on Portugal, we would suggest that a certain evolution is currently happening. It does not imply the *replacement* of the existing pattern of local cultural policies, but its increasing *complexity*. New purposes interact with the three

usual goals regarding heritage, supply and audiences: they refer to the empowerment of local artistic milieux, and the integration of culture into broader strategies of planning and development. At the same time, it is possible and necessary to mobilise other methodologies of action, in addition to the classical ones (that is, prioritising the provision of facilities, services and programmes, offering financial, material and technical support for local cultural promoters, and launching partnerships with schools, groups and artistic institutions). These new methodologies include the professionalisation of cultural management, joint ventures with private players, mobilisation of external capital, and the affiliation to supra-local networks.

Like any other model, this one does not *explain* each social reality, regardless of its scale. That is a matter for empirical research. But it is intended to prove to be a heuristic and interpretative guide, whose validity and reach can be tested.

Disentangling economics and culture in European policies for cinema: what can we learn from Portugal and non-commercial exhibition?

Helena Santos

Marta Miranda

1. Background and scope

The importance of cultural policies is widely acknowledged for stimulating cultural consumption and democratising the access to culture and the arts. Along with the social construction of cultural tastes and practices (Bourdieu 1979; Bennett et al. 2009) and beyond some sociological reconfiguration of the 'worlds' of cultural practices, research highlights the persistent connection between social inequalities and culture across the whole circuit of creation/production, distribution/availability and consumption/participation (Donnat 2011; Lombardo & Wolff 2020: 76ff; Jancovich & Stevenson 2019). Policy orientations by the European Union (EU) foreground the need to attend to peripheral territories (especially non-dense urban areas), as they combine multiple socioeconomic and cultural asymmetry factors (Pasikowska-Schnass 2018; Bell & Oakley 2015). Culture remains an urban-centred issue in all its dimensions, and outside metropolitan areas cultural supply is scarce, as well as often dependent on public intervention to correct asymmetries.

This broad picture applies to cinema, in-between market- and cultural-driven logics, and to film exhibition in particular. Despite '[the] movement towards decentralisation, observed [in the EU film and audiovisual funding] since the 1980s' and in the 1990s (Lange & Westcott 2004: 18), the push was towards production (Cucco 2018), responding to the economic turn of cultural policies (Menger 2013). European theatrical exhibition remains concentrated in multiplexes located at shopping malls,

where American (US) blockbusters dominate: European films constitute the majority of the films released, while US films account for the majority of admissions (Fontaine 2020; see also Poort & van Til 2020). In parallel, video-on-demand (VOD) logics appear to follow theatrical performance (Fontaine 2020:15), leaving theatrical cinema more captive of promotion strategies rather than of cultural accessibility policy schemes.

The argument that the commercialisation of culture through international trade might lead to homogeneity on both supply and demand (Throsby 2010) applies to cinema. Multiplexes have contributed to the decrease or even disappearance in the number of alternative exhibitors that in general provide a wide diversity of films and genres (they struggle to compete with powerful exhibitors, which in turn establish complex contracts with distributors, see Barnett 2015). This has contributed to a higher homogenisation of the demand (Park 2015), as well as to the conversion of theatrical cinema into an element of entertainment culture, especially among young people (e.g. Taylor 2016; Lombardo & Wolff 2020). This scenario does not consider the effects of the Covid pandemic, which led to unprecedented losses in admissions during 2020 (Blázquez et al. 2020: 70-71).

Attention to distribution and exhibition is scarce, mostly concerned with the cultural effects of the dominance of commercial (mostly Hollywood) exhibition (e.g. Vickery & Hawkins 2008; UNESCO 2016). Especially in the EU, several subjects are being researched, discussed and implemented, such as screen digitalisation, digital archives and VOD distribution and consumption, pointing up the difficult trade-offs between the potentials and the fallacies of digitalisation (Inglis 2010; Creton 2015; De Vinck & Pauwels 2018). Additionally, incentives towards the independent film distribution and exhibition for the diminishing of territorial inequalities are also being targeted (Paris 2015; Aveyard 2009, 2011; Poort & van Til 2020), along with the potential of digitalisation in diversifying and broadening the accessibilities to cultural-artistic contents, such as recorded live performances (Bakhshi & Throsby 2014; King 2018).

These developments argue for the need to consider distribution and exhibition as interconnected policy priorities (along with production), in order to address 'the contradictory tension between the growing abundance of films and the possibility that the majority of them will ever find an existence through encountering an audience' (Creton 2015: 18).

In addition to these fragilities (revealing difficulties on the market side, i.e. the power of distributors and established exhibitors), and despite the potentialities of digitalisation, theatrical exhibition remains residual in national policies for cinema, and is being challenged by the rapid dissemination of streaming distribution combined with the increasing adoption of online cultural practices by young people (Hadida *et al.* 2020) this is a trend that the pandemic has accelerated, while

leaving film consumption more subjected to the ‘choice of the majority’ (Creton 2015). This means the progressive exclusion from catalogues of films that do not meet market benefits, which in turn generates additional pressures on public policies (Harris 2018).

Portugal is not an exception regarding the above scenario, quite the contrary, as it is a small country, of about ten million inhabitants highly concentrated in coastal urban areas. Independent film exhibition is a residual part of the whole film circuit and systematic knowledge about the Portuguese socioeconomic dimension of the cinema sector is very limited. Moreover, there is conceptual ambiguity about the meaning of the ‘independent’ segment. We will follow its common technical definition, as used in most European policy papers and reports, covering non-commercial (which includes festivals) and semi-commercial exhibition, i.e. exhibition outside the major production and distribution circuits on a commercial basis. In Portugal, semi-commercial exhibition concerns regular theatrical exhibitors programming minority filmographies, configuring the so-called independent/arthouse cinemas, *strictu sensu*³. Non-commercial exhibition (NCE) is addressed to non-profit entities and refers to two different segments: festivals and ‘alternative circuits’ of exhibition. The latter is the subject of this paper, as the festivals segment configures a different scale and scope, and so requires a specific approach.

NCE is an almost invisible segment, considering official data and reports, as well as academic research, both in Portugal and the EU. Previous research has identified the potential universe of non-commercial exhibitors in Portugal (Santos & Barbosa 2019): a wide range of local cultural agents, mostly young and highly qualified, working on a volunteer basis in very fragile organisations (including film societies), often without the minimum technical requirements for film screening, so not eligible for public support⁴. Results confidently stress that, in locations where there is no regular cinema supply, non-commercial exhibitors are often the only relationship between local people and cinema and sometimes any cultural activities. The most striking result was that the NCE geography follows the existent territorial asymmetry: it is concentrated in locations where there is commercial exhibition and that host most of the film festivals and other regular film events that configure the possibility of contact with artistically and historically recognised films and *auteurs*.

³ According to the Portuguese Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual, it targets exhibition of ‘national, European, or other countries filmographies whose distribution in Portugal is less than 5% of the market share, in relation to the number of spectators’ (ICA, 2021a). We will get back to this in section 4.

⁴ A systematic web search allowed the construction of a database with 266 exhibitors in 2014 (53% with regular exhibition), based on which a sample was extracted for the implementation of a survey for characterising the exhibitors.

The subject of this chapter takes the research a step further, aiming at approaching NCE as a strategic segment for countering cultural inequalities and homogenisation, thus taking the perspective of cinema policies, both national and European. Specifically, the goal is to evidence NCE as an element for cultural decentralisation, by reflecting upon the evolution of public policies for cinema in Europe and Portugal. A comprehensive analysis will be ensued, based mostly on legislation and official reports of the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO) and the Portuguese Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual (ICA), in order to depict European and Portuguese public policies for cinema as the context of NCE. Additionally, data about the Portuguese support programmes for cinema will permit the retrieval of essential information about the Portuguese scenario for NCE policy.

The chapter is divided in three main sections. First, we will sketch a general contextualisation of the EU policy framework for cinema (section 2). Then, we will focus on Portugal (sections 3 and 4): an outline of the Portuguese cinema policy settings will be presented (section 3), followed by a focus on cinema support and Portuguese policies for NCE (section 4). Hoping to have contributed to the clarification of the (minor) place and the (high) importance of the cultural dimension of film exhibition (for which NCE might be a driver), some final considerations will be drawn.

2. Sketching EU policies: between economics and culture(s)

Despite its birth in Europe, the cinema industry quickly entered a 'second phase', with the displacement of its core to the US in the 1910s, and was 'characterised by massive financial investment, the creation of national and international markets for American films, and the reorganisation of production such that it became large scale and systematised' (Moran 2005: 2; see Bakker 2005 for developments). The end of World War I definitely made the US industry dominant and consequently the first efforts to protect and encourage cinema in Europe date back to the 1920s. The main policy goal was protecting national industries by imposing quotas – as was the case, for example, in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (UK) (Newman-Baudais 2011). Subsequently, public intervention in the cinema sector evolved, taking the form of direct economic aid, granted according to the different models that were established by specific objectives, aiming at disseminating national cultural identities. The early association between public intervention for cinema and political regimes is well-known, as cinema was soon perceived as a powerful asset for governments: the 1930s decade saw the rise of *propaganda* as fascist regimes were escalating in Italy, Germany, Spain, France, and others such as Portugal. Those were times of turbulence in Europe which shows that the cultural history of state intervention does not have only a positive side.

While cinema was spreading as popular culture and entertainment (Bakker 2008), art cinema, i.e. (mostly) 'amateur and semi-avant-garde films', was attracting social elites (Dickinson 1969: 85). This was the origin of film societies, which started in Paris, then literally *ciné-clubs* organising private sessions for subscribers. After World War I, they progressively evolved to reactions towards American cinema, arguing for quality instead of entertainment only. Film festivals, in a very different model than today, originated from those movements (De Valck 2007): Venice Film Festival was the first experience, in 1932, and Cannes would have followed in 1939, had it not been for the beginning of World War II. In fact, this war hampered the promises of the art of cinema in Europe, while the American industry continued flourishing.

After the war, cultural policies emerged as part of the European welfare state, and cinema was a core issue for meeting global commerce and culture (Crane 2014). Support for national cinemas started to be legislated in several European countries by the end of the 1940s (in France, Italy, Germany and the UK), while civic, artistic and political movements proclaiming (and making) cinema as art were being established (film societies, specialised publications, festivals and professional meetings, training, etc.). This was crucial for the cultural representation of 'European cinema' as artistic, in opposition to Hollywood entertainment. Two initiatives were both symbolic and foundational for the changes to come: the Cannes Film Festival was launched in 1946, and the International Federation of Film Societies (FICC) was created at its first edition (see Sadoul 1991: 300-373).

The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC, 1957) was a step further in terms of contributing to the institution of a single market. Regarding film industries, it was acknowledged that European unification and free trade were needed to counteract the US dominance (Stubbs 2022). However, culture was not foreseen in European agreements until the Maastricht Treaty (1992), and the French argument of 'cultural exception' at GATT (1993) was a milestone (though polemic) regarding EU policies. The so-called 'creative industries turn' in the last decades of the 20th century (Menger 2013) benefited the film industry as one of the fundamental concerns of European economies and cultures, in order to gain competitiveness in the face of the American industry oriented by an efficient blockbuster-driven market strategy in film production (McKenzie & Smirnov 2018; Brookey & Zhang 2018). Additionally, there was a consensus around the importance of culture as capital, i.e. as an economic asset (Throsby 2011), and as a driver of competitive advantage (Hill & Kawashima 2016). Despite very different national schemes, there is unanimity when considering the common pursuit of 'the convergence of economic and cultural goals' (Cucco 2018: 263).

As mentioned, production is the priority of policies' incentives, taking the lion's share of public funding and regulation, and so leaving distribution and exhibition more dependent on market forces, which has benefited the dominance of US productions all over the world (Crane 2014; Park 2015; Raats *et al.* 2018). The first types of formal support were automatic, but selective support schemes were soon introduced after World War II⁵. Both types of support are still implemented, and occasionally a combination of both is used (Cucco 2018). As pan-European policies started gaining autonomy by the end of 1980s, national schemes are combined with initiatives at the European level. European funds are mostly used for regional integration at different territorial levels, such as the Creative Europe's Media Sub-Programme and Eurimages, operating at a pan-European level, or the Nordisk Film and TV Fund and Ibermedia, comprising cooperation between different countries with cultural affinities (for analytic details, see Poort & van Til 2020). Nevertheless, the articulation between national and pan-European policies evidences not only legal and economic intricacies, but also the diplomatic side of negotiating different national schemes and powers. The challenge for EU cohesion policies in this matter is huge and difficult, aimed at achieving common scale and scope to compete worldwide, while preserving national particularities, as Poort & van Til (2020) showed.

The foundation of the European Audiovisual Observatory (1992) signals the importance of stimulating a 'European film industry' and has been highlighting its positive (although slow) evolution, as shown by the circulation of European films within Europe and in the world (Kanzler 2020), or by the leveraging of production and distribution budgets through incentives to co-productions (Stubbs 2022).

A significant European initiative on the exhibition side is Europa Cinemas network (founded in 1992): in 2018, it covered 58.2 per cent of the total European screenings, 34.5 per cent of the total European non-national screenings, 29.9 per cent of the total European non-national admissions, and 55.3 per cent of the total European admissions. It works as a label, fostering supra-national European identities and strengthening independent/arthouse cinemas (the semi-commercial segment, see above), while aiming at a global scenario. The Portuguese participation is still residual, considering other countries of similar size⁶, as the programme requires pre-established theatrical structures, making it difficult for most film societies to join without proper involvement of local governments (see section 4).

⁵ According to the EAO, automatic funding can be defined as 'cumulative funding provided by national film funds to which a producer has an absolute entitlement so long as they (or the firm) meet certain prescribed conditions', while selective funding is described as 'cumulative funding granted by national film funds at the discretion of the relevant issuing body' (Kanzler 2018: 156).

⁶ In 2024, there were 11 Portuguese cinemas in the Europa Cinema network, while, for example, Sweden had 49 cinemas and Greece had 47.

In general, sub-national funding bodies are rare in Europe, and when existent they are seldom committed to theatrical exhibition (Kanzler & Talavera 2018). Moreover, comprehensive data about local/municipal support is not usually available, making comparisons even more difficult. This means that data about NCE does not surface in official reports, except when integrated in specific programmes for independent or arthouse exhibition. Besides France and its complex schemes for distribution and exhibition, Norway stands out as the country with a strong tradition in local distribution and exhibition. The UK also has a history of municipal cinemas, and specific programmes were recently addressed towards vulnerable territories, while stressing the advantages of digitalisation for more equal cultural accessibility. Portugal is one of the countries with no guidelines formally established for cinema at the local level, and therefore municipal public support is dependent on the initiative of cultural agents (eventually supported by the central state) and casuistic deals for programming cinema that might be established.

All in all, distribution and exhibition are the least transparent segments, in fact the most market-driven, which is being facilitated by digital technologies and the associated difficulties in regulating vertical integration of big companies (see Hadida *et al.* 2020). This leads to the argument of unbalanced policies in many countries, which influences the conditions for engaging with the audiences. Without proper distribution and exhibition, many subsidised films do not meet potential audiences, and that is a rather consensual concern when reflecting about national cinematographies (Creton, 2015; Harris, 2018) and also 'the effectiveness of the European film financing system' (Poort *et al.* 2018: 8).

This situation favours the US industry, based on an efficient global distribution system that other countries struggle to compete with, especially outside the entertainment segment (Alaveras *et al.* 2018). Additionally, it justifies the American pressures for worldwide liberalisation, as US policies are aggressively oriented towards the establishment of foreign trade agreements that guarantee *their* films will penetrate external markets (Crane 2014). The adoption of the 'cultural exception' argument emerged as a response in many countries, in different versions, in particular after the fact that the digitalisation of screens facilitated the expansion of mainstream cinema, instead of stimulating the circulation of independent films (Raats *et al.* 2018; Poort *et al.* 2018). Digitalisation shows the difficult trade-off between private and public sectors, as public policies aim to combine the potential of digitalisation regarding cultural accessibility with private economic interests of distributors and exhibitors (Inglis 2010).

In the EU, the 'cultural exception' argument is interconnected with the definition of 'cultural criteria' by each member state, as an effort to protect national cultures. Access to film funding, whatever the phase of the chain (from story concept to de-

livery to the audience, production, scriptwriting, development, distribution, promotion and participation in film festivals) complies with cultural requirements, following national parameters, to ensure that the projects will contribute to the promotion of art and film culture. This is especially relevant in France, where cultural, political and economic investment in cinema is recognised as incomparable within the EU: despite critics and concerns (e.g. Creton 2015), French policies seem successful in combining market and culture, preserving an image of cultural distinctiveness.

The uneven size of the EU national markets is not negligible for the above purposes, impairing smaller countries' support mechanisms, which is the case of Portugal (Raats *et al.* 2018: 197). But, as we are arguing, historical backgrounds are important. Norway, for example, is 'an outlier', its distribution and exhibition policies being anchored in a locally-run system with early implementation. The Norwegian scheme is referred to as being a 'state-supported but not statist' strategy (Harris 2018: 238), which means that public support was crucial for implementing and consolidating a decentralised system that has succeeded in combining public and private interests regarding distribution and exhibition. In line with this and taking advantage of the small size of the country, a nation-wide digitalisation programme launched in 2010 was completed in 2011: Norway was the first country with fully digital cinemas (Aas 2015).

In sum, cinema policies remain largely targeted to the economic aspects of the industry, rather than the cultural ones. Notwithstanding that this may be regarded as a quasi-natural effect of countering the US hegemony, questions arise when we go beyond the general picture. Building an EU shared framework in the cinema industry is a complex process: in order to get economies of scale and scope, the cultural dimension becomes an economic instrument rather than the other way around. This tends to favour the countries with solid economies and public policies, as there is the risk of impairing small sized countries, in particular those with structural vulnerabilities (both in culture and economics), such as Portugal. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD, 2010, last revision in 2018), is an example of the efforts towards European cohesion policies, as it 'governs EU-wide coordination of national legislation with regard to all audiovisual media [which] include all kinds of services, from TV broadcasts to on-demand services and, since revision of the Directive in 2018, also video-sharing platforms.' (Blázquez *et al.* 2022: 13). Although it is a step further for regulation and support for cinema and audiovisual, the rhythm and the conditions of national transposition of AMSDV differ across countries. Two quite different cases, regarding the contribution obligations for VOD services, illustrate the differences: in Portugal, the annual fee is of 1 per cent of the companies' 'relevant revenue', while in France it might come up to 25 per cent. The subsequent application of the fees also varies: in Portugal, the money will go directly to the entity responsible for cinema

policies and support (ICA), but in some countries (such as France) it includes direct investment in cinema. In the next section we will go through the Portuguese policies for cinema, emphasising their socio-historical context while attempting to line up with the European framework.

3. Cinema industry in Portugal: outline of a policy and non-commercial exhibition

As mentioned above, Portugal is not a big country, which compels a market fragility in terms of the economics of cinema: there is no scale for *industrial* production, support for cinema is predominantly public and highly centralised, and budgets are low (Kanzler and Talavera 2018).

Money to subsidise cinema depends on screening fees, subscriptions fees and investment obligations, which follows the general European framework in the sequence of the liberalisation of the media markets in the 1980s – in Portugal, that process started in the 1990s, with private broadcasting. This major change, combined with the progressive diversification of support programmes, made the contribution of private investors essential, despite being difficult to obtain. At the same time, stimulating audiovisual works (with autonomous support programmes since 2012) would contribute to clarifying the distinction between public support for (more) authorial films (non-refundable grants) and private investment for entertainment and audiovisual contents. Several schemes for complementing public funds have been essayed since the second half of the 2000s, but some did not work at all due to lack of interest from the private sector, while others are too recent to allow evaluation⁷.

As for the cultural-artistic dimension, Portuguese filmographies have a tradition of international reputation in all genres (fiction, documentary and animation), measured by circulation and awards in festivals and other reputed events. This acknowledged quality of Portuguese authors and films has little to no effect regarding the way Portuguese cinema is internally recognised, watched and valued, and this gap is sometimes mentioned as a ‘divorce’ between the Portuguese people and national cinema (Monteiro 2004). This situation induces a difficult balance in public policies,

⁷ A very recent example is the Support Fund for Cinema and Tourism (2018), a cash rebate scheme aiming at attracting cinematographic activities that might project Portugal as a tourist destination. It is a common initiative of Culture and Tourism government areas that has been followed by an Incentive to Production and Film Capturing (2018), and the creation of a project group assigned to promote and implement the Fund (Portugal Film Commission in 2019). Preliminary evaluation (ICA 2020) evidences positive results on the production side. However, impacts on admissions and gross box office need more time to be measured, and most probably complementary initiatives and measurements are needed, on the side of culture rather than the market, such as effective socio-territorial impacts at the local level.

imprisoned between the safeguard of a strategic internationalisation of Portugal through an artistic-authorial cinema (seen as a market niche and a driver for its cultural projection – Costa 2002) and the adaptation to the European policy framework (aiming at market scale and scope within Europe and the global context dominated by the US).

Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 present some indicators of the Portuguese market between 2007 and 2019. During the period covered, 672 domestic films were produced, all types and genres considered (shorts and feature films, fiction, documentaries and animation), with two minimums, in 2013 and 2014, since no new public funding was awarded in 2012, ‘the zero year of Portuguese cinema’⁸, as a direct result of the *troika* intervention after the 2008 crisis (see chapters 10 and 11). Feature films count for around half of the overall national production (328, on average 25 films per year, the majority being fiction films)⁹. Production is not high, even for a medium-sized country, and the gap between the number of applications for public support and the number of funded projects is persistently high, due to public budget limitations¹⁰.

Table 5.1.

Portuguese cinema between 2007 and 2019, by year: number of domestic films produced and % of feature films produced:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of domestic films produced	52	55	50	66	57	39	24
% of domestic feature films produced	30.8	45.0	40.0	39.4	50.9	48.7	54.2

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of domestic films produced	27	51	48	65	72	66
% of domestic feature films produced	44.4	60.8	58.3	58.5	59.7	56.1

Source: ICA.

⁸ Coelho, Alexandra Lucas, “Retrato devastador. 2012 é o ano zero do cinema português.” In *Público*, October 6, 2012.

⁹ The production of documentaries has increased since 2012, *grosso modo*, and in some years it dominated feature films production. As for animation, only 1 feature film was produced, in 2009.

¹⁰ The number of films produced has been increasing over the last 5 years, but growth in the number of applications for public support is higher, despite some changes in support programmes, e.g. incentives to co-productions.

Table 5.2.

Films released by origin, admissions and domestic films market share in Portugal, 2004-2019 (%):

Origin	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.	Films	Adm.
Europe (co-productions included)	30.7	11.7	34.9	11.8	31.0	7.7	38.9	7.3	37.0	5.2	43.8	16.4	39.7	19.6	44.1	13.3	47.3	20.0	43.6	8.9	43.8	10.6	43.3	8.5	46.8	12.2
Europe	24.5	8.9	28.5	9.3	22.9	5.0	30.5	5.5	28.9	4.5	34.4	11.1	33.9	16.2	32.9	8.5	39.7	13.5	37.0	6.6	33.6	8.0	34.7	6.6	34.8	7.6
Portugal	6.2	2.7	6.4	2.5	8.1	2.7	8.4	1.9	8.1	0.7	9.4	5.3	5.7	3.4	11.2	4.8	7.6	6.5	6.7	2.4	10.2	2.6	8.7	1.9	12.0	4.5
Co-productions Europe-USA	19.0	21.8	16.2	23.2	16.6	28.6	11.1	19.6	11.6	16.0	6.9	9.9	7.8	7.1	9.9	15.5	9.3	9.1	7.3	11.2	10.2	9.5	10.1	19.1	10.7	11.1
USA (co-productions included, exc. Europe)	46.0	66.2	46.8	63.9	49.8	63.3	47.3	73.0	45.8	78.0	47.6	73.3	47.4	71.4	41.9	70.4	38.6	70.2	42.0	78.7	41.7	79.2	41.3	71.2	33.8	74.8
Other origins	4.4	0.4	2.1	1.1	2.6	0.4	2.7	0.1	5.6	0.8	1.7	0.3	5.2	1.8	4.2	0.8	4.8	0.7	7.0	1.2	4.3	0.7	5.2	1.1	8.7	2.0
N (admissions in millions)	274	16.3	235	16.0	271	15.7	262	16.6	284	15.7	288	13.8	348	12.5	313	12.1	355	14.6	398	14.9	372	15.6	404	14.8	391	15.5
Ratio admissions / inhabitants	1.5		1.5		1.5		1.6		1.5		1.2		1.2		1.2		1.4		1.4		1.5		1.4		1.5	
Domestic films market share (%)*	6.2		6.4		8.1		8.7		8.1		9.0		5.7		11.2		7.6		6.8		10.2		8.7		12.9	

* Feature films.

Source: ICA.

The magnitude of the fragility of Portuguese films in the national market is expressed by the origins of the films released and their admissions (Table 5.2). More than 50% of the films released each year are non-US productions, with European films taking the lead and exceeding the US share since 2014, in line with the EU trends¹¹. The share of domestic films released is very low and it reached around 10 per cent of total feature films only in three years (11 per cent in 2014, 10 per cent in 2017 and 12 per cent in 2019). Considering admissions, the picture changes (except for Portuguese films): US films dominate, never going below 70 per cent of total admissions since 2010. Distribution and exhibition are even more concentrated: the five main Portuguese distributors, as well as the five main exhibitors, represent almost the whole market, with around 95 per cent of the market share or more, as measured by admissions (ICA 2021b, c).

All in all, cinema's penetration, as measured by the ratio between total admissions and the population, is very low in Portugal: below 1.5 in 6 of the 13 years covered, a value that was only surpassed in 2010 (1.6). The situation gets worse when considering that more than half of the 308 municipalities had no cinematographic activity in 2023 (i.e., commercial and semi-commercial exhibition).

If for nothing else, the above portrayal makes clear why non-profit cultural organisations play a key role in exhibiting films at the local level to counteract territorial asymmetries: they are often the only link local populations have with culture and the arts. Furthermore, it confirms the need for public intervention, not only to promote the supply of films through the whole territory (democratising the possibility of access to cinema), but also to contribute to its diversity (correcting the dominance of US films by stimulating the exhibition of alternative filmographies and Portuguese films).

Portuguese policies for cinema must be considered in close connection with the country's contemporary history, which reflects its peripheral position within the EU. Some transformations, during the past half-century, were determinant for the position of Portugal in Europe. The major rupture was the democratic revolution in April 1974, that put an end to 48 years of dictatorship, with a hard censorship system formally established in 1933 (see chapter 1). That also meant the end of the last colonial empire in the world, along with its devastating war (1961-1974). In 1986, the country joined the EU (then EEC), which was the result of a significant effort to catch up with European modernity and socioeconomic standards. Ten years later (1995), the autonomy of culture was acknowledged, following EU policies, and a Ministry of Culture was created. Its further existence, however, was marked by discontinuities, in close relation with the government parties, as non-socialist

¹¹ In terms of number of films exhibited, US market share is over 50% (ICA 2021b).

governments have always devalued the institutional scope of culture (Garcia *et al.* 2016). Between 2011 and 2014 culture was relegated to the statute of a Cabinet Office under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. During this period, in the sequence of the 2008 financial crisis, Portugal was subjected to a severe programme of external financial 'assistance' (after Greece and Ireland in 2010), provided and supervised by 'the troika' (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund; see chapter 10).

The above historical circumstances influenced the course of Portuguese cinema policies, despite the attempts of approximation to Europe and its funding models. Before the democratic revolution, cinema was a precious instrument for structuring nationalistic ideology through the legitimacy of a popular culture based on Catholicism, rurality and patriotism (Torgal 2010). The end of World War II and the geopolitical changes in its aftermath troubled the Portuguese dictatorship: the regime would last for the next three decades, but more and more isolated and facing difficulties in preventing external influences, such as the movement of film societies, which formally started in 1945 and, although extremely limited and widely perceived as anti-regime (Granja 2007), it did not stop.

As post-war changes in Europe were pressing the Portuguese isolationism, the germ of an explicit policy for cinema was issued in 1948, expecting to introduce some modernisation while reinforcing institutional control over films, filmmakers, companies and even audiences (see Miranda 2020 for details). Even though, it allowed some new authors to be supported, mainly through international training grants. That, along with the support of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon¹², contributed to the later emergence of a new generation of Portuguese filmmakers during the 1960s, which was the germ of the primary representation of (contemporary) Portuguese cinema, labelled, in the 1980s, as 'new cinema': artistic, experimental, internationally recognised as *European cinema* (Cunha 2018). Some policy reconfigurations were implemented in the aftermath of the May 1968 French cultural revolution, of which the establishment of a specialised organism for cinema in 1971 (the Portuguese Institute of Cinema – IPC) was the major change. IPC was attributed financial autonomy, and configured some openness regarding the European context, while meeting some expectations of professionals and artists (as their international success was an instrument for the external image of the regime) and reinforcing the state control over cinema (Cunha 2018: 160 ff).

¹² Its role was of primary importance in supporting the Portuguese arts and artists before democracy.

IPC launched the basis for subsequent policy structuration: it lasted for more than four decades, with minimal functional adaptations to the profound transformations of the country enabled by the democratic revolution in 1974. All in all, an economic policy aiming at an internationally competitive *industry* of cinema was unachievable, so the legacy of a culture and arts-driven cinema ('new cinema') remained the core aspect of contemporary Portuguese production, relying on international recognition of some authors and highly dependent on public support to exist. Despite the mobilisation for structural changes in facing a 30-year delay regarding post-World War European changes, by the time of the Portuguese accession to EEC (1986) cinema policies were outdated.

It was only in 1993 that a new regulatory scheme was defined, and subsequent adaptations to EU directives and to technological changes were essayed, under the liberal economic turn, i.e. fostering 'self-sustainability', 'economic rationality', and less dependency on the state. Support for international circulation (festivals in particular) was explicitly addressed, assuming the quality of Portuguese cinema (in fact, the high probability for Portuguese films to be awarded); and so was the encouragement of co-productions, especially with member states that Portugal had already collaborated with (in terms of programmes or production funds). Support for production was restructured, establishing specific schemes, such as: an automatic support system (from the income which resulted, for example, from ticket fees charged during the exhibition period), direct support system (financial contribution obtained directly by the producers) and a selective support system. As for distribution and exhibition, films from European member states benefited from distribution quotas, and exhibition was referred to as requiring further regulation, to ensure independent cinema would be encouraged. Still concerning exhibition, it was established that the government would collaborate with the municipalities regarding theatrical cinemas, which was never accomplished.

Constant alterations occurred until 2004, when a new legal framework was designed, which, despite further revisions (in 2012, 2018 and 2021), has maintained its structural guidelines. Three major alterations are worth noting: the foundation of the National Culture Board (CNC) in 2006, with a specialised section for cinema and audiovisual; in the following year, the current Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual (ICA) was established; and in 2021 the transposition of the AVMSD was regulated.

The Portuguese trajectory shows efforts to overcome the country's backward condition regarding EU standards, which helps to explain many regulatory changes. Cinema is an expensive industry and the financial support granted in Portugal has always lagged behind the EU average (Kanzler & Talavera 2018), while ICA remains

the main financing source, sometimes the only one, so augmenting the agents' dependency on central-state support. This situation risks resulting in a double-edge sword regarding cinema policies. We will discuss it in the next section, arguing for the need for multilevel policies, where NCE should be addressed.

4. Public support for cinema in Portugal and the role of non-commercial exhibition: the need for multilevel policies

We evidenced that Portuguese cinema policies were far from stabilisation when the liberal turn in the global economy happened, a driver for the ensuing 'creative' turn in cultural policies, leading to the general retreat of public policies all over Europe. Last but not least, the *troika* intervention in 2011-2014 caused a huge impact on Portuguese cultural policies – in 2012 no public money was allocated to cinema, as mentioned. As pointed out in section 2, the countries with better performance in the EU film market present more robust public policies, which include more efficient distribution and exhibition schemes. This is why NCE emerged as a crucial element to consolidate the cinema sector in Portugal, as otherwise market forces would be dominant, putting at risk cultural diversity and democratisation.

We have been arguing that some degree of complementarity between national and regional/local policy levels is vital, and this complementarity is basically inexistent in Portugal. In this section, we will outline an insight on Portuguese support for cinema, focusing on distribution and exhibition and highlighting the role of NCE. Table 5.3 presents the evolution of the amounts available for cinema support between 2007 and 2019: all programmes, distribution and exhibition (data on festivals and NCE are provided).

Keeping in mind the EU context (Kanzler & Talavera 2018), underfunding is clear in total available amounts. Arguments for the urgency of more public money to support Portuguese cinema are recurrent, on the basis of its high artistic quality, international recognition, and emphasising the need for strategies regarding the internal acknowledgement of Portuguese cinema. Despite this, ICA direct financial support is relatively high, justified by market fragilities regarding private contribution mechanisms: in sub-programmes driven by cultural criteria mostly (e.g. production and exhibition), the amount of support is up to 80 per cent of the total cost of the projects (under a pre-defined maximum value per project)¹³. This means that the diversification of sub-programmes has not been accompanied by a correlated financial reinforcement, which results in a decreasing selection rate, as the number of candidates is increasing, in production especially, as referenced. In 2014 there was an atypical growth (73 per cent), which was related to the post-*troika* recovery.

¹³ The actual maximum for a production project is €0.7M.

Afterwards, a slight growing trend has arisen, with some (relative) peaks, mostly related to the programmes' regularity (e.g., contests for festivals are triennial).

Table 5.3.

Evolution of public support for the cinema and audiovisual sector between 2007 and 2019: all programmes, distribution and exhibition (thousands, non-deflated):

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
All programmes	10,190	10,190	10,190	10,190	10,140
Distribution (all sub-programmes)	700	700	700	700	700
Exhibition (all sub-programmes, exc. Festivals)	300	300	300	300	250
Festivals**	750	750	750	750	750
NCE (alternative circuits)***	100	100	100	100	100

2012*	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	10,190	17,654	17,763	18,419	18,540	18,940	20,550
	620	650	650	715	850	975	975
	250	350	150	420	445	350	570
	500	2,400			2,400		
	100	200		220	220		220

* 'Zero year'.

** 2007-2011: annual and biennial contests/awarding; 2013: support for one year; from 2014 onwards: triennial contests/awarding.

*** 2007-2013: annual and biennial contests/awarding; from 2014 onwards: biennial contests/awarding.

Source: ICA.

Specific measures addressed to distribution and exhibition include different sub-programmes. An autonomous programme addresses film festivals (on national territory, competitive and international), and 'alternative circuits' (NCE, as defined

in section 1). As for distribution, support is targeted to national works (in Portugal), as well as to European and minority world filmographies, as measured by admissions market share (less than 5 per cent), diversity of films' origins, and initiatives promoting audiences' engagement¹⁴. Table 5.3 evidences that distribution and exhibition are almost residual in the face of the global amounts: distribution gets 5.2 per cent, on average (12 years, i.e. 2012 excluded), while exhibition gets 2.3 per cent. As for NCE, the yearly amount is stable: €110,000, with a maximum value per project of €5,000 (up to 80 per cent of the project), which means aiding around 20 projects per year, i.e. a small part of the potential universe (see section 1). The festivals sub-programme has also maintained a quite stable amount between 2007 and 2019.

Let us briefly present the support framework for distribution and exhibition before getting back to NCE.

Distribution sub-programmes addressed to theatrical venues comprise incentives aiming at countering the Portuguese territorial asymmetry. Selective criteria combine (depending on the sub-programme) the number of cinemas involved, the presence in specific zones with less than 0.5 spectators per inhabitant and the number of screening days (outside Porto and Lisbon). In practice though, contribution to wider accessibility is low, as distributors tend to privilege the number of cinemas instead of the screening time. The result is that, excluding multiplexes, many films get one-day screenings only.

Support for semi-commercial exhibition is targeted at independent/arthouse cinemas (see section 1). It includes cultural criteria similar to distribution, and 'the existing cinema supply in the municipality' is addressed (ICA, 2021b). This would introduce a reasonable territorial adjustment if it were not for the coastal-urban Portuguese concentration, as mentioned above: although each municipality has at least one theatrical venue, regular cinema programming is not a local policy priority, which means that there are just a few eligible candidates for ICA support.

NCE and festivals sub-programmes are directed to non-profit entities, following cultural criteria, but no regional/local incentives are assigned. However, support is pluriennial, as a means to facilitate the exhibitors' planning and strategy, i.e. some stability: three years for festivals and two for NCE (see Table 5.3). As festivals have

¹⁴ Three sub-programmes (ICA 2021a): one for national works only; another including national, European and world minority filmographies (with two applications per year); and the third addressed to 'cinematographies with cultural relevance and low diffusion' in all channels (theatrical, VOD and subscription-on-demand (SOD) platforms, DVD/Blu-ray editions and digitisation and/or conservation and re-covering of old films). Support for distribution of national works is decided by ICA, the other two by jury boards.

become more professionalised (for which adjustments in eligibility for funding programmes have contributed, such as a minimum of two previous editions and the presence of at least one competitive segment), most small-medium festivals located in peripheral areas do not meet the minimum requirements to apply. As ICA support is limited to a maximum of 50 per cent of each festival edition total costs (up to €100,000), complementary funding is mandatory, and this benefits major urban areas, where festivals' positive externalities related to agglomeration economies attract not only municipal assistance but also some private sponsoring. As a result, the geography of festivals has been reinforcing the existing asymmetries, contributing to the disappearance of festivals that were important both for film diversification and as local-regional development drivers. Acknowledging this issue, a new programme addressed to medium-small festivals was launched in 2024.

There is an evident potential for NCE to fill (at least some of) the gaps the above segments do not, in terms of regular cinema supply all over the national territory. Non-commercial exhibitors are mainly film societies, but as the distance to urban centres grows, diverse cultural-artistic associations assume film exhibition as part of their activities. Because they tend to be relatively unstructured organisations, geographically dispersed and based on voluntary work and informal practices (see section 1), they configure quite a invisible activity (although sometimes regular), and therefore it is difficult to build a real alternative exhibition circuit. And of course beyond the applicants for ICA support, these entities are very hard to identify and characterise, which means that many agents and initiatives operate outside the institutional field (e.g., unable to follow the rules for theatrical exhibition, so to apply for public funding – Santos & Barbosa 2019).

Eligibility for ICA financial support entails requisites aiming at incentivising structural consolidation of non-commercial exhibitors and exhibition. For example, a digital ticketing system has been mandatory since 2003, the equipment being provided by ICA for free. Applications foresee the presentation of detailed annual plans, including a minimum of 30 different films per year (no juxtaposition with film festivals or extensions of film events extensions of any kind is allowed), and for each film a thorough description of its characteristics and target audiences is mandatory. Criteria regarding the Portuguese language or the weight of Portuguese films, as well as the presence of short films, animation and documentary, are also part of the boards of juries' evaluation. A promotion strategy must also be designed. Complying with these apparently basic requirements is far from being easy, especially as urban density diminishes.

The digital ticketing system allowed the availability of systematic data about the Portuguese non-commercial exhibition since 2004. Tables 5.4 to 5.7 summarise se-

lected information about the Portuguese non-commercial exhibitors between 2007 (as before that year the system was still being implemented) and 2017. During this period, 47 exhibitors were present in the database, which represents only a small portion of the real universe (see section 1). The fragility of the segment is clearly reflected in the irregularity of their activity records, meaning that non-commercial exhibitors often operate outside the formal system: only one fifth of the exhibitors were present in the database during the whole period (Table 5.4). As for those with continuous registers since 2014 (8 exhibitors), it is not yet clear whether they will stay formally registered or not.

Table 5.5 shows the territorial coverage of the 47 non-commercial exhibitors registered in the database, by calculating the percentage of municipalities they represent in each Portuguese region (cumulative values for the whole period): in all regions, they represent a very limited number of municipalities, illustrating the high extension of the territory that is uncovered (even taking into account the limited range of the statistical registers). Table 5.6 is especially expressive regarding the scope of NCE official statistics: although the use of the digital ticketing system became mandatory for receiving public support, not all the granted exhibitors complied with this requisite (and others, not subsidised, adopted the digital ticketing system). As referred to above, one of the targets of ICA support for NCE is to incentivise some professionalisation of the agents, so that the segment will be clearly identified and monitored to improve public policy, but it seems that even the state recognises that the majority of the entities need time (and assistance) to consolidate their organisations and formal practices.

Table 5.4.

The presence of non-commercial exhibitors in the database: number of years registered by the exhibitors between 2007 and 2017 (N):

	Number of exhibitors
11 years	9
8-10 years	5
5-7 years	12
Less than 5 years:	21
<i>Since 2014</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Before 2014</i>	<i>7</i>
Total	47

Table 5.5.

Municipalities with non-commercial exhibitors' activity between 2007 and 2017, by region (% of the number of municipalities in each region):

Region	% of municipalities with NCE	Number of municipalities in each region
Lisbon Metropolitan Area	16.7	18
Porto Metropolitan Area	29.4	17
North (exc. Porto Metropolitan Area)	11.6	69
Centre Region	12.0	100
Alentejo Region	3.4	58
Algarve Region	18.8	16
Azores Autonomous Region	26.3	19
Madeira Autonomous Region		11
Total	12.3	308

Table 5.6.

Number of non-commercial exhibitors between 2007 and 2017, according to whether or not they have received financial support*:

		2007	2009
Exhibitors in the database	Received financial support	17	16
	Did not receive financial support	2	4
	Total	19	20
(Number of non-commercial exhibitors supported by ICA)		(19)	(19)

2011	2013	2015	2017
19	17	19	19
3	3	11	11
22	20	30	30
(21)	(21)	(20)	(22)

* In 2012, no support was granted.

Non-commercial exhibitors are intrinsically targeted to focus on cultural-artistic outcomes, and as already mentioned, they often operate in areas of very low cultural density. Table 5.7 below shows that municipal screens are the most used by the entities registered in the database: NCE relies predominantly on available screens,

which exist in all municipalities. Nevertheless, in most of them the use of municipal screens for film screening is dependent on the municipality own programming, which means that regular scheduling for NCE is not the rule, and this makes cinema supply irregular in many locations where non-commercial exhibitors operate. As non-commercial exhibitors are also (*et pour cause...*) intrinsically receptive to adapting to unconventional and improvised screening conditions, in order to compensate the difficulties of regular film screening, a significant part of NCE is not registered, as it often does not comply with legal requisites for cinema exhibition.

Table 5.7.

Types of venues for film screening used by non-commercial exhibitors between 2007 and 2017 by type of exhibitor (N):

	Own venue	Municipal (public) venue	Public institution (non-municipal)	Private venue	Other
Film society	2	18	8	3	3
Cinema		2		4	
Cultural-artistic	3	3			
Other	4	3			
Total*	9	26	8	7	3

* Total > 47 because some entities screen in more than one venue.

Finally, most of the non-commercial exhibitors have developed a local embeddedness that involves many possibilities for socio-cultural initiatives beyond cinema. Theatrical exhibition means much more than viewing films projected on a big screen, it means social encounters and interaction, which are crucial for social cohesion and social participation. Additionally, even film societies (which are 'the most specialised' in cinema exhibition) tend to engage in different cultural activities, particularly in localities where there is no cultural-artistic regular supply. As local cultural agents, non-commercial exhibitors are privileged targets regarding the potentialities of digitalisation in countering the extreme territorial cultural asymmetry, not only in film supply, but also in other arts (performative and visual), as long as they have been recorded.

So that the above considerations become real and sustainable, two pivotal changes in public policies are required. One is that the different central-state institutions

must cooperate, i.e. that integrated cultural policies will be developed, articulating cinema, visual and performative arts, and heritage¹⁵. This does not mean the diminishing of autonomy for each area, but the need for new ways of cooperation, so that changes (such as the digital challenges and opportunities for cultural accessibility) are effectively taken into account. The second pivotal change concerns the articulation of different policy levels, which, in the case of Portuguese cinema, appears to be urgent. Central-state policies are essential in compensating the clear market failure in the cinema sector, which seems clear for non-commercial exhibition. But local and regional involvement is essential, either for cultural densification (multiple centralities) or for the efficiency of national policies (see chapter 4). On the one hand, a higher budget from the state (ICA) is crucial, not only for better assistance to each exhibitor but also to reach a wider number of entities: in 2020, the amount awarded to NCE duplicated globally (€200,000 per year) and the maximum per entity (€10,000), so it is not expected that the number of subsidised entities will increase. On the other hand, intermediate levels of intervention are critical, by means of direct and indirect support mechanisms. Excluding ICA, direct support in Portugal is inexistent: there are not regional funds for cinema. As for indirect support, the mobilisation of different regional and local agents is crucial. Municipalities should be actively involved in cinema exhibition, taking it, not as an external, casuistic, asset, but as an endogenous priority of local policies.

5. Final remarks

Public policies for cinema in Europe have been, since their initial establishment, a form of protecting and valuing national identities while countering the US hegemony. There is an evident two-fold interest regarding cinema: cultural and economic. However, financial interests and technological developments have always prevailed over cultural aspects when it comes to economic analysis of the cinema sector and the segments it comprises – production, distribution, and exhibition.

In general, European countries privileged either automatic or selective support programmes (or a combination of both), while US policies foresaw the establishment of foreign trade agreements, in order to guarantee worldwide circulation. Efforts to reach scale in European cinema industry (countering its fragmentation), and also scope (preserving European cultural distinction against US entertainment industry), seem pivotal in EU policies, but also very complex. The goal of preserving national identities and cultural diversity, and to compete internationally, conflicts with coun-

¹⁵ These are the three areas with central-state specific institutions in Portugal. ICA is the only one with legal personality (it is a public institute), the other two (arts and heritage) are General-Directorates.

tries characteristics, historical backgrounds and national support schemes, which makes it difficult to achieve integration and to evaluate (compare) policies and their outcomes. The articulation of production, distribution and exhibition is still far from being achieved, the first segment getting more attention from both EU and national policies. Furthermore, data concerning regional support is frequently unavailable, even in countries that have regional support funds for cinema, and data about NCE is usually not considered in official reports, except when it is part of specific programmes for independent exhibition.

In this chapter, we reflected upon the relation between European policies and national singularities, discussing the Portuguese policies for cinema and the importance of NCE. All in all, economics and culture should not be apart, so that cultural diversity and accessibility are taken seriously (Throsby, 2015). This is particularly crucial in cinema, given its complex relation between market and culture: talking about disentangling culture and economics means being aware of the urgency to efficiently articulate both dimensions.

Portugal has a contemporary history of major transformations since the democratic revolution in 1974 that impacted public policies for cinema. These remain primarily dependent on the central state and, as in most countries, oriented towards production. High centralisation, a small internal market and an excessive territorial socio-economic and cultural asymmetry (with a sharp inequality regarding cinema supply) are factors that amplify the effects of underfunding but also reveal its limits. Adding to the fact that national filmographies are internationally recognised makes exhibition even more crucial for cinema policies as economic and cultural policies.

So, what can we learn from Portugal and non-commercial exhibition? As stated, the coverage for regular cinema exhibition across the Portuguese territory is low, and this evidences the need for film exhibition at local level and public intervention for the democratisation of culture. Though most of the Portuguese non-commercial exhibitors (film societies and other cultural-artistic agents) are concentrated in urban areas, their activity goes beyond the conventional film exhibition, i.e. NCE official statistics are clearly incomplete (as we showed, many exhibitors do not use the digital ticket system). Furthermore, some exhibitors operate outside the municipal urban centres, and they are often the only link local populations have with culture and the arts. Non-commercial exhibitors are intrinsically motivated by cultural goals: not only do they adapt to improvised conditions and quite often promote other activities besides cinema, but they also play a crucial role in counteracting the homogenisation of film supply, by exhibiting alternative filmographies and Portuguese films.

Our research evidences the need for public intervention, and that it requires regional/local complementarity with the central state (multilevel policies), as market

forces tend to exclude this minor segment, all the more as the expansion of streaming is overwhelming. Non-commercial exhibitors have high potential regarding the potentialities of digitalisation for cultural accessibility. For this, however, the NCE segment needs to be better identified and characterised, i.e., efforts to gather robust data must be continued.

Artistic cosmopolitanism and sustainable territorial communities: the added value of a theatre company to a low-density region

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1. Introduction: the issue of culture and development

In their very useful book on cultural policies, David Bell and Kate Oakley (2015) distinguish three main scales at which such policies are currently put into practice – the urban, the national and the international scales – and point out the key role of urban spaces as centres for political innovation. We agree with this well-informed synthesis, and do subscribe to its stress on the importance of geography and territory in the design and implementation of cultural policies. However, this should not prevent a complementary inquiry on the processes based on rural and regional scales and fostering the leverage of community and social development strategies by a stronger focus on cultural resources and activities.

From quite diverse experiences and geographies, this focus is becoming more visible, although still lacking wider recognition, systematisation and operationalisation. It is worth mentioning Azzopardi (2012) and Ledwith (2012), both arguing for a contextualised research agenda on community engagement; and the recent assembling on research questioning the effective consideration of culture within solid and viable policies (MacDowall *et al.* 2015), where the embedding in rural specific contexts is also argued for (see Duxbury & Campbell 2009). But there remains a tendency to overemphasize the articulation between culture and economy in dealing with development issues, and to reduce the cultural economy to creative and urban

industries. This is a dangerous tendency for two reasons: first, it ignores the global nature of development; and, second, it takes a rather unilateral approach to economic affairs (see, e.g., Greffe 1986; Dessein *et al.* 2015; De Beukelaer & Freitas 2015).

This unawareness of complexity and this unilateralism are especially counter-productive in respect to the processes of sustainable development in low-density territories. A direct link of culture to marketable goods and services overlooks the richness and centrality of resources such as traditions, arts and crafts, the natural and cultural heritage, leisure and non-professional performances. These resources are not valued or valuable in strict economic terms but are crucial to the definition of local identities (Greffe 2010). And in regions that – for being peripheral, depopulated and/or out of the range of investments, public administration and political power – are so deprived of financial, physical and human capital, the cultural background and sense of community can indeed be the very basis for mobilisation and engagement of people in processes of social development (Greffe & Pflieger 2005; Azzopardi 2012).

Issues about non-urban and peripheral territories are indeed re-entering the development research and practice, and the hegemony of urban models is being questioned, even if from an economic perspective. Three quotations (among others) from the Western core account for the specificity of rural settings: Bell and Jayne (2010, drawing on an English case) show how the ‘creative rural agenda’ must fit into the rural culture and economy; Jørn Cruickshank (2016, based on two Norwegian experiences) clearly demonstrates the complexity of the cultural dimension in rural settings planning; and (in the Pacific), regarding the implementation of Australian local cultural policies in rural areas, Kim Dunphy (2009) criticises the ‘city-centric approach of funders and gatekeepers’.

Moreover, the consideration of low-density and rural territories is recently being addressed by the European Union (EU) cohesion policies (Dijkstra 2021), acknowledging the perils of a growing ‘geography of discontent’ generated by regional economic inequalities (Iammarino *et al.* 2018). Although culture remains marginal in these explicit concerns, that European agenda, if effectively essayed, might fuel a *positive mobilisation* of culture and arts as a pillar for sustainability (and development). This is the very opposite of blindly turning the rural assets into a ‘creative [industries] countryside’ (Bell & Jayne 2010); it is about ‘putting «weak» policies into strong agendas’ (Ferrão 2015: 84), relying on territorial embeddedness (‘place-based policies’, as Iammarino *et al.* put it), aiming at active social inclusion, and not just top-down problem-solving.

One has no excuse to plead ignorance, considering the availability, since the 1980s, of an important sociological and economic literature on the multiple and

reciprocal links between culture and development. UNESCO itself has paid a particularly acute attention to the political and methodological consequences of this literature (UNESCO 1984a, 1984b, 2015; Greffe 1986; Henry and Kossou 1986). We can summarise the main findings in the following items.

First, if the concept of development denotes the process of expansion of social capacities and the improvement of people's well-being, then culture, as the ability to access information and knowledge and to experience aesthetic emotions, to consume and participate in artistic events and works, to express one's beliefs, sentiments and ideas, is a crucial dimension of development goals. The rephrasing of development as 'human development', from the 1990s onwards, succeeded in extending its scope from economic growth to wealth distribution, education, health, and social and gender equality (see, for instance, the successive reports of the United Nations Development Program). It could also include the cultural dimension, which, although stressed and gradually included in the United Nations (UN) programmes, still lacks proper awareness and implementation (Maraña 2010, De Beukelaer *et al.* 2015).

Second, if social agents – real people, groups and institutions – are key players in the development process, one has to understand the values, attitudes, beliefs, know-how and common sense that characterise those agents, in order to better analyse and use their capability to undertake or participate in this process (Lacour *et al.* 2014, Ledwith 2012, Dunphy 2009). Development strategies cannot avoid the careful consideration of the cultural patterns of behaviour that are implied in human and social action.

Third, since these patterns are variable according to historical, geographical and social circumstances, and there are no universal criteria to justify a one-dimensional hierarchy between them, the basic assumptions of the so-called modernisation theory cannot be accepted (or, at least, must be substantially revised). The idea that it would exist only one effective road to development, the one covered by European modernity, has to be abandoned; and instead, the multiplicity of routes to human development must be fully recognised. This should be a clear consequence of assuming cultural diversity as the condition to open (plural) possibilities for exploring sustainable futures, globally and locally linked (Azzopardi 2012).

Fourth, as a pattern of individual or collective behaviour, culture is not only a framework for social action. It is also a *resource*, at all its levels: as mentality, way of life, art and heritage. This is a very important principle for development policies. One particular community may be incredibly poor in terms of natural resources, demographic vitality or economic assets; but every community, by the plain fact that it is constituted through history by men and women, is culturally rich. It can even happen that cultural goods, like material and immaterial heritage, working

traditions, religious beliefs and other symbolic ingredients, may be the *main* set of resources from which a development process can be launched.

Fifth, and finally, referring this process to such cultural resources – and globally to the community's sense of collective identity – can also be a productive means to encourage and structure social participation. The methodology of endogenous development implies the primary use of existing resources; the more or less intense participation of several segments of the concerned population; and the joining up and partnership of its most relevant institutions. But how can one achieve this purpose if one fails to articulate with the set of values and beliefs on which the community to be mobilised bases its identity? Working closely and daily with the existing people and the social institutions and networks that they constitute, in a local community, be it rural or urban, has all to do with understanding and accepting their cultural forms and capitalize them as valuable assets (Hickey & Mohan 2004; Greffe & Pflieger 2005; Duxbury & Jeanotte 2011; Lacour *et al.* 2014; Ledwith 2012).

In brief, culture is (i) a crucial dimension of human development; (ii) a formidable resource for development; and (iii) a productive means to improve social participation in development. Therefore, it cannot be ignored neither by analysis nor by policies. It cannot be reduced to an instrument, as in functionalist approaches. It is simultaneously an end, a factor and a support of processes aiming at promoting global, 'human' development of people, territories and communities. In this sense, 'culture is the place for thinking on development' (Silva 2000: 144-145).

The concept of sustainability, as proposed by the Brundtland Commission (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), strongly reinforces this perspective. On the one hand, it stresses the global, multidimensional nature of development: not only an economic, but an economic and also an ecological, social and, of course, cultural process. On the other hand, it establishes the orientation towards future, fully respecting the needs and interests of the next generations, the intergenerational availability of resources and, thus, the permanence of humankind.

Thinking in cultural terms adds a very important element to the idea of sustainability, referencing time not only to the future but also to the past. Cultural forms, building up communities, are generated, reproduced or transformed throughout generations and centuries. When we use them as development resources, we are linking the prospect to future with inherited ways of living and acting. This twofold temporal reference – future and past – favours a full comprehension of the double meaning of sustainability: harmony between the different dimensions and restrictions that are at issue; durability of the undertaken action and its effects.

Our research stands for the need of a holistic perspective. Benefiting from the comprehensive approach inherent to the methodology of case studies, we will

focus on a cultural policy experience in a peripheral European territory, aiming to contribute to the intrinsic link between culture and development. First, we will justify the pertinence of approaching low-density territories and the research design will be presented (section 2); then, data will be discussed, concerning the launching and implementation of the experience, its effects and its policy embeddedness (sections 3 to 6); finally, we will try to draw some conclusions that could be useful for sociological comparison and policy design.

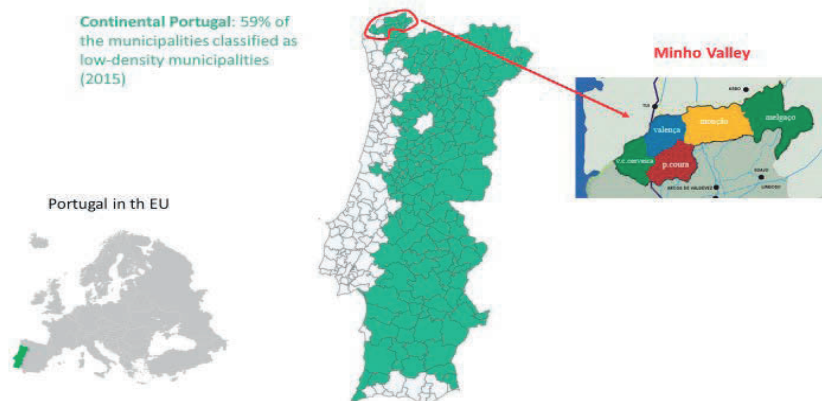
2. The relevance of a case study on a European low-density territory

The economics and sociology of the relationship between culture and development offer good food for thought. The focus may be on the added value of culture-driven strategies to the improvement and modernisation of economic areas, namely in the context of urban gentrification (see, e.g., Markusen & Gadwa 2010; Duxbury & Jeannotte 2011); to the revitalisation of local communities (see, for a Canadian program, Jeannotte & Duxbury 2015) and rural places (as in Australia, through a national program on local cultural development policies since the mid-2000s – see Smithies & Dunphy 2015 for an overall framework; Gibson & Connell 2011 on music festivals). Or the focus may be entirely different, one dealing with cases whose ultimate objective is the expansion of artistic practices – cultural development meaning, consequently, the development of arts and culture as an autonomous goal. Alternatively, we may somewhat combine the two orientations, taking culture, not as a means but as a development goal, and still considering carefully the externalities it can generate for economic growth, social integration, civic and political commitment and education. There is a quite large inventory of research possibilities.

Nevertheless, some precautions have to be kept in mind. We all know that the link between culture and sustainable development is far from being a specific issue of ‘developing’ countries or regions. Its relevance also touches ‘developed’ countries or regions. This is not a ‘South topic’, but South *and* North: a relevant and meaningful topic everywhere (e.g. Dessein *et al.* 2015). Development is really a *process*, an evolutionary, unfinished and non-predetermined process (Bruton 1985). And there are several ways for the topic to appear in a European agenda: rural and regional development, rehabilitation of former industrial quarters, urban development, partnerships linking public services and third sector economy, interculturalism, support for young and/or micro entrepreneurship, and so on (Cameron 2004, European Commission 2010, VVAA 2012, 2014, UNESCO 2015). Within this vast range of possibilities for research and policy, this chapter chooses to address the specific characteristics of low-density territories.

In 2003, five municipalities¹⁶ of the Minho Valley and a professional theatre company co-founded a new company, called *Comédias do Minho* (*Minho Comedies*). Minho Valley corresponds to the top Northwest of Portugal, Minho River serving as the border between Portugal and the Spanish autonomous community of Galicia – Figure 6.1 shows the five municipalities' territory. All the five municipalities are small in population, ranging, in 2021, from 7,773 (Melgaço, the smallest one) to 17,816 inhabitants (Monção, the largest).¹⁷ In 2003, all were ruled by the same party, the Socialist Party (PS). The professional theatre company, *Teatro do Noroeste* (*Northwest Theatre*) was established, in 1991, in Viana do Castelo, the main city and the administrative capital of the Minho-Lima region.

Figure 6.1.
The territory of Comédias project:



This was a bottom-up initiative. It did not result from any national policy; nor was it funded by any national or European body. Two partners with different experiences – five local political leaders, looking for common projects, and an artistic entity seeking opportunities of anchorage and consolidation – converged in an attempt to maximise resources. Two years later, in 2005, when the *Teatro do Noroeste* abandoned the pro-

¹⁶ The municipality is the local unit of the Portuguese public administration. There are currently 308 municipalities in the country. The political bodies of each municipality (the executive board, *Câmara Municipal*, and the assembly, *Assembleia Municipal*) are elected for four-year terms. See chapter 4 of this book.

¹⁷ Statistics Portugal, 2021. Except when mentioned, the sources of the data are either the *Comédias*' documents or our own fieldwork.

ject, a new professional company was already at work, *Comédias do Minho*, employing a small group of actors who were thus initiating their professional career.

Having begun its activity in 2004, *Comédias* has been continuously working for two decades. No one, among associates, partners, sponsors and artists, questions its permanence. Therefore, it can be taken as a living laboratory to reflect on prospects for the interrelationship between arts and social development, in a European low-density territory.

The methodology that we used can be labelled as an 'in-action' strategy. This means an immersive protocol of observation, analysis and interpretation, based on a dialectic interaction between the research team and the empirical case, throughout an extended period of systematic research (from 2009 to 2014), with regular stays in the field. A real exchange has been tried, in a dual sense: our insights from the field (questions, decisions, in-progress considerations) were informally shared, and this was meant to contribute to the self-reflexivity of the project. In fact, the origin of this research (in 2009) relied on the opportunity of combining the reflexivity purposes of the project coordinators (as they were aware of the experimental and uncertain scope of the project) and our academic interests, both aiming to understand an on-going singular experience, which inevitably was affording a wider transformation process in the territory. Although collaborative (and this means not neutral), it is not action-research, as we did not take part in the decision processes, nor did the researchers aim to identify 'problematical issues' in order to change their course. Our presence was permanently negotiated, and it has been explicitly critical, that is, systematically discussed with the company and the association. Our research must also be distinguished from arts-based research, our purpose being to highlight the emergence, development, embeddedness and effects of a particular project in a particular territory, considering this project as a significant totality, pertinent for broader interpretations on culture, policy and development (see Passeron & Revel 2005, esp. 10-13).

This methodology involves a comprehensive observation protocol and several data sources. The fieldwork was regular and persistent, in order to seize the different activities of the company and its context, combining *in situ* observation, formal interviews, informal interaction, and systematic registration through written notes and photography. We also worked on many types of documents (ranging from official statistics, internal documents, technical and political papers, to a wide range of other documentation, from local studies and traditions to arts and literature and films and photos, where available). Having in mind the broad research goals and the methodological strategy, we could not be limited to the Minho Valley and the *Comédias* project, and thus selected complementary inquiries into the Portuguese

arts fields and cultural policies, for critical appraisal and comparison (e.g. Santos & Moreira 2013). After the conclusion of the fieldwork, in 2015, updating of the *Comédias* project has been maintained by indirect accompaniment of its activities.

3. The architecture of a theatre-based project

The five municipalities that constitute the inner geography of *Comédias* typically present the problematic situation of many European rural areas. Table 6.1 summarises the main demographic and social indicators.

Table 6.1.
Selected socio-demographic indicators for Minho Valley:

Indicators	Year	Portugal	Minho Valley
Inhabitants	2011	10,562,178	61,021
	2021	10,343,066	56,765
Population growth (%)	2001-2011	1.80	-1.70
	2011-2021	-2.07	-6.11
Population density (persons/km ²)	2013	113.1	72.9
	2018	111.4	69.8
% of inhabitants living in localities of less than 2,000	2013	38.0	78.3
	2021	38.9	80.1
Age dependency ratio, old (%)	2013	30.8	44.3
	2021	36.9	55.1
Inhabitants (aged 15 and more) with tertiary education (%)	2011	16.3	9.7
	2021	18.2	11.2
Professional and intermediate occupations (% of the employed population)	2011	25.9	28.8
	2021	17.0	19.0
People occupied in agriculture, fish and forest (% of the employed population)	2011	2.3	4.5
	2021	2.2	4.2
Low-skilled workers (% of the employed population)	2011	13.1	18.3
	2021	15.4	25.6

Source: Statistics Portugal – Census (2001; 2011; 2021); Statistical Yearbook of the North Region (2012, 2013, 2014; 2019).

Table 6.2.

Political party and mayor by municipality, 2001-2025:

Terms	Melgaço	Monção	Paredes de Coura
2001-2005	PS: R. Solheiro (since 1982)	PS: J. Moreira (since 1993)	PS: A. Júnior (since 1993)
2005-2009			
2009-2013			
2013-2017	PS: M. Pombal	PS: A. Domingues	PS: V. Pereira
2017-2021		PSD: A. Barbosa	
2021-2025			

Terms	Valença	Vila Nova de Cerveira
2001-2005	PS: J. Serra	PS: J. Carpinteira (since 1989)
2005-2009		
2009-2013	PSD: J. Mendes	Independent: F. Nogueira
2013-2017		
2017-2021		
2021-2025	PS: J. Carpinteira	

Source: National Election Commission.

Some aspects are especially critical, such as the loss of population (in all the municipalities) and its isolation, the high old age dependency rate, the weak proportion of educated people, the percentage of employed people in low-skilled occupations. However, the region has benefited from the new role of the elected local officials, since 1976, the year of the first local election in Portugal; and also benefited from the gradual extension throughout the territory of some basic public capacities, such as education and health facilities, or communication and transport infrastructures. One remarkable fact – that the activists of the *Comédias* project usually point out – is the political stability at the municipal level, and the continuity of cultural policy despite several political changes (Table 6.2)¹⁸. When the project was launched, in 2003, the five mayors of the Minho Valley were already experienced political leaders, accustomed to

¹⁸ After the revolution of the 25th of April 1974 (the 'Carnation revolution'), the first local democratic elections took place in 1976. The Social-Democratic Party (PSD) is a member of the European People Party (EPP, centre right-wing), and the Socialist Party (PS) is a member of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D, centre left-wing). See chapter 4.

mutual interaction; and they could say that now that the basic needs of the population were resolved, a cultural turn could be undertaken.

Considering the two decades from 2004 until 2023, the *Comédias* project can be described as follows. At the beginning, it soon became clear that its accomplishment would require a high degree of autonomy and resources that *Teatro do Noroeste* (the pre-existent professional theatre company that was originally co-founder) alone could not fulfil, and the company left the association (being replaced by a local bank oriented to agriculture). The first two years of activity were not so successful, including in terms of the adherence of the populations. In fact, some prejudices, although not explicit, surfaced in the conventional artistic model that was implemented: expecting that non-publics (in this case: rural, aged, non-educated people, many living in isolated areas) would not be very demanding in artistic terms; and taking (almost) for granted that any kind of art would be appreciated by people with no previous contact with professional theatre. According to one mayor (interviewed in 2012), such a distant, 'imported', proposal, even if artistically good, would never compete with television, and 'that would be fair'.

Then, in 2006, a quite different model, innovative and risky, was launched. Two decisive changes took place: a private firm operating in the region (a wind energy consortium) started sponsoring the company on 3-year contracts; and a new concept for the artistic direction was developed, anchored in its artistic autonomy.

The private support was pivotal for the implementation of the new artistic concept, much more expensive than the previous orientation based on small theatre productions for itinerancy in the five municipalities. Two notes about the private funding. First, it is a high sum (100,000 euros per year), still today, considering the Portuguese reality. Second, it is an exceptional situation in Portugal, where private support for arts is rare and almost limited to the public sector (e.g., national theatres and museums).

The five municipalities supported the project directly (via the association) and indirectly (for example providing public spaces such as parish halls for performances). *Comédias* was annually granted by the central government (through the Directorate-General for the Arts) between 2004 and 2012. Since 2013, the project was intitled to receive a 'sustainable support' from the central government (a quadrennial grant, representing, in 2018, an annual average amount of 250,000 euros), accounting for a major part of its budget. Even though, the private sponsorship remains essential for a project that goes far beyond the initial idea of 'just delivering plays to villages'.

Indeed, the artistic dimension has been the core transformation of the project, aiming at 'a reconciliation with the territory' after the failure of the first two years (municipal staff, 2012): designing a 'specific project for the territory where it operates, with effective symbolic value for local people, and involving them' (artistic

director, 2012). 'Taking theatre to the villages' assumed therefore a completely new meaning. Using the words of a former member of the artistic commission of the project (interviewed in 2008), it was all about 'looking at people in the eyes' when playing for them; and *refusing to duplicate the socioeconomic and cultural marginality of the territory into a marginal artistic project*. A 'serious' artistic project, 'consistent, evolving and durable, would create a new centrality, a new artistic and cultural pole' (artistic director, 2008).

As proposed, building a new centrality entails a process of 'creating opportunities for the people to express themselves, and to develop their own, autonomous, «emancipated» [an explicit mention of Jacques Rancière 2009], independent, relationship with the arts, thus with the world', while focusing on a cosmopolitan artistic project (artistic director, 2012). This is how the original objectives were reframed: having a theatre company *and* developing an educational project meant, from then on, *a dual commitment, towards the art and towards the territory*.

4. The prospect of a new centrality

How to operationalise this approach, admitting that too much of territorial embeddedness would lead to a limited artistic proposal, without proper recognition in the art world, and that too much of a contemporary and cosmopolitan aesthetics would divorce the company from the territory? The balance between the two orientations is necessarily dynamic and uncertain: it will always be affected, not only by general changes (e.g., a political change in one municipality or an economic crisis), but also by transformations generated by the action of the theatre company itself (e.g., its status or recognition). 'Without cultural centralities, the risks [of localism] are very high', but so are the risks of making 'artistic proposals solely at the service of the artists themselves' (municipal staff, 2012).

The 'new centrality strategy' was launched in 2007 by Isabel Alves Costa, the first artistic director assigned to the project. Relying on her long experience and high reputation as curator and manager, responsible for an international puppet festival in Porto (the second Portuguese city), she proposed to split the artistic and managerial aspects. Thereafter, the advisory committee of the association (that existed since its foundation) was reframed as an '*artistic commission*', and well-known personalities were invited. Two became pivotal: Miguel Honrado (in the commission until 2024), with a long practice in cultural and artistic management, at the time in charge of EGEAC, the municipal cultural corporation of Lisbon; and Pierre Voltz, stage director, researcher, and responsible for *Les Théâtrales des Jeunes en Europe*, renowned in the field of theatre and intervention in rural territories.

That was a different, and rare, artistic governance of the cultural project, which has been implemented up to today. Three structuring aspects were assumed. First, director and advisors shared the need to '*depersonalise* the artistic production' (artistic director, 2012), conceived as the anchorage of an effective intervention. Second, the reputation and prestige of the director and advisors facilitated the acceptance of the new project by the municipalities, strengthening its autonomy. Third, the new model introduced a concept of artistic *programming*, envisioned as an interface between guest creators/ partners, the theatre company, and the territory, trying 'to respond to the needs of the territory' (artistic director, 2012), which were 'not just artistic but also cultural' (municipal staff, 2010).

This paradigm envisioned three 'pillars' of action: artistic production based on the *permanent circulation of artists* (inviting stage directors, choreographers, actors, musicians, dancers, etc.); *community involvement*, through the social and cultural 'inscription' (Paiva 2014) of the theatre company (working closely with local amateurs and lay people); and *pedagogic-educational intervention*, mobilising local and regional agents (individuals and institutions, such as schools, libraries, museums, but also old people nursing homes).

At the beginning, the three pillars were relatively autonomous, so 'there was a hierarchy (...): the theatre company was the centre, the pedagogical project followed (because it gained a lot of expression [and visibility]), and at the end came the community project. (...) At a certain point, we realised [that the hierarchy] had to be blurred' (artistic director, 2013). The activities of the pedagogic pillar were integrated into the artistic dimension, with specific productions for and with children, youngsters, adults and seniors, which were given the same statute of any other artistic production. This integration was a delicate mission for both the theatre company and the guest artists, because pedagogic activities are commonly perceived as art education, or training for participation in the arts, not as artistic expressions *per se*.

Under the new orientation, the pedagogic pillar achieved 'a huge effectiveness' in territorial inscription (artistic director, 2013). It eventually led to the formalisation of a Network of Local Collaborators, such as teachers in primary and secondary schools, technical staff of libraries, museums and other cultural institutions, and volunteers, from all the municipalities. Given the small scale of Minho Valley, the scope of the Network spread to families, neighbours, friends, and the pedagogic pillar became imbricated into the community activities.

Table 6.3 shows the array of regular activities currently covered by *Comédias do Minho*. One can notice the diversity and intensity, requiring a permanent mobility throughout the territory. One can also see the expansion and renewal of subjects and formats, as the project evolved and new possibilities emerged – for example,

more active participation of volunteers, or new demands from amateur artists and from local institutions. For instance, the *Invisible University*, launched in 2017, tests 'theoretical approaches' to philosophical and moral concepts (e.g., justice) through the arts. It is assumed as a new step (one decade after the implementation of *Comédias do Minho*) in the dialogue between conventional critical thinking and local and traditional values, feelings and knowledge, demonstrating the impact of *Comédias* on the territory and the impact of the territory on the project (Santos *et al.* 2014).

Some practical factors contributed to the integration of the three pillars of intervention. One was the participation of the elements of the theatre company (with around ten elements, five of which actors, the others technical staff) in all the activities, from theatre plays to training, education, and community involvement, *while their participation evolved towards artistic creation* (each actor became responsible for working with an amateur theatre company in the territory, one per municipality; and the actors were invited to propose artistic productions for the project).

The local team was also crucial for the artistic, technical, and social feasibility of external collaborations (by guest artists) and co-productions (with other companies). At the beginning, some of the external collaborators were asked to provide training for the then young members of the company, as they were starting their careers while adapting to the territory (none was native). Along with learning-by-doing, specific skills were needed for different programmes, such as movement, masks and puppets, or working in/with non-conventional spaces (e.g., heritage sites or private houses). As the project evolved, the situation was reversed: *Comédias* became requested to supply artistic proposals *and* to provide training, not just in Portugal but also abroad.

A de-hierarchisation of centre and periphery is indeed at stake in the project: outsider artists are pivotal for re-interpretations of the territory, but 'they must educate their own gaze and become fully aware of the implications of their work' in the territory (artistic director, 2013), as it could easily turn into a sacralisation or a caricature (Gandra 2014: 131).

Cooperation with the local amateur dramatics is also an example of the complexity of the implementation of *Comédias'* model. Working with the amateur theatre groups was not an easy task: what the amateurs valued the most was technical, not aesthetic, assistance. As an incentive to a more serious commitment of amateurs with aesthetics, an amateur theatre festival was launched in 2011: the FITAVAL (Itinerant Festival of Minho Valley's Amateur Dramatics). The event 'exposed' the amateurs' productions to non-local publics. Additionally, FITAVAL was meant to promote the intermunicipal circulation of the groups, going far beyond theatre productions.

Table 6.3.

Regular activities of *Comédias do Minho*:

Theatre company	Regular productions, including coproductions	Circa 10 professional actors and staff
Pedagogic pillar	Plays for children and students	Regular productions (2 per year on average)
	Pedagogic activities	Mostly targeted to secondary school students
	Workshops and other training activities	With children, youngsters, adults, including teachers and other education professionals
	Forums and encounters	School theatre, community arts, different arts – visual and performative arts, literature, cinema, music
	Local Network of Collaborators	Teachers, municipal staff, volunteers (since 2009)
Community pillar	Community documentary films	Regular production, and cultural diffusion
	Open-air performances with local people	Circa 5% of the population in the main performances
	Network of Amateur Dramatic Groups	Circa 100 actors and circa 10 groups
	FITAVALE – Itinerant Festival of Minho Valley's Amateur Dramatics	Since 2011
	Invisible University	Since 2017; 'knowledge production (poetic and scientific languages)': workshops, conferences and lectures on performances, concerts, films, books
	Digital content	Podcasts, videos, films, chats, radio drama (e.g., <i>Comédias Radio – Wireless imagination</i> , since 2019; <i>Comédias Take Away</i> , since the Covid-19 pandemic)

Actions towards the amateur arts and artists of Minho Valley soon expanded into traditional music and dance groups (brass, drums, *concertinas*, folk dance, choirs), enlarging the possibilities of involving them in *Comédias'* productions. Co-creation, train-

ing, multiple collaborations, but 'neither paternalistic nor exoticist. (...) The amateurs are now much more autonomous and more... artistic' (municipal staff, 2010). During our fieldwork, we observed artistic improvements due to the generational renewal, as newcomers to the groups had participated, while children and youngsters, in the pedagogic activities of *Comédias do Minho*.

Up to a certain point, the *Comédias* project put 'everything upside down' (artistic director, 2008): conceived as an intermunicipal policy for a deprived region, it attracted a private sponsor, it got pluriannual financial support from the government, it now exists for two decades. While being inscribed in a rural and deprived territory, the project has achieved artistic reputation in national and European terms. The institutional awarding of *Comédias*, in artistic and non-artistic instances, signals the recognition of the holistic nature of the project (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4.

Comédias do Minho's awards:

Year	Award/ recognition	Justification
2007	European Union (LEADER+*)	Good practices for rural development
2010	Creative North Award**	Innovation and creativity for regional development
2011	Portuguese Theatre Critics Association	'Training and artistic creation inside and outside the region, promoting training courses, workshops and meetings with creators, and co-producing with [very diverse cultural-artistic] entities'
2016	Access Culture (ex-aequo)	Social accessibility: 'This project is so far-reaching that it stands out for its good practices in promoting access to culture. It's a theatre company that takes theatre to the villages, in an unprecedented effort of cultural accessibility in the region, based on close proximity. It has created a broad cultural network that involves politicians, cultural technicians, local agents, amateur artists, educational agents, young people who collaborate or are trained in the project, at different levels of the relationship with artistic practice.'
2021	Presidency of the Republic celebration of the World Theatre Day	Cultural decentralisation

2023	Festival of the Creativity Club of Portugal	Silver award in the category of corporate publishing attributed to the design studio responsible for the 2023 Programme
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* EU programme for rural development (see European Observatory of Rural Areas 2007: 57-59).

** A partnership between a governmental organisation and a media corporation.

5. The 'impact' question

When applied to assess cultural outcomes, the concept of impact is rather ambiguous (see, for example, Belfiore & Bennet 2007). First of all, it is perhaps overused in the context of studies commissioned by institutions of various kinds, that wish to 'test' or to 'prove' the 'cost-benefit efficiency' of their cultural facilities, services or programmes, in order to legitimate them before funding agencies. In that framework, it is not rare that advocacy takes the place of analysis, and rhetoric substitutes for evidence (Belfiore & Bennett 2010: 136). Second, there is a strong, even if unconscious, connection between the 'impact' perspective and neoclassical economics; and experts tend to overfocus on easily recorded and quantified data, in a standard approach that can overlook some of the key features and outcomes of artistic and cultural processes. This is indeed a heavy trend among impact studies, despite the early criticism (see, e.g., Radich 1992). Third, the use of the concept is too often related to functionalist views, which deny the autonomy and self-sufficiency of arts and culture, 'demanding' that they justify their existence (and the allocated 'taxpayers' money') in non-cultural grounds – for instance, by demonstrating their effects in terms of economic growth, social cohesion, social integration, minority rights, reduction of poverty, and so on. And finally, many impact studies just ignore that, if the concept of 'impact' helps to define the direction of a causal relationship, evaluating the consequences of *X* over *Y*, the impact of territory on the arts can be much more important than the reverse (see Santos *et al.* 2014).

This does not mean denying any attempt of assessing and measuring the effects of cultural agency. It solely requires a more comprehensive approach. And the point of view of sustainability matters a lot.

On the one hand, assessment and evaluation are a matter of reflection, discourse, and debate. They call for a humanistic perspective, and not only economic (Belfiore & Bennett 2010). They are topics of thought and conversation. From 2009 to 2014, the field research on which this article is partially based was itself part of the project's own reflexive monitoring. As summarised in section 2, it was typically a 'research in action', trying to add the specific principles and means of sociological inquiry to the on-going planning of the *Comédias'* team. In that context, discourses are crucial: what people say about what they are doing, seeing and living, be they the

professional artists, the amateur performers, the municipal officials, the students and teachers, or the audiences, is a key component of the praxis inherent to the project.

So far, the general tone of the discourses produced about the *Comédias* project is very positive. The book published in 2014, celebrating and revisiting its first decade, included texts by different activists and observers (Domingues & Vaz, 2014). All expressed strong enthusiasm: the elected mayor currently chairing the association, the private sponsor, the artistic director, the actors interviewed by a critic and journalist (and the journalist himself), the external experts and creators that have been collaborating. Looking from a greater distance, the researchers' chapter was also cheerful. And, more importantly, the book offered local people's photos and quotations that undoubtedly showed adhesion and emotional engagement.

One should not underestimate the various testimonies on the high intensity and transformational energy that can arise from mass participation in open-air performances that recreate traditional legends and rituals, or the involvement of amateur actors in the reading and staging of plays, or the first attendance in one's own village or parish to a professional theatre or dance performance, or the request to inform and enrich, with one's experience and knowledge, the company's artworks. 'Thank you for having changed my life. Thank you for allowing me to join this family', said two women to the young actors, at the end of an activity in which they had participated (quoted in Costa 2014: 63). 'They [the actors] now belong here', an old man, once emigrant and now retired, told us (Santos *et al.*, 2014: 131). 'We have succeeded in building up an invisible university', one of the mayors repeated in several public occasions. Sense of belonging, sense of identity, sense of personal and collective change and development: the socio-psychological dimension of the experience in the context of such a project should not be forgotten.

There is, of course, a rhetorical element in this kind of discourses. They try to convince the listeners, to state an argument, to advocate a cause. People do see the events and their own participation from the point of view of their *habitus*, interests, and dreams. None of the various perspectives – including the one from the 'impact' expert – is global and neutral. All are parts of a dynamic and complex social reflexivity. But how could we reflect upon the project throwing away this reflexivity (see Belfiore & Bennett, 2010: 138-139)?

Meanwhile, an effort of systematisation can be made. Regarding sustainability, the first point to make is that the strategy put into practice is proving well, in a 20-year period, in terms of achieving the basic objective of any artist: to enter and survive in a rather difficult market, assuring jobs and enhancing the conditions and opportunities to work and perform. In fact, a new artistic 'centrality' arose in the Portuguese arts field; a new location was established in the Portuguese geography

of performing arts. Gradually, the signs of recognition within the field have arrived: the *Comédias do Minho* won several awards; from 2013 onwards, they qualified for a four-year subsidy; and they were already invited to such important venues as the two Portuguese national theatres. The collaboration with national and international directors and choreographers, their interpretation of this collaboration as landmarks in their own career, because of that inspiring interchange with local people and identities, and the increasing participation in national and European networks, are other facts and factors of artistic recognition.

Among the conditions that have rendered possible this professional and artistic endeavour, two seem crucial. One is the permanence of local institutional support, at the level of the political authorities and technical staff of the Minho Valley's municipalities, and at the level of local patrons and sponsors. The other is the territorial anchorage of the project, the praxis that the above quoted old man summarised in the sentence 'you now belong here'. The strategic ingredients of that praxis are the following three: (a) itinerancy, taking the regional scale and the whole territory as the framework for action; (b) multidimensionality, coupling the professional theatre activity with pedagogic intervention and support for the local amateur dramatics scene; (c) networking, building up a structure of cooperation, both with education and culture professionals (the 'local collaborators') and with local non-professional groups (the annual festival of amateur dramatics). The organisational structure based on a small permanent staff allows the attraction of trainees from art schools, either regional or national, as well as to engage local people in various logistic activities. The Local Network of Collaborators improves the pre-existing educational services of the municipalities (in schools, public libraries, local museums, cultural centres, etc.) and the cultural activities of the schools.

Thus, the *Comédias* project acquired a twofold singularity. As an artistic program, it created a new, recognizable pole within the national arts field. As a territorial intervention, it focused on regional development from a cultural point of view and anchored in a close relationship with local political bodies, configuring a bottom-up process of sustainable development. This singularity occurred in the Portuguese context, where no other analogue one could be found; but also in the European context, where, as far as we know, it is not common that this kind of comprehensive and territorialised approach is launched by the municipalities themselves. 'Community-based arts', in the broad sense of close links between the arts and their social contexts, are certainly a current issue in the cultural policies of developed countries, covering a wide range of features. Our standpoint regarding *Comédias'* singularity stresses the innovative action of *local* authorities, establishing the theatre company and directly setting up the basis for a regional artistic project. This is quite a unique

practice, in comparison to the more frequent initiatives launched by national policies and programmes.

6. Fitting into local cultural policies

The *Comédias* project certainly does not exhaust the goals and range of local cultural policies in the Minho Valley. Although small in population and weak in economic resources, the five municipalities are far from being confined to this initiative and partners. It is worthwhile to observe how this project fits into their cultural policies as a whole.

Table 6.5 presents the available information regarding the educational and cultural facilities of each municipality, state-owned or municipal. Table 6.6 gathers data on the main cultural events organised or supported by the municipalities. Both suggest that the *Comédias*, being unique in its inter-municipal nature and in its way of doing, is but one among various initiatives. Moreover, data suggest that the participation in this project is not substitutive for policies directed towards *other* audiences and objectives. Indeed, three local cultural events are significant at the national scale, and have some international reach: Paredes de Coura Rock Festival, since 1993, is a core indie festival of the Iberian Peninsula (see chapters 7 and 8 of this book); the Contemporary Arts Biennale at Vila Nova de Cerveira, founded in 1978 and hosting a museum since 2002, has important exchanges with the Galicia Autonomous Region of Spain; and the International Documentary Film Festival at Melgaço (since 2014), which is a partnership between a film society and the municipality's Cinema Museum, explicitly addressing identity, memory and border, has been getting international projection in Europe. Table 6.6 also shows some continuity in municipal policies, assessed by the longevity of many events, and the fact that some of them are cultural symbols of Minho Valley. At the same time, all the municipalities continue to pay a lot of attention to the conventional forms of celebrating folk culture, which are still very rewarding in terms of political legitimacy and electoral competition.

Table 6.5.

Number of educational and cultural facilities, 2013 and 2021-22:

	2013	2021-22
Cultural centres and auditoriums	11	12
Public libraries and archives	10	10
Local museums (museum-houses included)	10	10
Interpretative centres, heritage sites and circuits	14	16

Art galleries	16	17
Secondary schools	11	9
Tertiary education schools*	2	2

* Belonging to the same Polytechnic Institute (of Viana do Castelo).

Table 6.6.

Selected regular events in Minho Valley, 2014-15 and 2021-22:

	2014-15	2021-22
Classic-contemporary orchestras and festivals	3 (itinerancy)	4 (itinerancy)
Pop-rock music festivals	2	3
Traditional music festivals (drums, brass, choirs, <i>concertinas</i> ...)	5	5
International dance festival	1	1
International folklore festival	3	2 (1 itinerant)
Theatre festival (FITAVALE, by <i>Comédias do Minho</i> , not included)	1	1
Fine arts biennale	1	1
International Documentary Film Festival	1	1
Book fairs and regular literature events	2	6 (1 itinerant)

Sources: Municipal cultural agendas; Statistics Portugal.

So, the option for an endogenous, bottom-up and participatory strategy, aiming at artistically exploring and expanding the traditional roots of folk culture, is absolutely compatible with a wider-ranging local cultural policy, addressing the needs and attitudes of the various groups (age-groups, social professional groups, educational groups, urban or rural groups, and so forth) that nowadays constitute the social mosaic of any given European region, despite its location and density. The *Comédias* case even suggests that diversity is, if not a requisite, a positive condition for the anchoring and sustainability of a ground-based approach to local culture, within a necessarily much broader policy.

Nevertheless, the question remains of how much the local powers want or can invest in such an approach. And this is, at least, a threefold problem. First, it is a question of political coherence. That approach is compatible with other quite different approaches (folk is not the opposite of rock, one could say!). But it cannot

be subordinated, and it is not functional to the kind of political use of conspicuous cultural commodities, attracting a lot of people, namely tourists, that is so often in practice at the local and at the national level – such as musical mega-events or bright new public venues. Second, it is a question of resources. In a conjuncture of strong financial constraints, the viability of long-term, time-consuming strategies crucially depends upon the capacity of funders and sponsors to maintain the indispensable amount of money. And third, it is a question of continuity, i.e., institutionalisation. It implies the transformation of a political circumstantial initiative (so capital, as we have seen, in the launching of this bottom-up project) into an institutional practice and routine, such as the supply of water, gas and electricity, the maintenance of primary and secondary schools, or the assistance to local sports teams or leisure associations.

All these questions have to do with time, time being the key parameter of sustainability. The most strategic assumption of projects like *Comédias* is to deal with a territory, and not with a conventionally defined 'audience'. A territory is a spatially and historically rooted population and all the things built by men and women while interacting between them and with the natural environment: the economy, the society, the institutions, the traditions, the values, attitudes, beliefs and rituals, the embodied *habitus*. Any cultural initiative that departs from this territorial conscience, and wishes to inscribe itself in this territorial framework, needs time: investment, that is, present expenditure to obtain future gains, long-term commitment, gradual establishment of confidence, continuous work, patience to look for results that are neither immediate, nor easy, nor uncontroversial. But this, that is mostly evident in endogenous, participatory projects, is also the condition for multiple other policies directed to the increase and consolidation of human competences and social and cultural capital, such as education, training, and the empowerment of people both as art consumers and art practitioners. If cultural policy as a whole has something to learn from projects like *Comédias*, it can be expressed in few words: sense of territory, sense of time.

7. Conclusion: theatre, polity and development

There is always an imbalance between reality and the possibilities of its representation, through (always) selected analytic and interpretative schemes and processes (be it in science, art, economy, society, policy or culture). And this is of the utmost complexity when we try to relate general conceptualisation with empirical uniqueness. While aware of the hazards, we are also aware that we must contribute to broaden the horizon of social action, especially in intrinsic normative domains, like 'development'.

The story of *Comédias do Minho* is not an unproblematic marriage of art and development, a union of artists, authorities, and population. But the fact is that, in these two decades of existence, the main trend has been improvement and consolidation. The next future is open, as always, to success and defeat. Time, the main exigency, is one of the scarcest resources in the political field and the art world.

On the other hand, the project is unique, which forbids simplistic generalisations. Each case is a singular case; and it is difficult to imagine that the set of conditions, circumstances, activists and participants can be replicated elsewhere in the exact configuration it acquired here. Still, comparisons are not just only possible, but necessary, taking into account the different contexts, and trying to confront the different strategies, resources and accomplished outcomes. The analytical description offered in this chapter is conceived as an empirical contribution to that comparative approach, which, of course, has to avoid overly formalist schemes and, instead, has to consider in-depth real and complex social processes.

Such comparative research programme could, at least, assess two main ideas that arise almost logically from the present case. One has a mid-range nature, the other is more general.

First, when one tries to identify the critical factors that explain the specificity and (so far) the success of *Comédias do Minho*, one tends to list the following ones: (i) *the bottom-up method*, combining the professional ideal of a theatre company and the political and institutional concerns of elected officials; (ii) *the regional scale*, for the critical mass it was able to grab; (iii) *the non-localist territorial approach*, territorial in the sense of deeply rooted in the local community and non-localist in the sense of opening the local community to the influence of a much wider social environment; and (iv) *the twin dimensions of an artistic activity*, situated in, and referred to, the national world of art, *and a community development project*, attentive to local identities and resources and focused on long-term and long-lasting networking. *These are keys for sustainability* in low-density territories – partnership without dependency, territorialisation without localism, social orientation without dropping the artistic intention and way of doing – and they may well be adequate, *mutatis mutandis*, to other forms of social and policy settings (see, e.g., Duxbury & Campbell 2009, for a Canadian experience; or Gibson 2012, esp. 74-77; and Dunphy 2009, concerning Australian rural cultural projects). But here, because of the lack of economic, political and demographic resources, they are absolutely critical. They propose new brands, new centralities, new horizons to deprived communities, and this is a crucial means for development. Simultaneously, they put in question long-established, already obsolete dichotomies such as creation *versus* reception, endogenous *versus* exogenous, local *versus* cosmopolitan or tradition *versus* modernity. Finally, they can also help

the researcher to 'overcome the false and sterile dichotomy between «intrinsic» and «instrumental» value of the arts in which cultural policies debates seem presently stuck' (Belfiore & Bennett 2007: 148).

The other concluding remark has to do with theatre. One should not ignore that *theatre is at the very core* of this multidimensional intervention. And this is not a hazardous or merely circumstantial fact. Here, the well-known and ritually repeated historical linkage between theatre and democracy acquires a renewed and totally pertinent meaning. As a performing art, theatre requires the interaction of characters and roles to give life to texts and to produce action. Theatre demands that many individuals voice their anguishes and dreams, sharing them publicly. Theatre obliges actors and audiences to stay side by side, and interact, it compels proximity. Theatre unveils conflict, and proposes a collective way to deal with it. Theatre presupposes a public space for encounters, an *agora*, and fosters the consolidation of a polity, where common goods and needs can be cooperatively addressed. Think about that: these elements – words, characters, roles, actors, audiences, interplay, controversy, public sphere, collective action, discourse, polity – are also key components of sustainable development.

As we have presented and discussed it, the *Comédias'* experience may well contribute to understanding culture as the very core of sustainable development. Our research allows us to stress that low-density territories could be further explored, namely, to underline the importance of bottom-up, specific, situated projects to enrich the density of policy frameworks and implementations – in Europe and outwards. This of course must entail perseverance towards complex research protocols and reflection, as well as the efforts to share and discuss concepts, contexts, experiences, and outcomes.

A long improvement is still at stake, to incorporate singularities (time being one of them) into the theory and practice of cultural sustainable development.

A sonic paradise in the countryside: Pop-rock festivals as drivers of creative tourism development in small cities and rural areas in the post-pandemic era

Paula Guerra

Ana Oliveira

1. Entrance

The COVID-19 pandemic has reconfigured live music and tourism business models through technological evolution and new forms of music consumption. The literature on music festivals (McKay & Webster 2016) examines them as spaces promoting the articulation of and experimentation with alternative identities and lifestyles, within a framework of constant metamorphosis and uncertainty, affirming them as a strong theoretical and empirical source for new tourism practices and businesses (Richards & King 2022). This enables new ways to examine emerging contemporary (sub)cultures, with festivals understood as promoting social values and sustainability (Mair 2018; Gursoy *et al.* 2020; O'Sullivan & Jackson 2010). Paredes de Coura Festival,¹⁹ first held in 1993, aggregates transcultural and transnational encounters, pioneering links between tourism, sustainability, and economic, urban, and rural development. This chapter analyses summer festivals, specifically Paredes de Coura Festival, and explores the new challenges facing sustainable tourism.

Using a multidisciplinary approach combining sociology, economics, sustainability and tourism, we analyse Paredes de Coura Festival as a promoter of the creative and

¹⁹ Paredes de Coura is a municipality in the district of Viana do Castelo, Northern Portugal. According to the 2021 Census (INE 2022), it currently has 8636 inhabitants. It has an ageing population, and its main activities are agriculture and live-stock production.

sustainable tourism of small towns and rural areas in the post-pandemic era. Four theoretical axes guide this chapter: economic, musical, touristic and socio-cultural. We analyse the discourse of 40 economic and cultural agents related to the festival²⁰ between 2020 and 2021, and the festival founders. The interviews²¹ were transcribed and analysed using NVivo software. We begin with a systematic, in-depth theoretical review of our three themes – festivals, creative tourism and sustainability – and briefly contextualize the genesis and evolution of Paredes de Coura Festival. We then analyse and discuss the results before listing the main conclusions.

2. Towards a creative and sustainable tourism: new models for greening festivals

The Paredes de Coura Festival appeared in 1993 and has been held annually since.²² The festival was originally intended as a one-off concert, organised by several young people from the town of Alto Minho²³ at a time of emerging garage bands and remarkable radio and television programmes.²⁴ Passionate about music, the youngsters noticed a gap in local cultural offerings and, with local government support, created an event in Paredes de Coura, the Portuguese Modern Music Festival of Paredes de Coura. It can be distinguished by its strong roots in Paredes de Coura and the involvement of the local community in its organisation, production and execution.

Several studies suggest music festivals overcome the duality of rural/urban and local/transnational (Baumann 2001; Perry *et al.* 2019). They also drive tourism and promote sustainable practices. Mair & Laing (2012) maintain that the realisation of large-scale events such as festivals is globally significant, given its touristic potential.

²⁰ Set of social agents belonging to the festival ecosystem, including restaurant owners, rural tourism operators, small entrepreneurs, public and political entities and cultural agents.

²¹ The chapter complied fully with the guidelines included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/C364/01), especially with regard to Article 8 'Protection of personal data', including any information, private or professional, concerning an identified or identifiable natural person (Article 2(a) of EU Directive 95/46/EC). The chapter also complied with the guidelines contained in the General Data Protection Regulation No. 2016/679. The collection, processing, management, and exploitation of data were similarly based on the guidelines provided by the Codes of Ethics of the University of Porto, the International Sociological Association and the Oral History Association and International Council on Archives.

²² Except for 2020 and 2021, following the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

²³ Alto Minho is a Portuguese statistical sub-region that is part of the North Region. It is bordered to the North and East by Galicia (Spain), to the South by Cavado, and to the West by the Atlantic Ocean. It has an area of 2219 km² and a population of 231,488 (2021 Census).

²⁴ The national television programme *Pop Off* was a cult show about bands and trends in Portugal's 1990s indie rock scene.

Yet festivals such as Paredes de Coura counteract omission of the social, political and cultural decline of such territories by putting towns with no previous tourism interest on the map. For Getz (1997), music festivals boost the growth of business and promote alternative forms of leisure. Recently, several festivals in Portugal – and globally – have adopted sustainable practices to preserve natural heritage and the environment.²⁵

Yet we are also in a revolution of tastes. Andjelic (2021) argues that we are in a new post-Veblen aspirational economy in which the forms of distinction are changing. Bennett *et al.* (2009) and Prieur & Savage (2013) have shown that more omnivorous and cosmopolitan forms of cultural consumption are increasingly being valued. However, the moral dimension of these new cultural forms still needs analysis. To analyse current cultural consumption patterns, factors such as the ‘moral signalling’ inherent in certain cultural choices (Baumann *et al.* 2022), such as appreciation of the sustainable, the traditional and the local, need to be considered.

This reveals a theoretical-empirical connection between festivals, tourism, sustainability and creative tourism. The Paredes de Coura Festival is known globally for its forest location, promoting the biosphere and the fauna of the region inside a green amphitheatre. These aspects demonstrate that contemporary tourism has become associated with the logics of preservation and valorisation of material and immaterial heritage²⁶ in the countryside. This ethos permeates Paredes de Coura Festival (Guerra 2020a), reflected in several practices and initiatives of sustainable tourism and development. Mair & Laing (2012) call this ‘greening’ – the promotion of ‘green’ credentials such as environmentally friendly facilities, recycling, minimizing energy use, and use of public transport or cycling. We can thus frame the festival within the processes of summer festivals greening (Park & Boo 2010), which have been encouraged by digital technologies and the COVID-19 pandemic, and have altered and enlarged what can be considered heritage. The notion of heritage, once limited to institutional elements such as museums (Baker *et al.* 2016), has changed substantially. Kwiatkowski *et al.* (2019) talk about a *conservation* effect of rural festivals, which contribute to preserving (cultural) traditions, myths and local habits. In relation to the *conservation* effect, we could add a *reinvention* of the same traditions, myths and local habits into contemporary forms.

The intersection between tourism, sustainability and summer festivals is seen as another materialisation of the concept of the ‘festivalisation of culture’ (Bennett *et al.*

²⁵ In Portugal, other festivals such as Boom Festival and NOS Alive have followed this type of practice.

²⁶ Paredes de Coura Festival is currently attempting to be classified as intangible cultural heritage.

2014). With reference to sustainability, tourism and festivals, this is a new response to the needs of festival-goers and audiences. Although sustainable and creative tourism are on the agenda, a massification has also occurred. In fact, sustainability, ecology and the environment have been transversal to a diverse array of cultural and artistic consumption. Moreover, this festivalisation process is associated with the promotion of other forms of leisure, decoupled from a material and immaterial perspective. So, do we face a new materialisation of festivalisation processes – is the phenomenon of a festival of sustainable culture emerging?

In parallel to the festivalisation of culture, Duxbury (2020) argues that we are witnessing a 'cultural turn', emphasizing the role of culture in constructing identities and futures related to the countryside. Duxbury suggests the analysis of cultural and creative work in the countryside has three analytical axes: cultural vitality, with culture seen as a resource for community development; the 'rural creative class', recently linked to rural innovation; and rural creative economies and creative entrepreneurship in rural and remote areas.

3. Paredes de Coura Festival

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was a major driver of the Portuguese economy. In 2017, Portugal was one of the world's 20 most visited tourist destinations, attracting 27 million visitors in 2019 and experiencing economic growth of 7.3 per cent over 2018. This intense growth of tourism activity has led to concerns about negative environmental impacts, particularly in Lisbon and Porto and the main tourism regions, such as the Algarve and Madeira Island. This relates to the widespread use of hotels and Airbnb, and the sustainability of urban, rural and semi-peripheral physical spaces. Following worldwide *touristification* trends (Freytag & Bauder 2018), in recent years multiple initiatives related to creative tourism have emerged in rural contexts and small towns such as Paredes de Coura. The Paredes de Coura Festival is transversal to all three axes postulated by Duxbury (2020). With reference to the first axis, the promoters and organisers of the festival have a distinct or alternative understanding of the value of art, culture and heritage in promoting wellbeing and improving quality of life.

The second axis concerns the concepts of 'creative city' and 'creative class', addressing how rural communities seek to attract a 'creative class' of people aiming to create different lifestyles. This creative class has fostered *other* forms of fruition in line with the genesis of creative tourism, since their principle is the transformation of the social and geographical context, giving rise to different manifestations of intangible heritage. Summer festivals such as Paredes de Coura have brought new experiences and new understandings to the rural world, emphasizing the *other* side

of heritage, which had been dismissed by political actors and societies.

Regarding the third axis, the Paredes de Coura Festival has been an important promoter of the creative economies of the region and a driver of the work of individual creators and of cultural/creative based entrepreneurs in this area. Music and summer festivals have come to enhance *other* forms of heritage, *other* academic research and *other* forms of public policies, leading to studies about music festivals, tourism, sustainability, heritage and geographic territories (McKay 2021). In contemporary Portuguese society, the Paredes de Coura Festival has opened different forms of knowledge and ways of planning and acting by unfolding into a plurality of proposals and cultural, economic, political and social involvements, embodying cultural identities and polysemic lifestyles and going beyond the mainstream and dominant narratives. Because it is socially circumscribed to the countryside, this festival is a standpoint for creative, sustainable and creative tourism by promoting different logics of cultural fruition and enhancing social specificities (Bakas & Duxbury 2018). Cultural festivals – especially small-scale festivals – thereby provide a framework for the development of creative tourism activities.

The Paredes de Coura Festival has grown progressively, motivating the appearance of other festivals and becoming a national and international reference point. A festival originally imbued with do-it-yourself (DIY) logic, based on the efforts of a group of young people, has been transformed. Since 1996, the Paredes de Coura Festival has been organised by a national event producer, *Ritmos*.

4. Welcome to a Sonic Paradise: The Paredes de Coura Festival as a catalyst for *communitas*

To analyse creative and sustainable tourism in relation to the Paredes de Coura Festival, we start with Kwiatkowski *et al.* (2019), who identify four main effects of rural festivals. First, this festival generates a *conservation* effect, contributing to preserving traditions, myths, habits and cultural manifestations. It also has a *transformative* effect by contradicting rural decline and is a source of creative empowerment for the town and festival-goers. A third effect is *reinvention*, in relation to the festival's capacity to convert ancestral traditions, symbols and habits into contemporary formats as part of the festivalisation of culture (Guerra 2016). Finally, regarding the *consolidation* effect, the Paredes de Coura Festival has contributed to the social cohesion of its home territories. This is another characteristic of creative tourism, as it shapes forms of active participation, learning, creative self-expression and community engagement (Bakas *et al.* 2019).

In the case of the Paredes de Coura Festival, the effects of conservation and reinvention emerge in close articulation. While the festival preserves local traditions, it is also seen as the 'party of the future'. The interviewees attribute common characteristics to the festival, generating similar behaviours and mobilising the same energies felt in the popular festivals and religious events of the Alto Minho region, generating moments of joint celebration. The Paredes de Coura Festival enhances other forms and different aspects of creative tourism associated with the rural context and the material and immaterial heritage:

'The festival replicates, in the way it is celebrated, in the way the population participates, an identity. The relationship between Alto Minho and the Paredes de Coura Festival has numerous things in common. The way the festival started to have actions in the town and how it mixes with the municipality's festivities creates that opportunity'. (Musician and composer, male, 45 years, Porto).

The local population is involved in the organisation and management of the festival, through local companies and volunteers, and the continuous development of close relations between the community and organisers. This demonstrates active participation (Bakas *et al.* 2019) in creative tourism. Festival organisers, locals and shopkeepers are involved in many activities and in promotion of the festival.

Festival organisers know community engagement is essential for the event's success and sustainability (Qu & Cheer 2020). As Mair & Duffy (2018) state, benefits for locals, such as free admission, generate greater community engagement and contribute to more acceptance, while mitigating social inequalities in access. Organising free local events – the Festival Sobe à Vila²⁷ and the Music Sessions²⁸ – also promotes articulation between the festival, festival-goers and the local community, contributing to a feeling of belonging. Through this initiative, the festival's organisation does not just showcase places rarely visited by festival-goers, but provides opportunities for the local community to attend festival events. This aligns with the principles and opportunities of local co-creation, impacting both local tourism and sustainability by fostering the development of expertise and strengthening the bonds between outsiders and residents.

Returning to Kwiatkowski *et al.* 2019, effects evident in the case of the Paredes de Coura Festival include the *attraction effect* of other events and the *manifestation*

²⁷ A set of free concerts in the town of Paredes de Coura in the days preceding the festival.

²⁸ Small intimate concerts (also free) in unusual and unexpected places (an abandoned church, a windmill) spread throughout the municipality of Paredes de Coura.

effect. Interviewees stated that the festival exposed Paredes de Coura to the country and the world. The festival contributes to the affirmation and projection of the municipality and the Alto Minho region, but is also the main driver of tourism and economic development in the area, which is now a year-long tourist destination. Festivals such as Paredes de Coura contribute to the construction of shared meanings of their territories, which attracts people to places they may not visit otherwise. They also result in more people being sensitive to and aware of rural realities and their specificities, highlighting local traditions and cultural assets while revitalising them in contemporary settings and giving them an economic, political, social and cultural purpose (Bakas & Duxbury 2018). Therefore, the Paredes de Coura Festival is a mechanism of identification and affirmation of the town and the region; while attracting other events, initiatives and cultural offerings rooted in contemporary society. Examples are the creation of the School of Rock²⁹ in 2014, the theatre company Comédias do Minho (see chapter 8), the Paredes de Coura Fan Weekend – LEGO® Fan Event,³⁰ the Realizar: poesia³¹ and the International Vegetarian Congress.

The festival ... should be studied in territorial marketing, in a completely forgotten area of the country, because although it is one hour away from Porto, the interior of Alto Minho has not had any kind of investment ... uncovering a hidden area ... whose attractiveness used to reside only in tradition, in traditional festivities, in the food and the environment, in the landscape, etc'. (Journalist, male, 51 years, Porto)

Both the festival and these events have helped the host communities to create and promote a positive image. The festival encouraged new ways of looking at the relationship between communities and their locations, and it is possible to find axes of action related to cultural and social sustainability. This festival has increasingly become a synonym for charisma and authenticity, in contrast to other festivals based on mass tourism. At the level of territorial impacts, the interviewees identified improved access and communication, which has also boosted forms of creative tourism (Marques & Borba 2017).

²⁹ An initiative of the City Hall of Paredes de Coura, with the collaboration of the Space Ensemble; it aims to provide a complete and diversified musical education to young people from different social backgrounds and music education paths. It takes place over short periods, in an artistic residence and holiday camp format.

³⁰ An international initiative supported by LEGO® that brings together fans from across the world.

³¹ An annual event that promotes artistic exchange among participating authors and artists, and with the public. Dozens of national and international guests present proposals in areas ranging from conversation to performance, lectures, theatre, poetry readings, music, cinema and exhibitions.

From a cultural perspective, the interviewees highlighted the festival's contribution to the creation of cultural habits in terms of consumption, fruition and creativity. They pointed out that the festival promotes a willingness among residents to take risks. It has also influenced ways of listening to music, dress and lifestyles, and introduced new cultural offerings. Another impact is the promotion of greater openness and availability of residents for arts and culture. The interviewees also underlined that the festival has created a cultural dynamic in the town that translates into multiple events that go far beyond the festival period:

'There is always a cultural exchange ... There is always some learning and something positive. People don't come here just for the festival and then leave. They talk to someone, leave some experience, take experiences with them ... And many people come back'. (Businesswoman in festival hospitality, female, 35 years, Paredes de Coura)

'In social terms, the festival is a colourful thing in the life of Paredes de Coura. It's a mixture of generations, it's a mixture of cultures, it's a totally different panorama. The people from Paredes de Coura have the particularity of being very warm ... There is a community sense in Paredes de Coura'. (Nurse, male, 61 years, Paredes de Coura)

The impact of the festival is far from just economic, which is particularly important in low-density territories. Interviewees mentioned the impact on job creation – jobs directly related to the festival as well as more permanent jobs.³² The festival also contributes to the growth of the local economy, in terms of accommodation, commerce and restaurants. It is seen as the main economic lever of the town and municipality, also significantly impacting the region of Alto Minho. While these impacts are more intense during the festival, there are also broader impacts through people returning to Paredes de Coura to explore the region. It is common for residents to rent their houses during the festival, or to rent fields for camping and car parking. A large part of the community thereby benefits from the festival. Besides this direct return, the festival also works to attract other investments to the town, the municipality and the region:

³² This is so in the hospitality area for which one of our interviewees is responsible. The group started informally in the context of the Paredes de Coura Festival but is currently one of the most recognized companies in the area, working with other festivals, such as Primavera Sound and NOS Alive.

'We employ a lot of people from Coura during the festival. We have an economy that depends a lot on the success of the festival, whether it is restaurants or multi-sale shops. So, 2020 has not been an easy year for local businesses'. (Promoter, businessman and festival founder, male, 49 years, Braga)

Finally, we focus on Kwiatkowski *et al.*'s (2019) *consolidation effect*, which frames the social impacts of festivals. In the case of the Paredes de Coura Festival, the interviewees highlight that the festival facilitates exchanges and learnings between people of different generations, habits, lifestyles and cultures, due to the proximity to the town and the ease of fitting into the local community. The festival generates a universe of proximity, where music becomes a subject for meetings, conversations and exchange of experiences, fostering a greater 'opening of mentalities' and a certain cosmopolitanism. The festival is seen as a healthy change from the rural and relatively isolated context of Paredes de Coura.

At the same time, the interviewees' discourses highlight the festival as a source of pride and motivation for the resident population. The concept initially seemed like a kind of utopia, but it had transformative impacts on Paredes de Coura and Alto Minho. The festival is therefore understood as generating the capacity to believe that, even in a small, isolated place, it is possible to carry out successful initiatives and projects. In other words, it became a source of self-esteem, emerging as a heritage of resilience. The festival has revealed itself as a way to mitigate isolation, ageing and desertification, due to its dynamism and the contacts with younger visitors, as well as through the idea of modernity with which it is associated – the capacity to believe it is possible to do something that may initially have seemed impossible:

'It's not a factory, it's a cultural event and you get a return, in a municipality with 9,000 inhabitants, deserted, aged. The festival helped to counteract this trend. How does something that is part of culture and heritage end up being important in keeping people in the area? The festival brings the idea of modernity, of hope, that it is possible, even in unlikely places, to do impossible and different things. That is then transported to the industry, to the desire that foreigners must live here, to buy the houses'. (Mayor of Paredes de Coura, festival founder, male, 51 years, Paredes de Coura)

Functioning as a meeting point for a diverse group of people, the Paredes de Coura Festival has an enormous capacity to generate feelings of *communitas* (Bakas & Duxbury 2018). Events such as this are liminal spaces that promote significant and intense social interaction between people, capable of breaking down (or temporarily suspending) social, age, cultural or other boundaries, circumventing the restrictions

and divisions of everyday life. The concepts of 'social utility' and 'social capital' have been used to analyse the sociocultural and psychological effects generated by festivals and other events in a community (Moscardo 2007; Qu & Cheer 2020; Ziakas 2016). These effects translate into stronger ties within the community by creating common knowledge, building trust, encouraging collaboration, facilitating network formation and increasing social cohesion (Coleman 1988). This process of local and creative investment has cemented a differentiated regional identity.

Inevitably, the COVID-19 pandemic tested the Paredes de Coura Festival and its sustainability. With no festival, tourism and the resulting economic benefits were deeply affected. However, seeking to minimise these effects, organisers developed a series of strategies aimed at both maintaining festival-goers' interest, nurturing their emotional relationship with the festival, and attracting visitors to the town. In 2020 and 2021, on the festival dates, the natural amphitheatre on the banks of the Taboão River saw the usual stage set up, with a giant screen displaying footage of previous festivals. Many people attended, staying in local accommodation, thus mitigating negative economic impacts:

'[In 2021] when there was no festival, a stage was set up where songs and images from [previous] festivals were played. People could still go to the venue to watch ... for the companies that work and depend on culture it was a very difficult year ... We saw places closing that, maybe, if there had been Paredes de Coura Festival ... wouldn't have closed'. (Businesswoman in festival hospitality, female, 35 years, Paredes de Coura)

There was also a strong focus on the festival's digital communication, particularly social networks, alluding to previous festivals and reflecting the festival's affection for musicians, audiences, journalists and the local community. The hashtag #Courentena was created on Instagram, and videos were posted in which musicians who had performed at the festival shared their memories. Especially during the festival's scheduled dates, reports were published on multiple digital communication platforms, recalling key moments. More recently, in December 2021, festival organisers promoted the Courage Club, a series of concerts and DJ sets by several national artists in different places in Paredes de Coura. These strategies have contributed to the sustainability of the festival, which would again be held in August 2022. One day will be dedicated to Portuguese artists, something that may be maintained in the future as a gesture of support in the face of the negative impact of the pandemic on the cultural sector.

5. Remnants of a creative and sustainable approach in the countryside COVID-19 had a huge impact on society, socially, culturally and economically, including in terms of business reconfiguration and innovation, in both urban centres and rural areas. Tourism was among the worst affected, due to restrictions on the movement of people, and Paredes de Coura suffered greatly. The effects of the festival being cancelled were quickly felt, especially through lay-offs. The local economy still managed to achieve some breathing space with increased demand for rural tourism, for renting rooms in towns, but these were individual initiatives without the same impact on Paredes de Coura's economy. While the Portuguese government activated responses to the pandemic, financial aid to the cultural and music industry was slow and scarce.

Only in 2021 was it possible to carry out a kind of plan B, a winter festival, symptomatically dubbed the Courage Club. Although the festival did not take place for two years, many festival-goers continued to visit the venue on the scheduled dates, which corresponds to the argument that there is an established festival lifestyle in contemporary society (Guerra 2018). As the festival occupies a prominent place in the calendar of many people, a concrete fear existed that it could disappear, with all the consequences this would bring. This led to the development of self-help strategies, such as the maintenance of room reservations. Thus, in a very creative way strategies of remembrance of the festival were activated by festival-goers, which can be equated to objectified forms of cultural (or subcultural) capital (Barrière & Finkel 2020).

The Paredes de Coura Festival can be read through the lens of recovery and revitalisation (Bennett & Janssen 2016) as an element of recovery and economic, political, cultural and social revitalisation. Moreover, by being inserted into a small rural environment, it uses local specificities to its advantage – namely the physical environment (e.g. the river), culture and the intangible and tangible heritage (e.g. the natural landscape, architectural heritage and gastronomy). From the point of view of creative tourism, the Paredes de Coura Festival reflects a connection between space, identities and community, becoming a strategic element of the promotion of initiatives with not only local but also national resonance. Moreover, it promotes the cultural sustainability of the territory (Duxbury *et al.* 2019). The festival is thus seen in the light of a territorial image (Juanchich 2007), which is created as shaped by the festival, providing an indispensable symbiosis for local development. From the perspective of the creation of innovative lines of knowledge regarding sustainable and creative tourism, we can affirm the existence of a concern and deep articulation with the community. The strengthening of ties, the promotion of common knowledge and collaboration

are essential elements, along with innovation. These allow the cementing of networks and the promotion of social cohesion (Coleman 1988). This takes us back to the relationships established between the participants in relation to the music and the performance, which have been a key element of the sustainability of the festival since 1993 (Guerra 2020a).

It is not only territorial and financial sustainability that is at stake here, but also the industry's sustainability. The effects of the Paredes de Coura Festival go far beyond its economic, tourism and regional development impacts (Kwiatkowski *et al.* 2019). Conservation and reinvention effects are created that continue to generate interest in the festival, contributing to the maintenance of a performance circuit in Portugal. The festival's success also offers opportunities for building narratives and counter-narratives about the dichotomies between the rural and the urban. The Paredes de Coura Festival opened the doors for other rural festivals to follow the same path and today plays a fundamental role in regional development strategy. It must therefore be analysed in a holistic way, considering its multiple and diverse impacts and its cumulative effects – socio-cultural, psychological, economic and material/infrastructural. Considering its role in the promotion of a differentiated tourism, which aims at social dynamics from the point of view of integration, interaction and encounter, and in terms of understanding notions of place, community, identity and belonging, the Paredes de Coura Festival is a paradigmatic example of how such events can be strategically used to sustain and reinvent the rural areas in which they are located.

‘From the night and the light, all festivals are golden’: The festivalisation of culture in Portugal

Paula Guerra

1. ‘Praise you, we’ve come a long way together’³³

Since 2005 music has been a subject of intense focus by academic and cultural analysis, namely concerning its enjoyment, consumption and experience at major events and summer festivals (Guerra 2013, 2016). In this sense, festivals seem to be an entirety of cultural production, mediation and reception in different scales/spheres of action whose motivation is music, but which go beyond it – they are pluri-programmatic/pluri-sectoral. We can say that nowadays the festival positions itself as a ‘totem point’, offering ‘carnal experience’, music, dance, sports, therapy, food, clothing, drink, sun, beach, forest, land, mud... As referred by Purdue *et al.*, festivals are ‘globalisation’s somatic multisensory’ (1997: 662). Then, in the last decade of the twentieth century, festivals have acquired prominence in cultural programs around the world, largely because they are an ‘immense accumulation of spectacles’ (Harvey 1989) in an illogicality of instantaneity/perennity. In this sense, the festival is a striking case of Debord’s spectacle (1992) in its relationship with (post)capitalist order.

Historically, festivals have become established as important forms of social and cultural participation: space-times for celebration and sharing of values, of ideologies, of mythologies, of beliefs. In anthropology, the festival is interpreted as a public ritual; a ‘carnivalisation’ of reality in which community members participate by (re)affirming and celebrating social, religious, ethnic, national, linguistic and historical ties, in an articulation between past, present and future (Bennett *et al.* 2014). In contem-

³³ This is a song by the musician and DJ Fatboy Slim. The song was released in 1999 as the third single from the album ‘You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby’. Kasabian presented a cover of this song for their encore at the 2014 Glastonbury Festival because it is a simple, joyous song, fun and endorphin-inducing – all key attributes of summer festivals. This song appears on the list of the most easily identifiable and listened to songs at summer festivals (New Musical Express 2016).

porary society, the festival assumes this same function, unfolding into a plurality of proposals – particularly regarding the expression of cultural identities and lifestyles (Bennett *et al.* 2014; McKay 2000).

This is where we find a cornerstone of the approach to festivals as space-times for the articulation of identities referring to liminality. As liminal spaces – removed from the routine sphere of everyday life – festivals offer opportunities for experimenting with extraordinary identities – and in some cases, socially circumscribed ones (Guerra *et al.* 2016; Simão & Guerra 2016). They are a current synecdoche of holidays, of freedom, of a better world. In addition to their importance as spaces for acquiring and articulating identities, festivals also increasingly emerge associated with the (re)constitution of different lifestyles. As societies have assumed a constant evolvement of diversified lifestyles (tastes, beliefs, attitudes, orientations and opinions) (Chaney 2002), this has been accompanied by the scenario of the global festival. Music festivals are fundamental examples of a festival genre where identity and lifestyle merge and find collective articulation.

2. How soon is now?³⁴ The defence of social networks

In this chapter, we will focus specifically on analysing the Instagram³⁵ social network of Paredes de Coura Festival³⁶, examining the 2015, 2016, and 2017 editions to understand both the dynamics of festival promotion and dissemination, and – more fundamentally – the festival experience as a *social practice* that emerges through the circulation of images and their transformation via scrolling, liking, and commenting. During the three years of analysis, 157 images/photos have been published on *Instagram* of Paredes de Coura Festival – which are not limited to the four days of the festival. We are positioning ourselves before the capture of a photographic lens, but also before the interaction of those who follow the publications on this social network – the followers – and that show their opinions about the published photographs, either through comments or likes. And why? Because we live in a world

³⁴ Since the spring of 1985, The Smiths' song 'How Soon Is Now' has been touring the world, having become a forerunner of post-punk. Written by the vocalist Morrissey and guitarist Johnny Marr, it has forever remained the epitome of alternative rock (New Musical Express 2016).

³⁵ Social network whose shared content is exclusively in image or video format, and the latter cannot exceed 60 seconds in duration. This social network differs from other photo sharing services because it provides tools for editing the images in the application itself and 'this democratized making good-looking images' (Manovich 2016: 4).

³⁶ In this chapter, we will drop the usual naming of festivals that associates them with their sponsors – e.g. EDP Paredes de Coura, Vodafone Paredes de Coura, Sudoeste TMN, Meo Sudoeste – because given the volatility of the brands involved in each festival in the last 15 years, it seems to us an exercise that rather fragments the narrative coherence that is required here.

where the virtual conquers more and more space in the lives of individuals, merging or even overlapping reality. Therefore, it seems essential to analyse the meaning phenomena inherent in the attendance/experience of a music festival:

Mobile practices - where Instagram fits - can be characterised as an intense experience because users are linked to contexts and emotional moments and this moves them away from other activities (Kuru *et al.* 2016). In the same way, music festivals can also be considered as an immersive experience, because individuals distance themselves from what is beyond the festival. In those days, only the festival matters (Carah & Shaul 2015).

This immersive experience does not merely create a simple separation between the festival and the outside world but generates new forms of hybrid spatiality. In fact, we can allude to the development of a self/hetero-mapping of the real and virtual space of the festival that models new forms of spatial appropriation (Liew & Pang 2015). Currently, smartphone apps are cornerstones of this mapping: they act as expert benchmarks of personal space and symbolic guarantees of ontological security. The mobile phone is everything: a 'Big Brother' device and a key element of self-affirmation and realisation in relation to *the others*. As a matter of fact, new media and digital technologies have very relevant impacts not only in terms of lifestyle but also in the placement and spatialisation of allegiances and collective memories (Bennett *et al.* 2014; Regev 2011; Chalcraft & Magaudda 2011; Tomlinson 2004). In (post-traditional) festivals, the intensity and speed of mapping and appropriation of one's cyberspace is staggering and, it should be stressed, it is a prime setting for interaction (Kitchin & Dodge 2007; Roche 2011; Cummings *et al.* 2011). *Instagram* shows us the growth of a visual culture which links design to photography, resulting in a combination of a *media form* and a *particular type of content*, which Manovich (2016) calls *Instagrammism*. This social network has come to be seen by its users as a tool that allows them to 'narrate their ideas and experiences, and connect to each other' (Manovich 2016: 4).

3. Methodology

In exploring the potentialities of using photography, video and hypermedia in ethnographic research, Sarah Pink favours a critical understanding of visual cultures, a reflective understanding of how visual and ethnographic materials are produced and interpreted (Pink 2001: 4). We focus primarily on the use of these visual and digital materials as the foundation for our analysis, believing that - when combined with ethnographic approaches - they offer enormous analytical potential for understanding social phenomena, given their deep integration into daily life and their capacity to transcend traditional notions of interaction (Pink *et al.* 2017: 18). The con-

tent shared on Instagram is characterised by ‘subtle differences, the power of empty space, visual intelligence, and visual pleasure’, which contrasts with the platform’s original objective rooted in immediacy – the quick and effortless creation and sharing of content (Manovich 2016: 25). With the emergence of Instagram, our daily lives have been exposed and organised according to images in flow, where spaces of our intimacy – or other spaces and events that we attend – and our body are associated, for example, with trademarks. In that way, it is possible to say that ‘Instagram enables market relations to form through everyday life and cultural space around the production and circulation of images’ (Carah & Shaul 2015: 71).

4. ‘Let it happen, just let it happen’³⁷

We proceed, in this chapter, with the chorus of the song most often heard in the enclosure of the Paredes de Coura Festival in 2015³⁸ in order to demonstrate its (re) construction in a quintessential musical scene-place in the region of Alto Minho, in northern Portugal and the country itself. In the early 1990s, more specifically in 1993, the festival came into existence. Since then and uninterruptedly until today it has been populating the banks of the Taboão River in Paredes de Coura and has been established as the ‘natural habitat of music’. This festival is the result of an informal initiative by a group of young people who at the time were avid readers of *the news-magazine Blitz*³⁹, which showed the new music trends, and were also influenced by the TV program *Pop Off*. At a time when a certain frenzy about alternative music was emerging in Portugal (Guerra 2013) with the appearance of several garage bands and of significant radio and television programs, a group of young people (calling themselves *Incentive to Courense Culture*⁴⁰) who were passionate about mu-

³⁷ This is a song by Tame Impala – an Australian psychedelic rock band – released on March 11 2015 as part of the band’s third album, *Currents*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ed6UeDp1ek. Tame Impala had top billing at the Paredes de Coura Festival that same year and ‘Let It Happen’ was the song most often heard at the venue during the festival. The song focuses on the inevitability of accepting the innumerable transitions of the self in a transglobal context, under an eight-minute base of melodic hypnotism. An important piece of information associated with this song is that it was one of 15 songs ‘that would be heard at all festivals during the summer of 2015’, according to a list by *New Musical Express* (2015).

³⁸ We cannot but cite an excerpt of the song ‘Let It Happen’: ‘It’s always around me, all this noise/ But not nearly as loud as the voice saying/ Let it happen, let it happen/ (It’s gonna feel so good)/ Just let it happen, let it happen’. Cf. Tame Impala (2015).

³⁹ *Blitz* was the first Portuguese newspaper specialized in music and pop culture, for a long time it was the one and only, later being made into a magazine that has been editing until today.

⁴⁰ That group was formed by Vítor Paulo Pereira, José Barreiro, Filipe Lopes and João Carvalho. (...) they saw an ‘astounding place’. Someone has an epiphany: ‘What if we made here a music festival for youth?’ (...) in the night of fados de Coimbra (a Portuguese type of music), there were present the Town Council and a councilman. On

sic and especially about the independent rock music of the 1980s, found there was a supply gap in the area where they lived and, moved by a certain idealism, decided to create a 'night' of concerts by rock bands in Paredes de Coura. To that end they soon got in touch with the mayor of Paredes de Coura, who was from the beginning an important interlocutor, proving to be very receptive and becoming decisive in the start-up and sustained growth of a festival that would come to be considered unique as well as a pioneer in the national context⁴¹.

In fact, in its first two years the festival lasted only one day; later it was extended to two days and subsequently to three and four days. Time in contemporary societies is characterised by polychronic, homogenized, calendarized time that arranges everyday life. However, as Pais (1998) points out, work time is no longer absolute, particularly given the expansion of leisure time. Consequently, leisure time has become increasingly heterogeneous – it no longer possesses uniform subjective properties. Paradoxically, the less time we have available, the greater our need for leisure time to provide a break from other temporal demands. Therefore, it is here that the time for festivals is included, thus justifying the festival's extension to additional days. The Paredes de Coura Festival has been progressively growing in several aspects, consolidating a 'successful career' and even bringing about other festivals nearby and becoming an international reference – at least as far as Spain. This means that, as advocated by Geus *et al.* (2016), in its essence the Paredes de Coura Festival was born of a 'fortunate' interaction between the individuals and the 'environment' of the event – the program, the theme, the scenario, the service and the other users of that environment.

The photos published on the festival's Instagram that capture the scenery show us a place where nature prevails, as if it were a reconstruction of nature based on an idyllic construction principle. The layout of the main stage looks like a natural amphitheatre, lying at the bottom of an inclined plane surrounded by nature, which allows a good visualisation of the concerts to all the people, even when they are in the back region. There are even those who prefer to watch from this region, since it allows

an 'urge', João Carvalho takes the initiative and presents the idea to them. On the next they have a meeting at Paços do Concelho, where they are given '180 contos' (900 euros) from the municipal budget to arrange the event. And so is born the Paredes de Coura Festival.

⁴¹ João Carvalho, one of the founders of the festival, recalls that moment in 2015: 'In Paredes de Coura we always had a group of friends who enjoyed and knew a lot about music, but who also enjoy and know a lot about independent cinema, architecture and painting. We were always interested people. The festival was born precisely at a time when everyone went off to study elsewhere, some to Porto, others to Lisbon, Évora, and I was the only one in Paredes de Coura. So, it began as a kids' game where the goal was to have a good time, and the rest is history' (*in* Pereira 2015).

them to escape from the crowd and to watch the concerts more leisurely – sitting or lying down – if there is a small audience and calmer rhythms.

Taboão River and its banks are a central element and one of the festival's trademark images. More than a place where individuals can be in contact with nature, diving and sunbathing, it is a space of sociability, where individuals meet and amuse themselves, with props and artefacts ranging from clothes, like swimwear, fashion accessories – such as sunglasses, hats, caps, among others – and rubber buoys and rubber boats that they share with friends on the river. Smoking, drinking and eating is another recurring practice during sunny afternoons, with some festivalgoers carrying portable coolers. There is a disorganised arrangement in which youth groups merge, there is no interest in distancing themselves from those they do not know or in establishing spatial boundaries. We would like to reiterate here, with Bauman (2006), the distinction between mixophobia (fear of being in physical co-presence with anonymous people, causing estrangement) and mixophilia (satisfaction through the experience of socializing with strangers, which induces fusion). Apparently, this arena is governed by mixophilia, i.e., the occupation of the different spaces in the enclosure obeys massive rationales between day and night, ruled by the abovementioned *mit-sein*. This festival is even interpreted in the image of a 'Gaulish village' materialised into an indie community, for it is 'as if Paredes de Coura were the indomitable *Gaulish village* heroically resisting the diabolical concessions of true music to global capitalism'⁴².

We are therefore witnessing the transformation of a festival that emerged under a do-it-yourself (DIY) rationale based on the effort of a group of young people committed to opposing the more or less fatalistic idea that the 'hinterland' location of their town would be synonymous with cultural dependence vis-à-vis the big cities. As early as its second edition in 1994, and benefiting from the absence of other festivals and/or events of the kind, the festival began to appear in full-page features in the national press.

On its 25th anniversary in 2017, all media continue to consider Paredes de Coura a 'unique festival', not only due to the natural setting where it takes place but also to its program. As a matter of fact, this festival eventually achieved the image of being an experimental venue for new artists/concepts, having presented the largest number of debuts in Portugal until the appearance of the *Milhões de Festa* festival, in 2006. Thus, a 'well-received' performance in Coura became synonymous with subsequent success, i.e., the festival became a springboard for names belonging to the so-called alternative sphere. This option corresponds to the representations that the organisers and festivalgoers themselves have about their own musical tastes. If

⁴² Inês Nadais, 'A aldeia gaulesa', *Ípsilon/Público*, 2010, May 13.

we claim, like Pais, that 'hegemonic culture is much more of a culture of exclusion than of inclusion' (2010: 166), underground music pulverizes other musical manifestations, reserving for itself the primary space of action and establishing itself as the legitimate form of musical creation in Coura.

If we consider the logic of free artistic expression, authenticity – one of the core values of the indie scene – is the main criterion for ranking. Thornton (1996) has told us that authenticity is linked to the notion of subcultural capital. In fact, journalists, bloggers and opinion makers – as cultural gatekeepers – have always 'defended' Coura as an alternative, unique and singular; and it is unavoidable – year after year – that through their music tastes and recommendations – isochronous with those of the organisers – they gradually defined and built the subcultural capital of Coura (Jetto 2010).

These memorable moments decisively contribute to structuring the relations of sociability established in the festival, and here it is pertinent to join Pais (2010) when he says that popular music is a unique field to analyse social constructs. The fact that there is a temporary suspension of everyday identity based on the notion of proxemics, underscores the importance of assuming a common identity, the knowledge of how to behave that is learned at festivals and that improves the chances of starting new relationships insofar as the distance between strangers is narrowed by the symbolic, sensuous sharing of common space-time. From this we can identify the emergence of groups of affinities established on the basis of elective affinities that may amount to friendship as an omnipresent modality of sociability.

Reflecting the way the playbills and the organisation evolved, from 2007 onwards the festival presents several stages: the main stage, usually associated with the major sponsor; the *Ibero Sounds* stage (currently also associated with the major sponsor), for bands that were still relatively unknown; *Jazz on the Grass*, responsible for the afternoon entertainment in the enclosure closest to the river, where there are concerts and other activities such as the *Writing Voices* – since 2015 – in which musicians and other artists are invited to take part in some reading sessions; and the *After-Hours* stage, for more electronic-type sounds. Although there is a certain distinction and separation between national and international names, this does not prevent the best-known Portuguese bands (Mão Morta, Linda Martini, X-Wife, Manel Cruz) from featuring side by side with the international attractions on the main stage. This proliferation of stages complies with the necessary coexistence of multiple musical worlds at the same festival, demonstrating the increasingly eclectic and omnivorous music consumption (Guerra 2013; Crossley & Emms 2016).

There are other concerts that the organisation takes to various points in the village, such as *Music Sessions* – created in 2013 and in undisclosed parts of the village, such as a shoe factory, next to the church or a private farm – characterised by a greater proximity and intimacy between the artists and audience, which is quite limited. In addition to these secret and intimate music sessions, *The Festival goes to the Village* is another initiative in which the festival organises this link with the town, since it happens in the main avenue of the town, before the inauguration of the festival, and the access is free.

Speaking of the current structure of the festival, let us start by mentioning its location and its fruitful intercrossing with the town. Thinking about festivals as communities not only evokes the interactions established between subjects but is also related to the fact that music and musical performances can act as a means of connecting festival participants to the places where they are held, promoting the creation of a sense of identity and identification (Duffy 2000). Frequent trips to festival venues favour the formation of these communities – communities of identification associated with spaces of allegiance and intensification of relationships. Simultaneously, music and performances can be considered to incorporate and give voice to the relationship established with the space, on the one hand, and on the other hand to offer, through participation, ways for individuals to identify and situate themselves (Hudson *et al.* 2015).

These activities promote not only contact with the local community, but also contact with relevant political, institutional and economic agents. Can these be considered actual coordinates of local development? We do not know yet, but surely festivals cannot be forgotten when planning the development of municipalities and regions such as Paredes de Coura. Established 25 years ago, the festival takes on the central dimensions of cosmopolitan openness advocated by Skrbiš and Woodward (2011): belonging and becoming, or simultaneously the involvement with the municipality and the connection to the world; the physical and virtual mobility and perennality of people (Hebdige 1990); the 'semiotic capacity' for reading *the other* (Molz 2011). Urry, in his 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' model, speaks to us of the *topos* of festivals as spheres for 'opening up about the divergent experiences of the present in national cultures' and the 'search by and for contrasts between societies' (1995: 167).

5. 'Desire lines'⁴³: appropriations and music

Our perspective looks at pop rock – or its drifts of indie rock or electro pop – as a *social system* and not as an opaque cluster of individual activities, which implies its (re)creation in a space transformed into a *place-scene* within the framework of this chapter. The festival's line-up has been quite well defined since its first edition – independent rock. It therefore assumes an orientation that allows one to identify it and distinguish it from others, marking its difference. At this level, we align closely with Hennion (1999), who advocates for a new approach to music that moves beyond orthodox conceptions of music as art objects to be admired. Instead, he proposes understanding music as a collective activity that communicates identities – viewing music as a performance of personal taste. In Coura's line-up, one seeks novelty. This requires constant updating based on research work where the Internet is an essential tool, and which also involves reading industry publications and attending other international festivals – Reading⁴⁴, Roskilde⁴⁵ and Benicàssim⁴⁶. This is very interesting because the festival's line-up – as we can see on Instagram – seems like a live and ephemeral flow of images (Carah & Shaul 2015: 72).

In order to publicise and promote the festival, in 2016 the organisation of the Paredes de Coura Festival opted to make a publication with a photograph and name of each artist or band that were being confirmed to act in the natural habitat of music in the same year's edition which occurred between February 29th and August 6th. This is a way not only to approach audiences and to keep the festival alive in their minds months before it happens, but also to perceive public opinions about the invited artists or bands. The comments on these publications are divided between thanks to

⁴³ Desire Lines is a song by Deerhunter – an American indie band associated with 4AD, a major British independent record label – blending a variety of musical genres and subgenres (noise rock, art rock, shoegaze and post-punk...), which also features in a New Musical Express list, this time intended as a ranking of the 'best festival road trip songs' of 2010. See www.nme.com/photos/the-50-best-festival-road-trip-songs/309307. 'Desire Lines' is acknowledged to be magnetic and an indie hymn to freedom and self-realisation.

⁴⁴ Reading and Leeds are a pair of festivals that take place annually in two cities in England, Reading and Leeds. They are both a music festival, renowned for being the number one in UK. More information can be found on their website: www.reading-festival.com; www.leedsfestival.com.

⁴⁵ The Roskilde is an annual festival held in the city of Roskilde, Denmark. Is considered one of the 3 biggest and most well-known festivals in Europe, being the largest in North Europe. Initially created for hippies, but nowadays is more eclectic and covers a more mainstream part of the youth. More information can be found on their website: www.roskilde-festival.dk.

⁴⁶ The Benicàssim festival is an art and music festival that takes place annually in the city of Benicàssim, Spain. It offers a place for art displays, short movies, theater, dance, fashion and various workshops and courses on these themes. More information can be found on their website: www.fiberfib.com.

the organisation for bringing the artist or band announced, requests to bring other artists and bands who people would like to see performing at that festival, and identifications of friends in those publications, many of them with requests to accompany them in that edition. In the latest edition, held in 2017, they adopted another strategy of disseminating the confirmed artists, placing only one image where four confirmed names were registered, followed a month and a half later by a new publication with another international band confirmed for the edition of the festival's 25th anniversary.

If festival confirmations were once given through the press, today promoters see a need to adapt to the audience, who is increasingly disconnected from traditional media and gives exacerbated attention to social media. See the example of the Portuguese version of *Primavera Sound*, which is held in Porto, whose poster of the 2017 edition was first published on Instagram with videos that narrate a story, interpreted by a character, focused on emblematic buildings of the city – since the brand of the city is associated with the festival. This was preceded by several warnings to the public that they should be attentive to Instagram stories to be released on that day and at that time, a whole marketing strategy that proved effective and that aroused the curiosity not only of the public, but also of the press. Remember Tia DeNora's concept of music in action (2003b), in which music assumes itself as a social practice, endowed with senses.

These new forms of promotion and dissemination create a link that connects the festival and the public intermediated by the artists that constitute the poster – there is an identification with what the event involves that leads to the desire to remain in contact with it, namely from social networks. In the days in which the festival takes place, the artists that make up the poster are prominent on Paredes de Coura Festival's Instagram. Throughout these three editions – 2015, 2016 and 2017 – the organisation shared several photographs of the artists and bands that passed through the natural habitat of music, either by the main stage or the secondary stage. What is behind this option of highlighting the artists during the festival instead of the other dimensions that constitute and define it? Is there a logic behind strengthening the association of the poster to concepts such as quality, originality and diversity through the creation and/or intensification of hypes?

The headlines are not always those that reach a greater number of likes and comments on Instagram, although there is often a direct relationship between these aspects. Take the example of the last day of the festival of the 2017 edition, in which Ty Segall and Foals are the protagonists of the poster and whose photographs reached 433 and 821 likes, respectively, compared to the 1218 likes in Benjamin Clementine's photo or 607 likes in the photograph of the Portuguese artist Manel Cruz who also performed on the main stage, but was less prominent in the poster.

The comments on the photos of these two include thanks, congratulations and compliments: 'The best of the festival!'; 'It was so good!'; 'Amazing!'; 'Idol'. Initiatives such as *Jazz in the Grass*, *Writing Voices* and the after-hours do not have as much visibility on this social network, and in the case of the after-hours, there are no publications on Instagram in the last three editions.

The main point to bear in mind here is to understand how the programming is experienced and appropriated according to the subjective dispositions and objective possibilities of the actors at play in Taboão. We can say that there is no 'strong' code of regulation – which does not mean that there is no order at the festival. There is, and it is precisely the order of improvisation, of disorganisation. In the interactive framework, this is where the difference resides between being in (being cool) or out (being an outlier). The 'art' of infraction demands that it be done naturally, like a 'gift' one has, an expression of something inherent to one's being – something spontaneous and unconstructed, unrehearsed. Here lies the true *knowing how to be* of the festivalgoer, i.e., the ability to 'naturally fit in/ into the space – or Malbon's (1999) coolness criterion. We are in the sphere of musicking, which is the way we act before music, the value we place on it, etc. In other words, we are talking about social skills in relation to music (Crossley 2015: 473). And musicking can only be completely apprehended if we seek to understand its collective nature through the concept of music worlds and of the way it functions in the festival scene-place.

The consequences of musicking are varied, cutting across the whole festival experience. Fonarow (1997) speaks of 'regions inhabited' by the enjoyers during the live shows: in 'front of the stage' are the youngest and most enthusiastic; 'behind the pit' are the older ones experiencing music without distractions; in the 'back regions' are industry staff and other professionals, peacefully enjoying the distance. In one of the videos published on the festival's Instagram we see a whole frenzied audience at a concert of the Portuguese Orelha Negra, a band that is in its essence instrumental and that locates its sonorities between diverse musical genres like soul, jazz, rock, funk or hip-hop. Once again, the diversity that the Paredes de Coura Festival offers to its audiences stands out, not being restricted to a genre or subgenre.

Festival authenticity can imply ignoring the rules ('everyday garb', for example) ostensibly and systematically (as a habit, therefore). Think of 'finite provinces of meaning', as Schutz would say (Wagner 1979). Other people purposely prepare for this place. The party – the 'carnival' in which the masks invade the hosts (Bakhtin 1981), and value scales are subverted: a different place, a different time and, above all, chronotopes. Convergence, orchestration – the expectations of what will be shared, the backward assumptions (Garfinkel 1967) evidenced by the people who dress for, who 'commit' to the bands. Regev's (2013) perspective on pop-rock as a

possibility for cultural rapprochement is, in this regard, exemplary. The expressive elements that different cultures use to show the uniqueness of pop-rock are very close to each other. While those differences and singularities do exist, the processes and instruments for expressing these particularities are very similar.

DIY is an ethos and a praxis that defy and subvert the codes of mainstream culture (McKay, 1998). In this sense, this festival takes on the role of a heir that lubricates this ethos. It is an 'autonomous temporary zone where the fragments of everyday symbolic life are suspended, or like a cultural laboratory where dominant codes are summoned to enable the formation of experimental identities and forms of neotribal sociability, or temporary *communitas* '(Purdue *et al.* 1997: 660). Thinking about the festival's game of sociabilities leads us to the notion of an 'exception regime' – of planned and organised (regime) lack of control (exception), with no contradiction in terms.

The diversity of aesthetic styles speaks for itself. The heterogeneity of clothes, props and artefacts takes on a common value. The aesthetic function becomes an axis of signification that crystallizes (originates) the main dynamics engendering subjective polyvalence. Aesthetic issues are visible not only in the way individuals present themselves and through the artifacts they carry, but also in their appropriation of space in the camping zone. Along with the tents are placed cards with handwritten expressions related to the festival, with its practices or with identity aspects. Read on these posters' expressions like 'Take me to the Couraíso [Coura (the festival's and town's name) + *paraíso* (which means paradise in Portuguese)]', 'Danger Zone', 'Beware, drunk is camping', 'Eat, Sleep, Rave, Repeat', 'Kamacoura, Bragasutra'.

Along with music, the wish to interact with the (known or unknown) *other* is one of the main motivations behind attending festivals: 'there are people who get together and do not know what they are going to find. That is why we came here. We are people of different cultures, different nations, different religions, that is cool' (Larsen & O'Reilly 2005: 7). At the same time, sharing the reality of the festival and a preference for certain bands is a reason for establishing new relationships. In this sense, and perhaps more important than the music itself, are the non-musical aspects of festival attendance. We could even speak of the formation of transitory communities based on an awareness of similar tastes and sharing of experiences. These are geographically and temporally limited communities, slightly different from the communities that are formed when attending concerts. The camping area is one of the highlights in the festival where these communities manifest themselves. It is in this area that festivalgoers meet basic necessities like sleeping or eating, cooking their own meals with equipment, utensils – portable gas stove, plates, cutlery, and so on –

and food that they transport to the festival, favouring fast and easy food, always in a great atmosphere of relaxation and permanent contact with each other.

The festival is a catalyst of networks. There emerges a spontaneous reformulation of the festival's structure, interweaving the previous structure with individual practices. Thus, 'the festival organisers weave a fabric of relationships that can be approached in different ways by individuals.' (Purdue *et al.* 1997: 661). The music festival community can be perceived as 'a means of promoting the identity of a community, or at least, the way the community would like others to see it.' (Duffy 2000: 51). In this respect we cannot but draw attention to Cummings *et al.* (2011)⁴⁷: although indie music is defined by its independence from mass 'commercial' music, it is itself also commercialised and its idea of authenticity is also a marketing strategy. We can therefore suggest that festivalgoers often end up forming communities of individuals linked together because they are consumers of a particular commercial brand. For this reason, we can emphasize the fact that the brands that sponsor music events are important as symbolic elements connecting individuals who belong to music neotribes: the 'Primavera Sound' brand is prototypical. The appearance on the scene of a growing number of brands, even in Coura, has met with the acceptance of the participants, leading us to believe that they have accepted the role of sponsorship and of trade brands as essential for the festival's continuity. Since this is a time for neotribes to gather, it is necessary that the presence of a particular brand is linked to the values inherent to the community of festivalgoers and to its symbolic universe (t-shirts, backpacks, mattresses, scarves, key rings, etc.).

6. 'From the night and the light, all plans are golden'⁴⁸: (in)conclusive clues

As Dowd *et al.* observe: 'Gathered from geographically disperse locations far from the normalized expectations of everyday life, fans and performers can immerse themselves in a particular culture and experiment with different identities' (2004: 149). As we have seen, in a festival the actors tend to occupy mixed positions

⁴⁷ In her reflection, Cummings *et al.* (2011) mention the American Vans Warped tour, associated with the punk music that connects many skaters. This event has the name of a brand of trainers that is strongly associated with that community. They do so to compare this tour to the Australian Big Day Out festival which, by refusing to sell its name to a sponsor, has itself become a brand.

⁴⁸ This is an excerpt from the song Golden Skans by Klaxons and marks the moment when the band moved from nu-rave/new rave to art-pop. With all its vocal falsettos, mystical lyrics and indie-disco drums, this song from the 'Myths of the Near Future' album – winner of the Mercury Prize – dominated the 2007/2008 festival season and became part of the clothing and aesthetics of many festivalgoers (New Musical Express 2016; Reynolds 2011).

between creation, intermediation and musical enjoyment – referring to music *in act*. The festivalgoing way of life is made up of layers recreated from festivalgoing cultural capital constructed by total participation – body and soul – in the Coura place-scene. McKay (2000) revealed an interesting duality in music festivals that is also present in Coura: if on the one hand the festival has an emphatically dreamlike brand associated with pilgrimage and to divinisation, at the same time it is very much rooted in the real world, the market and consumption, which is also denoted by use of social networks. The virtual has brought new forms of self-presentation and new forms of interaction not only between individuals but also between consumer products and the individuals. According to Carah & Shaul (2015: 71): ‘the portability and habitual use of the smartphone within everyday life enables Instagram to extend the role played by images in the stimulation, capture, and modulation of attention’. It is here that the sphere of action of the organisation of Paredes de Coura Festival is inserted, through the use of Instagram: to communicate and interact with its public, capturing their attention.

In fact, there has been an exponential increase in the number of festivals in the UK and throughout the world: the music festival is now an economic figure in the popular music industry. Moreover, these are constituents of urban repertoires of regeneration, of seasonal cultural economies, of ritualised collective events, of tourism, of museumisation-*nostalgia*, of endogenous local development. Thus, the Paredes de Coura Festival also lives between these two levels and the music *in act* experienced there also suffers from this dualism. The search for the alternative is an impactful motive for action but it is always carried out within the framework of a symbolic, economic and cultural struggle for authenticity. The Coura festival's way of life is presented as a complex *utterance under construction* of beliefs, symbols, modes of interaction, values and ideologies around what is alternative – not to mention underground.

This festival is defined by the search for experiences, which have marked their unique presence: experiences of communion with nature, of enjoying the most ‘beautiful’ amphitheatre in Portugal; experiences of direct contact with pioneering bands and with big names of alternative rock; experiences with festivalgoing authenticity as opposed to the mainstream. In all these experiences, or rather in the festivalgoing ‘economy of experiences’, Coura has gained a competitive advantage because it has offered the best symbolic, musical, affective and emotional experiences. A significant aspect is that the rain has ‘already become a tradition’: what would *a priori* be a competitive disadvantage of the festival has been transformed,

over time, into an absolute experiential capital – because it brings the experience of this Minho festival closer to the legendary Glastonbury (Geus *et al.* 2016).

The immersive analysis of Paredes de Coura Festival's Instagram was central to understand that Coura is music, but it is much more than music. Put another way, *musicking* can only be fully apprehended if we seek to grasp its collective nature through the concept of music worlds and the way it operates in the festival scene-place (Crossley 2015). As we have seen through the analysis of the festival's Instagram, music *in act* is present not only on-stage performances but in the experience that it dictates in the festivalgoer's 'world of life': at the camping site, at the river and its banks, the food, drinks and in the use of technologies and social networks. This issue helps us realize the complexity and heterogeneity that currently characterise the universe of music intermediation, which do not arise only from the coexistence of multiple forms of diffusion. They are also associated with trends that dilute the boundaries that traditionally structured, on several levels, the worlds of music. And festivals are quintessential place-scenes of this mix. The development of cultural industries and the flexibilisation of their forms of productive organisation have blurred the boundaries between work and activities of creation, diffusion and enjoyment. Alongside this, diversity is evident in the varied content offered by festivals, which are increasingly showing their awareness of the importance of dimensions other than music, even though music continues to be the key element.

The unstable lightness of rock once again: Careers, trajectories and DIY cultures in Portuguese indie rock

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This chapter is concerned with DIY ('Do it yourself') careers as an employability pattern (Guerra 2013, 2016; Oliveira 2020) affected by the impact of the neoliberal worldview on the trajectories of the participants in the Portuguese indie rock scenes. First, we examine the social positions of the protagonists of the Portuguese indie rock scene, focusing on gender and social class, and highlighting the socio-political and economic changes that occurred between 2010 and 2020. Second, we seek to understand how these social actors have built their professional-creative DIY careers considering their different positions within the indie rock scene. Third, and for this purpose, we also offer a typology of these careers in the Portuguese context, based on extensive and intensive research. The data were collected in two phases: between 2005 and 2010, and between 2015 and 2020. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, we conducted 273 in-depth and semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in the production and mediation of Portuguese indie rock.

1. DIY music careers in a neoliberal atmosphere

In the early twentieth century, do-it-yourself (DIY) referred to creating, repairing and/or modifying something without using an experienced craftsman/professional. It later came to encompass a wide range of cultural and creative practices (Bennett & Guerra 2019a; Guerra 2017, 2018). While its musical roots date back to the 1950s and the rock'n'roll era, DIY gained greater prominence with the emergence of punk from the mid-1970s. Based on a logic of empowerment and musicians' ownership of the means of production as an alternative to traditional and mainstream produc-

tion and promotion circuits, several punk bands created their production platforms and organised themselves into networks, fostering the emergence of alternative distribution circuits from those dominating the music-cultural industries. During the 1980s and 1990s, the DIY ethos remained strongly linked to the punk aesthetic but extended to other music genres and spheres of alternative cultural production (Bennett 2018) as well as to other socio-cultural domains, including environmental/ climate change issues, animal rights, veganism and the fight against poverty and racism (Haenfler 2018; McKay 1998). Once the different genres and music scenes, such as punk, metal and electronic dance music, expanded beyond the Anglo-Saxon context, DIY culture followed, and now manifest in various local cultures globally, including the Global South (Guerra 2020b). Despite local specificities, music scenes and DIY cultures are now a transglobal phenomenon. At the same time, they occur at the intersections between art and economy, resistance and subsistence and/or existence, ethos and praxis (Guerra 2021). 'While by no means eschewing anti-hegemonic concerns, this transformation of DIY into what might reasonably be termed a global 'alternative culture' has also seen it evolve to a level of professionalism that is aimed towards ensuring aesthetic and, where possible, economic sustainability of cultural production practices'. (Bennett & Guerra 2019b: 7).

The conceptualisation of a DIY career requires understanding it as a form of professional trajectory that stems from the need to manage the 'pathological effects', both political and economic, of post-industrialisation, and the risk and uncertainty that characterise contemporary societies. In the risk society of late modernity (Beck 1992; Giddens 2002), guided by neoliberal configurations, ideals and narratives, not only are biographical trajectories more uncertain and unpredictable, but processes are also becoming increasingly individualized and/or atomized (Chapman 2013; Dale 2016; Everts *et al.* 2021; Gavanas & Reitsamer 2016).

DIY careers have emerged as a response to this context, asserting themselves as a cultural-creative expression, materialized in economic practices and assuming themselves as viable professional occupations (Bennett 2018; Bennett & Guerra 2019b; Guerra 2018; Oliveira 2020). Technological innovations and the internet have made a decisive contribution to this through the emergence of a platform economy (YouTube, TikTok, Instagram), that makes uploading and publishing content extremely simple and capitalises on content created by independent cultural creators. Although they do not provide a total democratisation of cultural-creative production processes, the role of DIY careers in enabling more people to produce and disseminate their own cultural products is transforming cultural production practices into professional careers. So how can cultural creators earn income through this online content (Guerra 2020b; Wierenga 2009)?

Yet if a DIY career remains linked to the original DIY ethos and independence, there is now recognition of the need to achieve a sustainable lifestyle in which notions such as lifelong employment, or a regular salary no longer hold (Bennett 2018; Threadgold 2018). Considering a *precariat* economy, and subsequent uncertainty in employment trajectories, over the last twenty years, a process led by the Global North and replicated in the South, Standing (2011) argues that such changes have created a new type of social category: the *precariat*, comprising those who live and work in precarious conditions because they are dependent on short-term employment opportunities with little prospect for stable career development; moreover, they are at the mercy of market fluctuations and the cyclical crises of capitalism. When building artistic and creative careers, it is common to navigate between different part-time and short-term jobs to earn an income, leading many people to mobilise their often informally acquired skills to manage their professional trajectories. This is the re-conversion of 'subcultural capital' (Thornton 1996) and the activation of DIY skills, of resistance, of achievement, of freedom and of collective action, managing the uncertainty and precariousness that currently characterise the labour market and society (Haenfler 2018).

This chapter is concerned with DIY careers as an employability pattern (Guerra 2013, 2016; Oliveira 2020) affected by the impact of the neoliberal worldview on the trajectories of Portuguese indie rock scene participants. We first examine the social positions of the protagonists of the Portuguese indie rock scene, focusing on gender and social class, and highlighting the socio-political and economic changes that occurred between 2010 and 2020, marked by the economic and financial crisis that impacted Portugal between 2011 and 2014. We seek to understand how these social actors have built their professional-creative DIY careers in terms of their different positions within the indie rock scene, the crossings/contamination with other artistic domains, their tacit and formal competencies, their educational, professional and informal qualifications, and their promotion, dissemination, communication and agency networks. We then propose a typology-synthesis of these careers in the Portuguese context. This exercise of constant combination between DIY and do-it-together (DIT) creation/production questions the boundaries between the professional and the amateur, and the artistic contaminations between arts and music, and between music and the 'lifeworld'.

The data were collected in the periods 2005-10 and 2010-20. Using a mixed-methods approach (Crossley & Edwards 2016), we conducted 273 in-depth and semi-structured interviews (202 interviews in the first study and 71 in the second) with individuals involved in the production and mediation of Portuguese indie rock, including musicians, promoters, record label heads, music venue programmers, managers

and journalists. In both cases, we used snowball sampling to achieve an extensive territorial coverage of the indie scenes. The analysis was carried out by building key categories for data interpretation, based on the interview scripts. The interviews were subjected to a thematic content analysis. Multiple correspondence analysis was used for the construction of the typology.

2. The social space of Portuguese indie rock

As in other music scenes and other geographical contexts (Berkers & Schaap 2018; Gavanas & Reitsamer 2016; Guerra 2016; Guerra & Oliveira 2019; Leonard 2017; Reddington 2021; Reitsamer 2012), male hegemony is a defining feature of Portuguese indie rock. This is particularly visible in the 2010 research: 89 per cent of our sample was male. The female under-representation was mainly evident among the older generations, where there was an almost exclusive male presence. The difficulties in advancing a music career expressed by the few active women included exclusion from scene networks; gender stereotypes regarding supposed female characteristics, their interests, abilities, skills and roles assigned to them by society; horizontal and vertical segregation, which relegates women to less favourable employment conditions, income, power and recognition in the field of popular music production; difficulties in balancing professional and family life, especially with children; and objectification and sexual harassment. These experiences are in line with other research (Richards 2016; Smith *et al.* 2019). Ten years later, we still had a mainly male group of interview partners, but the proportion of women had increased to 21 per cent. Indeed, as expressed in the interviews, greater problematisation of gender inequalities and prevailing heteronormative constructions of gender and sexuality in the wake of feminist-queer movements and #MeToo have created greater awareness of, and engagement with, gender issues, especially among younger generations. This is shown in the recognition of the under-representation of women and the need to change the current configuration of the indie rock scene. We found that the greater problematisation of gender inequalities has been translated into promoting the reduction of differences between men and women when composing festival lineups and programming music venues, so music becomes a space for acceptance and tolerance. The collective and promoter Maternidade, formed in 2014 in Lisbon, and its transdisciplinary, feminist and queer festival Rama em Flor are examples. They want to counteract the marginalisation of women in concert line-ups, as well as the *machismo* and paternalism they consider institutionalised in Portuguese society. It also manifests in more recent musical projects, through the themes addressed in the lyrics and how the artists present themselves, questioning

gender stereotypes and criticising discrimination. This is the case for artists such as Vaiapraia and Filipe Sambado.

In terms of age, we are facing a relational space marked by people aged between 30 and 40 (43 per cent of the sample in 2010, 56 per cent in 2020). These data suggest both continuity and a generational renewal of the Portuguese indie rock scene, although the continuity does not mean music careers are viewed and experienced in the same way by the younger generations.

In both moments, our respondents had a high level of education compared with the average Portuguese population. In 2010, 55 per cent of the interview partners had higher education; in 2020, this figure was 69 per cent. In 2020, the percentage of the resident population in Portugal aged 15 and over with higher education was 21.2 per cent. Yet few interview partners had formal higher education in music, and this was mainly in music production and sound engineering. This does not mean a total rejection of musical education: among the interviewees of the first phase, 19 per cent took singing and instrumental lessons; in the second, 38 per cent had similar 'private' music learning experiences. Seventeen of the latter respondents had attended a music conservatory, while others had rock and jazz lessons in institutions accredited by the Portuguese Ministry of Education. However, these classes were generally a means to acquire basic knowledge for a later self-taught DIY evolution, where freedom and experimentation contrasted with the rigidity of Portuguese music education.

DIY practices were important to most actors from the beginning of their cultural activities. They manifested in different learnings: singing and playing instruments; recording, producing, distributing, booking and organising concerts and tours; and developing/planning choreographies/performances on stage, making clothes and aesthetic artefacts, scenography and videography. In these three learning axes, we speak of informal learning processes and contexts characterised by trial-and-error and the sharing of information and skills based on belonging to creative-artistic communities and local music scenes, facilitated by digital technologies.

In 2010, only 21 per cent of the respondents were professionally involved in music and 44 per cent were amateurs. Due to the small Portuguese music industries, which make it difficult to earn a living from music, the main professional activity of this group was outside these industries and music happened in their free time. The remaining 35 per cent combined music-making with other activities in fields such as design, architecture and illustration to ensure their economic survival and to achieve social and personal fulfilment. All research participants felt the profession of a musician was practised in a precarious environment due to the low and unstable income.

In 2020, although musicians (like other creative workers) (Bennett 2018; Guerra 2016, 2020b; Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2011; McRobbie 2016) face increased precariousness and insecurity, we have seen an increase in those who describe their musical and/or music-related activities as professional (49 per cent) and a marked decrease in those considering themselves amateurs (14 per cent). These data include interview partners working as mediators, such as journalists/music critics, programmers, promoters, or agents for record labels – areas where professionalisation is easier.

Despite this change, in 2010 and in 2020 most interviewees belonged to the middle classes associated with liberal professions (58 per cent in 2010 and 66 per cent in 2020) in artistic, intellectual and scientific areas⁴⁹. These data are in line with what several authors (Bennett 2018; Friedman *et al.* 2016; Threadgold 2018) have shown about the importance of socio-economic background in the creation of conditions for building DIY careers in the creative and cultural industries.

Most research participants lived in the cities of Lisbon and Porto. This geographical distribution closely follows the distribution of social agents of the artistic field generally, denoting the structural asymmetries and dualisms of Portugal. The markedly urban configuration of the Lisbon and Porto music scenes is unsurprising: it is easier to find more diverse lifestyles in the larger cities, as well as bigger circuits of production and circulation of different forms of artistic expression (Guerra 2013, 2016).

3. A typology of Portuguese DIY indie music careers

Aiming to better understand the construction of DIY music careers, we conducted a typological reading of these careers, according to the main strategies mobilised in the current neoliberal context and the intensity and forms of expression of DIY among them. To define the career profiles, we considered two analytical dimensions. The first captures the strategies adopted by social actors to ensure the sustainability and economic viability of their careers, including continuous musical activity (i.e. always being in a phase of the production cycle), networking, the capacity for reinvention, a concert circuit, regularly publishing albums and other artistic materials, and using copyright and related rights. The second dimension describes a combination of music-related activities with others in non-musical/artistic fields to earn a living. Based on these dimensions, we were able to identify seven ideal-typical career profiles in mu-

⁴⁹ In the Portuguese context, this refers to people who occupy professional management positions, who are integrated within the so-called intellectual jobs or are highly specialised. In the case of the younger generations, it means highly educated people such as senior managers, administrative or directorate workers, knowledge professionals or professionals such as doctors, lawyers and economists.

sic: catch-all musicians, non-stop musicians, mediator musicians, author musicians, mediators, non-musicians and weekend musicians. They are fluid ideal-types since, due to the precariousness and uncertainty in their trajectories, it is usual to pass from one to another ideal-type throughout their musical careers. Sometimes abrupt, these transitions are the result of the state of the music industries, and the cultural industry, based on precarious contracts; or even external factors such as the economic situation of the country, for example the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent restructuring.

'Catch-all musicians' comprises 8 per cent of respondents in 2010 and 27 per cent in 2020. This profile includes musicians who mostly combine their music careers with other music-related activities to overcome the instability and uncertainty of a music career, such as writing and playing for other musicians and working as producers and composers for cinema, television, and advertising. Their own music-making is not their primary source of income. We have designated this career profile as the 'catch-all musicians' because such a music career involves greater versatility. This capacity for adaptation and multiplication of projects and roles is also their main strategy to deal with an uncertain artistic trajectory. This occurs in a markedly DIY way, but it is also DIT because it is anchored in relational networks.

'Non-stop musicians' included 6 per cent of respondents in 2010 and 10 per cent in 2020. Finding a balance between music-making and other professional activities is a reality for these individuals, but the connection between the day job and the artistic sphere is more evident. The defining element is maintaining a continuous musical activity by planning the whole creative process and its phases and defining objectives to be achieved and a work methodology. These actors can reinvent themselves as musicians and artists, which translates into the development of various musical projects, not only enabling musicians to express their creativity in different musical styles, but also broadening the possibilities of playing live and sources of income. This means ensuring that their cycle of creation–performance–dissemination is never interrupted, requiring regular releases of albums, EPs, singles and videos. In this career profile, music takes a professional character, with planning, dedication to work, perseverance and the capacity to multiply roles in the music scene. It is in this and the previous category that a highly professional perception of music-making prevails, and DIY practices present a more professional dimension.

'Mediator musicians' encompassed 6 per cent of respondents in 2010 and 31 per cent in 2020. Unlike the two previous career profiles, these actors do not combine music-making with other professions outside the music industries. However, the split still exists: they work as promoters, editors, agents or music venue creators – professions that allow for creativity but focused on 'mediation' activities. This reflects

DIY ethics and praxis due to the lack of channels for publicising and promoting their musical work. At the same time, DIY labels and promoters act as important creative agents, fostering collaborative practices to maintain and consolidate musical careers. The development of several musical projects is not an option for this career profile because the focus is on the multiplication of roles rather than the realisation of musical projects. The musicians in this career profile tend to be younger, particularly in 2020. This is also the only career profile in which most members understand music as being only one of the channels and possible languages to share their vision of the world. We find a sceptical perspective regarding living solely as musicians, with the interviewees stating the virtual impossibility of being a full-time musician in Portugal, let alone an independent one. Together they reveal the will to express themselves through artistic languages besides music, including video, poetry, urban art, comics, cinema and dance. They see the possibility of eventually combining music with other artistic activities, and playing other roles in the independent music scene, more related to mediation than creation. Involvement in the world of music tends to be seen as a cyclical form of experimentation with diverse artistic languages.

'Author musicians' made up 6 per cent of respondents in 2010 and 7 per cent in 2020. This is the only career profile whose members live exclusively from the music they create for themselves. In other words, they do not need to create music for other people or be involved in mediating activities. This implies a diversified set of strategies. First, in line with several studies that have identified networking and the acquisition of social capital as crucial for advancing a music career (Becker 1982; Guerra 2016; Reitsamer & Prokop 2018), these interviewees referred to the mobilisation of networking and the establishment of relationships in the musical environment. However, like the 'mediator musicians', the reduction of the size of musical projects (solo projects or projects with two or three people) was also a career-management option, making it easier and cheaper to book bands and allowing salaries to be divided between fewer people. This denotes the influence and impact of neoliberal ideals and their individualisation logics on the trajectories of musicians. The same happens with the planning and definition of a work methodology, the maintenance of continuous musical activity and the realisation of a concert circuit. Still, within the scope of strategies mobilised by these musicians, it is important to mention the copyrights from the works they create, which enable them to generate income from their music, often an essential supplement in periods when income from other sources is scarce. This is the only career profile in which this option is so significant⁵⁰. This leads us to an authorial vision of the artistic work. For most of these

⁵⁰ Musicians in other career profiles also use copyright, but this is less significant for them.

interviewees, music has a professional dimension. Consequently, and like the 'non-stop musicians', planning and dedication to work and a persistent posture are their main ways of managing the uncertainties associated with a professional trajectory in music. Most also face trajectories explicitly marked by DIY, leading them to seek control over the different phases of the processes of creation, production and dissemination of music, often adding technical and management tasks to creative activities.

'Mediators' included an extensive set of interviewees, especially in 2010 (51 per cent in 2010, 25 per cent in 2020). These heterogeneous social actors play crucial roles in the indie rock music scene, but are not musicians, distinguishing this from the other career profiles. They are journalists/music critics, radio broadcasters, promoters, agents, managers, label managers, music venue owners and/or programmers, and record store owners. Almost all could make a living exclusively from their activity in the music field, in both 2010 and 2020. They therefore had a professional perception of music. The exceptions were those in charge of record labels, especially in 2010. At that time, about half had another job that was their main source of income. The publishing activity was a hobby, reflecting a strong passion for music. Ten years later, this was the reality for only one of the record label heads, who worked as an office clerk in a textile company during the day. In the remaining cases, the economic sustainability of their careers was entirely anchored in the musical sphere, often combining editorial activity with promotion or management. Nevertheless, except for the journalists, who mostly had higher professional education, professional trajectories were developed on a DIY basis. This means that learning was based on learning-by-doing and trial-and-error, as their involvement in music grew. It is in this career profile, as well as among the 'mediator musicians', that we find more women in the two moments⁵¹. A music career for women continues to pass essentially through the sphere of mediation.

The last two career profiles concern only the first period of analysis⁵². We have designated one as 'non-musicians', comprising 7 per cent of the interviewees. Their main characteristic is that they have built musical trajectories without considering music as a professional option. They never lived (or considered living) from their activity as musicians and have never been economically dependent on music as they forge their careers in non-musical fields. It has always been a space of freedom and

⁵¹ In the case of mediators, in 2010 the percentage of women was 11 per cent and in 2020 it was 24 per cent. In the case of mediator musicians, in 2010 the percentage of women was 10 per cent and in 2020 it was 32 per cent.

⁵² This is due to the objectives of the doctoral thesis that supports the second moment of analysis considered in this chapter. In this case, only people who make their living from music creation or other activities within the music industries were considered for the sample. DJs were also excluded from the analysis.

passion. For many, their involvement in music goes back more than 30 years and DIY logics and practices have prevailed in how they acquired their musical skills, their attitude to the musical field and the self-taught way they have managed their careers. This career profile brings together the founders of Portuguese indie rock who have marked – and continue to mark – the history of popular music. This is related to them being young during the dictatorship and/or immediately after 25 April 1974, being the pioneers of the break with a traditional, closed, rural Portugal.

The last career profile, ‘weekend musicians’, encompasses 16 per cent of the 2010 respondents. Unlike the previous career profile, for whom involvement in music is a constant, their connection to and involvement in the world of music is intermittent. They are essentially DJs and bloggers who, like the interviewees from the previous career profile, never envisaged their musical activity as a profession. It occupies their leisure time, and their professional daily life is filled with other professional activity. It is also a career profile where the configuration of musical trajectories is marked by a DIY ethos and praxis, prefigured in dispositions of assumed ‘music lovers’. Their designation as ‘weekend musicians’ is not stigmatizing: it reveals a vibrant and cosmopolitan urban culture at the dawn of the 2010s in the cities of Coimbra, Lisbon and Porto that has allowed more people to combine art with life⁵³. This occurred in the 1990s with the UK club culture, but could only emerge in Portugal recently, given the particularities of its semi-peripheral socio-historical development and dictatorship.

4. Conclusion

We have read DIY careers as a pattern of promoting employability within the framework of the effects of the neoliberal worldview on the transitions and trajectories of the musicians and other creatives who make up the Portuguese indie rock scene. Based on a pioneer empirical study at the Portuguese and European scales, over a ten-year period, our investigations led to two main conclusions. The first is that the protagonists of these music scenes have not changed much in terms of their main socio-demographic characteristics. However, within this framework of continuity, two relevant changes have occurred. Although the Portuguese indie rock scene remains predominantly male, there is an increased participation of women and a greater awareness of, and concern about, gender issues – especially among the younger generations. Nevertheless, we should highlight that women continue to de-

⁵³ In the same sense, it should be made clear that this does not mean musicians in the other career profiles do not play at the weekend. Our point is that for the musicians who are part of this career profile (essentially DJs), their involvement with music only happens in their leisure time.

velop careers mainly as ‘mediators’ and ‘mediator musicians’, so differences remain in the types of music careers women pursue.

The second change is a significant increase in those who represent their involvement in music as professionals, accompanied by a sharp reduction in those who consider themselves amateurs. This is most clearly expressed through the decrease in ‘mediators’ and the increase in ‘mediator musicians’. This is due to the fact that by 2020, due to improved access to digital technologies for music, an increasing number of mediators are also active as musicians, as well as the increase in DIY *ethos* and *praxis*. In recent years it has been common to see the formation of collectives of musicians who share mediation activities related to the music they create, due to a lack of channels for publicising and promoting their musical work. In recent years, even if developed precariously, a career in indie music has become an increasingly viable and sustainable option from both the professional and financial perspectives. As McRobbie (2016) argues, for middle-class youth it has become increasingly important to forge ‘affective attachments’ with employment and develop careers for satisfaction. Over a decade, there have thus been both continuities and discontinuities.

The second conclusion refers to the common denominator of these careers: although DIY ethics and praxis can be seen as intertwined with neoliberal values and ideas in modern capitalism, for our interviewees they are also an essential strategy for pursuing their music careers in the context of neoliberal working conditions. In their differences, the trajectories of these social actors have been marked by DIY from their beginnings to the present day. Whether it manifests itself in the processes of learning and acquiring skills, in their stance in the musical field or in the self-taught way they manage their careers, this DIY ethos has allowed these actors to deal with precariousness and with the impacts that result from a neoliberal paradigm in the trajectories of creative workers. This seems to be intensified in Portugal, where due to socio-historical circumstances, the weaknesses of the cultural and creative industries are accentuated and the effects of the cyclical financial crises of capitalism are felt very intensely and shared with Spain, Greece and Italy.

Finally, we wish to examine what could be done to improve the situation of DIY musicians in Portugal. Both investigations made it clear that these DIY careers are also DIT. They imply a strong involvement in collaborative and co-creation networks. One way to improve the situation of these musicians may be to promote the creation and consolidation of networks for sharing information, resources and coping strategies. These careers could also be developed in line with public policies specifically oriented towards popular music, as it occurs in other countries.

When art meets crisis: the Portuguese story and beyond

Augusto Santos Silva

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1. Introduction: the crisis, the 'troika' and the arts

Subsequently to the international crisis originated in 2008, in the heart of the North American financial system, and in the context of the European sovereign debts crisis, several countries belonging to the Euro Zone were forced to ask for external financial aid. This was the case, in 2010, of Greece and Ireland, and in 2011 of Portugal. In all these cases, the aid was provided by the joint effort of the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), constituting a 'troika' of European and international institutions. In order to obtain the aid, each country had to apply for an 'assistance programme', whose terms implied (a) a heavy and frontloaded pack of fiscal austerity, (b) a sequence of reforms aimed at reducing labour costs and public expenditures, shrinking the public economic sector and deregulating the labour market, and (c) a close external surveillance on the decisions undertaken by the national government that could have fiscal impact.

Ireland was the first country to exit the programme, in 2013. The Portuguese programme ended in May 2014. Both countries were therefore able to conclude their respective 'adjustments' in the three-year period that was initially scheduled. Greece did not achieve this goal, and in that period Cyprus was subjected to an external bailout, from which it has also exited in the meantime.

The assessment of the outcomes of the Portuguese programme is a matter of intense political controversy. The 'memorandum of understanding' that first launched it was negotiated, in April and May 2011, by a resigning minority government, led by the Socialist Party, and it was supported by the two right-wing parties (PSD and CDS). Following the general election held in June 2011, PSD and CDS formed a government coalition.

Independently of the opinions on the merits and outcomes of the assistance programme, there is a general awareness of the tremendous sacrifices it demanded from both the society and the economy. If one compares the main economic and social indicators of 2014 with those of 2010, the conclusion is quite obvious: there was some progress in fiscal consolidation and in the deficit, and a major setback in terms of the growth rate and volume of GDP per capita, employment levels and average income, number of people in poverty and social-economic inequalities. Still, in order to fully apprehend and evaluate the effects of the 'troika' policies, one has to look beyond these figures, and investigate further, into the domain of social representations. It is not only the 'material' standards of personal and social life that are at stake; symbolic and moral issues are also relevant.

An unexpected change of the development path implied a new awareness of the structural frailties of the national economy and the unanticipated effects of the adoption of the euro as common currency. This led to a significant revision of the popular assessment of the European integration, which had usually been valued as the single most important success of the Portuguese democracy. The conditionality of the assistance programme, meaning that all the relevant government's decisions regarding fiscal policy – which encompassed most economic decisions – had to be previously approved by Brussels, Frankfurt and Washington represented a huge limitation of the Portuguese sovereignty. The moral topic was a crucial feature: were the Portuguese people paying the inevitable price of lasting habits of low economic commitment, financial incautiousness and conspicuous expenditure that, according to many news media from Central and Northern Europe, supposedly characterised the Southern countries? Was there a 'sin' to pay, as the German language suggested, using the same word both for 'debt' and 'fault' – with austerity serving as the act of contrition? And what was the responsibility of national elites – economic, social and political elites – in the trajectory that brought the Portuguese economy and state to a situation of imminent default?

These topics – Europe, sovereignty, collective behaviour and elite's responsibilities – polarised many representations and discourses expressed in the public space, namely in the media. They dialectically interacted with issues of power, hegemony, and asymmetries, on whose grounds the Portuguese situation could also be described as the output of a wrongly designed monetary union that aggravated, instead of attenuating, the economic differences between the core and the periphery of European Union, and perversely reinforced the political hegemony of Germany and its imposition of an austerity orthodoxy on the whole of the Euro Area. The assistance programme could even be seen as a formidable attack against the welfare

system that the Portuguese democracy had gradually built up, and the repositioning of its economy in the traditional role of provider of low-cost manpower.

In any case, how should this delicate historical moment be interpreted? What lessons were to be learned? How should citizens and civil society organisations react? How could a new vision and interest of the Portuguese people be forged? How could new energies and players be mobilised in this sense?

Sociology can give some help in addressing these questions. Its most important contribution – in comparison, for instance, with conventional macroeconomics – resides in the combination of the analysis of available objective indicators and the inquiry into the less crystallised realm of symbols, beliefs and representations. Our assumption is, furthermore, that this sociological endeavour can further benefit from the study of art.

The artistic perspective of the social crisis is crucial since, as intellectuals, artists participate in the social reflections and debates in and about any historical circumstances. They tend to work on those circumstances and the ideas, emotions and behaviours they arouse in people; they use them as materials for creation, because their works and performances configure representations of, and discourses on, social reality. A moment of crisis emphasises all these ingredients: the leading role of the intellectual and the relevance of cultural critique; the abundance of materials for the artistic work on time, context and identity; and the self-reflexivity of society on what concerns its foundations, problems and future.

However, one should not limit oneself to the consideration of arts as another subject for sociological research, to be added to others. As Howard Becker (2007) suggests, art is a form of ‘telling about society’, like sociology and many other disciplines of knowledge. Images and words convey, organise and disseminate ideas and interpretations, just like the maps of cartography or the tables, figures and graphs of statistics. They are neither to be merged nor interchangeable, since they depend upon very different postulates and they put into action quite distinct ways of thinking and talking. Therefore – the difference allowing for dialogue – they can be taken as parallel discourses on society, relating one to the other. It is this sort of ‘epistemological partnership’ (in the words of Jean Majastre cited by Péquignot 2007: 286) that can justify the use of art as ‘an instrument of research’ (Péquignot 2007: 287), and not only as a subject of sociological research.

Alternative ways of considering the arts in a sociological analysis of facts and representations could certainly be followed. One could look for the effects of the economic and social crisis on the literature, music, cinema and other artworks produced in that context – even if the refracted nature of those effects must be acknowledged.

One could try to apprehend the consequences of the crisis for the structure and dynamics of the cultural field (or art world), and its relationship with the government and public policies. But here the focus will be on art as a form of knowing, interpreting and problematising social realities: on its power to perform, reconstruct and interpellate history and society; its capacity to simultaneously immerse in, and distance from, social context.

The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to observe how the Portuguese arts have dealt with the Portuguese crisis, in the years 2011-2014, when the country was subjected to external aid and a 'bailout'. The approach will be based on a cross-section analysis, considering the domains of literature, fine arts, visual arts and cinema, music and the performing arts. In the next section, a few examples of *directly political positioning* through artistic performance will be given. Section 3 will then illustrate the presence of the crisis as a *background* to several artistic creations of that time. In section 4, it will be argued that the crisis projected a *new light* into consistent topics of the Portuguese artistic imagination⁵⁴, stressing the centrality, within it, of issues of collective identity and self-reflexivity. Finally, some conclusive remarks will point out the usefulness of this sort of analysis to the sociological understanding of the national and European situation.

2. Artivism in the 'troika' years: the crisis as a theme

On 5th July, 2014, the National Museum of Contemporary Art – also known as Chiado Museum, in Lisbon – inaugurated an artistic installation by an emergent artist, Rui Mourão (born in 1977). Its title was *Os nossos sonhos não cabem nas vossas urnas* (*Our dreams don't fit in your ballot boxes*)⁵⁵. The visitors could see, on a wall, fragments of video films, reporting scenes of protest: people interrupting the Prime Minister's speech at the Parliament, people contesting the official visit of Chancellor Angela Merkel to Portugal, people organising street demonstrations to protest against increases in transport fares, to denounce financial cuts in health services, to parody bankers and politicians, or to call citizens to civic participation. Statements and testimonies by social activists could be heard at five headphones. They explained the use of art to mobilise people and to express social protest: a form of *artivism*, meaning the articulation of art with political and civil action. The opening ceremony of the exhibition was followed by the occupation of the museum, throughout the whole

⁵⁴ The phrase is used here by homology with the 'sociological imagination' coined by C. Wright Mills (1959), in this case to refer to the specific ways of thinking and doing that make sense for arts and artists.

⁵⁵ Exhibition at the Museu do Chiado from 05.07.2014 to 28.09.2014 curated by Emília Tavares.

night – a gesture of which the museum’s director had not been previously informed (for his own protection, the organisers said). The exhibition ran until the scheduled date, at the end of September 2014, with no further incidents.

Other initiatives of political upheaval by artistic means or of manifesting artistic solidarity with social protest took place. For instance, on 15th June, 2013, the first part of the *Oresteia* trilogy by Aeschylus was staged at the municipal theatre of Matosinhos, near Porto (the second biggest city of Portugal)⁵⁶. As it was the day of a national demonstration against the government and the ‘troika’, the company (*Companhia de Teatro de Braga*, that is, *Braga Independent Company*) started the performance echoing the demonstration and singing slogans like this: ‘Yes to culture, no to ‘troika!’’. In 2014, another company, *Teatro Praga* (*Praga Theatre*) recreated a traditional form of Portuguese popular comedy – the *revista*, which typically consists of a series of dialogues, songs, marches and dances united by a very strong carnivalesque critique of contemporary social, moral and political facts. The show, *Tropa fandanga* (an idiomatic expression for ‘ridiculous people’), was really a success, both for critics and the public⁵⁷. But, in each performance, the parodic atmosphere was suddenly interrupted by the monologue of one of the youngest actors, who described their own precarious professional situation and denounced it as a treason to the dreams of his parents’ generation, those who had accomplished the transition to democracy, in the mid-1970s, believing that they were preparing a much better future.

Analogous political statements through or within the context of works of art can be seen in cinema and visual arts. The Portuguese Centre for Photography, a public institution, commissioned twelve photographers to take as source of inspiration aspects of the current social situation. The result was a collective exhibition, *12.12.12*, that ran at the Centre from February to April 2013⁵⁸. The overwhelming topic was the economic privation operated by the crisis and the ‘troika’ policies: people queuing at the entrance of social security offices, people revolving the urban dustbins in search of still usable things, long queues waiting for buses that take too long to come, abandoned public works, misery and exclusion. In 2015, the film director Miguel Gomes directed the trilogy *As mil e uma noites* (*Arabian nights*), working on stories of the difficult everyday life experienced by the Portuguese during the years of 2013 and 2014, where the lines between fiction and reality account for the strangeness and excess of the documented

⁵⁶ *Ésquilo* (Aeschylus): *Agamémnon* (458 b. C.), staged by Rui Madeira, observed at 15.06.2013.

⁵⁷ Staged by Pedro Zegre Penim *et al.* and performed by Teatro Praga, première at 20.02.2014.

⁵⁸ Collective exhibition at the Centro Português de Fotografia, Porto, from 23-02-2013 to 21.04.2013.

real lives⁵⁹. In the same year, the documentary *Dreamocracy*, by Raquel Freire and Valérie Mitteaux, was released, which dealt with the organisation of demonstrations and other forms of massive mobilisation against austerity measures⁶⁰.

Nobody should be surprised by the particular incidence of political and social criticism in popular music. A song by the band Deolinda, *Que parva que eu sou* (*What a fool I am*, 2011), denounced the precarious condition of young generations, the most educated generation in the Portuguese history, still condemned to unemployment or bad jobs and to personal instability⁶¹. It quickly became an anthem of many social protests. In 2012, the rapper Capicua released her self-titled album⁶². One of its most important songs was *Medo do medo* (*Fear of the fear*), a very harsh critique of a society that accordingly placed fear as a means of domination and alienation, immobility and adulation to economic, social and political powers. The latest album of Mão Morta (*Dead Hand*), a Portuguese band of alternative rock, points out the responsibilities of the Portuguese elites and exhorts to direct action against the political oppression. Its very title – *Pelo meu relógio são horas de matar* (*By my watch it is time to kill*) – suggests metaphorically the resort to extreme violence; and the videoclip directed by Rodrigo Areias emphasises this provocative message, staging the lead singer of the band armed with a gun and shooting people, while images of social demonstrations and the faces of former or current political leaders appear⁶³.

Therefore, social criticism and political activism were explicit components of several artistic works and performances in Portugal, in the 'troika' years and taking them as the main motif. Both the social situation and the adjustment policies that were seen as factors producing or aggravating it were the targets of such a criticism. And the artistic engagement – the already mentioned *artivism* – was seen as an indispensable and effective instrument to mobilise and combat the ideological hegemony and the political power of the 'troika', the government or the entire political establishment, and the mainstream economists and politicians. This did not exclusively originate within marginal artists or organisations, but also in the institutional core of the Portuguese cultural field. And likewise, it led to a reconsideration (if not revision) of the political dimension and social responsibility of art and artists. The collective exhibition held in the Chiado Museum from December 2012 to March 2013, carried the very

⁵⁹ Gomes Miguel: *As mil e umas noites. Volume 1, O inquieto; volume 2, O desolado; volume 3, O encantado*, Portugal/France/Germany/Switzerland, 2015, 381'.

⁶⁰ Freire, Raquel & Mitteaux, Valérie: *Dreamocracy*, Portugal, 2014, 80'.

⁶¹ Deolinda: 'Que parva que eu sou', in *Deolinda no Coliseu: Sons em trânsito*, 2011.

⁶² Capicua: *Capicua*. Porto: Optimus Discos, 2012.

⁶³ Mão Morta: *Pelo meu relógio são horas de matar*. Leiria: Rastilho, 2012; Areias, Rodrigo: *Horas de matar*, Portugal, 2014, 4'.

significant title (in English) *Are you still awake?*⁶⁴ It was an exhibition about the political discourse and positioning in the Portuguese contemporary fine and visual arts, from the 1974 Democratic Revolution up to 2012. Colonialism and post-colonialism, gender and sexual identities, ecology, political resistance and critique, dystopias, and the meaning and pertinence of revolution were among the main topics. But the most striking feature of the curator's option (Emília Tavares, the same curator that would eventually curate the Mourão's exhibition with which this section began) was indeed the message conveyed by the title: are you still awake – still aware, still available for criticism and agency?

3. Hard, shadowy times: the crisis as an ambience

The economic, social and political context of the years 2011-2014 – the years of imminent financial default, external aid and the surveillance of troika – were challenging times for political activism in and through the arts. The examples given in the last section evidence the centrality of this situation as a subject and a motif for artistic expression and engagement. They also suggest that the overall panorama in the cultural field was not structurally distinct from the one characterising the social and political arenas: certainly, a higher degree of turbulence, but no radical disruption that could question the very pillars of social order.

However, this is not the only way through which the Portuguese crisis haunts the artistic imagination. Another way, even if less explicitly present (less than the *artivism* form), is not at all ineffective.

First, the hardness of the ongoing events grants a renewed pertinence to classic inquiries into the nature of human agency and destiny. For instance, the staging of two celebrated Shakespeare's plays update their political dimension. In 2012, the last staging due to the influential Portuguese director Joaquim Benite, left incomplete by his death (being subsequently completed by his disciple Rodrigo Francisco) was Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*⁶⁵. His reading stresses the political dimension of the moral lesson of Shakespeare's allegory: the vacuity of vanity and richness, the loneliness of the former rich citizen immediately abandoned by the flattering friends as soon as they perceive his financial difficulties, his radical rebellion against all forms of social life. In a more direct manner, director Nuno Cardoso, revisiting Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* in 2014, prefers the political register (the incapacity of the military hero to

⁶⁴ *Are you still awake?*, collective exhibition at the Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea / Museu do Chiado, Lisbon, from 13.12.2012 to 30.03.2013; curator: Emília Tavares.

⁶⁵ Shakespeare, William: *Timão de Atenas* (1623), staged by Joaquim Benite and Rodrigo Francisco, performed by Companhia de Teatro de Almada, première at Teatro Municipal de Almada, Almada, 20.12.2012.

use the political arts of courtliness and dissimulation) to the moral one (the theme of the hero first betrayed and then betraying by revenge)⁶⁶. Other illustrations could be added: one of the most relevant for our analytical purpose is the recreation of the 1956 play by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *A visita da velha senhora* (*The visit of the old lady*)⁶⁷. Staged by Nuno Cardoso, it involved the new *Companhia Maior* (*Major Company*), whose actors are amateurs or former professionals older than 60 years. The city of Güllen, once rich, subsequently decayed and collapsed. Now, the inhabitants are anxiously waiting for a city's daughter, who had to leave it longtime ago, and meanwhile became astonishingly rich. But, to save the city that once expelled her, the 'old lady' demands nothing less than the death of her former local boyfriend, who had betrayed her. Will the city accept such a brutal price to assure its bailout? Is there a sort of collective fault that must be expiated through anything causing a huge pain? Everything, from the staging to the programmes distributed to the audience, directs the attention to this similarity: Portugal is Güllen, the old lady is the international aiders, the conditionality humiliates far beyond any reasonability, and independently of individual responsibilities it is indeed the community as a whole that has to be sacrificed.

Second, the presence and effects of the economic and social crisis show up as a sort of background for descriptions and narratives deployed on different topics. As the familiar drama taking place in Lisbon's suburbs in 2010, powerfully filmed by João Canijo (*Sangue do meu sangue*, *Blood of my blood*, 2011), comes to its tragic end, the radio news focus on the financial crisis and its consequences⁶⁸. The austerity policies that force severe financial cuts in the national health services, both in Portugal and Spain, contextualise the experience of Joaquim, suffering from HIV and subjected to an experimental treatment in Madrid – in the extraordinary film by Joaquim Pinto, *E agora? Lembra-me* (*And now? Remind me*, 2013)⁶⁹. And so on and so forth.

Third, this background forms a sort of negative, shadowy ambience that somehow pervades the whole artistic endeavour. Three striking examples can be taken in distinct arts. The sadness and loneliness staged in Vítor Gonçalves' film, *A vida invisível* (*The invisible life*, 2013) becomes even more moving as the urban décor is the gentrification interventions in Lisbon, with the building of new elegant zones and the rehabilitation of the main historical square; the promise of future they anticipated

⁶⁶ Shakespeare, William: *Coriolano* (1607-1608), staged by Nuno Cardoso, performed by Ao Cabo Teatro, première at Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, Lisbon, 09.01.2014.

⁶⁷ Dürrenmatt, Friedrich: *A visita da velha senhora* (1956), staged by Nuno Cardoso, performed by Ao Cabo Teatro and Companhia Maior, première at São Luiz Teatro Municipal, Lisbon, 27.03.2013.

⁶⁸ Canijo, João: *Sangue do meu sangue*, Portugal, 2011, 131'.

⁶⁹ Pinto, Joaquim: *E agora? Lembra-me*, Portugal/Spain, 2013, 164'.

turned to be, melancholically, frustration and despair⁷⁰. The events reported in *Quando o Diabo reza* (*When the Devil prays*), the 2011 novel by Mário de Carvalho – an ironic story of petty delinquency and family disputes – take place in Lisbon, during a noisy election campaign to which the novel's characters dedicate an absolute indifference. And so does the narrator, as these are the three last sentences of the book: 'The campaign was over. The election took place. Some won, some lost' (Carvalho 2011: 159). Finally, the well-known Portuguese photographer Paulo Nozolino placed his 2012 exhibition under the auspice of Ezra Pound's poem *Usury* (*Usura*)⁷¹. There were nine triptychs of black-and-white photos, describable as a moral pronouncement against whatever confiscates and alienates human beings, depriving them of dignity, and an alert to the indispensability of collective memory. The photographer portrays victims of war, migrants, refugees, poor people. And one of the triptychs is named 'Europe' – a lamentation on Europe's uncertainty.

4. Reconfiguring time and space: the crisis as a revealer

It would then be a mistake to confine the sociological inquiry into the artistic problematisation of the Portuguese crisis to the explicit discourses and representations. Section 2 illustrated that explicit presence. But it is not the only form one must keep in mind. As Section 3 demonstrates, equally relevant is the more oblique, nevertheless real and effective presence of the social crisis as a sort of background and ambience, in which topics and tones of the artistic imagination acquire (new) meaning and significance.

Do these two complementary ways exhaust the interplay between social context and artistic activity in the 'troika' years? The conventional sociological approach would be tempted to answer affirmatively: those were the refracted effects of the crisis on the Portuguese world of art, those were the artistic reactions and reinterpretations raised in such a time and context. One could extend the research on content, but along these two main lines.

However, this is the point at which, in our view, one must abandon the conventional approach, and seriously conceive art and sociology as 'epistemological partners'. The relation between the social context, challenging as it is, and the art work, autonomous and situated as it is, cannot be subsumed under the (complex) causality chains at stake. They must also be regarded as *independent* social processes that *dialogue* one with the other. The specificities of the context – here, the fact that it involves a huge crisis, both in political-economic and in moral-symbolic terms – do

⁷⁰ Gonçalves, Vítor: *A vida invisível*, Portugal, 2013, 103'.

⁷¹ Nozolino, Paulo: *Usura*, exhibition at Espaço BES Arte & Finança, Lisbon, from 20.09.2012 to 04.01.2013; curator: Sérgio Mah.

illuminate certain features and outcomes of that dialogue, which began before the crisis and will continue after its end. They act as *revealers*.

If we look, in the first place, to the *œuvres* that some of the most prominent artists – as writers, film directors, composers, stage directors, choreographers, and so on – have been constructing throughout their career, and that grant them relevance, coherence and individuality, and then we examine the specific works they created in the ‘troika’ years, one fact is striking for many of them: the new context of these years does not significantly alter the main traits that characterise and singularise their *œuvre*. At the same time, two other impressive realities arise. On the one hand, the crisis ambience accentuates certain features of the composition and/or certain features of our reading and reception of each *œuvre*. On the other hand, and foremost, it is precisely the internal structure of the *œuvre* and the relation it undertakes with its time that deepens the social understanding of the occurrence and significance of that (hard, shadowy, critical) time. ‘Social understanding’ encompasses both the vivid experience of readers, viewers and listeners, and the collective values, symbols and dispositions that the art field, as such, proposes to the public and society.

This applies to several artists working in the context of the Portuguese crisis. Film director Pedro Costa has built up, since the 1980s, a quite singular work, in European and international terms. It can be said that at least one of his main focuses is the reinvention of his country: the metamorphosis of the last European colonial power into a peripheral Member-State of the European Union, having to deal with its colonial memories and sequels, including the presence of thousands of immigrants coming from the former African colonies to work in the construction industry, public works and unskilled services, who are relegated to suburbs and ghettos, struggling for survival in terrible conditions – that the recent crisis did aggravate. Pedro Costa’s point of view on Portugal is exactly this one: the point of view of black, foreign, uprooted, poor people living in miserable neighbourhoods of Lisbon, epitomized in his main actor and character, the Cape-Verdean Ventura. In 2014, his film *Cavalo dinheiro* (*Horse money*) situates Ventura in a hospital, static or walking with no purpose through dark corridors and tunnels, receiving the visits of his wife and friends (hard, sad, black, impressive faces) and chaotically remembering past events, including the Colonial War, the ‘25th April’ – the day of the military coup that overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship, in 1974 – or his migration to Lisbon, his marriage, his work, his struggles⁷². In the most important sequence of the film, Ventura shares the elevator with a petrified armed soldier, the eyes closed as if he were a statue – and Ventura’s long speech in Cape-Verdean Creole faces and

⁷² Costa, Pedro: *Cavalo dinheiro*, Portugal, 2014, 103’.

questions that disturbing symbol of both the colonial oppression in Africa and the democratic liberation in Portugal. Has this something directly to do with the social crisis and the troika's surveillance? No. But the point is that this central, permanent theme of Costa's *oeuvre* – the enormous dignity of people carrying on that kind of non-existence associated with sub-urbanism, misery and otherness – assumes a new meaning and relevance, both artistically and politically, in the framework of that crisis and surveillance.

The same goes concerning the work of probably the most influential of living Portuguese novelists. António Lobo Antunes published three novels in the 2011–2014 period. Here, the last one, *Caminho como uma casa em chamas* (*I walk like a burning house*) is perhaps the most important. Individuals and families facing existential deadlocks live in the eight apartments of an old building in Lisbon. Each of them (or former lovers, friends and relatives) tells us stories of suffering, frustration, treason, decay, solitude. They talk about dreams and hopes that seem irreversibly lost. In the attic of the building, hidden from all but the young girl that feeds him, still stuck to his pre-modern views and confident of their permanence in the country's mentality, but simultaneously aware that times are gone and now he is only 'the echo of an extinct authority' (Antunes 2014: 357), lies Salazar, the dictator that ruled Portugal during four decades. And that old building, in the centre of the capital, full of frustrated lives and with no future ahead, appears as a possible symbol for the entire country – Portugal walking like a burning house, possessed by past and present torments and despair.

Again, this is not in any sense a novelty in Lobo Antunes' *oeuvre*, whose emergence should be credited to the dramatic conjuncture of the 2010s. On the contrary, it is a recurrent motif, since the first books published in 1979 and 1980. The Portuguese history, as it is revived by urban people, namely by those who experienced first the Colonial War in Africa and then the expectations and deceptions of the democratic revolution, has been a permanent topic and source of Lobo Antunes' writing. Still, his characteristic interpretation, and the way he transforms it and expresses it in literary terms, provides a really powerful insight into the hard times of crisis and external aid.

If one considers from the same perspective the work of another very important Portuguese novelist, Lídia Jorge, a similar portrait can be drawn. Her 2014 book, *Os memoráveis* (*Memorable people*) pays a vibrant tribute to the young captains who toppled, 40 years earlier, the dictatorial government. The 'unfinished fight' that was the 1974 revolution (as defined by one of the characters, see Jorge 2014: 296) has to be rescued from its historical defeat. And its heroes, victims of their own intestinal quarrels, and then victims of misunderstanding, injustice and persecution, have to be re-established in their entire, authentic dignity. 40 years after the democratic

dawn, the partial loss of sovereignty and self-government implied in the troika's assistance programme illuminates in a grey, crepuscular light, this memory.

The examples could be multiplied. Notwithstanding, one may summarise this first branch of the interplay between art and its time, in the context of a huge crisis, in the following terms: the context does not change the meaning and significance of rooted and lasting motives of various oeuvres; still, it impregnates them with a specific tone or colour, both regarding (as Adorno 1991 would say) their 'textual structure' and its interpretation.

Meanwhile, this does not consume all the instances and features of that interplay. A second branch must be found in the emergence or re-emergence of themes and issues brought into the artistic imagination.

The re-examination of recent history is one of them. Again, this did not start in the 'troika' years. After a period in which the events of the 1974-1975 decolonisation were still fresh and traumatic in the collective memory, and the colonial experience could only be portrayed either from the negative prism of colonial powers or from the positive prism of the colonised nations, the Portuguese culture gradually began to admit and incorporate new perspectives on that historical stage. The publication, in 2011, of Dulce Cardoso's novel, *O retorno* (*The return*) was a breakthrough event. The Portuguese colonisation in Africa and the dramatic conditions of the return to Portugal of hundreds of thousands of former Portuguese settlers and migrants in Angola or Mozambique were approached from the point of view of a young boy from a humble family with peasant origins (Cardoso 2011). This basic option changed the narrative and the assessment of the Portuguese recent history, somehow humanising it. In 2012, the film *Tabu* (*Taboo*), by Miguel Gomes, would go further in that direction: the Portuguese colonial rule in Africa (with its oppression and exploitation of native people) was reinterpreted in the framework of the social and cultural experience of those Europeans who, in the 1960s, had imagined Africa as a promise to fulfil their own dreams of youth, freedom and future⁷³. This does not diminish the fault, the historical crime committed by the intruders, indeed, in a certain way, it stresses it; but it also gives a specific context of meaning to the fact and its sequels. In 2014, in the new film by Margarida Cardoso (*Yvone Kane*), the Mozambican drama of the post-independence and post-civil war era parallels the drama of Portuguese people personally or familiarly related to the African experience⁷⁴. A similar parallel had been designed, three years earlier, concerning Angola, in Lobo Antunes' novel *Comissão das lágrimas* (*The commission of tears*, Antunes 2011)

⁷³ Gomes, Miguel: *Tabu*, Portugal / Germany / Brazil / France, 2012, 118'.

⁷⁴ Cardoso, Margarida: *Yvone Kane*, Portugal, 2014, 117'.

The re-examining of the recent Portuguese history through its tense relationship with Africa is not the only way to re-centre Portugal. Another obvious way is its dialogue with Europe, and namely with what, within contemporary Europe, symbolises the 'North' – the pole of world power both in ideological and economic terms. As already mentioned, the European integration (from 1986 onwards) was consensually perceived as the happiest achievement of Portuguese democracy. The difficulties generated by the enlargement of the European Union towards East, by the shortcomings of the euro currency and, foremost, by the sovereign debts crisis of 2010, outlined a new framework. The peripheral position of Portugal, as a 'South' within the 'North', and the emancipatory potential of that position, inasmuch as it could favour a distant and thus critical view, counterbalancing the hegemonic representation of the world order, could be reinterpreted as a positive singularity. Its effects would transcend the narrow limits of a national case to reach the complexities of the imagination and construction of a new cognitive and social international order. This idea (see Santos 2015) was also a source of inspiration for Portuguese artists and curators. One impressive example can be found in the programme *Next future*, held by the greatest cultural institution of the country, the Gulbenkian Foundation, and coordinated by curator António Pinto Ribeiro, from 2009 to 2015. Typically, the evolution of contemporary culture is reinterpreted from the point of view of the challenges raised by urban scenes and cultures and the ongoing triangular dialogue between Europe, Africa, and Caribbean and Latin America. This theme of 'Southern' eyes questioning and simultaneously reviving the European centre gives meaning and relevance – within the broad framework of post-colonialism, interculturalism and globalisation – to many of the programme's initiatives. It is not surprising that, for instance in the collective exhibition held in 2014 and significantly titled *Artistas comprometidos? Talvez. (Engaged artists? Maybe.)*, works by young Portuguese artists join emergent artists coming from countries like South Africa, Mozambique, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, Morocco or Austria, to rethink and redefine the political halo of the artistic imagination⁷⁵.

But maybe the most interesting stream of what has been tentatively described as the dialogue between art and its time-space, in the context of a huge, systemic crisis, resides in the impulse to reevaluate Portugal itself. Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 1974 Revolution, one of the key art institutions, the Serralves Foundation, presented the first comprehensive exhibition about the SAAL initiative – that had been an entirely new experience of popular participation in urbanism, then

⁷⁵ *Artistas comprometidos? Talvez.*, collective exhibition at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, from 20.06.2014 to 07.09.2014; curator: António Pinto Ribeiro.

launched by the revolutionary government and led by strongly committed architects⁷⁶. Serving as a celebration, it was somehow a recall to contemporary agenda of two issues: architecture and politics; architecture and social participation. It also urged the 21st century visitors, in a hugely depressed nation, to reappraise a vibrant feature of its own recent history: the militant and euphoric participation of common people in the reshaping of their destiny. In the field of modern dance, several attempts were made to stage mutually challenging encounters of contemporary choreographies and choreographers with folk motives, rhythms and interpreters⁷⁷. In a quite distinct direction, capitalising the 'pop' reach of theatrical, spectacular re-staging of folk traditions, the painter and sculptor Joana Vasconcelos built up, in those years, a personal, international trademark, immediately transformed into a rather official icon and messenger, for Portugal's external marketing⁷⁸.

Notwithstanding, it is perhaps in the field of cinema that one can see the most promising approach to Portugal by artists working in the country, in the 2010s. Once more this new trend is prior to 2011. In fact, it can be dated from 2008, when film director Miguel Gomes, born in 1972, presented an unexpectedly fresh perspective in Portuguese cinema, with *Aquele querido mês de agosto* (*That beloved month of August*)⁷⁹. A mix of fiction and documentary, the film projects an entire new light over the everyday reality of the central mountainous region, marked by emigration, during the month of holidays, flirts, festivals, forest fires and the yearly return of emigrants. One year later, in 2009, *48*, a documentary of the Portuguese dictatorship, that had lasted from 1926 to 1974, by Susana de Sousa Dias, was released. The film screens photographs of political prisoners from the police files, along with the voices of their own current narratives of incarceration and torture⁸⁰. In 2011 Gonçalo Tocha's *É na Terra não é na Lua* (*In Earth, not in the Moon*) was released, an

⁷⁶ *O processo SAAL: arquitetura e participação 1974-1976*, exhibition at the Fundação de Serralves, Porto, from 31.10.2014 to 04.10.2015 (and at the Canadian Center for Architecture, Montréal, from 12.05.2015 to 04.10.2015); curator: Delfim Sardo.

⁷⁷ Namely, Francisco, Francisca: *A viagem*, première at Guimarães 2012 – Capital Europeia da Cultura, 16.03.2012; and Andermatt, Clara: *Fica no singelo*, première at Teatro Viriato, Viseu, 13.12.2013.

⁷⁸ Joana Vasconcelos was invited to organise a grandiose exhibition at the Palais de Versailles, in 2012, then she was the official representative of Portugal in the 55th Venice Art Biennale, in 2013, and, in the same year, would beat all the records of public affluence to her exhibition in the Palácio Nacional de Ajuda. Working with a variety of materials, and characteristically re-using and re-framing folk and pop motives, Vasconcelos regularly addresses issues of collective identity, national symbols, emblems and narratives, mass culture and its relation to history and heritage, as well as the dialectic between crafts and art, art and heritage, traditional and contemporary arts, art and industry.

⁷⁹ Gomes, Miguel: *Aquele querido mês de agosto*, Portugal/France, 2008, 147'.

⁸⁰ Dias, Susana de Sousa: *48*, Portugal, 2009, 92' 50".

innovative and emic approach to the life, beliefs and institutions of a Portuguese community, in this case the few hundred inhabitants of Corvo, the smallest and far-away island of the Azores archipelago⁸¹. And in 2014, another young director, João Pedro Plácido, revisited his grand-parents' village, in the rural North, now reduced, because of the emigration and the exit to urban areas, to a few dozens of people⁸². This documentary takes as its main character a local youngster, working in the family farm, and from his living world draws an empathetic portrait of the community, evidencing the tenacity and simplicity of those tireless labourers that resist to an almost fatal decline. Meanwhile, Joaquim Pinto chose the mountain to situate his already mentioned *E agora? Diz-me*; and Paulo Rocha stressed, in his last film, a personal testimony, his own social origins in traditional communities simultaneously used to local primary economy and to transatlantic emigration⁸³.

One could go on. But maybe the point is already clear. In 2011-2014, the period of economic crisis, external aid, fiscal austerity and limited sovereignty has also generated a new context of meaning, both to revisit and extend consistently central motives of several *oeuvres* – as we have seen regarding film directors as Pedro Costa or novelists like António Lobo Antunes or Lídia Jorge; and to develop emergent or reconsidered themes of Portuguese cultural imaginary, such as the relationship with Africa, the relationship with Europe or the self-awareness as a nation and society. There is no direct link, let alone causality, between social processes that occur at distinct levels: the socioeconomic dynamics and the artistic imagination. But one illuminates the other, redefining relevance, suggesting meaning, and proposing interpretations.

5. Concluding remarks: on the complexity of the oblique

As far as we know, there is not yet a significant sociological literature – internationally available – on the cultural and artistic dimensions of the period of troika's intervention in Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus. This chapter should be taken, therefore, as a methodological proposal, and its preliminary empirical testing.

The proposal can be summarised in three sentences. The political discourse and social criticism originated in the artistic imagination and expressed in artistic language, being effective in any given context, takes an increased pertinence and value in times of systemic crisis; one must consider it, when trying to understand the whole scope of that crisis. But this is not the only way by which the crisis is perceived and represented

⁸¹ Tocha, Gonçalo: *É na Terra não é na Lua*, Portugal, 2011, 180'.

⁸² Plácido, João Pedro: *Volta à terra*, Portugal, 2014, 78'.

⁸³ Pinto, Joaquim: *E agora? Lembra-me*, Portugal/Spain, 2013, 164'; Rocha, Paulo: *Se eu fosse ladrão... roubava*, Portugal, 2013, 87'.

in symbolic and aesthetic terms, since it also forms a sort of background, an ambience framing and influencing those terms. Last but not least, it is not possible to work out a comprehensive understanding unless one fully reckons the autonomous nature of 'art' vis-à-vis 'society' and the dialogical relationship thus generated between 'art' and 'society'.

At the first level, one should identify, describe and interpret the artistic problematisation of politics, economy, ideology and common sense – by means of art installations, documentaries, fiction, performances, exhibitions, and so on. These art works can be put in relation one with the other, and each or all of them with the social context and events. It would be an error, however, to treat them as direct effects or causes, the mechanical causality being the wrong way to apprehend the social situation and role of art, independently of which is considered the cause and which the effect (see, among others, Hennion 1993, Heinich 1998, Lahire 2010). If there are effects – and certainly there are, in both directions – they are *refracted* by the specific stance and grammar of art.

At the second level, the presence of social contemporaneity in the artistic imagination is even more diffuse. It is less a contingency factor than a more general ambience – an *atmosphere* that permeates either the sensibility of creators (authors and interpreters) or the sensibility of audiences, or indeed both. Borrowing from Hans Robert Jauss (1982) a concept that seems quite illuminating here, that atmosphere impregnates both the 'horizon of reception' and the horizon of creation of art works. In that sense, the context stays as a background, whose oscillations contact through intersection or tangency with the oscillations in artistic inventiveness and discourse.

At the third level, we take into full account the reciprocal autonomy of social processes and look for the dialogical interaction they may have. There is an internal dynamism of the artworks – internal to the authorial project and deployment, and internal to the cultural field or art world to which it refers. If, as Becker (2007: 192) underlines, 'context' is really important to understand the art works, the context is first of all the set of art works, resources, rules and procedures: their history, structure and conditions of possibility. There is also the dynamics of the social environment, in its several dimensions and their systemic interrelation. These two realities, that for the sake of simplicity we name 'art' and 'society', respectively, cannot be merged, or one subsumed under the other. That said, it is precisely their reciprocal autonomy that makes them interdependent, dialoguing in terms that it is an empirical issue to report and characterise. The context – in this case, the huge systemic crisis of the 2010s – can propitiate a new meaning and relevance, or reinforce (or even dissolve) the meaning and relevance of a motif, a theme or a form. The context may favour the emergence (or maintenance, or disappearance) of subjects and styles. The artistic imaginary may create a pertinent framework in order to help lay people

and institutions to interpret, take account of and position themselves regarding the present they live and the future they envisage. The way art works put in perspective social time-space can help to apprehend it, as they produce knowledge as well as emotions about it. And all this matters, for a sociological inquiry into 'facts' and 'representations' that refer to a historic period of huge crisis, challenging the very nature of national institutions and identities, and their placement in the world system.

In all the three levels, things are oblique – and that is perhaps the decisive remark. There are no straight lines, no conspicuous relations, no obvious links between arts and their social context. The role of arts in mutually constituting social settings requires that one think about different forms of interplay between art and social context, with neither dialectic nor monistic explanations capturing the inherent complexity. One must deal with ambiguity, openness, polysemy – with obliquity. But obliquity does not imply unaccountability. One has only to design an appropriate approach to complexity. This chapter is an attempt to contribute to such a design.

Financial crisis, cultural policy, and the resilience of performing arts: Portugal, 2013

Augusto Santos Silva
Helena Santos

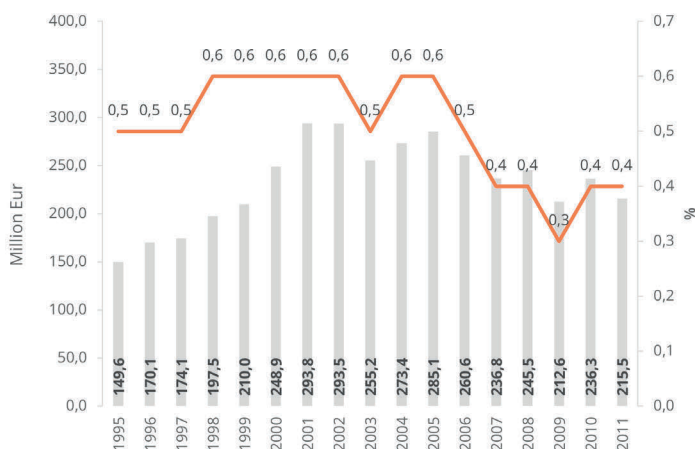
1. The expansion of the Portuguese performing arts: real, still fragile
In Portugal, 1995 was a turning point for the public cultural policies. The foundation of the Ministry of Culture (which had already existed, in the 1970s and the 1980s, but in a precarious and occasional form) epitomised a political project that assumed the centrality of culture, and the necessity of a coherent and long-lasting public intervention in its several dimensions. A new balance between heritage, arts and audiovisuals; the increment and comprehensiveness of public financing; the extension of cultural facilities across the entire territory; and the internationalisation of Portuguese arts and artists, were among the main objectives of such a project. In crucial aspects, these objectives continued and reinforced features of the policies undertaken by governments in the 1980s (mainly in what concerned the cooperation between central and local authorities in order to edify national networks of public libraries, archives and theatres, as described in chapter 3). In other aspects, they were indeed innovative. Therefore, it makes sense to consider, for analytical purposes, 1995 as a milestone.

Due to the fragility of the Portuguese cultural infrastructure and the incipency of state intervention, the budgetary issues were, then, absolutely critical. In fact, the first years of the existence of the new Ministry have been a time of increment of the public resources allocated to culture, the sector's budget following the expansive trend of the overall budget. The political goal of reaching 1% of the total sum was never achieved; nevertheless, an effective reinforcement has occurred. But this was a rather precarious result: culture became one of the first victims of subsequent programmes of fiscal

consolidation (in 2003-2005, 2005-2007, and 2008-2014). Figure 11.1 shows this double tendency, from 1995 to 2011, measurable in terms of resources allocated⁸⁴.

Figure 11.1.

Culture provision in the state budget, 1995-2011 (Million EUR and %):



Source: Neves 2012: 76.

Note: from 2009 onwards, the state-owned corporations in the performing arts are excluded, since they are funded directly by the Ministry of Finance.

Meanwhile, as described in chapter 4, the funds allocated to culture by local authorities (that is, the municipalities) increased in a much more expressive dimension. As a consequence, the amount spent by those authorities clearly surpasses the one with origin in the national government (Gomes & Martinho 2011: 25).

The performing arts constitute one of the key areas of the public cultural expenditure, especially at national level. They also benefitted from the construction of cultural facilities all around the country – as we have seen in chapter 3. Generally speaking, before the crisis of 2008-2010, they were expanding their dimension and centrality within the Portuguese arts field (Gomes 2010). An economic assessment commanded by the Ministry of Culture concluded that, from 2000 to 2006, they had the highest growth rate, either in added value or in employment (Mateus, 2010: 80). Other variables, such

⁸⁴ This book is not the appropriate place to pursue a full and detailed technical discussion of the reliability of the Portuguese official statistics on culture. Our option is to consider the data published by Neves, 2012, to highlight the financial context of the strategies of resilience put into practice by artists during the Adjustment Programme of 2011-2014, which are the subject of the research reported in this chapter.

as some improvement in the education and professional training in dance, theatre and music, also contributed to increase the national capabilities in the area.

Still, given the very low point of departure and the structural restrictions to cultural production and consumption in the Portuguese society, this evolution, effective as it was, was more a start than a steady state, more a promise than an achievement. We can say that Portugal put into practice, in that period, and for the first time, a structural framework for the performing arts – that is, schools, facilities and funding – but still a rather tentative one.

Around 2010, that structure could be summarised as follows. In theatre and dance, most of the producers were small, independent companies – or even merely personal projects. They used their own theatres, or they managed municipal facilities. The main source of income was public funding, by means of the subsidies distributed, in a competitive way and for periods of one, two or four years, by the competent national department (currently named as General-Directorate for Arts). Several companies also received monetary subsidies or used graciously material and human resources provided by the municipalities. In contrast, patronage was a much less important source, captured as it was by the great national theatres and major cultural events. The box office incomes were normally residual, if one takes apart the so-called commercial plays, which indeed represented a minor partner of this field. The state owned two national theatres, located in the main cities, Lisbon and Porto, whose budget was guaranteed by the government.

Classical music, ballet and opera offered a different situation. The key players were national theatres and companies, that belonged directly to the state (this was the case of the National Opera and its orchestra, and the National Dance Company), or to foundations that resulted from partnerships between the state and private for-profit and not-for-profit organisations (the most important one being the Porto National Orchestra), or between the state and municipalities (the most significant one being the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra). The most prestigious classical orchestra was owned by the biggest cultural private foundation, the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Nevertheless, the turn of the century had witnessed a quite interesting development of initiatives of a lower scale, fostered by the extension to music of the calls for public funding opened by the Ministry of Culture. At the same time, the expansion of musical training schools, spread throughout the territory, helped to configure a foundation for independent structures, in jazz, chamber music, or experimental music. The summer festivals and master classes, organised or supported by municipalities and the central administration, also favoured such a development. In contrast, the attempt to launch four regional orchestras, each one under the responsibility of a group of municipalities, did not entirely succeed.

To have an overall view of the situation circa 2010, we may consider all the 142 independent structures that were then receiving public funding on a biennial and quadrennial basis (the one-year funding being allocated to more incipient or occasional projects). 43 per cent worked in theatre, 13 per cent in dance, 24 per cent in music, and 20 per cent combined several arts (Table 11.1): theatre was, therefore, the most representative of the artistic languages. The structures could be either centres of production (such as companies, ensembles, and so on), or dissemination centres (such as festivals and schools). As shown in Table 11.1, the former predominate. And the regional distribution clearly demonstrates the most striking feature – at least, for a sociological approach – of the evolution of the Portuguese panorama: a less uneven coverage of the territory outside Lisbon and Porto (Table 11.2).

Table 11.1.

Financed independent structures in 2011 (in a multi-year basis): artistic domain and type of activity (%)

		Combined	Dance	Music	Theatre	Total	N
Artistic domain		20.4	12.7	23.9	43.0	100.0	142
Type of activity	Production	11.5	44.4	20.6	65.6	40.8	58
	Programming	19.2	5.6	14.7	3.3	9.2	13
	Both	72.4	50.0	58.8	31.1	48.6	69
	nd					1.4	2
N		29	18	34	61	(100.0)	142

Source: Santos & Moreira 2013.

Table 11.2.

Financed independent structures in 2011 (in a multi-year basis): artistic domain and location (%)

		Combined	Dance	Music	Theatre	Total	N
Region	Lisbon	37.9	44.4	17.6	34.4	32.4	46
	Porto	17.2	5.6	5.9	21.3	14.8	21
	Lisbon and Tejo Valley (Lisbon excluded)		22.2	32.4	9.8	14.8	21
	Centre	24.1	11.1	14.7	9.8	14.1	20
	Alentejo	10.3	11.1	5.9	11.5	9.9	14
	North (Porto excluded)	3.4	5.6	14.7	11.5	9.9	14
	Algarve	6.9		8.8	1.6	4.2	6
N		19	18	34	61	(100.0)	142

Source: Santos & Moreira 2013.

2. The key role of public policies, its development and backlash

This new cultural landscape was mainly the effect of the transformation that occurred, in the transition from the 20th to the 21st centuries, in the Portuguese cultural policies. Two changes can be pointed out. The first one was, as already described in chapter 4, the new role of the municipalities as key players, complementing and articulating with the national government – a change that can be dated from 1987, when the first national network based on the partnership between the state and local authorities was launched (the Public Libraries Network). The second change was the enlargement of the competences and resources of the national Culture Department, a process marked, both symbolically and from the point of view of the political centrality and administrative organisation, by its metamorphosis into a Ministry of Culture, in 1995.

Of course, this transformation has been leveraged by an important modernisation of the Portuguese social structure. The data from the national census of 2011, compared with 1991, make it quite evident: variables that are critical to consolidate the social demand for cultural goods, such as education, urbanisation and the growth of professional middle classes (see Donnat 2009), have improved (Table 11.3). Imperfect as they are, the official statistics on the household cultural expenditure confirm the tendency: it reached, in 2006, a level equivalent to 4.5% of the Portuguese GDP (Gomes & Martinho 2011: 25).

Table 11.3.

Three indicators of structural change in Portugal, 1991-2011:

	1991		2001		2011	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
People having attained tertiary education	625,530	6.3	1,193,625	11.5	1,722,511	16.3
People living in cities with 100,000 and more inhabitants	n.d.	n.d.	1,325,094	11.5	1,679,192	15.9
Entrepreneurs, managers and professionals*	712,574	17.3	1,163,542	25.0	1,449,715	33.2

* Authors' calculation, considering all the active workers classified, by the Portuguese Censuses of 1991, 2001 and 2011 as entrepreneurs, managers and professionals (with scientific, intellectual or technical background, and whether employees or self-employed).

Source: Statistics Portugal.

Nevertheless, all these structural changes needed a voluntaristic policy in order to concretise their possibilities. And that was achieved by the articulation between national and local cultural policies. At least, along four critical features. First, the dissemination of cultural facilities (libraries, museums, theatres, multidisciplinary centres) throughout the territory – by means of the construction of new buildings or the rehabilitation and modernisation of already existing ones. Second, the stabilisation, in a more regular and multi-year basis, of public funding for independent artistic production, its extension virtually to all artistic domains, and the increase in resources allocated to it. Third, the development of national agencies and institutions – state-owned or integrated in public-private partnerships – that assumed responsibilities of public service and played a pivotal role in the networking of the Portuguese arts field. And, fourth, the expansion of the academic and professional training in arts, both at the secondary and tertiary educational level.

The upward trend of the financial resources allocated to culture in the national budget stopped at the beginning of the 2000s. Culture ceased to be a beneficiary of the budgetary options, and became one of its victims. This is not only a financial issue, it is rather a political one, including but surpassing the financial features.

We don't want to minimise the consequences of the latter, dramatic as they were. As we have already noticed, the structure of the Portuguese performing arts that emerged as a result of both the artistic dynamism and the public policies was rather incipient, fragile and hugely dependent on the public financial support. And, since 2002, when the programmes of fiscal consolidation began, not only did the government's budget decline in general terms but the share reserved to culture also decreased. The overwhelming effects on that structure can be summarised in a single sentence: a developmental process was severely damaged at its very starting point.

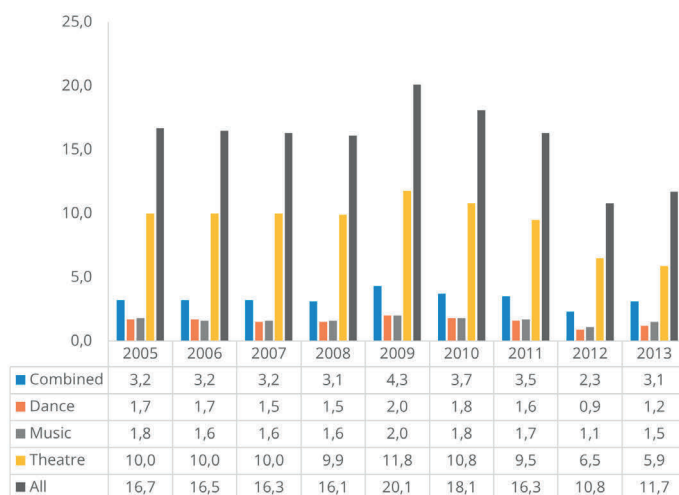
However, no less important was the political devaluation of culture, inherent to the extinction, in the year of 2011, of the Ministry of Culture (to be restored in 2015). The political coordination of the cultural departments of the central administration and the responsibility for the cultural policy was, then, attributed to a secretary of state, reporting directly to the Prime Minister. (In Portugal, the position of secretary of state is less important than the position of minister). Therefore, culture simultaneously lost a global configuration as an autonomous sphere of the public and national administration and its representation at the appropriate political level within the Cabinet.

This combination of financial and political disinvestment had also quite clear symbolic and ideological effects. It meant a retreat of the attitude and rhetoric favourable to the public support for the arts, and an advance of the radical questioning of the usefulness and cost-effectiveness of arts.

In all the three levels – finance, politics, and symbolism – the performing arts were in the very eye of the hurricane. They were the main victims of the budgetary cuts: as shown in Figure 11.2, between 2005 and 2013 the total amount of public funds allocated to subsidise independent structures and projects fell down, and in the last four years that fall was indeed dramatic (the amount available in 2013 meant two thirds of that of 2005, and almost half of that of 2009). This breakdown was accompanied and reinforced by a strong reduction of the resources of the national theatres and companies, and by cuts in the public funding of cultural foundations and other third sector entities. And, of course, the independent, public-subsidised art was one the favourite targets of the populist disaffection vis-à-vis the spending of the so-called money of the tax-payers – a tendency fostered by these times of economic and social crisis and fiscal penury.

Figure 11.2.

General-Directorate for the Arts' funds for independent artistic structures, 2005-2013, by artistic domain (Million EUR):



Source: Santos & Moreira 2013.

Whatever the indicators used, they all clearly evidence the regressive turn in national cultural policy, associated with the financial and economic crisis and the fiscal consolidation programmes of the first 15 years of the 21st century. The decision to downgrade public departments for culture did worsen the case. Meanwhile, the big downsizing of internal demand, due to the loss of family incomes, the growth of unemployment and the degradation of economic expectations, usually

sacrifice, at the frontline, the consumption of cultural goods. The question was how deep and long-lasting could be the consequences for the arts domain, and how should this one resist.

3. The arts field facing the crisis: moving to a survival mode

It is not easy to assess sociologically, using encompassing statistical data, the concrete effects of the economic crisis and political turn. But we can try to estimate those effects and find elements of resilience, within the arts field, considering two sources: a survey applied in 2012 to all the 142 independent entities that were then subsidized, in a multi-year basis, by the Portuguese Directorate for Arts, in the previous four-year period; and an in-depth analysis of 11 such entities⁸⁵.

The evidence suggests that the main consequence of the budgetary cuts was the dramatic reduction of the artistic activities of independent creators, producers and curators. In certain cases, this could mean a temporary suspension, or even the risk of extinction. But the main trend seemed to be the move to a survival mode. Companies reduced costs, downsizing their professional teams, and choosing minimalist approaches in terms of scenography, lighting, costumes, and the like. Projects that required larger resources were passed over, and people focused on small-scale shows: plays for one or a small number of characters, individual dancing performances or involving micro-groups, chamber music, shortened festivals... In some cases, trying to obtain incomes from several sources of funding, the structures seemed to multiply activities – but very small ones, with little artistic dimension, if any.

Various structures tried to share costs, coproducing shows and circulating them through itinerancy circuits. Creators suspended their own creative projects, and responded to external commissions coming from municipalities, festivals, international networks, and so on. The pedagogical dimension of artistic activity was privileged, in order to get some additional resources. And, in individual terms, many artists combined the artistic work in their companies with more standardized, commercial work, for instance in the film industry, television soap operas or advertising. Emigration became again a destiny.

The overall picture seems to describe an entire sector at risk: the structure of theatres and other cultural facilities underused; the agony of many independent producers or their shifting to less creative, less 'authorial' activities; the much greater vulnerability of the artistic core domain vis-à-vis the media and entertainment industry.

But the picture would be incomplete and the appreciation biased if one should stop at the identification of the deeply negative effects of that backlash in public cul-

⁸⁵ Both sets of data were gathered in 2012 by a team headed by Helena Santos and Ricardo Moreira, in the context of a report commanded by the General-Directorate for the Arts. See Santos & Moreira 2013.

tural policies. These policies are not the only factor at work in the cultural dynamics, and the other relevant factors must be considered – namely, (i) the endogenous capacity of the national structure of facilities, local scenes and players that were disseminated throughout the territory, in the 1980s and 1990s; and (ii) the strategies put into practice by creators, producers and curators to resist and eventually overcome the economic crisis and political breakdown.

The best way to characterise them is to point out the ways by which cultural agents do demonstrate some resilience, and the instruments they use to respond to negative external inputs. The evidence provided by the 11 case studies we refer to allows us to draw a sort of catalogue of such instruments (see Table 11.4)⁸⁶.

Table 11.4.

Illustrations from the field: some resilience strategies:

Strategy	Field findings	Relevant cases (N=11)
Networking	Increase in programming exchanges between entities (hosting vs. itinerancy), including public national venues.	Theatre, dance, combined arts.
	Inter-municipal (regional) protocols for production, itinerancy and scheduling the cultural programme.	Theatre company; tendency to be developed by others in short-term.
	Increase in artists-in-residence activities (at a national and, in some contexts, international level).	Theatre, music and (mostly) combined arts.
	Increase in co-productions, in search of lower production costs and higher symbolic benefits.	Music, theatre, combined arts.
	Increase in 'big events' (at a local and regional scale), in order to gather density and 'network power' (either in political or in artistic-symbolic terms).	All cases, although with different expression (depending on the capacity to mobilise political and cultural actors).

⁸⁶ The cases were chosen in order to obtain several combinations of the overall characteristics of the 142 entities. Their general characteristics are as follows: 1 dance company, 5 theatre groups, 3 music entities (1 school and 1 jazz orchestra) and 2 combined arts entities; 4 are production entities and 7 are mixed ones (production and programming); 2 cases are located in Lisbon, 1 in Lisbon and Tejo Valley Region (Lisbon excluded), 1 in Porto, 3 in Northern Region (Porto excluded), 1 in Central Region, 2 in Alentejo and 1 in Algarve.

From production to dissemination	Increase in the scope of educational and social projects all over the region. This might include protocols with primary and secondary schools, and with third sector institutions, in order to define regular activities and repertoire choices.	Theatre, music.
	Increase of the centrality of different sorts of community projects: (i) work with 'lay people'; (ii) audience segmentation (aged people as a new segment); (iii) social inclusion programmes (poor and marginalised populations); and (iv) training activities, namely with amateur groups.	Theatre and music, and, to a lesser degree, dance.
Municipalisation	Privileged, although tense, relationships with local governments, in a threefold movement: (i) physical facilities were guaranteed by the municipalities; (ii) some entities constituted the only artistic supply all over the region; (iii) the artistic entities conferred high symbolic and social reputation to the region.	Mostly in the cases that were distant from urban locations (namely from Lisbon and Porto).
Creative entrepreneurial shift	Joining creative business programmes in order to compensate the absence of public funding.	Theatre, music and combined arts in urban areas.
Internationalisation	When the entities were solid (within the arts field), it might be a way to find better conditions for working and experimenting, as well as for getting internal reputation through international networks. It often depended on the individual reputation of the artist who led the group, which might eventually put the whole entity at risk of disappearance.	Dance companies and combined arts were typical examples. One theatre company, located in a rural area, evidenced the ambiguity between local constraints and international recognition.

Source: Santos & Moreira 2013.

The first one is networking. It can be established in many forms. Several municipalities of the same region associated in a common theatre company, whose responsibility was to produce and present plays in all the localities concerned (see chapter 6). Various theatre or dance companies jointly designed an itinerancy circuit, thus sharing production costs and accessing larger audiences. The national theatres or the dance national company played a pivotal role within the field, hosting independent performances in their venues and on their schedules, or working with independent artists in cooperative original productions. The same did public festivals.

The move from production to dissemination was another strategy in use. The fact is that the budgetary cuts, the fall of audiences and the decrease of complementary supports, be they private patronage, sponsorship or municipal resources, made the production of strictly speaking artistic works extremely difficult or even impracticable. So the independent professionals invested, mostly or only, in cultural dissemination. For instance, a professional theatre company centred its activity in the presentation, all around its region of influence, of well-known plays, mainly those that integrated the national curriculum for secondary education. Others dedicated their work to educational service to an extent they would refuse if times were less hard for creation. With regards to music, this could be a rather frequent situation, as small orchestras of jazz or classical music were often linked to artistic private or municipal schools and leisure centres. And/or several independent structures may compensate the lack of artistic opportunities by means of a kind of training work with local amateur groups.

A third strategy can be seen in the strengthening of the relationship with local authorities and agencies. Taking benefit of the existence of municipal theatres and other cultural facilities and the correlative need to manage and program them, and given the usual weakness of the municipal techno-structure, some independent groups and artists turned out to be, *de jure* or *de facto*, municipal bodies, guaranteeing the professional management and functioning of municipal theatres. An equivalent nearness between music or theatre groups and public or public-private offices of tourism could be witnessed in touristic places.

Another strategy attempted to use the 'creative sector' in order to surpass the public financial cuts in the artistic activities. Several programmes have been implemented in that sector since 2008, and many artists (mostly young) and entities were trying an 'entrepreneurial shift', namely joining the creative business incubators that had been founded. This arts-and-business strategy required instruments and skills that were far from being available within the arts field. It also required a density on the demand side that was still very incipient in Portugal. One of the evident results was the risk of splitting the artistic core activities into fragmented 'cultural services' (see Simão 2013).

Finally, internationalisation could also be an alternative for the absence or decrease of internal conditions for artwork. There are quite a number of examples in modern dance: its experimentalist nature severely reduced the possibilities to reach significant local audiences and, logically, impeded the full use of the approach to itinerancy, education and dissemination. Inversely, the circulation through international festivals, artistic residences or workshops and other contexts of development of the artistic elites and their audiences, could be a real opportunity for artists confronted with deadlocks in the Portuguese art world. We can notice equivalent strategies in the field of music, be it classical or jazz, and in theatre, in what concerns the option for international networking and the circulation throughout the international festivals. In some cases, this turned out to be an emigration process, in which case it ceased to be describable as resilience, but as an exit.

These strategies are not mutually exclusive. As a matter of fact, we could identify, in the cases that were analysed, different combinations: networking with dissemination, nearness to the local authorities with internationalisation, and so on. Nevertheless, there is a sort of dialectics between, on the one hand, networking and internationalisation, and, on the other hand, dissemination, 'creative entrepreneurship' and 'municipalisation'. For the former frequently constituted attempts to resist and overcome the crisis *within* the core domain of performing arts, and appealing to the cultural assets and social capital that are specific to that erudite, high-valued segment of the cultural field (Bourdieu, 1992). And the latter had to exit this segment, surviving by means of a less artistic and a more educational (or even commercial) investment, or bypassing the 'aesthetic distance' (Jauss, 1994) between artwork and mass audiences.

Anyway, an impressive element must be highlighted from our empirical observation, based either on the broad survey or on the case studies: the absence of significant increments in patronage, sponsorship and box office incomes. That is, no form of private funding has been developed by the small-scale independent artistic structures in Portugal, as alternative means to compensate the decrease in public support. For two sound reasons. On the one hand, the consequences of the economic crisis were even more negative in terms of cultural markets and private patronage than in terms of public policies (bounded as these were by some legal and moral obligations). On the other hand, due to the scarcity of resources, the competition between the independent artists and the major cultural institutions was harder, and of course favoured the latter, which tended to capture more significantly the available funds for patronage and sponsorship.

3. Crisis and resilience

All over Europe, whenever it happens, fiscal consolidation severely reduces the amount of public funding available to support artistic creation (hastening a trend that Klammer *et al.* 2006 named *désétatisation*). Culture is always one of the victims of the strategy to consolidate by drastically reducing the public expenditure (an orientation that is far from economic rationality and efficiency, but this is not the subject of this chapter). Of course, in times of austerity, the debate on the legitimacy and cost-effectiveness of public funding of arts tends to be more intense and extreme, and it is more difficult to maintain a social and political consensus. And, as we all know (see Belfiore & Bennett 2007), the quarrel about the 'value of the art' is intimately linked to the existence and perception of public funding.

The Portuguese case was not, of course, unique. Still, it is a relevant one, for comparative analysis, with either Central and Northern European countries (where cultural policies and the arts field are much more structured, under several models), or countries that also entered modern cultural policies quite recently, such as some of the Southern and Eastern European countries.

On the one hand, the breakdown of 2011 was not exclusively financial. It was indeed a major political shift, with a triple nature: financial, administrative and symbolic. It succeeded to two decades (since the mid-80's) whose main trends were (i) a real increment of the public resources allocated to culture, (ii) a rather consistent orientation towards the implementation of public cultural facilities throughout the territory, and (iii) first the emergence, and then the consolidation, of a new key player in the field of the cultural policies, that is, the municipalities.

In 1995, the foundation of the Ministry of Culture was indeed an event, symbolising the renewed centrality of cultural policy, committing its responsibility to a Cabinet minister, reinforcing and articulating all the administrative departments for heritage, arts and film industry. Therefore, the decision, taken by the government in office in 2011-2015, to abolish the Ministry of Culture inserted the financial cuts into a conspicuous and broader movement of political and symbolic devaluation, both of the arts and the policies regarding them.

On the other hand, the convergent policies of the state and local authorities, during the incrementalist period of (let us say) 1987-2002, had been able to implement, in the Portuguese territory, a public cultural infrastructure. Its main axes were (i) a set of basic facilities, such as libraries and archives, museums and heritage sites, theatres and multidisciplinary centres, and (ii) a network of agents, such as artists and artistic communities, schools, companies and curatorships, located mainly in Lisbon and (in a smaller degree) in Porto, but disseminated throughout the country.

Compared with the pre-existent situation, this infrastructure really represented a new evolutionary stage. However, because of the very low point of departure, and the anyway modest number of resources available – not to speak of some variations and imbalances regarding the concrete policies put into action – this was still a preliminary momentum, accomplishing tangible but also fragile outcomes.

The crisis of 2008-2010 produced such overwhelming consequences on the independent cultural structures that they were compelled to enter into a sort of survival mode. Which is indeed a form of resilience, mobilising resources such as the social and cultural networks – on a local, national or international scale – and making use of strategies like the shift to more pedagogical activities or a closer approach to municipalities and public facilities. That resilience allowed them to overcome the risk of collapse, and eventually to take advantage of some positive developments following the reinstallation of the Ministry of Culture in 2015 – the improvement of public funding (Table 11.5) and the rise of the number of subsidised structures (Table 11.6). A detailed analysis of this new period is beyond the scope of this chapter; the point is that without the capacity and means of resilience put in place during the previous crisis by the Portuguese art world (which was the focus of our research), such a new period would not have been possible.

Table 11.5.

Funds for independent artistic structures, managed by the General-Directorate for the Arts, 2008-2023, by artistic domain (Million EUR):

Art domain	2008	2012	2016	2020	2023
Combined	3.1	2.3	3.2	3.8	8.6
Dance	1.5	0.9	1.3	2.0	3.6
Music	1.6	1.1	1.5	2.7	8.7
Theatre	9.9	6.5	5.0	9.4	16.6
Total	16.1	10.8	11.0	17.9	37.5

Sources: Santos & Moreira 2013 and DGARTES (biennial and quadrennial financing).

Table 11.6.

Independent structures financed by the General-Directorate for the Arts (in a multi-year basis), 2011-2023, by artistic domain (Million EUR):

Art domain	2011	2018	2023
Combined	29	35	44
Dance	18	21	22

Music	34	43	45
Theatre	61	68	75
Total	142	167	186

2011: 2009 biennial and 2011 quadrennial financing; 2018 and 2023: biennial and quadrennial financing ('sustainable support').

Sources: Santos & Moreira 2013; DGARTES.

4. Contextual analysis and policy-making

Some years ago, Eleonora Belfiore (2004) warned her fellow sociologists against the temptation to reduce the cross-national analysis of cultural policies to a comparison of the financial resources the national budgets allocate to culture. And she added that, even if the comparison of the models of cultural policy in use in the different countries did mean a step forward towards a more rigorous approach, this comparison had to be seen as an instrument of research, and not its final stage.

The analysis of the Portuguese case entirely supports her argument. The consequences, for arts and culture, of fiscal austerity are not fully understandable unless we situate them within a major shift in cultural policy as such – a shift that put at risk the very existence of such a policy. Thus, the budgetary component of that backlash must be investigated in relation to the political, administrative, ideological and symbolic dimensions. And – as Belfiore proposed – contextualisation remains a key methodological device for the sociological explanation of the design, implementation and impact of those policies. Once again, to consider the Portuguese situation one must be aware of the peculiar evolution of the respective public policies, both national and local, from the 1980s onwards.

Moreover, as Bernard Perret (2008) emphasized, the assessment of cultural policies cannot be abridged into an inventory of statistical indicators. It must also focus on the processes that constitute such policies, trying to understand *comment ça marche*, how they function, with and for whom, by which means, and so on – not only in order to seize all the factors in action in the politics of public policies, but also favouring the collective learning that such an assessment can provide.

Thus, a contextual analysis of (i) the evolution of cultural policy, and (ii) the subsequent strategies of adaptation and response used by the arts field – as we tried to summarise here, in reference to the situation of Portuguese performing arts in 2013 – may prove to be interesting for both academic and policy-making purposes. The Portuguese case makes evident that the development of the artistic and cultural system depends crucially on the dialectics between opportunity, risk and resilience. Against the threat of reducing cultural policies to a mix of minimalism and adorn-

ment, resilience finds its roots both in the endogenous resources of the artists and art worlds, and in the instruments of cultural policy, management and supply implemented in previous expansive periods.

So, the role of public policies for the outcome of that dialectics seems to be determinant – at least considering the Portuguese circumstances. As we have seen, the public support for performing arts and the exploration, by the artists themselves, of other forms and sources of support – like audiences, patrons or the clients and consumers of additional services provided by artists, such as education, dissemination and touristic services – do not relate to each other in an exclusive manner. One is not the substitute for the other. On the contrary, they complement – and also presume – each other (see Klamer & Petrova 2007 for a study on visual arts). A reasonable and stable public funding – assuming a variety of forms, and of course accountable – provides a positive background for the implementation of structures and processes that contribute to lessen the dependency of creators and producers on state agencies and policies. This is the reality that the anti-subsidisation *doxa* simply misunderstands.

We can point out many of those structures and processes that independent artists can use, in order to obtain some degree of freedom regarding public directives, demands and subsidies. The analysis of the Portuguese case suggests the centrality of the following three: rooting, networking, professionalism. They can typically be implemented concomitantly with sound public support, and indeed may constitute a desirable, if not compulsory, offset for that support. They are important assets for resilience in periods of decrease or even suspension of public support.

We name as rooting (and we could also name it as embeddedness, in Granovetter's sense, see Granovetter 1985) the various strategies that create and consolidate a link between artists and their social environment. Depending on the disciplines, projects or cultural and aesthetic affiliations, according to the characteristics of each environment, they can focus on the consistency of programs, the enlargement of audiences, local partnerships, educational services, dissemination, itinerancy, and so on. Networking means the establishment and functioning of flexible structures that allow several artistic teams to relate and reach economies of scale, at the local, regional, national or international level. And, of course, professionalism denotes the improvements in organisation and management – such as workflows, leadership, marketing, fundraising, and so on – that are so necessary for the structuring of cultural enterprises.

Our analysis suggests that none of these three processes is alternative to the absence or reduction of public support; and they all can be seen as positive outcomes of those cultural policies which have included them as key objectives, and have pro-

vided orientation and means to achieve them. Since they are established, they operate as factors of resilience in periods of crisis and backlash.

This is probably an interesting result sociologists can deliver to policy-makers and discussants. It suggests that we will be more attentive to reality and prone to intervene adequately if we cease to think in terms of dichotomies. The option is not between cultural policy and market-driven cultural economy. The option is between an intelligent linkage of public support and artistic autonomy, and its alternative, that is, no cultural policy at all.

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How does change occur in the art world, which specific elements it presents there? How do changes in social context impact the characteristics and evolution of the art world? What are the main drivers at stake, how are they perceived by artists and cultural institutions? How do public policies respond to these drivers, or anticipate them, or even generate them? We try to approach these issues from the point of view of the social sciences, fostering a productive dialogue between sociology and other disciplines, such as economics, political science, history, and anthropology.

The purpose is to discuss broader issues with regard to cultural change in contemporary societies, taking the Portuguese situation as a relevant example that deserves thorough, comprehensive, holistic, and data-based investigation.

In Portugal, the consequences of democratisation and European integration were huge, at all levels. Change came late but was intense, implying a radical reconfiguration of the country's geopolitical, institutional, economic, and cultural positioning. This is why it constitutes a pertinent case for European and international research on social change and the cultural dynamics.

